Dear Parent/Guardian,

I’d like to welcome you and your child to a new year of instrumental music and introduce myself as the 9th-12th grade instrumental music teacher for the 2016-2017 school year. The purpose of this letter is to describe the expectations and operations of the class, which will ensure your child’s success in the program.

**Band 9/10 (Group A)—Course Description**
This course is designed to provide a smooth transition from middle school instrumental music to high school instrumental music for the experienced player. Students will be exposed to various musical genres as well as add to and enhance skills that they acquired in middle school through listening to and performing higher level repertoire. All 9th-10th grade instrumental students are required to perform at least once per semester and will be required to rehearse each school day (5 days per week) and participate in both concerts in order to earn a passing grade. Daily home practice is strongly encouraged and is essential for adequate improvement.

**Band 9/10 (Group B)—Course Description**
This course is designed for students who have little to no instrumental music experience. Students will learn basic music concepts that will enable them to play a wind or percussion instrument. All students will be required to perform at least once per semester and will be required to rehearse 2-3 times per week (depending on their class schedule) and participate in both concerts in order to earn a passing grade. Daily home practice is strongly encouraged and is essential for adequate improvement.

**Percussion 1—Course Description**
This course will provide students with exposure to a variety of pitched and unpitched percussion instruments: concert/orchestral percussion, marching percussion, keyboards, steel drums, and African drums. Students will learn basic music theory that will enable them to read, compose, and perform basic music rhythms on the above instruments. Although this course is exploratory in nature, students who demonstrate proficient skills throughout the course will have the opportunity to perform with the concert band.

**World Drumming—Course Description**
This course is designed to help students develop an understanding of the people and musical cultures of West Coast Africa and the Islands of the Caribbean through the playing of various types of drums and other percussion equipment. Students will learn mostly through the African model of demonstrating followed by imitation and repetition as well as singing, dancing, and playing simultaneously. All students will be required to perform at least once per semester and will be required to rehearse 2-3 times per week (depending on their class schedule) and participate in both concerts in order to earn a passing grade. Daily home practice is strongly encouraged and is essential for adequate improvement.

**Piano/Keyboard —Course Description**
This course is designed to help students learn and develop fundamental techniques on the piano/keyboard. Students will learn basic music theory that will enable them to read, compose, and perform basic piano repertoire. Although this course is exploratory in nature, students who demonstrate proficient skills throughout the course will have the opportunity to perform in the annual Spring Concert.

**Musical Objectives**
- To developing in its members a deeper response to the elements of music
- An appreciation for music in our society
- To promote the growth and development of the fundamentals, techniques and disciplines of music.

**Personal Objectives**
- To provide a unique experience to further develop the qualities of excellence, responsibility, cooperation, sincerity, and leadership.
- To discover areas in music for personal achievement and enjoyment

**Service Objectives**
- To present concerts and performances of excellence, serving the school and community with our music and talent.
- To represent Pittsburgh Obama Academy at any and all public engagements with pride and honor.
**Academic and Behavioral Expectations**

My role as the music director is that of both a conductor and a teacher. As a conductor, I am most concerned with the music ensemble as a whole. My philosophy is simple: The ensemble’s needs, progress and high standard will always take priority over any individual needs. As a teacher I am concerned with a student’s individual progress. The students’ needs will come first. As both an individual and ensemble member, students will always be respected and treated with fairness, but keep in mind that I expect to be treated with the same respect and fairness as is given to them from both roles that I must fulfill. Students adhering to these rules and guidelines of the classroom will ensure their individual success as well as the success of the ensemble and perpetuate the district’s mission of “Excellence For All”

1. Be Prompt.
2. Be Prepared.
3. Stay Seated.
4. Use Appropriate Words and Actions.
5. Raise Your Hand to Speak.
6. Remain Quiet During Instruction.
7. No Food, Gum, or Drink.
8. Treat Others and the Classroom Environment With Respect.

Be PRESENT—Come to class EVERY DAY
Be PROMPT—Arrive to class ON TIME. Submit homework ON TIME.
Be PREPARED—Have all of your materials every day (Instrument, music, pencil, etc.)
Be POSITIVE—Your attitude determines your altitude. Come to class with a positive attitude ready to rehearse and learn.
PARTICIPATE—Play your instrument every day in class, try your best, ask questions and request extra help if necessary.
PRACTICE and PERFORM—Your performance will be a reflection of how hard you’ve practiced. Work hard, participate in the concerts and put on a great show!

Prior Planning and Preparation Promotes Proper and Positive Performance

**Detention and Discipline Policy**

In most cases, detention is meant to serve as an alternative to a school referral. Students who are late to class, display open defiance, or use inappropriate language will receive a lunch detention. Detention is to be served on the day that it is issued. In the event that an infraction is repeated or is considered a major offense (with the exception of tardiness), the student will be referred to an administrator. In the case of excessive tardiness, parents will be notified after the second offense. After the fourth offense, parents will be notified and the student will serve a week of lunch detention (as outlined in the school handbook). Students who choose not to serve detention for their infraction will be referred to a school administrator. Depending on the infraction, referrals will result in a phone call home and may include students’ conferencing with the teacher and administrator, parent-teacher meeting, and/or an out of school suspension.

**Grading Guidelines:**

Theoretical—(Homework, Music Theory Assignments, Performance Tests, Quizzes, Unit Tests, and Music Compositions)—40%
Performances—(Projects, Oral Presentations, Concerts)—40%
Participation (Individual/Pair Share/Four Square/Sectionals)—15%
Assessments (Journal Writing, Oral Reflections, Exit Tickets, Written Warm-Ups)—5%

**Homework Policy**

Students are required to practice at home to improve individual skills as well as the overall quality of the ensemble. Performance tests are used to monitor home practice and are given bi-weekly. Each test is worth a total of 100 points and students are assessed according to the rubric (MYP Criterion B). Students are expected to practice for a minimum of 30 minutes per day 4 days per week. In addition, pop quizzes will be given at any time on any parts of the music covered in class to monitor progress. Reminders for weekly tests will be posted on the class Facebook page and in the classroom at least 48 hours prior to the assessment. After school rehearsals and performance dates will also be posted as the date for the concert approaches.

Additionally, all instrumental music students are required to write weekly journal reflections based on how they are growing as musicians as well as their overall development as IB Learners. The primary focus of each assignment will be in the form of an IB Learner Profile Characteristic. Prompts for each journal reflection will be given on Fridays upon the student’s arrival and each
assignment is due on the following Monday. **All journal reflections are to be typed.** Students will have the opportunity to share their reflections in the form of pair share and small/large group discussion, which will go towards their class participation grade. Journal reflections will be assessed according to the rubric (MYP Criterion C) and go toward students’ homework (assessment) grade.

**Late Work Policy**
Students who are absent from school on the day of a performance test will be permitted to make it up the next school day. All students who put forth a sincere effort to pass a performance assessment and earn a grade that is not to their liking will be permitted to retake the test(s) as many times as they wish until they earn a satisfactory grade. “Test Make-Up Days” will be when the schedules of the teacher and student permits. The opportunity to retake performance tests each quarter ends three days prior to the closing of grades each report period. Exceptions to this rule will be made in extreme circumstances or at the discretion of the teacher. Students missing class due to school activities are expected to get all assignments for the day before leaving for the activity and to turn them in **ON THE DUE DATE.**

Journal assignments are due every Monday of each week (depending on the student’s schedule) and are worth 10 points (an A grade). If they are submitted one day late, the grade will drop one letter from what could have been earned had the assignment been submitted on time. Homework assignments submitted 2 or more days late will receive half credit (50%). As per school policy, there will be no opportunities provided for extra credit assignments.

**Performances**
All ensemble members shall be required to attend all performances unless excused by the Music Director. Both performances will be reflected in the semester grades. Dress for the concerts will be:

**Young Men**—White collared dress shirt, black slacks, and black dress shoes.
**Young Ladies**—White blouse, black knee-length skirt (or black slacks), and black dress shoes.

**Please contact me in advance if there are any questions or concerns about concert dress**

All requests for excused absences must be submitted in writing to the Music Director as early as possible and signed by a parent/guardian. Excused absences are:
- Illnesses that are severe enough to keep the music student in bad or are highly contagious (Doctor’s note required).
- Religious conflict
- Death in the family
- *****WORK, BABYSITTING, and other EXCUSES of this nature are NOT acceptable excuses for missing performances.*****

The Band Director will evaluate other reasons on an individual basis. All students are important. We depend on each other for a good performance. Please remember that any absences affect the performance level of the entire ensemble. Our success is a group effort.

**IBMYP Arts Assessment Criteria**

**Criterion A-Knowing and Understanding**
Students should be able to:
- demonstrate awareness of the art form studied, including the use of appropriate language
- demonstrate awareness of the relationship between the art form and its context
- demonstrate awareness of the links between the knowledge acquired and artwork created.

**Criterion B-Developing Skills**
Students should be able to:
- demonstrate the acquisition and development of the skills and techniques of the art form studied
- demonstrate the application of skills and techniques to create, perform and/or present art.

**Criterion C –Thinking Creatively**
Students should be able to:
• identify an artistic intention
• identify alternatives and perspectives
• demonstrate the exploration of ideas

Criterion D- Responding
Students should be able to:
• identify connections between art forms, art and context, or art and prior learning
• recognize that the world contains inspiration or influence for art
• evaluate certain elements or principles of artwork

Every member of an instrumental ensemble has a needed place in the organization. Adherence to these rules and guidelines will not only ensure your child’s success in the music classroom, but also help foster a sense of dedication, responsibility, creativity, discipline, and pride within them. Remember, the students’ every word and action represents the entire band as well as themselves, their homes, Pittsburgh Obama, the Pittsburgh School District, and the community. Our bands and orchestras can only be as good as we make them!

Please feel free to contact me via email or phone if you have any questions or concerns. I look forward a positive and productive school year.

Sincerely,

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Approved: Ms. Aisha Robinson, Director