

West Wing Band Handbook

2023-2024

Directed by Mr. Brian Hix; brian.hix@dvusd.org; 623-376-5083

Website: <https://www.dvusd.org/Domain/10053>

Band Mission Statement:

The West Wing School Band Program strives to impact our peers and community through high levels of music performance and academic achievement. It is our goal to share not only music, but also the friendship and creativity that comes along with making music.

Band Class Goal:

All students will show mastery of instrumental technique to be applied through performance of grade appropriate music at a high level of achievement. All students will show mastery of rehearsal techniques.

Instrumental Ensembles

Middle School Band

This performing group focuses on reaching the Band I (7th Grade) and Band II (8th Grade) wind instrument standards set by DVUSD, depending on the age of the performer. They perform in at least 3 concerts per year, a Spring Festival, District Assessments, Assemblies, and select students will perform at District Honor Band, All-State, and Solo & Ensemble.

Middle School Percussion Ensemble

This performing group also focuses on the Band I & Band II Instrumental standards, but specifies in percussion-based techniques. They perform in at least 3 concerts per year, possible festivals such as Solo & Ensemble and members may have the opportunity to participate in District Honor Band and Solo & Ensemble.

6th Grade Band

This performing group aims to achieve the Intermediate Band Standards set forth by DVUSD. They perform in 2 concerts a year and may participate in a Spring Festival. Select students will perform at District Honor Band, All-State and Solo & Ensemble.

5th Grade Band

This performing group aims to achieve the Beginning Band Standards set forth by DVUSD. They perform in 2 concerts a year.

Materials Needed

All Members		
Pencil 1-inch 3-ring Binder At least 15 Sheet Protectors <i>Tradition of Excellence Method Book (Book 1: 5th & 6th Grade; Book 2: 7th & 8th Grade)</i>		
Brass	Woodwinds	Percussion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Instrument and Mouthpiece ● Valve Oil <u>or</u> Trombotine + Spray Bottle ● Instrument Snake + Mouthpiece Brush 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Instrument ● Vandoren Reeds 2.5 for 5th grade, 3/ 3.5 for 6th-8th grade ● Mouthpiece Patch ● Cork Grease ● Silk Swab ● Mouthpiece Cap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vic Firth SD1 General Snare Sticks ● Innovative Percussion F10 Rubber Mallets ● Promark JH3 Timpani Mallets* ● Stick Bag ● Personal Snare/Bell Kit

*7th and 8th Grade Only

BAND PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS

1. Students who are enrolled in band at the start of the school year will be expected to commit to the entire school year. This ensures students develop a sense of membership to the band and cooperation with their peers. There will be a period within the first two weeks of school during which they can choose to have their schedule changed. This process will include parent communication with the band instructor, who must sign off on the schedule change. Exceptions can be made for medical reasons or if their academic standing in other classes may require such a withdrawal after the first two weeks of school.

2. Should students or parents communicate with the office about a schedule change, they will be directed to the band instructor to discuss their concerns in the hopes of finding a productive and positive solution before any changes to their schedule occurs.
3. If students or parents cite the cost of being in band as their reason for wanting to drop, they should be reminded that the school and the band instructor have the ability to make accommodations and give assistance in such instances.
4. The band instructor has the ability and discretion to recommend a student be dropped from band on the basis of poor and chronic behavioral issues that disrupt the learning environment, rehearsal or performance expectations, or jeopardize the safety or success of the other students in band.
5. In order to foster a welcoming environment and to promote growth of the band program, students not enrolled in band at the start of the school year are capable of joining band at the beginning of quarters 2 and 3, with the understanding that the earlier in the year a student joins the more success they will have and the better chance they will have to participate in on-campus and off-campus activities related to band.

REHEARSAL ETIQUETTE

1. Upon arrival, students are expected to get required materials (instrument, pencil, and music) and report to their assigned seat
2. Students will be “READY” 3 minutes after the start of class
 - a. “READY”
 - i. Instrument is assembled and ready to play
 - ii. Music is up and on a working music stand
 - iii. Student is in their assigned seat and ready to play
 - b. Students not “READY” 3 minutes after the bell will lose one daily point
 - c. Students missing a pencil will lose one daily point
 - d. Students missing music will lose one daily point
 - e. Students missing their instrument will lose all daily points
3. Students are to remain quiet, attentive, and actively participating in rehearsal
4. Rehearsal will end at the director’s discretion
 - a. The director will ensure that students have adequate time to reach their next class
5. Sometimes the director may allow students to use class time for individual or group practice; students are expected to do as instructed
 - a. Students who do not use class time as directed will follow discipline procedures
6. No running or horseplay is permitted.
7. No food, drinks, or gum in the band room (water is allowed)
8. Students will not begin packing up until the director dismisses them.
 - a. After being dismissed, students will leave the room cleaner than they found it by fulfilling their assigned jobs:

- b. throwing away at least one piece of trash, dusting a surface, wiping down the sink, tidying a shelf, stacking instruments, etc.
- c. Students will then set up chairs (and if necessary, stands) for the next class before leaving.
 - i. If being put away, chairs will be safely stacked, stands will go into the rack orderly, and all percussion equipment will be put away in its labeled place.

ATTENDANCE

1. Daily Rehearsals- Daily expectations are explained above under Rehearsal Etiquette. Students who consistently tardy/unprepared for class will have their daily grade lowered per the rehearsal technique rubric.
2. Scheduled Performances- All students are required to attend each event/performance listed on the concerts & events calendar. Students who do not attend without a health or emergency related reason from a parent/guardian will be expected to complete an alternative performance/assignment to receive points for the event. Call times for events will be communicated at least two weeks prior to the event.
3. Optional Performances- These events will not be graded and students involved in these events will be scheduled through registration forms and performance attire expectations may vary per event. Such events include participation in All-State, Honor Band and Solo & Ensemble as well as after-school pep band performances.
4. Off-Campus Trips, Assessments and Performances- Permission Slips will be issued for these events. Some will be graded, such as our fall and spring district assessments. This also includes our in-state and out-of-state trips such as area festivals and Disneyland.

UNIFORMS

1. All students will acquire an all-black polo shirt with the West Wing Band Logo. If you have one from previous years, you do not need a new polo.
2. Gentlemen: polo, black dress pants, black belt, black dress shoes, and black socks
3. Ladies: polo, black dress pants/skirt, and black dress shoes (wedge, sandal, flat)
4. Not Allowed: Leggings, jeans, running shoes, skate shoes, t-shirts, dresses, high heels
5. Failure to comply with these guidelines will result in the lowering of grade and removal from performance.

CONSEQUENCES & DISCIPLINE

The West Wing PBIS Discipline Program, outlined in the student handbook, governs specific disciplinary procedures for most classroom behaviors.

If at any time he feels that a behavior is disruptive or detractive from a healthy learning environment or represents a danger to the well-being of students or school

property, Mr. Hix reserves the right to intervene in that behavior, regardless of whether or not a specific rule exists to govern it.

Steps of Discipline (for middle school):

STEP 1: A verbal warning, consisting of a reminder of the rules, a restatement of the expectations, a reminder of consequences, and a polite request to stop the undesired behavior. Parents are notified.

STEP 2: Student is re-notified of the rule being broken. Parents are notified. A written reflection is assigned. Additional Consequences may be introduced:

- Loss of privileges, including using school instruments
- After-class teacher/student conference

STEP 3: Lunch Detention is issued. Parents are notified. Office Referral.

Practicing Expectations

1. Students are expected to take instruments home on a regular basis.
2. Students should be prepared for class and playing assessments.
3. If a student is unprepared for a performance due to lack of practice or poor attendance, they may be moved down in part and/or pulled from the performance at the director's discretion.
4. Assignments and playing assessments may be posted on Canvas for students to complete from home.

Success is only achieved through diligent practice. If you wish to be personally successful on your instrument, and you want the band to be successful, then you **MUST** put in the time to practice.

It is crucial that you practice every single day, and not just cram all your practice time into one day. Learning to play an instrument requires slow and steady development of muscle memory. Muscle memory cannot be crammed like other information—so make sure you're practicing a little bit every day!

If taking your instrument home is impossible (in the most literal sense of the word), you can still practice. Name the notes in your music, make fingering flashcards, clap the rhythm to your music, or sing it in your head while you finger along. You do not need an instrument in your hands to get better at the music.

CHAIR PLACEMENT AND CHALLENGE GUIDELINES

Within the first few weeks of each semester, band students will perform a playing test that will determine their chair placement for the semester. This is standard practice in any musical ensemble and is what students can expect from their musical career. This is intended to appropriately place musicians within the sections so that they are playing parts that are most accessible to them as well as challenging. This is also to give musicians with more experience an opportunity for leadership. The first chair (highest placed) student will be designated section leader and will fulfill the responsibilities expected of someone in that position.

*****The director reserves the right to consider any playing test as a placement audition and therefore grounds for section reassignment.**

**** Challenges will only take place for 7th and 8th grade band students, and may become allowed in the 2nd semester for 6th grade students.**

If a student wishes to challenge someone within their section, some guidelines apply:

- Students may challenge each other for chair placement or for playing part.
- Chair placement: students will perform scales, rudiments, and other fundamental exercises. The winner will gain the higher chair.
- Playing Part: students may challenge each other in order to play solos or selected passages in music. Percussionists may challenge each other for the right to perform parts in concert and assessment performances- this may include entire parts, solos and instances where there are more percussionists than parts that need to be played. Example: in a piece where all parts are covered and there are multiple percussionists playing snare drum, students may challenge each other to determine who will play that part on that piece in the actual performance.
- Students may only challenge the person whose chair placement is above theirs (ie: third chair may only challenge second chair, they cannot skip over and challenge the first chair player).
- The challenger must call the challenge to the director. The director will select the excerpt for the challenge. Both students will have at least one week to prepare for the challenge.
- Students involved in a challenge who wish a re-challenge must give appropriate notice and wait one full week (7 days) before they can play another challenge.
- Only two separate challenges will be allowed per ensemble per week.
- The director will set deadlines for challenges leading up to performances, and students may not begin challenges again until after the performance.
- **The director reserves the right to make modifications and changes at his or her discretion and as needed in the best interest of individuals and the ensemble as a whole.**

GRADING

Band classes create a group performance, yet each student is still held individually responsible for their individual part. It takes great dedication, individual practice, and collaborative efforts to have a high level of performance. The grades in band relate directly to district content standards that measure how well a student is progressing towards the ability to have a high level of performance.

Performance

Band will have various performances throughout the year. There are several assignments directly related to success during these group performances. All of these assignments are standards based and related to a guaranteed and viable curriculum. These assignments include:

- Attendance at the concert
- Being on time

- Having all materials at the performance
- Wearing the correct concert attire- black top (dress shirt, blouse, etc.), black slacks/long skirt, black socks, and black shoes
- Behaving correctly at a formal concert
- Giving best effort at all the musical concepts learned.
 - This includes notes, rhythms, dynamics, balance, blend, etc.
- A written analysis of the group performance
- A written self-analysis of the student's individual performance

Individual Performance Assessments

Each student is at an individual level with their musical ability and talent. As we continue to learn and grow through the school year, we will need to progress to meet the standards of our guaranteed and viable curriculum. These assignments will be specific skills, note patterns, tone, etc. that relates to music making for instrumentalists. These assignments give specific data to each student on how they can improve and what should be part of their daily practice towards their realization of these goals. These assignments include:

- Rhythmic Skills
- Tone production
- Musicality mastery
- Scales, Arpeggios, and other patterns
- Range development
- Sight Reading
- Technique

Daily Progress towards the Class Goal

In order to maintain daily progress towards the class goal, daily assignments will be given directly related to the goal. These assignments include:

- Having all materials in class, every class meeting (how can you work towards the class goals if you do not have the materials with you to do so?)
- Effective rehearsal technique
- Active engagement in academic conversations, self-reflections, and class discussions
- Daily warm ups, technical exercises, sight reading, and work on the music literature

Late work, makeup work, assignment do-overs

It is my deepest philosophy that each student has the right to learn. In addition, learning builds on itself and should continue to progress towards mastery of a guaranteed and viable curriculum. Students in band class will have every opportunity to show mastery of the concepts. Each assignment will have a specific due date in which mastery needs to be shown. At the time of the due date, the grade on the assignment will be entered into the gradebook. If a student wishes to try again, put in more personal practice, time, or do an extended study program in order to show new mastery of the concept they will be allowed to do so. The teacher will make every opportunity available for the students to obtain the knowledge. The students should take every opportunity to learn the knowledge. Late work, makeup work, and assignment do-overs will be accepted until the last week of each grading period.

Take note: THERE IS NOT A WAY TO SIMULATE GROUP PERFORMANCE OTHER THAN TO BE IN THE GROUP PERFORMANCE.

It is not possible to “make up” missing a group performance. A student can show mastery of every other part of the performance grade, however the performance cannot be redone. If a student is unexcused for a concert performance, those points cannot be made up. If they have an excused absence, they may make up that portion of the grade by completing a performance at a later time, as determined by the teacher. In addition, the teacher determines what an excused absence is on a case by case basis. In general, “I did not have a ride”, or “I didn’t know about the performance” or “my parents/I had a different commitment that night” are not excusable absences. To repeat: The teacher determines what is an excused absence and not an excused absence.

COSTS, INSTRUMENTS, FUNDRAISING

Fundraising

Occasionally, the band program decides to undertake an initiative that requires significant monetary support. This could include everything from traveling, to new instruments or music. During these initiatives, Mr. Hix may ask students to do fundraising for the group. Fundraising allows us to purchase new materials (including songs, songbooks, CDs, and electronics like tablets) for use in teaching, and may allow us to go on tour as a group. Check in with us as the year progresses to see what you can do to help support the music program at this school. At the time of writing, there are no current plans for group fundraisers. This document will be updated at the end of each semester if there are significant changes or plans.

Instrument Rental

1. It is expected that all students provide their own instrument, accessories, and materials for participation in ensembles at West Wing.
2. If a family has issue renting an instrument, it is recommended you contact the director for a private conference regarding the matter.
3. Limited bigger and more expensive instruments (Tuba, Baritone, Baritone Sax, etc.) for ensembles may be checked out from the director for the school year.
 - a. Rentals are subject to the completion of a rental contract.
 - b. Instruments must be returned at the end of the school year cleaned and in working condition.
 - c. Rental contracts are given/revoked at the discretion of the band director based on treatment of the instrument, its case, and/or other band property.
4. To facilitate obtaining an instrument, the following stores are available in the local area:

Milano Music- 38 W. Main St. Mesa, AZ 85201
800-344-9324, milanomusic.com

Music & Arts- 5350 West Bell Road #132 Glendale, AZ 85308
(602) 504-0206, musicarts.com

Sam Ash Music- 4402 West Cactus Road Glendale, AZ 85304
(602) 863-7746, samashmusic.com

Buying a New Instrument

If a student is looking into buying a new instrument it is highly recommended that parents talk with Mr. Hix or private instructor before making the purchase. There are more “knock-off” brands on the market than good quality brands. Avoid EBay and Craigslist unless you know exactly what you are looking for. A good place to check first is your local instrument repair shop; they will be truthful with you and may have instruments for sale. A good motto to abide by is: “If a deal is ‘too good to be true,’ then it probably is.”

Please stick to traditional colors: black clarinets, brass saxophones, silver flutes, silver/brass trumpets, etc. Make sure that the instrument you are buying is **music educator approved!**

Private Lessons

Private instrumental lessons are an amazing opportunity for growth for you or your child. They are highly encouraged at the elementary and middle school levels to help propel students into a very successful playing career through high school. It is never too early or too late to start taking lessons! There is a large network of very knowledgeable teachers in this state taking on private students at this time. Please contact the director for specific recommendations on private instructors.

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Signature Sheet

****Please return completed form to class or virtually through Canvas (See instructions)**

By signing below, you are acknowledging that you have received this information and understand the policies present in band class at West Wing School. You understand the importance of performances as they relate to your grade and you understand the expectations of band class at West Wing School. Should any questions, concerns or issues arise you will first communicate with Mr. Hix to try and find a solution.

Student Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION (please write legibly)

Parent/Guardian Phone Number: _____

Parent/Guardian E-mail: _____