

FOOTHILL HIGH SCHOOL

Home of the Cougars

Steve Abbott, Principal

Shawn Anstine, Assistant Principal

Lauren Stroud, Assistant Principal

July 23, 2020

Dear Cougar Band Families,

I have had to write some tough letters in the past...but this beats them all. You are receiving this letter because we have been mandated by the State of California to not offer any course that includes wind instruments for 2020-21. Neither myself, nor our principal Steve Abbott, nor our Superintendent Jim Cloney, nor our County Superintendent, Judy Flores want this to be the case. However, it is the reality of the times in which we live. And, we must keep living. Instrumental Music WILL CONTINUE at Foothill High School this year. Please keep reading.

In the very near future, I will be calling all families of students enrolled in Jazz A, Jazz B, Band I and Band II. I will be asking you to select from the following menu: String Orchestra, Percussion, Piano (Beginning), Piano (Intermediate/Music Theory) or Guitar. Choose to still engage in music...pick more than one if you like! I have strong interest in continuing to offer quality education and a positive culture for you to get enjoyment out of attending FHS this year. Frankly, my desire to help you enjoy your year at Foothill is stronger than it's ever been; as you have been deprived of so much.

I share in this deprivation with you. Since grade school, I have wanted to be a band director; and I love my job. However, it is not the *only* thing I love. First and foremost, I love the opportunity to teach YOU! You are the reason I teach. Band was the medium, sure...but I believe in the power of music education, and I believe we can still do it well. Briefly, here are course descriptions of what we are being allowed to offer to you this year:

Orchestra: Violin, viola, cello and upright bass are the instruments in an orchestra...and I will be steering the majority of new orchestra members towards violin. While there are violas, cellos and basses available, I will not assign those or promise those to anyone ahead of time. Of course, if you show up with your own cello, then...you're playing cello!

Percussion: Historically, Drumline has operated after-school, as an over-worked and under-rehearsed ensemble. Offering a separate percussion course cures this problem. While drumline will get ample time to really work, this course will work on technique in all areas of percussion. Musicality will be the central focus as we tighten up our notation and rhythm reading skills; growing in our arranging/compositional skills as well.

Piano (Beginning): We will have a piano lab. In this class you will learn the technique and skills to play piano. No knowledge required! Piano is THE #1 instrument that most adults wished they knew how to play. Now's your chance.

Piano (Intermediate): You can "hunt and peck" on the piano....maybe even play a few songs. But outside of Heart and Soul, Chopsticks and your favorite Coldplay song, you're stuck. We will take your developing skills, combine them with theory, and get you playing circles around those three "songs" in no time! While this will not be an AP Music Theory course (yet), we will add ample theory into the curriculum so that you can more deeply understand what you are playing.

Guitar: Acoustic guitar course. Whether you fit into the beginner or intermediate classification on this instrument, we can run a fantastic acoustic guitar class...back in the day, we had a strong acoustic guitar program. Focus will be on notation, chord knowledge and songwriting. Please let me know if you own (or can get) a guitar, or if you need a school instrument.

Please give each course your consideration. **We need music more than ever.** Should you have friends that show interest in these courses as you talk to other people outside of the band program, I am happy to talk to them about enrolling (you can pass their info to me when I call you). First and foremost, these courses are for YOU in order to promote your musical growth and emotional well-being. I am proud, and thankful, to be able to have the opportunity to still teach you. Thank you for your consideration, and I'll be calling (starting with the Class of 2021, then 2022, and so on) very soon,



Mr. Mitch Bahr

Instrumental Music Director, Foothill High School

A California Distinguished School

9733 Deschutes Rd., Palo Cedro, CA 96073 (530) 547-1700 Fax (530) 245-2700

