



MEET



Band Director

# Kelly Zunic

Ms. Zunic is in her 8th year with Westlake City Schools. She's from the Youngstown area and went to college at the University of Akron. She said she's been really impressed with how well the students adapted to the difficulty of having to learn instruments at home during the pandemic. "Students really had to learn how to be independent learners while they were gone, so they really came back ready to work and continue learning. It was really great to see how hard they worked to learn new things."

The 6th Grade Band will perform on Tuesday May 25, and the 5th Grade Band will perform on Thursday May 27.

#### **What is your favorite part of working with Westlake City Schools?**

The music program here is outstanding. I remember visiting and seeing the Westlake High School band perform while I was in grad school. I thought to myself, "I need to work there someday," and I am lucky enough to be here now.

#### **With everything that has gone on this year, have you learned anything about the students?**

It was really enlightening to see how important Band is to many of them, just in the sense of providing a sense of normalcy. It's the one class they take year to year, so they're with familiar teachers and with the same students every year. I think being in band provides a sense of home for some of them. Last year when we were virtual, they really missed in-person playing opportunities, so they were so eager to get back together with their friends and actually play together. Even with all these new protocols and changes to the year, once they get that instrument in their hand, it feels a little bit normal. It was really great to see that.

#### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

I really like to watch movies, and I miss going to movie theaters – I love the experience of going to the theater. I have two boys and we like to play baseball together. And I really like to read – Stephen King is probably my favorite author.

#### **If you could have any meal right now, what it would be?**

Cavatelli with meatballs and tomato sauce. I'm not Italian, but I love Italian food.

#### **If you could visit anywhere on the planet, where would you like to go?**

I love to travel everywhere, and I can't wait to travel again when it's safe. But I need to be on a beach somewhere. Aruba is favorite place I've ever gone.

#### **Who is a person in your life who has had a positive impact on you?**

My college mentor, Dr. Laurie Lafferty. She has been an amazing teacher and role model to me. She was a female band director when that wasn't a thing – even nowadays the numbers are still heavily male in our profession. Fortunately, there are more and more women band directors – even right here in Westlake, our High School Band Director is female (Hilary Patriok). Dr. Lafferty really taught us all how to be strong in what we do and has been such a positive influence on me.