

CAMBRIA HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

4TH & 5TH GRADE

BAND



INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC



2024 - 2025

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PERMISSION SLIPS & RENTAL PAYMENTS ARE DUE MAY 24. CURRENT 4TH GRADERS GOING IN TO 5TH CAN KEEP THEIR INSTRUMENTS OVER THE SUMMER IF THEY PAY IN THE SPRING.



2024-2025 TIMELINE

CAMBRIA HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY BAND

4TH GRADE

Students will:

- Learn to read music during full band without instruments.
- Have their first lessons and work through a video series at home called the "First Lessons Practice Guides" that I will post in Google Classroom.
- Learn the first 5 notes of their instruments.
- Start reading music and playing their instruments simultaneously using the *Essential Elements* band method book.
- Percussion will learn the bells in band and snare drum during lessons.
- Prepare and perform for the Winter Concert that will be held in late November/early December. This will be in the style of a "First Performance" where students demonstrate what they have learned so far.
- Continue to work through the *Essential Elements* book in full band and in lessons.
- Prepare and perform in the Spring Concert & Band Highlander Music Expo that will be held in March.
- Continue to work through the *Essential Elements* book in full band/lessons.
- Prepare and perform at the Solo & Ensemble Concert that will be held in mid-May.
- Continue to work through the *Essential Elements* book in full band/lessons.

5TH GRADE

Students will:

- Do a thorough review of all concepts learned in 4th grade.
- Continue working through the *Essential Elements* band method book in full band, lessons, and music special.
- Percussion will review the bells in band/music special using *Essential Elements* and will continue to work on the snare drum in lessons.
- Prepare and perform in the Winter Concert that will be held in late November/early December.
- Continue to work through the *Essential Elements* book in full band, lessons, and music special.
- Prepare and perform in the Spring Concert & Band Highlander Music Expo that will be held in March.
- Advanced students will have the opportunity to attend the IUP Elementary Band Summit in early April.
- Continue to work through the *Essential Elements* book in full band/lessons with a focus on scales and music theory during music special.
- Prepare and perform at the Solo & Ensemble concert that will be held in mid-May.
- Continue to work through the *Essential Elements* book in full band/lessons with a focus on preparing for 6th grade band during music special.



BE A PART OF THE BAND!

CAMBRIA HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY BAND

CHES BAND PROGRAM

4th & 5th grade students have the opportunity to learn the flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, baritone, trombone, or percussion (snare drum and bells). All band students receive a 25 minute pull-out lesson time from English, Science, or Social Studies. Both grades have full band rehearsal once a week during enrichment. 5th grade students that are in band will also report to me for their music special for a small group lesson. Both grades have a winter concert, spring concert, the Band Highland Music Expo, and perform at a Solo & Ensemble Concert. Advanced 5th grade students will have the opportunity to attend the IUP Elementary Band Summit in early April. Chorus and band share concerts and never have conflicting schedules, so students can easily participate in both.

EXPECTATIONS

Participation in band is a responsibility and commitment on the part of both students and parents. Regular home practice will be essential for success. Students are expected to practice at least 50 minutes a week.

NEW BAND STUDENTS

5th grade students that were not in 4th grade band are welcome to join in 5th grade. All students are highly encouraged to join at the beginning of the year. 4th & 5th grade students that decide to join after the start of the year will have the opportunity to join at the beginning of the 3rd marking period (approximately January 14th). Students that join late will attend full band rehearsals, but won't participate in full band until they catch up to their peers.

THE BIG PICTURE

Cambria Heights is lucky to continue to have a thriving music program. Participation in elementary band & chorus is just the beginning of a student's musical career at CHSD. The school district was honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from the NAMM Foundation for its exceptional commitment to music education for five consecutive years from 2020-2024. This is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students.



INSTRUMENT SELECTION

CAMBRIA HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY BAND

TIPS ON CHOOSING AN INSTRUMENT:

The most important part of choosing an instrument is that the student should enjoy the sound of the instrument. Students should listen and watch recordings of all the instruments before making a final selection. They do NOT need to pick an instrument yet, although students should start to think about what they are interested in. Students that sign up for band will have a one on one meeting with Mrs. Kemerer to explore the instruments. I'll send home a paper with their top three favorite instruments from the demonstration then parents will sign the paper and send it back with the final decision.



Please go to mrskemerer.weebly.com for listening examples under "instrument demos."

A note about instrument selection: The traditional way for students to select an instrument is for the students to blow into each instrument for 3 seconds and then select the one that they "like the best." The problem with this is that students will become discouraged from picking the instrument that they want, because they did not have immediate success on it. I compare this to having children pick a sport by throwing them one baseball pitch to see if they can hit it, having them kick a soccer ball one time into a goal, or having them throw a football one time. It wouldn't make much sense! The majority of students can be successful at any instrument that they want to learn after a few lessons. Most students can make a decision based on the instrument demos that Mrs. Mulligan and I give, along with holding the instruments. Although, I may ask some students to test blowing into an instrument, especially if I expect that they might have a hard time physically playing a specific instrument.

FLUTE



Some students struggle to make a sound on the flute.

Students will test making a sound on the mouthpiece.

CLARINET



SAXOPHONE

TRUMPET



PERCUSSION

Snare Drum & Bells



Students use a quiet practice pad to practice the snare drum at home.



BARITONE



TROMBONE



PARENT FAQ

CAMBRIA HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY BAND

WHAT'S THE COMMITMENT?

Students are asked to practice at least 50 minutes a week. They keep track of their practice times on a practice journal that is assigned every week. There will also be the traditional winter and spring concerts, along with a performance at the Solo & Ensemble Concert in May. Band students will participate in the Highlander Music Expo, a school-wide concert for grades 4-12, every other year. The 2025 HME will feature the bands.

MY CHILD IS ALREADY IN TOO MANY AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES. WILL THEY BE ABLE TO HANDLE ALSO BEING IN BAND?

Yes! Band is not an extracurricular activity because all of the instruction happens during the school day. Kids are expected to practice at least 50 minutes a week outside of school. There are only 3-4 after school commitments throughout the year for concerts in December, March, and May. Students at Cambria Heights are supported and encouraged to participate in both music and athletics.

HOW DO THEY PICK AN INSTRUMENT?

Students that sign up for band will have a one on one meeting with me to explore the instruments. I'll send home a paper with their top three favorite instruments from the demonstration, and then you'll sign the paper and send it back with their final decision. Mrs. Mulligan does a unit in 3rd grade on learning the instruments and I will also demonstrate the instruments to students, so they will be familiar with their options.

WHEN DO I PAY?

All of the CHES instruments are the same price to rent, so you can pay to reserve an instrument before your child has picked an instrument. You can pay in the spring or the fall, but I'd recommend to pay as early as possible to ensure you have one saved. Renting from CHES is significantly cheaper than renting from a music store. Rental information is on pages 6 & 7.

WHAT IF I CAN'T AFFORD TO RENT AN INSTRUMENT?

Please read the "Reduced Fee Rental" section on page 6 and select "I request a reduced fee" on the permission slip.

I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT MUSIC AND MY CHILD CAN'T EVEN KEEP A BEAT. HOW WILL I BE ABLE TO HELP THEM?

All children are capable of learning an instrument. The best way that parents can help their children is by helping their kids set up a practice routine and encouraging them to practice using the interactive music learning software that is provided. More details are on my website (mrskemerer.weebly.com) under student resources > practice tools.



PARENT FAQ CONTINUED

CAMBRIA HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY BAND

WHAT'S THE EASIEST/HARDEST INSTRUMENT?

In my opinion, all instruments are hard to learn, but they are challenging at different times in the learning process. Learning any instrument is simply about developing the muscle memory for the instrument to feel like second nature to the player. Therefore, it takes a lot of repetition to get students "off the ground" on an instrument. But once students become comfortable with their instruments, they'll improve at a steady pace. Everyone starts an instrument by learning the first five notes. It takes flute players about 3-5 weeks to make a solid sound and play their first five notes. After that, the hard part is just tricky fingerings. Clarinet is easy to start on, then the fingerings get difficult at the end of 5th grade. Alto saxophone is easy to play, but hard to play well with a good tone. Brass players need about 3-5 weeks to develop the muscles in their mouths needed to execute their first five notes. After that, they'll progress at the same pace as the other instruments. Percussion will get a quick start on the bells and snare drum and then will slow down as the music gets more and more technically challenging. Percussion focuses on developing the proper technique necessary to do complex rudiments such as open and closed rolls on the snare drum.

IS MY CHILD ALLOWED TO SWITCH INSTRUMENTS?

Students are allowed to switch instruments at the beginning of the third marking period (approximately January 14th). 4th grade students can also switch at the beginning of 5th grade.

WHAT IF MY CHILD DECIDES TO QUIT?

It's always better for a student to try an instrument and then quit, rather than never trying. 4th & 5th grade is a great age for kids to explore their interests. Band isn't for everyone, but kids will never know until they try it out. Statistically, students that join band in 4th grade have the best rate of staying in band throughout high school. Students are welcome to join late, but I highly encourage kids to join at the beginning of 4th grade.

HOW ARE BAND STUDENTS GRADED?

Specials use a Standard Based Report Card. Standards for band are:

1. Completes practice journals by practicing 50 minutes a week.
2. Demonstrates developmentally appropriate playing skills on instrument.
3. Demonstrates responsibility by remembering lesson time/bringing instrument & music.
4. Actively participates in class and has respectful behavior in the band setting.



ACQUIRING AN INSTRUMENT

CAMBRIA HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY BAND

CHES INSTRUMENT RENTAL

Total Cost: \$75/year (Includes instrument, book, care products)

- To reserve an instrument, please pay as soon as possible with only a check or money order made payable to the **CH Activity Fund**. (No cash please!)
- Make sure that the **CHES Instrument Rental Contract** on the permission slip is completed.
- 4th grade students will receive their instruments in mid-September.
- Current 4th grade students going in to 5th grade can keep their instruments over the summer if they pay in the spring.
- If you cannot afford to pay the total cost now, please pay half (\$37.50) or a third (\$25) of the rental cost now. Your next payment will be due at the beginning of the next marking period.
- Please note that once your child receives his or her instrument, we are unable to give refunds on CHES rentals.

IF YOU OWN AN INSTRUMENT

- If you already own an instrument, I suggest getting the instrument checked by a music store before the beginning of the school year.
- If you want to have the Volkwein's Music Store look at your instrument, have your child drop off the instrument to me and I'll give it to the sales representative. Please label the instrument and include your contact information. Volkwein's will call with a quote before doing any repairs and will deliver it back to the school.
- Remember to buy the book and care products listed on the next page.

REDUCED FEE RENTAL

- If you cannot afford the \$75 rental fee, please check the "Reduced Fee Rental" option on the permission slip. The reduced fee is \$25 each year. Please pay with a check or money order made out to "CH Activity Fund." Your child might not get their first choice of an instrument. This fee will cover the cost of books and instrument accessories.

PURCHASING AN INSTRUMENT

- Please contact me for help purchasing an instrument.
- Low quality instruments almost always cause a students to quit. PLEASE do not buy under-priced instruments online. BE CAUTIOUS of buying colored instruments online. These instruments are often poor quality and students usually grow out of that phase quickly.
- Educational Percussion Kits are affordable and often cheaper than renting. Check out the Yamaha SBK350 or Pearl 910C at www.steveweissmusic.com. These are bell kits that include a practice pad. Innovative Percussion, Pearl, Vic Firth, & Yamaha are all trusted percussion brands.
- Remember to buy the book and care products listed below.

VOLKWEIN'S MUSIC STORE

- Go to www.volkweinsmusic.net for information on the rent to own program at the Volkwein's Music Store.
- A Volkwein's sales representative, Joe Dipyatic, comes to the school once a week. If you ever need anything music related, or an instrument repair, you can pay for it over the phone and Joe will deliver it right to the school.

CARE PRODUCTS & BOOKS

Method Book = \$10

Flute Care Products: Swab \$6, Finger Guide \$7

Clarinet Care Products: Swab \$6, Guard \$2, Reed \$1, Cushion \$1

Saxophone Care Products: Swab \$6, Guard \$2, Reed \$2, Cushion \$1

Trumpet/Baritone = Valve Oil \$4

Trombone = Slide-O-Mix \$6

- Make checks payable to the **CH Activity Fund**.
- Students can buy reeds as needed with cash in the bandroom.
- **Care products and books are included in CH Rentals.** If you lost something, please purchase a replacement to keep your instrument working well.



BAND PERMISSION SLIP

CAMBRIA HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY BAND

STUDENT NAME: _____

CURRENT GRADE/HOMEROOM TEACHER: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN EMAIL(S):

A schedule & newsletter will be sent home monthly to emails listed below.

PHONE NUMBER: _____

INSTRUMENT PLAN (PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):

- We own a _____ that my child can use.
- We plan on renting from CHES.
- We plan on renting from a music store.
- I request a reduced fee rental.

*Please contact Mrs. Kemerer at 814-344-8506 or jkemerer@chsd1.org. More information is listed under "Reduced Rental Fee" at the bottom of page 6. Please complete the rental contract below.

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: _____



CHES INSTRUMENT RENTAL CONTRACT

CAMBRIA HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY BAND

I permit my child to use a school instrument for instrumental study for the 2024-2025 school year. I understand that any blatant misuse or damage to the instrument will be my responsibility to get replaced or repaired. Problems with the instrument should be notified to Mrs. Kemerer immediately. I understand that I should not attempt any instrument repair myself. Once my child receives his or her instrument I understand that I will not be able to receive a refund.

DATE: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: _____