

The Laing Middle School Band Program

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Dear Future Laing Students and Parents:

Greetings from Laing Middle School of Science and Technology! My name is Nick Nafpliotis and I am one of the band directors at Laing Middle School along with Mr. Adam Vernon-Young. We would like to personally extend an invitation to your student to join our award-winning program next year. In addition to learning how to play a musical instrument, they will also be part of one of the best bands in the state of South Carolina.

If you are interested in joining the band program at Laing and have not done so, then it is not too late! Enclosed with this letter is a brochure that will provide you with information about our program, some of our accomplishments, and how to register to be a part of the Laing Band.

If you already have joined the Laing Band program, then you will be getting more information on upcoming dates and procedures this summer. You can also call the school or visit the front office and they can make sure that you are signed up!

We hope that you decide to join us this year in learning a skill that will last a lifetime! Below are the answers to some frequently asked questions that many parents and students have about joining the band. Please feel free to email me or Mr. Vernon-Young, or call the front office with any questions that you may have. If you decide to join, then we will look forward to seeing you on your first day of being part of a tradition of excellence and music here at Laing!

Be sure to fill out our [Interest Form](#) by **May 17th** to receive all future updates!

Musically Yours,

Nick Nafpliotis
Director of Bands

Adam Vernon-Young
Assistant Director of Bands

Media Links

2021 Laing Band Teaser:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4guD_DWMDr4

Laing Band Promotional:

<https://youtu.be/0qIbp3qC0Mo>

Laing Band Website:

<https://laingmsband.membershiptoolkit.com/home>

Laing Band Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Laing-Middle-School-Band-Program-106222824406687/>

Laing Band Interest Form: <https://www.bepartofthemusic.org/group/index.php?id=5744>

Frequently Asked Questions

What instruments are in the Band?

Anything that you have to blow air into (also known as 'wind instruments') such as the flute, trumpet, french horn, etc. as well as percussion. Percussion consists of more than just drums; you must also learn how to play a variety of different instruments including the timpani, chimes, and xylophone (which is laid out just like a piano).

When does the Band rehearse?

The band meets every school day during one of the students' exploratory periods.

I have never played an instrument before or read music. Will I still be able to join Band?

Definitely! In fact, I had never played an instrument (or read music) either before I joined band in 6th grade. By the time I graduated high school, I had received a college scholarship for it. Most students entering the band program in the 6th grade start at the ground level with no experience, so that is where we start with everyone. If you can already read music or play an instrument, then you will just have a little bit of a head start.

I play sports and/or do other after school activities. Can I still participate in Band?

When I was in middle school, my dad was also the head coach of my basketball team. That's one of many reasons that we do everything we can to make sure students are able to participate in band along with other after school activities and sports. We are very flexible with the scheduling of after school activities as long as the students and their parents are willing to work with us.

Middle school is not a time to pick a major. It is a time for students to experience and learn different skills, lessons, and hobbies in a variety of settings. While we do have high expectations of our band members, we also want them to be well rounded students and individuals.

Fortunately in 6th grade band, there are not many things you would need to worry about as far as after school rehearsals and commitments are concerned (except for practicing, of course). We have a few days at the beginning of the year when we meet after school to help us get started, as well as 2-3 after school rehearsals before our winter and spring concerts.

Can I still do Band if I am in orchestra or chorus?

Absolutely! Students would be in band during one related arts class period and chorus or orchestra during the other.

How long will it be before I can play my instrument?

If you were like me growing up, you would ask your parents to measure how tall you were and mark it on the wall. I could never actually see from day to day that I was growing, but every few months or years, the marks would reveal that I'd grown a few inches.

Learning to play an instrument in the band program is very similar, only the results are even more astounding. On the first day that we all play our instruments together, it's going to sound very...interesting ☺. Over the next three months, however, we will gradually learn more and more about how to make a good sound, reading rhythms, and playing together as a group. By Winter Break, you will have played a concert with recognizable music—and you will sound great doing it!

Do you go on any trips during the year?

Yes, we take a trip to Carowinds in the spring. We play at their annual music festival and find some time to go on the rides, too ☺. Our 7th and 8th graders take an annual trip to either Disney World or Universal Studios in Orlando, FL.

How will I know what instrument I will play?

We would normally have a spring Instrument Testing Night in late May followed by a fall Instrument Testing Night in August or early September. Since our spring testing date obviously can't take place as scheduled, we will roll it into the one at the beginning of next school year.

During that event, professional musicians will come to Laing and "test" students on each instrument that we offer.

From there, we look at instruments on which we think you would be highly successful, and that you would enjoy playing. For example, if you tested incredibly well on trombone, but the thought of playing trombone is completely unappealing to you, then we won't make you play it. On the other hand, if you always wanted to play the flute, but the tester determines that you would have a very difficult time learning it, then we will look for something else that works for you.

This event will be followed a few days later by First Steps Day, an event where professional musicians give an introduction to each section on how to start playing (and properly caring for) your instrument.

Speaking of instruments, how will I get one?

We are partnered with Music and Arts, which gives a discount on most instruments to beginning band students. We also have instruments that can be rented from the school.

How much is all this going to cost?

Prices of instruments and where you rent your instrument from depends on what you play, but expenses are something we can always be flexible about if a student wants to be a part of the Band. If they rent an instrument from the school, we can often waive the fee.

Students will also need to buy 2 books (usually \$8-\$12 each) and supplies for their instrument such as reeds, valve oil, etc. Once again, these are more often than not things we can work around if a family is not in a financial position to afford an instrument on their own.

We also have a band fee of \$180 that covers costs that the county does not pay for such as music, clinicians, festival fees, uniforms, etc. This is due in installments and can also be offset by fundraising and scholarships for students whose families are in financial need. That fee can also be reduced or waived if needed.

A student will never be denied the opportunity to be in Band due to finances.

I might not do band this year. Can I sign up in 7th or 8th grade?

In most cases, the answer is no. Band is a very sequentially structured class; things that are learned in 6th grade are built upon in 7th grade and 8th grade. If you want to join the band program, this is the year to start and see if you like it.

I still have some questions. Where can I get more information?

If you are still unsure about joining and want more information, you may contact the band at laingmsband@gmail.com.

I am convinced! I want to join one of the best middle school band programs in South Carolina. How do I sign up?

You can call the Laing front office at 843-849-2809 or fill out the interest form attached below!

Laing Band Interest Form: <https://www.bepartofthemusic.org/group/index.php?id=5744>

Meet the Directors



Nick Nafpliotis - Director of Bands

Nick Nafpliotis has been the band director at Laing Middle School of Science and Technology. This is his 16th year teaching, all of them with the Laing Band Program. Under Mr. Nafpliotis' direction, the Laing Band has consistently received superior ratings at State Concert Festival while also placing a large number of students into the All-Region and All-State honor bands.

Nick is a graduate of the University of Kentucky, where he received his Bachelor of Music Education Degree in 2003 (while also becoming a devout fan of the Kentucky Wildcats basketball and football teams). He studied trombone under Dale Warren while also being an active member in many of the performing ensembles, including the Symphonic Band and Orchestra.

Nick Nafpliotis is a member of the South Carolina Band Directors Association, the National Association of Music Educators, and an alumnus of Phi Mu Alpha music fraternity. He currently resides in Mount Pleasant with his two dogs, Benjamin and Half Pint.



Adam Vernon-Young - Assistant Director of Bands

Adam Vernon-Young is beginning his third year as the Assistant Director of Bands at the Laing Middle School of Science and Technology. Additionally, Mr. Vernon-Young (Mr. V) also serves as an Assistant Director of Bands at Thomas C. Cario Middle School. Mr. Vernon-Young recently received his Master of Arts in Teaching degree from the University of South Carolina, where he also previously received his Bachelors in Music Theory, as well as an Undergraduate Performance Certificate in Bass Trombone.

During his time at Carolina, Mr. Vernon-Young accumulated numerous performance and teaching credits, including playing with the USC Wind Ensemble, conducting one of the University Bands, and serving as a Graduate Assistant for two seasons with the University's Marching Band. Other performance credits include being a finalist at the American Trombone Workshop National Solo Competition, and two years marching with the World Class Drum and Bugle Corps, Carolina Crown.

Mr. Vernon-Young is a regular instructor, consultant, and guest conductor with various groups across the Southeast, working with high school marching and concert programs, as well as University ensembles. Additionally, he has spent the past two years on the brass staff with the Blue Stars Drum and Bugle Corps from Lacrosse, WI. He is also an avid arranger and composer, and writes for numerous competitive high school groups, as well as for the University of South Carolina's own "Mighty Sound of the Southeast." His professional affiliations include the National Association for Music Education, and both alumni and honorary membership in the Kappa Kappa Psi, National Honorary Band Fraternity.

Mr. Vernon-Young was fortunate to spend his teaching internship at Cario Middle School and Wando High School in the Spring of 2019. He is very excited to return to the Charleston County School District, and is very happy to be working with the fine students of both Laing and Cario in a more extended capacity.