Mt. Lebanon School District

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April 8, 2024

Dear Mt. Lebanon Band Builders,

This morning I received emails and phone calls regarding social media posts discussing the Mt. Lebanon Band program. Our administration values direct communication through channels like emails, phone calls, and face-to-face meetings to facilitate two-way communication, as opposed to social media. Due to some potential sharing of misinformation, I want to update the Band Builders directly and reiterate the District's support of the band program.

Band Courses at the High School

- Mt. Lebanon School District plans to offer 28 semester sections of music at the high school level for the 2024-2025 school year based on student course requests.
- As a general practice, ten students must make a course request for the school to offer the course. Currently, ten or more students requested to take Wind Ensemble and Concert Band next year. These courses will run as requested by students. Additionally, we have a need for one semester of Music Technology. This equates to three courses one semester and two courses the other semester for the band program.
    - The number of band sections next year equals a .5 music position.
    - Nine students signed up for band lunch. As the schedule comes together, we will explore all options for the students to have this opportunity.
    - No Extra Duty Remunerations (EDR) have been reduced from the band program. All extra support will remain for the 2024 - 2025 school year.
    - The band director will remain as the Marching Band Director. There is no impact on the EDR the band director receives for responsibilities outside of the school day.
- Assigning the head marching band director to the middle school presents an opportunity to boost participation, as students move on to high school. We have seen a reduction in students interested in band courses over the past few years. This role has the potential to connect with students earlier and encourage them to participate in the high school band program. Our goal is for the band program to grow and for course offerings to increase based on student interest.

Use of Practice Facilities

During the fall, the District is challenged with scheduling practice and competition times at our stadium and upper practice field for the marching band and five sports, most with Varsity, JV, and Freshman teams.

- Three hours of field time a week is the commitment that we have made to the marching band. This time may be broken up into smaller segments due to scheduling constraints. Our goal is to use the stadium as the primary location for the marching band, however, the upper practice field may be used as well. If the field becomes available during the week due to cancellations/changes in schedules, the band will be offered the space. For each of our students' activities/sports,

flexibility is necessary when working with limited space to practice/play. Consistent times each week of a season is not guaranteed for anyone due to various competitions and practice schedules.

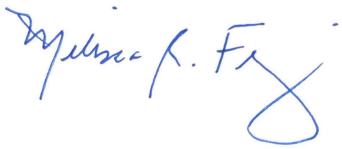
- This year the band was offered to have full access to a portion of the parking lot to ensure practices could occur in daylight to further increase the amount of practice time on a large surface. This is also an option for next school year.
- Additionally, the Upper Practice Field (UPF) will continue to remain without lights and temporary lights are not approved for the UPF at this time for any sports or activities.
- The District has arranged for the band to use the stadium for band camp from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. for two weeks in the summer. This year it will be July 29 - August 9. Previously band camp was held offsite, however, it has been moved to the high school stadium for the last few years.
- The band was informed that if they have a concern when the field schedule is released, they are to contact Dr. Thompson immediately, rather than waiting until it becomes a concern late in the season.

We are very thankful for the continued support the Band Builders provide to ensure our students have a memorable experience. The rich legacy of the band is something I have had the opportunity to experience far before my tenure at the District. Our goal as a District is to ensure this legacy continues.

As many of you may know, balancing the 2024-2025 budget will require the District to reshape some of our operations throughout the organization. Like many Districts across the region and country, MTLSD is facing considerable rising costs across insurance, tuition, transportation, and inflationary cost increases. It is our goal to put the student experience first as we make these very complicated decisions. We highly value our art and music program and are committed to ensuring its continued success and growth.

With the rise of disinformation on social media, it's more important than ever to verify the accuracy of information before sharing or engaging with it. Please help us combat the spread of misinformation by reaching out directly to our administration with concerns.

Sincerely,



Melissa R. Friez, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools