



Ballard High School Performing Arts

P.O. Box 17774, Seattle, WA 98127

www.ballardperformingarts.org

August 18th, 2021

Dear BHS Band Members and Parents,

Welcome to what promises to be an exciting and rewarding school year that takes us a step closer to normality in the performing arts! After the last year and a half of mostly online instruction and virtual performances, we are so happy to get back to making music together in person. That being said, we are still very cognizant of the continuing threat of COVID-19 and will continue to follow guidelines set out by SPS and the Department of Public Health.

A long-standing tradition at Ballard is the first weekend of the new school year, Band Camp is held at Camp Seymour near Gig Harbor. This year, due to safety issues with overnight school field trips and the conflict of Labor Day weekend, we will be holding band camp on the weekend of **September 10th -12th at BHS and Memorial Stadium**. A detailed list schedule for this event is provided in an accompanying document and this is a required activity for all band and percussion students. Band camp is the only time during the year where students receive intensive field and parade marching training and practice. New students will learn how to march in the Ballard style and continuing students will be able to improve their marching skills. Band camp is a great way for us to start off the school year as we prepare for the home football games and basketball games, marching in local parades, and the Homecoming halftime show.

Band camp is also a time where freshmen and new students to Ballard will get to know the people in their sections as well as the rest of the members in the band. The camaraderie among band members is just part of what makes Ballard's Award-Winning Band program so special, and many students will leave this weekend having made some of their best friends that will be with them throughout their high school career! Band members are a close-knit community and we have a lot of rebuilding to do after a year and a half of online instruction so come ready to have fun, play music and make friends!

The silver lining to having band camp structured this way this year is that it will be significantly less expensive than previous years. Please read the attached information document thoroughly and if there are any questions about band camp or anything else, please don't hesitate to ask. There is a ton of information in there so don't feel overwhelmed!

As most of you know I took over the Ballard band program last year from Michael James who moved on after 14 years at Ballard. I feel like we have a wonderful opportunity to revamp some things while still keeping the proud tradition of excellence that has been fostered over the years. As a new director taking over an established program, know I will be learning and adjusting along with everyone. If COVID has taught us anything it is how to roll with the punches and improvise, so I know we will have a successful year no matter what it ends up looking like!

The Ballard bands have a reputation as some of the best bands in the state and it is a reputation we are proud to uphold. I am excited to begin the 2021 school year and I look forward to working with you as we continue the strong tradition of musical excellence in the Ballard High School Band!

Jay Gillespie

Director of Bands, Ballard High School

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