

Music Boosters Association

Parent Handbook

(2008 - 2009)

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this annually published parent handbook is to provide information on topics of particular interest, and on frequently asked questions regarding activities of the SPF Music Boosters Association and the Music Program in general. We welcome any suggestions you might have to enhance next year's edition.

According to the Constitution of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Music Boosters Association, "The objective of the organization shall be to encourage, assist, and further the interests of the music programs in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood School District." It further states, "Anyone interested in promoting the stated purpose of the organization shall be eligible for membership."

The SPFMBA is a very pro-active organization that relies heavily on voluntary parental support to accomplish its objectives. The balance of this document will go into more detail as to how we accomplish these objectives, provide information to you the parent, as to what is happening in the Music Department, and provide opportunities for **you** to get involved.

GENERAL MUSIC BOOSTER MEETINGS

General Music Booster meetings are held every other month. The purpose of these meetings is to keep the parents of the students in the music program informed as to what is happening, as well as the Music Boosters' role in making it happen. It is important that you as a parent, attend these meetings and become aware, contribute your expertise, be actively involved, and help maintain the outstanding music program we now have. See the enclosed calendar for this year's dates.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

In addition to volunteering for one of the SPFMBA Executive Board positions listed in this handbook, there are many other opportunities to lend your assistance and support to the Music Program. Many of the committees need additional help at various times throughout the year. These include: helping the Hospitality Committee serve refreshments at home football games and school concerts, assisting the Pit Crew in moving Marching Band equipment on and off the field during football games and competitions, acting as a chaperone for away football games and competitions, etc. In addition, there is always a need for people to collect admissions at concerts, make minor repairs on uniforms, etc.

We know that everyone today has very busy schedules – so... if you specify that you are only able to volunteer at one event, then once you have performed that service, we will make every effort not to contact you again for the rest of the school year.

THE SPFMBA NEWSLETTER

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Music Boosters Association Newsletter is sent out periodically during the course of the school year to the families of all High School Music students. The Newsletter is a vital communications link to advise parents of important dates, instructions, and general information about our various ongoing activities. It includes:

- A Calendar of Events for the current season of Music Department activities
- Directions to away football games and Marching Band competitions
- Forms and permission slips for Music Department trips, SPFMBA membership, medical emergencies, event sign-ups, etc.
- The schedule of General Membership and special information meetings
- A list of SPFMBA Executive Board members with phone numbers
- Order forms for jackets and sweatshirts, Buy-a-Note sales, etc.
- Opportunities for parental involvement
- Instructions for helping students with their personal fundraisers
- Urgent information regarding rescheduled dates, mandatory meetings, and payment due dates

It is critical that our membership **read the Newsletter** on a timely basis so that essential meetings, sign-ups, and deadlines for the submission of forms and payments are not missed! The Newsletter tells you about the activities your children are involved in, what the Music Boosters Association does for them, and how you can help support these efforts!

SPFMBA WEBSITE:

The newsletter and other important music department information can be accessed at the SPFMBA Website: www.spfk12.org/musicbooster/

STUDENT FUNDRAISERS

Every student who is planning to participate in the Music Department's Spring Evaluation Trip is levied an assessment to cover the cost of that trip. To assist the students in meeting this assessment goal, the Music Boosters facilitate several opportunities for them to raise these funds. Various fundraising activities are offered, spaced throughout the Fall and Winter. Student participation in these fundraising activities is strictly voluntary. Fundraisers that have typically been made available in the past include:

Magazine Drive (Early September)

The students sell magazine subscriptions to relatives, friends and neighbors at greatly reduced rates off the newsstand price. They can also sell music CD's with this program. A percentage of the proceeds is applied towards satisfying the student's trip assessment. It is important to note that it may take several months for the first magazine to arrive so your 'customers' should be informed of this up front to avoid any disappointments. Also, make sure that you keep a copy of all sales slips in case there are questions later about the order.

Yankee Candles (Early October)

The students sell Yankee Candles and accessories to relatives, friends and neighbors, and a percentage of the proceeds is applied towards satisfying the student's assessment.

Supermarket Gift Card Program (Ongoing)

Gift cards may be purchase from the Music Boosters for A&P, Shop Rite and Stop & Shop. 5% of every dollar spent will be applied towards satisfying the student's assessment.

The Music Boosters Association establishes and publishes several dates for payment of installments against the assessment. At the beginning of each school year, the policy on refunds is distributed to all students and parents. As a general rule, all monies raised through the various fundraisers are not refundable. Some or all of other payments made may be refundable depending on when notification is given that the student will not be going on the trip. Amounts and due dates for the installment payments will be set at the beginning of the school year. Monies raised by individual students through fundraisers will be applied toward these payments. Please read the SPFMBA Newsletters for specific information about this year's trip.

PAYMENTS / CHECK POLICY

Unless otherwise specified, all payments for Music Department activities should be paid **by check or money order made out to Scotch Plains-Fanwood Music Boosters Association (or SPFMBA)**, and placed in the "BLUE BOX" in the Music Department office. This protects your student and makes our accounting easier. We are **NOT** responsible for lost cash. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD CASH BE DEPOSITED IN THE BOX AT ANY TIME!**

TRIP PAYMENTS

When installments for the Annual Trip are due, payments should be mailed directly to the designated Trip Coordinator and NOT PLACE IN THE BLUE BOX. Mailing information and specific directions will be contained in the Newsletter at the appropriate time.

BLUE BOX

Throughout the school year, you will hear many references to the "BLUE BOX". This is literally a blue, wooden box located inside the Music Department office. Almost without exception, any payments, forms, permission slips, etc. that are to be returned to the Music Department are to be placed in this box by the students. Although the box is kept locked, due to the heavy traffic in that office throughout the day, **NO CASH IS TO BE DEPOSITED IN THE BOX AT ANY TIME.**

SECURING VALUABLES

The students are reminded not to leave any valuables in the band or choral room during practices, rehearsals, or at any time when the room(s) are unattended. While the staff does make every attempt to lock the doors, there are times when the rooms must be left open for various reasons.

END-OF-YEAR RECOGNITION

The **Senior Recognition event** is held in the SPF High School Auditorium, is planned by our Music Department Staff, and provides the opportunity to recognize the many accomplishments of our outgoing seniors, and to wish them success in their future endeavors. Families are also invited to this event.

MARCHING BAND

At Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, participation in the Marching Band is an extra-curricular activity. The Marching Band has a twofold purpose:

- First, to support the school's varsity football team at all home and away games, and
- Second, to develop proficiency in the Marching Band/Performance Band format, and to perform at local competitions

Participation in the Marching Band requires a great deal of dedication on the part of both the students and faculty, and a solid commitment to attend all practices, games and competitions.

There is a two-week Band Camp for the Marching Band in late August prior to school opening. The first week runs from 8:00AM to 8:00PM and the second week from 8:00AM to 4:00PM, with breaks for lunch and dinner as appropriate. On the evening of the last day of Band Camp there is **an opportunity for the parents to attend and participate** in the Marching Band activity. Thereafter, practices are twice a week (usually one in the evening and one after school) as well as Saturday mornings prior to the football games. There is a football game nearly every Saturday (or occasionally on Friday evenings) from early September through Thanksgiving, and five or six competitions on either Saturday nights or Sundays. Our last regular season game is on Thanksgiving Day, usually at 10:30AM. This game is at home every other year.

UNIFORMS

The Music Department provides the students with Marching Band uniforms, with the exception of socks and shoes, which must be purchased by the students. The shoes may be ordered through the Music Department. A contract will be issued for care of the uniforms, which must be read, signed and returned to the "BLUE BOX". It is the student's responsibility to take care of the uniform – a charge will be assessed to cover the cost of any lost or damaged articles. Specific information regarding the care and cleaning of the uniform will be provided and must be followed.

The Moonglowers, Percussion Ensemble and SPF (Spiffy) Jazz Bands wear tux pants and shirts. . The care and rules/contract for these are the same as those for the Marching Band uniforms.

MUSIC DEPARTMENT COMPETITIONS

Throughout the school year, several of our ensembles participate in musical competitions. The Marching Band, as noted earlier, has five or six competitions in the Fall while the two Jazz Bands (Moonglowers and SPF Jazz) participate in several competitions during the Winter and early Spring. This past year the Wind Ensemble competed in several spring events. In addition to the competitive events, these and other ensembles may perform throughout the year at various venues (the Percussion, Brass and Clarinet ensembles at a local Mall during the Holidays, the Moonglowers at the Village Green in June, etc.). Every effort will be made by the SPFMBA to publish the dates and times for these events in the Newsletter. All parents, friends and relatives are strongly encouraged to attend as many of these events as possible to show support for our students. If you need directions to any of these events, they will either be in the Newsletter or available a few days before the event in the Music Department office.

MUSIC DEPARTMENT SPRING EVALUATION TRIP

In the Spring (generally April or May), the Music Department attends an evaluation sponsored by the Festivals of Music. In the past, SPF students have traveled to Williamsburg, Va.; Boston, Ma.; Washington, D.C.; Virginia Beach, Va.; and Ocean City, Md. to participate in this evaluation. The students also look forward to a trip every fourth year to Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida. This trip, was held in the Spring of 2005 and includes various performances by the band and choral ensembles, but did not involve evaluation by the Festivals of Music.

The Spring evaluation trip is 3-4 days long and is usually held around a weekend so students only miss 1-2 days of school (students are responsible for making up any school work they miss over those days). The first day of the trip is spent traveling and some of the musical groups may compete that first evening. The students spend almost the entire second day in competition. The third day is a "fun" day (although one or two ensembles may have to perform that morning) spent at a local place of interest (e.g. Busch Gardens, Quincy Market, the 'Mall' in Washington D.C.). The trip participants also attend the Festivals of Music Awards Ceremony that afternoon or evening. The last day is spent traveling, with a stop along the way home for lunch.

Transportation is provided via coach buses equipped with VCRs. Most meals (except for a couple of lunches) are also included in the cost of the trip.

All students in the Music Department are invited on the trip – this includes all instrumental students (Marching Band, Concert Band, Wind Ensemble, Moonglowers, SPF Jazz, Percussion Ensemble), all vocal students (Sensations Show Choir, Las Cantadoras, Select Choir, Barbershop Quartet, and Full Choir, both 1st and 2nd semester students), and Winter Guard.

Music Department staff members, a Board of Education Nurse and parent chaperones also participate in the trip. Chaperones help to ensure the students' safety and participation throughout the trip, taking attendance on the buses, making sure all students are in their rooms at "bed check", etc. Chaperones are available to assist students all day and night.

Students are expected to behave responsibly and respectfully – not only at the hotel, but also at all performances, restaurants and on the buses. Any damages to hotel rooms, buses, etc. are the responsibility of the students. A **Personal Conduct/Participation form**, which details specific rules of conduct to be followed by every student on the Spring Evaluation Trip, **must be signed/returned in order to participate.**

The cost of the trip (see section above on Student Fundraisers) must be paid in full prior to the trip. In addition, an **Emergency Notification form must be completed, notarized and returned before the trip.** This form allows for emergency medical treatment, if necessary; it also provides important information on how parents and guardians can be reached during the trip as well as information on any medical conditions the students may have. These forms are kept strictly confidential, are managed by a Board of Education approved nurse who accompanies us on the trip, and are only accessed in the event of an emergency. **It is VERY important to fill in the form completely!**

Medications – As per guidelines set by the State of NJ, students are not allowed to self-dispense medications except for life threatening illnesses. If a student requires medication, the Board of Education supplied nurse will retain and administer the medication as long as appropriate forms have been completed and signed by student's physician and parent/guardian. Additional details will be provided in specific Trip-related correspondence.

MUSIC DEPARTMENT OFFERINGS

The offerings of the SPFHS Music Department are some of the richest in the State. They include a combination of for-credit courses and extra-curricular activities, and cover nearly every possible interest in the field of instrumental and vocal music. The for-credit course offerings are as follows:

Concert Band (682) – Open to all students with different levels of ability. Meets five days a week. All students electing this course will be required to take one Instrumental Technique lesson per week. This lesson is during other class hours but the time is rotated so as to ensure that the students do not miss a significant number of classes in any one subject.

Concert Choir (671/672) – A large, mixed boys and girls chorus for any student interested in singing various types of music. Meets five days a week. This is a performance chorus and all members are expected to participate in several annual programs.

Concert Band/Choir (673/674) – Open to all students with different levels of ability who wish to participate in both instrumental and vocal programs. Class time is divided between band and chorus, and may include some 7:00AM practice sessions before concerts.

Instrumental Music Techniques (687 – 1 Credit) – Students electing this course will be aided in the further development of techniques such as breath control, tone quality and control, and sight-reading. All facets of instrumental music will be emphasized and students are expected to practice at home as well. A limited number of beginners will be enrolled. All students in Band are strongly advised to elect at least one period per week.

Las Cantadoras (691 – 1 Credit – Accelerated) – This chorus is a performing organization for select female voices, open by audition only. Auditions are held at the beginning of each school year. Rehearsals are held after school one day per week for one hour. Extra 7:00AM rehearsals may be scheduled prior to concerts. Members are expected to participate in all events.

Moonglowers (690 – 2 Credits – Accelerated) – This group is a performing Jazz Band for select students. Auditions are held at the beginning of each school year or in June of the previous school year. Music performed consists of Big Band sounds of the forties, Bebop, Swing Era, Latin Jazz, Jazz Rock, and Jazz Fusion. Rehearsals are every school day at 6:50AM. Members must be willing to commit to attending all rehearsals, performances and competitions throughout the year.

Select Chorus (692 – 1 Credit – Accelerated) – This chorus is a performing organization for select male and female voices. Auditions are held at the beginning of each school year. Rehearsals are held after school one day per week for one hour. Extra 7:00AM rehearsals may be scheduled prior to concerts. Members are expected to participate in all events.

SPFHS Jazz Band (“Spiffy”) (689 – 2 Credits) – This group is a performing Jazz Band open by audition to all students. Auditions are held at the beginning of each school year or in June of the previous school year. Music performed consists of all styles of Jazz. Rehearsals are typically 2 mornings per week @ 7:00AM, and often an evening (usually Wednesday) as well. Members must be willing to commit to attending all rehearsals, performances and competitions throughout the year.

Vocal Techniques (688 – 1 Credit) – Students selecting this course will be aided in the development of techniques such as correct breathing, tone quality, voice placement, diction, score reading, sight-singing, and interpretation. Any student may elect this course. We especially encourage all students in our choral groups to elect at least one period per week.

Wind Ensemble (684 – Accelerated) – Members of this group are selected by audition only. All members should be able to play Class IV Concert Band Literature. This ensemble will perform music of a more challenging and difficult nature for educational and performance purposes.

The extra-curricular activities offered by the Music Department are as follows:

Marching Band – see the detailed discussion earlier in this handbook.

Percussion Ensemble – A group of percussion instrumentalists who perform a variety of musical styles and perform at the various school concerts as well as at many community events. Rehearsals are usually after school but may include some 7:00AM rehearsals before major events. Members must be willing to commit to attending all rehearsals, performances and competitions throughout the year.

Sensations – This is a mixed male and female show chorus open by audition only to all students. Past themes have included: a Salute to Frank Sinatra, Broadway Show Tunes, a Salute to the Beatles, Motown Review, etc. Rehearsals are usually after school but may include some 7:00AM rehearsals before major events. Members must be willing to commit to attending all rehearsals, performances and competitions throughout the year.

Jazz Lab – Open to HS music students grade 9-12. Lab band rehearses two times a week. During the school year, the band will learn and study many diverse styles of Jazz ranging from Swing and Latin to contemporary arrangements. The Band performs throughout the school year at various venues. There is no audition to be a member.