

FIRST COLONIAL BAND NOTES

SEPTEMBER 21, 2020

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings FC Band Family,

The new school year is finally upon us & we are glad to be back to the joy of making music. Thank you for your continued support & for encouraging our students to dedicate time to music. This investment of time, effort & energy will produce lifelong dividends. Throughout the year you will be receiving communications from our Band Program concerning upcoming performances (virtual & potentially live later on), fundraising efforts, & other pertinent information regarding the FCHS Performing Arts Department.

This year will be like no other when it comes to our educational experiences, with information & logistics changing as the state of the pandemic continues to shift. Classes will be different, band will be different, how we interact will be different—but we will still be the same FC Band made of the same amazing members, regardless of the circumstances.

We have a few projects currently in the works that we are very excited about. The first is an opportunity for our second semester students to be involved & playing their instruments this semester. The second project is a cabaret/solo performance night in November. Further information on those events can be found later on in this newsletter. Each will provide our students with opportunities to continue making music & develop their individual musicianship skills.

To our new members & parents (old members & parents too), I encourage you to find ways to be involved in our program. I told each of our students the first day of class that, "The more you put into our program, the more you get out of it." I find this to be very true—with those students that put effort into ensembles, participate in co-curricular ensembles, join chamber ensembles, & participate in Tri-M being the students that are enjoying time with other musicians & thriving in our program. Conversely, the students that put forth less effort or that do not participate in events outside of class typically do not get the same positive experiences out of our band program.

I will be sharing information as it becomes available to me regarding face-to-face classes, mitigation strategies & general protocols for band. In the meantime, I invite all parents/guardians to attend our monthly FCBB meeting on Monday, September 14 at 6pm. The meeting invite will be posted on our [website](#) at 5:45pm.

I look forward to meeting all of our new faces as the year goes on. Until then, I am excited that we are back & thrilled to be involved in making music with our students!

Musically Yours,

Luke Walker
Director of Bands
First Colonial High School



FIRST COLONIAL HIGH SCHOOL

SMALL ENSEMBLE OPPORTUNITY

We will be forming small chamber ensembles over the next few weeks to allow all students, especially those not scheduled for band until February, the opportunity to play music this fall & winter. These ensembles will be 5-10 members in size & will be based on student ability level. Each ensemble will be working on new arrangements of quality pieces designed specifically to meet the restrictions placed on us by the pandemic. While this is purely an extracurricular activity, we do ask that members commit to their group so that each ensemble has enough members to perform. The target is for each group to produce a virtual concert (1-3 pieces each) that would be made available to our virtual audience in December or January. We will be using Schoology to organize & share information. The join code is: PQ75-FQ29-H5XWZ. Students that have questions should [email me](#) or message me directly on Schoology.



TRI-M MUSIC HONOR SOCIETY

The FCHS Chapter of Tri-M will continue this year, even with virtual schooling currently in place. Information packets will be posted in each Schoology course this month regarding membership qualifications. Tri-M will operate differently this year, however we felt as a Performing Arts staff that it was still worth having. Tri-M is open to all 10-12 grade students active in a music course.



Tri-M Music
HONOR SOCIETY

MARCHING BAND UPDATE

With the decisions by VBCPS, VBODA, & VHSL regarding the fall, we cancelled our fall marching season at the beginning of August. While this was anticipated, it was disappointing for all of our students & staff that were looking forward to the season & all of the experiences & memories that come with the season.

We are currently planning on participating in the Tidewater Spring Marching League in April-June, assuming health metrics allow us. Student interest & availability will dictate the type of ensemble we will participate in the TSML with. As designed, the TSML will allow marching bands, winter guards, & percussion ensembles to compete. More information will be available as we get closer to spring.



TIDEWATER SPRING
MARCHING LEAGUE

2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR SCHEDULE

With VBCPS approving the 4x4 schedule for the 2020-2021 school year, band (as well as all classes) will no longer be year long alternating A/B. This decision is understandable, given the state of the pandemic, but it is not optimal for performing arts classes. Our current schedule is:

1st Semester (September-January)

- Beginning Band
- Percussion Class (Beginning & Intermediate Percussionists)

2nd Semester (February-June)

- Concert Band (Intermediate Winds)
- Wind Ensemble (Advanced Winds & Advanced Percussionists)

As a former student that experienced the 4x4 schedule in high school, I am a huge advocate as it will make the course load for students much more manageable & will hopefully lower student stress. As a music teacher, I am concerned by the current adaption of the 4x4 as our students need to be on their instruments year-round to develop the skills needed to be successful. If we keep this schedule without adaptations, it could mean some students go a full year without being in a band class. This also would mean our ensembles would not be able to participate in all VBODA events (Marching Assessment in October, SRO in November, District Band Auditions in December, District Band in February, Concert Band Assessment in March, All-Virginia Band in April).

As we go forward, we must advocate as supporters of music programs to adapt a modified 4x4 schedule, similar to those used by other local districts (such as Chesapeake), or petition to return to our typical A/B block scheduling. The modified 4x4 schedule alternates performing arts classes (band in our case) with PE or English year long, with the rest of the day being regular 4x4. Without a modified schedule, our music & theater programs will struggle with continuity & opportunities for students. When the time comes later this year, we must advocate for the necessary changes to preserve our programs.

Monday	Times	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Students: Asynchronous learning	AM	1A	1A	1A	1A
	AM	2A	2A	2A	2A
Teachers: Planning, PL, Preparation, PLC's, Office Hours	AM	Advisory/ Lunch/ "Flex Block"	Advisory/ Lunch/ "Flex Block"	Advisory/ Lunch/ "Flex Block"	Advisory/ Lunch/ "Flex Block"
	AM/PM	3A	3A	3A	3A
	PM	4A	4A	4A	4A

FCBB SEPTEMBER MEETING

WHEN

MONDAY, SEP. 14TH, 6PM

WHERE

THIS IS AN ONLINE EVENT.

MORE INFORMATION

We will hold our monthly meeting on Monday, September 14th at 6pm via Zoom. Meeting invites will be posted in the Band App.

If you are a parent/grandparent/guardian/caregiver, you are invited to be a member of the First Colonial Band Boosters. Meetings are held monthly where we discuss program direction, fundraisers, student events, & much more. All are encouraged to participate & help make our program the best that it can be.

To join FCBB in Band, click [here](#).



ABOUT US

📍 1272 Mill Dam Road, Virginia ...

✉️ Luke.Walker@vbschools.com

☎️ 757-648-5300

🌐 fcband.org

