

Hey everyone,

So Christmas break is fast approaching. We've got a lot going on over the next couple weeks. Not only will the students be working on getting the first portion of the show learned, but we'll have some days for parents to do some work behind the scenes.

For the students, we have a few camps throughout Christmas break. I can't stress how important these camps are. We'll have James Sparling in with us twice over the break. This will give him a significant amount of time to begin teaching drill to the students. For the battery, this will be the primary goal for them entering the Christmas break camps. For the front ensemble, we'll be attempting to learn all of the music that we've received thus far, which is about 3 and ½ minutes worth of music. If things go well, by the end of the last camp, we'll be rehearsing all of the drill while the front ensemble plays.

Our first camp is next Tuesday (12/22) from 3:30 – 9:00. I understand that the schedule says 8:30, but James asked for a little more time. They will be going until 9. They'll have a break for dinner to eat something, so they'll need to bring some food for dinner. Not eating isn't an option; they'll definitely need the energy.

After that camp, we get a full six days off. Throughout those days, I want everyone to enjoy the time off and have a great break, because we'll have a lot of work to do the next week. James Sparling will be back with us on Monday (12/28) for the longest camp of the season. We'll be going from 9 AM – 6 PM. There will be an hour lunch from 12-1. We'll be ordering pizza. On Tuesday (12/29), we'll also be having another camp. This camp will be an hour shorter, only running from 9-5. The lunch situation will be very similar. The goal for this day will be to solidify all of the drill that James came in to teach. It will also provide us with a great opportunity to attempt and put some of the music with the drill on the floor.

On Saturday (1/2), we'll have our final camp of the break. It will also run from 9-5, and it will be a great opportunity for us to finish anything that we hadn't finished going into break. For any mallet parts that we don't yet have down, this will be the day to fix that. This will also be a great day to reinforce the drill after a few days off, and attempt piecing it together as a whole.

I'm very excited about the camps, and the more that we can get done during that period, the better off we'll be come January rehearsals.

For the parents, we'll have a couple opportunities to get involved and help with the ensemble. The priority for us at the moment is getting the props built. Unlike last year, simplicity is the key for us. We're going with simplicity in every area. The three camps on the week after Christmas (12/28, 12/29, and 1/2) will be a significant amount of time for us to schedule some prop building. If anyone is handy with tools, or just wants to get involved and help in anyway, please contact me so I can include you in the design process.

This program will not work unless we have some parent support. It means so much to me, but even more to the students, that parents are willing to dedicate some time to helping their program be a success.

This year is different than any other year for these students. This won't be a program where the kids just show up and play drums for a couple hours, and then leave and forget about it until the next rehearsal. This is a year where the students are making something they can call their own. Since this is the goal, the students have to take certain responsibilities upon them that they normally wouldn't have to take. The same concept applies to the parents that have students in the program.

I understand that we are asking a lot of everyone. It's only because I know that this year can be great, and I want to see all of these students succeed. These kids only have four years out of their life to do something like this, and I want every year to be memorable for the right reasons.

As always, feel free to contact me with any questions.

Thanks so much for the support. It means a tremendous amount to the staff, and even more to the students.

-Jeremy