

Ladies and Gentlemen:

My name is Jim Dunlop and I am proud to be a band teacher in the Hillsboro School District for the past 23 years. During these years I have been blessed to teach at nine different elementary schools, Brown Middle School, and Century High School. I am writing to you today to plead for 6th grade band FTE.

We want to first thank you for your amazing support, both pedagogically and fiscally. In the past five years the "Arts Investment" money has infused over a half million dollars investing in band programs in 5th to 12th grades, district wide. I know at Century we have spent every dime of our Investment Money on new instruments. This has been critical in ensuring all students can participate with quality equipment.

Hillsboro elementary schools now have "loaner" instruments being distributed district wide to ensure equity and accessibility. The Hillsboro School Foundation has awarded several grants to help instrumental programs grow. This year alone HSF awarded \$4,000 to Ladd Acres to purchase instruments for a school-wide program.

Your support has been continuous at board meetings, budget meetings, and planning meetings. The Hillsboro School District was just awarded the Best Communities for Music Education by NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants). I can honestly say all Hillsboro band programs are stronger than ever thanks to your support. Thank you!

Now we are faced with new challenges and obstacles. We see from our distance learning survey, students and parents are more concerned with social and emotional well being. Engagement and community are more important than ever, and harder to achieve. Band has always played a critical role in these goals for so many. Truthfully, online bands had many challenges. It takes creativity and teamwork from students and teachers. Grit and self-discipline are not only beneficial but essential.

We have a plan! In collaboration with the grade school band teachers, the high school band students will work together to cultivate success. All four high school teachers (Century - Jim Dunlop, Hilhi - Geoff Fotland, Liberty - Kevin Soon, and Glencoe - Ben Adams) have met with our students and will commit one mentor for every 6th grade student. All mentors have pledged to practice twice a week with each of their apprentices. Combined with the synchronistic teaching from their adult teachers we believe together our beginners can thrive. This partnership will also benefit the high school programs, helping us keep our band communities strong.

The high school students are also working on a recruitment video and a "How do I pick my instrument?" video. When programs begin to meet together, elementary students will have a solid start and can continue their experience.

We already know what will happen if we fail and 6th grade bands cannot be funded. In the 2003-04 school year the Hillsboro School District discontinued elementary school band. Some of us gave up our own time to start some beginning band kids. Century went from averaging 40 freshmen a year to 10 in 2006-07. There were less than 25 freshmen in all four high schools. It took three years to get elementary numbers up after the cut. It took six years to recover 100% at the high school level. Cutting FTE from 6th grade band was not a one-year decision. This cut would cripple our programs for six years.

This is an historic year! Everyone is experiencing difficult decisions. Things will look different - change is inevitable. We know your commitment and understanding of the benefits of a competent arts program is clear in both your words and actions. Please help us protect your investment in our programs. Please help us save your bands. Please keep FTE for 6th grade bands.

Sincerely,

Jim Dunlop  
Director of Bands  
Century High School

Kevin Soon  
Director of Bands  
Liberty High School

Ben Adams  
Director of Bands  
Glencoe High School

Geoff Fotland  
Director of Bands  
Hillsboro High School

Matt Carr  
Director of Bands  
South Meadows MS  
Brown Middle School

Jeff Johnson  
Director of Bands  
Poynter Middle School/  
Evergreen Middle School

Elementary Band and Music Teachers

Lana Pratt  
Marsha Kelly  
Emily Ray

Amber Young  
Regan Geiger  
Leesa Burr-Bates

Niki Volz  
Carissa Shroul  
Kristin LeBeau

Andrew Magnuson  
Dan Abrahamson

Mary Kay Babcock  
Hillsboro School District Secondary Music TOSA

Jeff Snively  
Century High School Band Booster President

Iris Mason  
Hillsboro Band Booster

Jadon Baysa  
Hillsboro High Drum Major

Tracy Saxton  
Glencoe High School Band Booster VP

Destin Brown  
Glencoe High School Band Booster Treasurer