



Dear 4th Grade Families,

We are excited to invite your child to become part of the **Pipestone Area Schools Band Program!** Our band has a **long-standing tradition of excellence**, and we would love for your student to be part of this incredible opportunity as they enter 5th grade.

Why Join Band?

Participation in band goes far beyond learning an instrument—it helps students develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork skills that benefit them in **all** areas of life. Studies show that students involved in music education achieve **higher test scores, graduation rates, college acceptance rates, and even future earnings!** Band students build strong friendships, improve communication skills, and gain confidence that lasts a lifetime.

The Pipestone Promise Band Scholarship

We are committed to ensuring that music education benefits every student. Through the **Pipestone Promise Band Scholarship**, all students who participate in band from **grades 5–12** will receive a **guaranteed \$1,000 scholarship** for college or trade school!

What to Expect in 5th Grade Band

- **Band takes place during the school day** – no extra time commitment required!
- **Only three evening concerts** per year to showcase students' progress.
- **A summer start-up week** before school begins to help students get comfortable with their instruments and learn their first notes.
- **Future opportunities** to participate in honor bands, jazz band, marching band, drumline, and travel around the region and country as students advance in the band program.
- **Instrument options:** We recommend a rent-to-own program to ensure access to a high-quality instrument. However, **the school has instruments available for loan at no cost** so that every student can participate!

Why Start in 5th Grade?

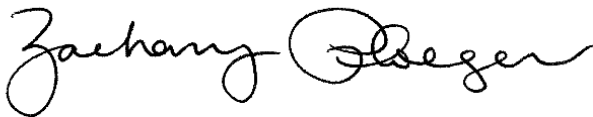
While band is optional in 5th grade, students must take **band, choir, or both** in middle school. Trying band in 5th grade gives them a **head start** and allows them to explore music in a fun, low-pressure environment.

Next Steps

1. **Attend one of our Band Information Nights on (May 5th or 15th from 6 to 7:30pm in the Band Room)** – Families can ask questions, and students can try different instruments before making a choice!
2. **Fill out the enclosed registration form** – even if your child chooses not to participate in 5th grade band. Please turn them into your 4th grade classroom teacher by Friday, May 23rd.
3. **Look for more details on the next page**, including frequently asked questions.

We are excited to help your child begin their musical journey and look forward to seeing them in the Pipestone Band Program! If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zachary Ploeger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Zachary" and the last name "Ploeger" clearly distinguishable.

Dr. Zachary Ploeger

Director of Bands, Pipestone Area Schools

Frequently Asked Questions

Is Band a Regular Class?

Yes. The 5th-grade band meets during the school day for 30 minutes. Students will receive a letter grade in band just as they do in their other academic classes.

Are there After School Practices?

No. The only required band activities outside of the school day are concerts. The 5th graders usually perform three concerts a year, in December, March, and May.

How Much Practice is Required?

Beginners should practice a few times a week for approximately 15 minutes a day.

Should My Child Already Know How to Read Music?

No. Your child will be taught how to read notes and rhythms in band. Our first few weeks of lessons will focus on learning to read music and how it applies to playing their instrument of choice. You will be amazed at how quickly your child progresses!

Which Instrument Should My Child Choose?

Woodwinds (flute, clarinet, and alto saxophone are usually rented from the music store, and oboe and bassoon are typically loaned through the school.)

Flute – a popular choice, can be challenging to make a sound at first, similar to blowing air into a pop bottle.

Oboe – small instrument, the double reed used can present difficulties. This instrument is for students who are looking for a challenge.

Bassoon – a larger instrument, the double reed used can present difficulties. This instrument is for students who are looking for a challenge.

Clarinet – very successful beginning instrument, starts more straightforward but does get more challenging with added fingerings. Clarinets use reeds which can be purchased through the school.

Alto Saxophone – it can be challenging to get a good sound at first; after playing for one to two years, switching to tenor saxophone may be an option. Saxophone also uses reeds, which may be purchased through the school.

Brass (trumpets and trombones are rented from the music store; horn, baritone, and tuba are loaned from the school.)

Trumpet – small mouthpiece suitable for smaller lips; valves change notes.

Trombone – bigger mouthpiece, suitable for those with full lips; notes are used using a slide instead of valves. (The school does have some trombones that can be rented.)

Horn – small mouthpiece, suitable for those with smaller lips; notes are changed by using valves, which are difficult to begin learning at first.

Baritone – a very successful beginning instrument with a bigger mouthpiece similar in size to the trombone, and notes are played using valves.

Tuba – large mouthpiece, larger than the baritone; notes are played using valves. The size of this instrument can be a challenge for some students.

Percussion (Students purchase a home practice kit. Students will use the school percussion during class. To participate in percussion a student must either already have some experience playing piano or be recommended by the elementary music teacher.)

Percussion consists of learning stick and mallet percussion. All percussion students will learn snare drum, bass drum, timpani, marimba, xylophone, and bells.

How Do We Get an Instrument?

The easiest way to help your child get started is to rent an instrument from a music store. We encourage our students to rent from Music Street in Marshall, MN. They provide excellent service and have quality instruments. They also visit the school once a week during the school year to repair instruments. By renting, you can have a smaller investment in the beginning, plus their program is rent-to-own, so by 8th grade, the instrument is usually paid for. We want every student to have access to participating in band. If renting an instrument presents a financial hardship, you can request a school instrument.

Are There Other Fees?

Students who play clarinet, saxophone, oboe, or bassoon will receive one set of reeds. After that, they will need to purchase their own box. (Usually around 25 dollars.)

Do You Offer Beginning Band Over the Summer

Yes, there is a week of beginning band lessons in August. These sessions are optional but encouraged because they help give students individual attention while learning the basics of playing. More information on this will be sent out in July to families.

What If I'm Not Sure? Can I Join Once School Starts?

Yes, this is possible. However, please realize that starting later may set you back a bit from the other students who have been playing already. Remember that you will have to practice extra to get caught up.

Can My Child Be in Sports and Do Band?

Yes. The goal for all of our students is to raise well-rounded children that will grow up to be leaders in our community and world. This is achieved by encouraging students to participate in various activities offered through our school and community. In a town, the size of Pipestone, sports and music must co-exist and “share” students. As a music department, we work very hard to make our schedules “work” together with other activities for your child’s benefit. The good news is that there are very FEW scheduling conflicts throughout middle school.



You can rent an instrument through Music Street in Marshall on their website by going to the “Rentals” tab.

<https://www.musicstreetmarshall.com/>

Or you can call them and set up an instrument rental at 507-532-4005

Music Street offers a simple, affordable rent-to-own program for band instruments. For your student to be most successful, they need a quality instrument that's easy-to-play, durable, and reliable. A benefit of renting from Music Street is that they visit the school once a week to repair instruments and make deliveries.

Band Instruments

\$30/month (includes tax & \$3 fee) - Flute, Clarinet, Trumpet, Trombone, Percussion

\$40/month (includes tax & \$3 fee) - Alto Sax, Baritone, Xylophone

\$50/month (includes tax & \$3 fee) - Tenor Sax, French Horn, Euphonium

- Trade instrument during first 4 months at no extra charge
- Pay in full and receive a 10% discount on unpaid balance
- Weekly service calls to area schools
- New or reconditioned instruments available

Importance of a quality instrument

For a student to be able to succeed, they need an instrument that will allow them to succeed. Cheap internet specials may look nice, but will be difficult to play, won't sound good, and will be difficult (or oftentimes impossible) to service when inevitable repairs need to be done. A quality instrument is an investment into giving your student the foundation to succeed!

Come try all the instruments and
figure out which one is right for you!

Monday, May 5th from 6 to 7:30pm - PAS Band Room
&
Thursday, May 15th from 6 to 7:30pm - PAS Band
Room

A representative from Music Street, Dr. Ploeger, and Mrs.
Kruse will all be there to answer your questions and help
you pick an instrument.

Attending one of these sessions is optional, but encouraged if
you have any questions. You do not have to attend the entire
session. Come anytime during the sessions that work best for
your family.

IMPORTANT!!!!

EVERYONE MUST RETURN THIS FORM – REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU ARE SIGNING UP FOR BAND OR NOT. This helps us with planning for next year. THANK YOU!

**Pipestone Area Bands
Beginning Band Registration Form**

Please fill out the following information and return this form (by **May 23rd**) to your 4th Grade teacher. The teacher will forward it to the band director.

Student Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Street Address: _____ City _____ Zip _____

Phone Numbers: Home _____ Parent/Guardian Cell _____

Every effort will be made to register your child with their first instrument choice. However, band classes do need to strive for balanced instrument for the educational development of our students. We may need to limit some of our more popular instrument choices, such as Alto Saxophone and Percussion.

Student's First choice of instrument: _____

Student's Second choice of instrument: _____

Please check one of the options below:

☐ **My child will rent an instrument from the music store. (Music Street in Marshall)**

☐ **My child already has an instrument to use.**
(Please make sure the instrument is in working order.)

☐ **My child does not have an instrument and will need to use one from the school district.**
(There is a very limited quantity/selection of school-owned instruments, so your child may not get to play the instrument that s/he signed up for)

☐ **My child is not going to participate in 5th grade band.**

Parent Signature: _____