

Okemos High School Bands

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*Please (both parents and students) read all of the enclosed information without delay.
This will help everyone to be prepared and productive for Pre-Season Drills and Marching Band.*

Dear Band Members and Parents,

July 24, 2016

FIRE UP! - It's time to prepare for a great year with the 2016-17 Okemos Bands. The bands of the past have helped to create a band with pride and a great tradition. You have *earned* your membership through hard work, and you *deserve* the honor by being personally prepared when we begin our rehearsals as an ensemble. As a member of one of the most important elements representing Okemos, you will be challenged to be an active participant in creating exciting music and marching performances. The new school year brings with it the opportunity for each of us to develop our musicianship, friendships, leadership, and teamwork. Whether you are a veteran or an incoming freshman, it takes commitment and hard work to reap the rewards. Remember, ***it's up to you.***

THE OKEMOS CHIEFTAIN MARCHING BAND has an exciting fall planned for 2016: Five home football games.....the 27th Annual Car Wash-A-Thon... CMS/OHS Combined Band night and lots of Homecoming activities.....performing under the lights at the Grand Ledge Exhibition..... The 4th and 5th grade stadium showFun and awards at the Fall Recognition Dinner....and our annual Late Night Party. You can make it a great year!

PREPARATION has continued through the summer: Drum Major Rylan Rawson and Assistant Drum Major Eva Schwarz attended Major Camp in July to develop their musical, marching and leadership skills. A number of the Color Guard and percussion members attended the MSU Camp. The Drumline, have been working since the end of school and the sounds of the OHS Series, a tradition for over 40 years, can be heard across Hulett Road. The freshmen were introduced to marching fundamentals by the veterans at Freshman Drills in May. Many band members will return from summer music camps or private lessons having gained new musical and leadership skills. The Band Boosters have planned to make the band year even better. And of course, there's **your** preparation that creates a great sound. It takes all of this to create a fine band. We are all fortunate to be able to be a part of something so meaningful and exciting each year.

PRE-SEASON DRILLS BEGIN AT 4:00 PM SUN. AUGUST 7TH AND END TUES. AUGUST 16TH AT 8:00 PM for all band members, including freshmen, new members and veterans. See the enclosed calendar. **These essential rehearsals are required of all band members.** In addition to polishing fundamental musical and marching skills, and learning our pre-game and halftime shows, the band learns to perform as a group, and we get to know each other as people and as musicians. There is really no way to "make-up" missing Pre-Season Drills. Our schedule includes nearly 40 hours of rehearsal over 9 days. This is equivalent to 9 weeks of school-day rehearsal. **This is fewer hours than many other bands, so we must be prepared and efficient to learn our material.** All band members have the same rehearsal and performance attendance responsibilities.

MISSING ALL OR ANY PORTION OF DRILLS – IT IS CRITICAL THAT EVERYONE ATTEND EACH REHEARSAL. Please be sure your student schedules work obligations and all other appointments around our rehearsals. Everyone has had these dates since before the conclusion of the school year, so all conflicts should have already been avoided. Remember, we count on each other, and if we all do our part, nobody sits the bench.

PRE-SEASON SPORTS PRACTICE - those who will have conflicts should **contact their coach** with the band schedule, and **contact me** with your sport schedule. **Your parents (or you) should ask your coach to call or e-mail me. (There are 15+ fall coaches, but just one band director)** The coach and I will then arrange a compromise schedule. The coaches and I do not want any student penalized in any way by their participation in more than one group. High school is a time to develop and enjoy all of the areas in which you have talent. We want you to have areas of appreciation, understanding and enjoyment for a lifetime.

MUSIC PREPARATION, MEMORIZATION, AND EVALUATION – Prepare your "I LOVE THE 80's!" halftime pieces, OHS Fight Song, Proud Chieftains, and the Star-Spangled Banner to the best of your ability upon your arrival at Pre-Season Drills on August 7th. By mastering your music, you will be able to learn your marching drill confidently and correctly. This will also help free you up to learn additional pre-game and "bleacher" music, making it easier when the season begins. As usual, there will be individual memorization testing for the halftime tunes, the Fight Song, and the National Anthem in September. You will not want to wait until Pre-Season drills to learn your part! Remember, *a mile is easiest run one step at a time:* Don't try to do it all at once. You can hear all of our halftime selections on Mr. Stices' website (see above url). Continue to practice

regularly through the summer and you will be ready and confident on August 7th. Follow the enclosed **“Important Rules for Productive Practice”** – your practice will be more efficient, productive, and satisfying – and **you will really enjoy sounding great!**

GETTING IN SHAPE – Just as you must be prepared musically, it is important that you are physically ready for Pre-Season Drills. To develop endurance and strength, how about running, biking, swimming, hoops, baseball, tennis, soccer, helping with yard work, or marching at our practice lot at OHS?!

YOUR INSTRUMENT - make certain your equipment is in top-notch shape, cleaned thoroughly, adjusted, oiled, extra reeds broken in, etc. Don't be without your instrument for long. Make arrangements for a loaner instrument if necessary.

SCHOOL-OWNED INSTRUMENTS – If you use a school instrument (mellophone, marching trombone, sousaphone, percussion, etc.) and have not picked yours up, call or e-mail me. I will let you know when it's ready for you to pick up. As always, there is a **\$50.00 annual use fee** (to “Okemos Public Schools”) to check out a school instrument.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT NEEDED - 1) A sturdy, workable **lyre** - take your instrument with you to purchase a model that fits. 2) **Flip folder** - standard black, with windows. Both lyres and flip folders can be purchased at Marshall Music or Meridian Winds. Flutes - a "Flutist's Friend" wrist lyre will take care of both lyre and flip folder requirements, and you should not need a back-up. Percussion - no lyre needed, but a flip folder is. I would recommend calling the music store to check on availability before going over.

CAR POOLING - there will be over 160 students coming in each day during Pre-Season Drills. Make friends! Save gas!

DRESS FOR DRILLS – light-colored T-shirts, shorts, tennis/athletic shoes (no sandals, beach shoes, or heels for marching) and socks (avoid blisters) will keep you comfortable. Jeans or anything tight is strongly discouraged. A hat is a great asset on sunny, hot days, and sunglasses will reduce “brass glare”. We will be working hard - be dressed for it. Oh... and **BUG SPRAY!**

BREAKS/DINNER - We will take snack/rest breaks each day. We will also take dinner breaks 6:00-6:30 pm. Bring cold water and a sack meal or high-energy snacks with you. There will not be an opportunity to leave, so plan on eating at OHS.

UNIFORM FITTINGS AND RESERVATIONS - for all students will be done on Tuesday, Aug 9 thru Friday Aug 12 – see the schedule indicated on calendar provided. Students will sign up for a 20-minute appointment on the first day of pre-season drills. ***Please wear a t-shirt and running shorts for your fitting to make it comfortable when trying on pants and jackets.***

BAND BOOSTERS TAILGATE & FRIENDS/FAMILY PERFORMANCE – on Tuesday, August 16th, we have the Band Boosters Tailgate & Friends and Family Performance. The Tailgate will provide an opportunity to eat & meet, and the Friends and Family Performance gives us a chance to show how and what we've learned. Both are held outside at the stadium lot/football field areas. We look forward to a great turnout!

WEEKLY EVENING REHEARSAL 6:30-9 PM - through October 19th. It should be noted that many marching bands rehearse more hours, or two or more nights per week. We want to be reasonable with your family's scheduled commitments, so we really work at using this time efficiently. Full attendance is important and required since this is the only time all three bands rehearse together.

CALENDARS – the enclosed calendar is as complete as possible at the present time. Please record these dates and keep the calendars in a handy place for reference and updating. An updated calendar is always available at www.okemoschools.net/stice.

PARENTS – please see the enclosed pages from the OHS Band Boosters. We want you to be a part of this wonderful group! They help the band members have a great experience. Visit their website -- okemosbands.org -- and click the Sign Up link to volunteer.

BRING WITH YOU THE FIRST DAY OF PRE-SEASON DRILLS:

- Instrument or flag
- brass: valve/slide oil, woodwinds: extra reeds, perc: sticks, tuning key, cymbals: batting/golf gloves
- all distributed music, lyre and flip folder
- pencil for marking music and charts
- cold water and snacks/sack meal
- comfortable clothes (see above) and sun screen

EVENING FUN TIME!- Following rehearsal each night, there will be optional activities until 10:30 pm. These activities range from a movie night to a dance party. I hope your student will plan to stay for some fun!

QUESTIONS? - Contact your section leader or me.

WHAT KIND OF FALL SEASON WILL WE HAVE? How exciting? How much fun? How satisfying? How much growth? **It's in your hands; *the only place you'll find success before work is in the dictionary.* Fire up!**

See you soon,



Mark D. Stice
Director of Bands
Okemos High School Bands

Pre-Season Drills Preparation Checklist

- Read** all enclosed information
- Practice. Listen. Critique. Adapt. Improve. REPEAT! Enjoy improving!**
- Highlight** your positions and study your halftime drill - mark your music.
- Get in **shape**: Start active **exercise** and get your **sleep** schedule back in line
- Pick up school-owned **instrument/flag** if needed
- Take care of any **repairs** needed to instrument
- Obtain **equipment**: lyres, flip folder, reeds, oil, drum sticks, etc.
- Contact your coach**, provide the band schedule, find out **sports practice schedule**, provide this to me. Ask your coach to contact me to work out compromises.
- Set up **transportation** schedule to and from rehearsals (car pool?)
- Use your imagination here: _____