My name is Justin Johnson and on behalf of the entire NW band program, we are beyond excited to welcome you to our 2020-2021 school year! We will be playing! We will be making music! We will continue to provide the best music education possible! You will periodically receive program updates and information through the newsletter format and email throughout the year. In addition to communication from our newsletter, you can check out the soon-to-be updated website here: https://nileswestband.com/. You can also learn more about our awesome programs and private instruction faculty.

Please read through this newsletter to get an idea of how things will look this year, how you can support our program/students, and hopefully get involved. Please know I expect there to be some rough edges as we roll out cool new things, but we are there for your students and hope you can show the same support back. We will take this band year on with a bright spirit and embrace the world we live in with grace and perspective. As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me directly.

Meet the New Faculty Members! - 2 Band This Year

This past summer I spent my time “in school” finishing a masters in music education and am excited to offer a different take on our traditional band class. It may not look like our typical class, but band will still offer our students the privilege to benefit from music and all it has to offer. I will be shaping our fall curriculum and repertoire and we will be fortunate enough to partake in several new musical works and world premieres. We will still build skills, music literacy, theory, musicianship and maintain the high standard of quality that the Niles West Band Program is known for. Students will be doing a lot more recording, creative projects, and hearing from some prominent speakers and performers in the field today!

Welcome

We All Need Music

More than ever, even if remote, music is a necessary class for our students! When we engage with music we engage with our emotions, practice being vulnerable, and build self awareness. It’s the only discipline where students get to study themselves and then be strong enough to put who they are on display through performance. Further, the music community provides a safe place for our students. It is a place where they can take risks and grow. Additionally, studies show over and over again that music helps us through hard times. Just the act of playing is proven to lower your heart rate and release hormones that make us happy. If you’re ever thinking that band isn’t for you during these times, I ask you to think again. Music enriches our lives and is an art form that our students
How can you help?
Please, please, please let your students play this year. I'm recommending that students try to find a spot in their house where they can play uninterrupted during their band period. I completely understand there are different needs in different households and your sibling or guardian might be in a zoom call in another room. Please try to support our students by figuring out something to make playing possible. Please let me know if this may be difficult for you, and we can try to figure out a way to make it work. Also, please, please, please try not to give your opinion about their musical development. Students may be out of tune or sound "squeaky" and bad. This is all a part of the process. Band is a space for our students to perhaps not sound good with the goal of constant improvement. They can only get better if they work through that, and our students respect what their family members say about their playing. The last thing I want a student to do is doubt themselves during their progress. Thanks for your understanding!

Concerts
Currently, no concerts are scheduled to be done in person. That being said, we are looking at creative alternatives including virtual bands/recordings to showcase our amazing students. I will share information on what this may look like once it is developed. Additionally, I am following guidance from the National Association for Music Education on best practices for when and how to do in person rehearsals/concerts.

Marching Band
The Niles West Marching Band has been a staple of the music department for many years and, while this year will look completely different than years past, we will continue to focus on providing the students with an amazing musical experience. Marching band will take place virtually this year and information will be made available very soon! I am currently in communication with my staff and we will share our plans for the year when it is ready.

Last season the Niles West Marching Wolves were crowned Grand Champion at the Metamora Marching Band Invitational for classes "A, AA, and AAA". The marching band was named class "AAA" best winds and auxiliary while earning high scores in 8 of the 10 adjudicated captions across the 3 classifications. We can't wait to see the NW marching band back on the field soon. We look forward to returning to the field soon!

Auditions
Band students are encouraged to audition for the ILMEA District 7 honor band this year. Auditions will be completed through virtual video submissions. Any student interested should contact Mr. Johnson for more information.

NWMPA
The NWMPA is the parent booster organization for the Band, Orchestra, and Choir programs at Niles West High School. Their goal is to support these programs through scholarship, fundraising, and volunteerism. The NWMPA is currently working on how to best serve the program during these times. I will be sharing information soon on how to get involved! Please check out their website at https://www.nwmusicparents.org/.

Band Handbook and Contract
Within the first two weeks of school, the band handbook will be going out to our students. The handbook covers everything from policies and procedures to how to sign up for private lessons. Please be prepared to read through and return it.