

# Bradley Middle School Remote Instrument Placement Interviews for Incoming 6<sup>th</sup> Graders – Emily Gurwitz

When it was clear that in-person interviews would not be possible, I came up with a method to do the interviews using Zoom. The letter below was sent to the parents of incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders in early April 2020 and explains the process. I have left the links so that you can review the resources that I used to make the remote interviews successful. Note that after doing several interviews, it became clear that neither the water bottle nor the metronome was necessary to make an effective evaluation. Please continue reading below the letter for some ways that these interviews have worked *better* than the traditional method.

## *Letter Sent to Bradley Middle School Incoming 6th Grade Band Students*

Dear Bradley Middle School Incoming Beginning Band Students and Parents,

Welcome to the Bradley Band family! The Bradley Band has had a long-standing tradition of excellence and success since the school's inception in 1982!

Each incoming beginning band student will require an interview to determine what instrument he/she will be playing in band. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to maintain social distancing, I will be conducting virtual interviews through Zoom!

**Before your band interview to help select an instrument, we ask each student (and a parent) to do the three steps below.**

1.) Watch the video below introducing the band instruments.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CCTeSjpDsIs>

2.) Complete a Pre-Interview questionnaire to help us get to know you.  
Note that the form will ask some questions pertaining to the video above.

<https://forms.gle/tUaWwdD3VdmqYnk36>

3.) Schedule a date and time for your interview. The student and parent must attend the Zoom video meeting! **Any student who comes to an interview without a parent will have their interview rescheduled.**

<https://forms.gle/6Q1nzjv2uM83Fuj47>

**You will need the following items for your interview:**

- A drinking straw
- One empty disposable water bottle (e.g. Ozarka or Aquafina) A similar glass bottle is also ok.
- One 12" ruler
- Access to a flat surface (i.e. a TV tray, a desk, or a table)
- The metronome link listed below if you do not own a metronome. Alexa also has a metronome available. Say "Alexa set a metronome for 90 beats per minute":

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1s0QhKLx4x23F4l1dt1MpmA000HwZVgZL/view?usp=sharing>

Below is a video on what to expect during your interview!

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iUY-W49w0h1cntXPUw2ld-9qO3sLSbxm/view?usp=sharing>

Please contact me at [egurwi@neisd.net](mailto:egurwi@neisd.net) with any questions or concerns regarding the Bradley Band program and I look forward to meeting you all!

## **Value of Pre-Interview Questions**

The pre-interview questions combined with the video interview gives me a lot of information about the student. I use this information and my experience to determine which instrument(s) are appropriate. After teaching middle school band for over 25 years, there is a combination of factors involved in being successful on certain instruments, and it is vital to take into consideration certain attributes such as grades, physical/personality traits, and determination.

## **Benefits of Video Interview**

In the traditional interviews with incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders in a new environment with other kids around them, some students may be nervous during the interview process. One thing I noticed immediately is that the Zoom interviews taking place at the student's home with a parent present makes the student much more relaxed and focused. There is also often peer pressure with the group interviews and students may want to play the same instrument as their friends even if it is not the best option for them. Having the parent available, you also can discuss costs and challenges associated with certain instruments in a more private setting.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

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