



**Recruiting and Retention – Middle School:
From Beginner Drives to Motivating Students to Continue on
to High School Band**

CLINICIANS:

Nathan Cooley, Marty Nelson, and Jason Tucker

**Texas Bandmasters Association
2012 Convention/Clinic**



2012 Patron Sponsor

**JULY 20 – 23, 2012
HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

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A comprehensive look at techniques designed to get students into your program and then how to keep them. The clinicians will outline proven recruiting methods including the areas of testing, communication and instrumentation. The discussion will also cover motivational techniques geared to keeping students in your program throughout middle school and into the ninth grade.

Sunday, July 22

10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

CC Room: 214CD

Clinicians: Nathan Cooley, Marty Nelson, Jason Tucker

Recruiting Beginners

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- Know your target audience.
 - Translate letters if needed.
- Recruiting is a perpetual cycle.
 - Look beyond 5th graders. Be visible to other grades.
 - Invite students to concerts.
 - Look for opportunities MS and HS groups to play at elementary schools.
- Developing advocates- counselors, administration, and 5th grade teachers.
- Be involved in the master schedule if possible.
- Be proactive about knowing how other elective choice sponsors are presenting their subjects.
 - Meet with sponsors to set guidelines.
 - Inform administrators of agreed upon guidelines.
 - Administrator monitoring if necessary.
 - Everyone's presentation is representative of what goes on in class.
- Know the timetable for course selection.
 - Timing is everything!

First and best method of retention is getting them on the correct instrument.

- What's available to play: Parent meeting, website instrument descriptions, and brochures.
- Instrument lesson.
- Auditions.
- Testing formats: Cafeteria style, appointments.
- Instrumentation vs. student choices.

Start of School

- Be diligent in getting stragglers to get their instruments.
 - Students who don't get their instruments at start of school are at risk for dropping out.
 - Communicate early and often about importance of having their instruments on the first day.
 - Can be a sign of little parent support.
 - They may lose interest.
 - Be ready to help with financial needs.
- Closely monitor early progress.
 - Be ready to switch a kid that is clearly not suited for their instrument.
 - Make tutoring time available for those that are struggling early.
 - Hire private lesson staff to work with those that having trouble.

Retaining Beginners

Recruit your 6th graders!

- It takes a long time to develop loyalty, but it can only take one bad experience to lose it. Provide positive experiences in your class room.
- Social experiences that set your group apart.
 - Band hall is a special place for band students.
- Rewards
 - Social events.
 - Band Bucks.
 - Visible recognition.
 - Badge Lines.
- Keep them looking ahead to what's to come in following years.
 - **"When** you are in band next year you will..." Never say "if."
 - Highlight activities that are only available to 7th graders.
 - Parties.
 - Banquet.
 - HHS Game.
 - Special performances. (UIL, Meyerson.)
 - Class activities, (Jar of Doom, Wheel of Fortune, March Madness.)
- Above all, teach them how to be good players and band members.
- As in every level, know the following:
 - When do the counselors explain course options?
 - When do the students receive their selection forms?
 - When are the forms due?
 - What opportunities do you have to showcase your program?
 - Printed materials.
 - Video descriptions.
 - Parent meetings.
- Tell your students that you want them to continue, that they are wanted.
- Prior to turning in forms, or making decisions...
 - Give them the "Be in the Band Speech."
 - Put together a video or PowerPoint that shows them how different band is in the 7th grade.
 - Also point out how band is the same.
 - Remind them about how far they have come- and what they have to look forward to.
 - Communicate to parents these differences in emails, or open house.
 - If quitters are influencing good kids, encourage kids to make their own choices.
 - Check the pulse of the kids.
- Explain to kids that they can be in athletics, pre AP, club soccer, etc. and be in band.
 - Some electives can be taken at any time.
 - Beginning band is just the start.
- Once course selection sheets are in, fight for the good ones that got away.
 - Make sure that they know they are wanted and needed.
 - Make a "top ten" list of kids to contact.
 - Talk to parents. They may not know how good their student is.
 - "I am worried that you will miss this 6 months from now."
 - Choosing another elective adds homework time.
 - Keep having those conversations, especially after a successful spring festival, etc. Keep the door open.
 - But don't be too heavy handed or forceful... those can backfire on you.
- Keep them active in the summer.
 - Kids who get to a camp are more likely to stay in band.
 - Promote summer lessons.
 - Stay in touch.

Retaining Your Older Kids

Retaining 7th graders- The critical year.

- Help your kids through the transition from 6th to 7th.
 - As 1st day approaches some start to panic as they look at all their activities.
 - Assure them that you will assist them and help them to be able to do it all.
 - Kids who make top band can “freak out” when they get the region music, have more important chair tests, etc. Communicate with kids *and* parents.
- Most will start deciding if band is just a “middle school thing” during the 7th grade.
- High School Band awareness and visibility so important. (More on that when discussing 8th.)
- Keep them thinking ahead about 8th grade.
 - “**When** you are in band next year you will...” Never say “if.”
 - If not in top band, promote top band activities, accomplishments. (Top band only performs at elementary school, for example.)
- Know when counselor conversations about 8th grade courses start.
 - Know what HS credit courses are offered.
 - Find out how kids might benefit from delaying a HS course until HS.
- Again tell your students that you want them to continue, that they are wanted.
- Prior to turning in forms, or making decisions...
 - Give them “The Be in the Band Speech,” 7th grade edition.
 - If needed put together a video or PowerPoint that shows them how 8th grade and HS band can be different than 7th grade.
 - Communicate to parents these differences in emails, or open house.
- Continue to encourage the kids who have not signed up. Keep all the doors open.
 - One on one TLC is more important at this level.
 - Be real with the kids about their athletic prognosis.
- Give words of encouragement at the end of the year audition.
- Promote summer activities.

Getting 8th graders to the 9th Grade

- High School Band Awareness and visibility.
 - HS Directors- Kids need to know who they are. In a positive way😊
 - Bulletin boards.
 - HS Band achievement banners.
 - Show the HS halftime or drumline shows when you are absent.
 - MS pep rally- Have the drumline, color guard, or HS band members perform.
 - Point out your alumni successes.
 - Advertise HS performances.
 - Combined performances.
- Make sure that you and the HS directors know the following:
 - When do the counselors explain course options?
 - Have the HS directors draw up sample 4 year plans for every sport and degree level.
 - Is there a parent meeting or open house for HS programs to promote their courses?
 - Have a middle school director there to increase comfort level, facilitate dialogue.
 - When do the students receive their selection forms?
 - Make sure that they know what to write down for band.
 - When are the forms due?
 - Have HS directors available around that time.
 - “You are wanted and are important to us.” A simple but powerful message.

- Dispel the fears
 - Kids often think they can't march.
 - They think marching won't be fun.
 - They fear the time involved.
 - They think they can't do sports and band.
 - They hear more from kids that quit than kids that continue.
- Promote the positives
 - On your first day of school you will instantly have 250 friends.
 - HS Band kids look out for each other. High school can be scary. Band is familiar and safe.
 - HS Band kids tend to be high academic achievers.
 - Colleges look positively at band kids. They want kids that can work with others and not just crack open a book.
 - You need a group to belong to in HS. Band is the biggest and best.
 - You will develop deep and lasting friendships in HS Band. The kind that last a lifetime.
 - Did you have fun at middle school night? You get to do that every Friday!
 - Fun overnight trips to fun places.
 - Opportunities to really learn how to play your instrument and truly see what your potential is.
 - Opportunities to get college scholarships.

Other Ideas

- Combined middle school/HS rehearsal prior to school.
 - Get ready for the MS visit to a football game.
 - Chance for HS students to interact with middle school. (More important than director interaction!)
 - HS students can lead sectionals, have fun, and teach the ms kids the section rituals.
 - Put all kids together for rehearsal at end.
 - Cook-out, ice cream social, something fun at the end.
 - Relationships can be developed further at the football game.
- MS attend HS Football game.
 - This one event can sell 7th and 8th graders on HS band more than any other.
 - Teach MS kids HS tunes to play along in the stands.
 - Have HS kids come down or create video to teach stand rituals.
 - Encourage your kids to "let their hair down." (If that's what the HS kids do!)
 - Perform on the field. Walk out (run!) turn around and play a tune with all MS and HS kids. Something fun and easy. It's a big audience and big sound!
 - Try to build in some social time with the HS kids before or after the game.
- Band Buddies
 - Assign HS kids a "Band Buddy."
 - HS kids write letters to their 8th grade buddies.
 - 8th graders can write back.
 - Several times a year.
 - Discourage form letters if writing to more than one 8th grader.
 - Make an appearance at middle school functions wearing band jackets, etc.
 - They need to hear positive messages from HS kids who love band.
- HS Event awareness
 - Make a big deal about contests coming up.
 - Brag about HS achievements.
 - Have HS Band kids play at your school.
 - Organize a trip to a marching contest.
 - Have kids assist at HS concerts.
 - Wear your HS swag.

- HS Director Visibility
 - MS kids, especially 8th graders, need steady, positive contact with HS directors. (Coaches are good at this.)
 - Pull out sections during rehearsals.
 - Teach a beginner class.
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- Little things that can make a difference.
 - Make marching instruments available in your band hall.
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- Promote Your Band
 - Successes.
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Please contact us if you have any questions.

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Nathan Cooley
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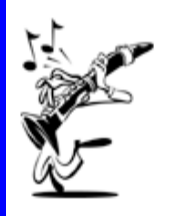
Jason Tucker
Rice MS
Jason.Tucker@pisd.edu

Sample Documents

Arbor Creek Middle School

Come Try The Instruments!

We will have several days set aside when you can try the instruments. These “Try the Instruments Nights” will give you a chance to try 3 of the instruments that you think you might be interested in. You can sign up to do this at the 5th grade parent night, or have your parents call us. Please come and try the instruments—
It’s fun!



www.arborcreekband.org

www.arborcreekband.org



ARBOR CREEK BAND!

How to join or just find out more!!!

- *Set up an 15 min. appointment to try the instruments on one of these dates: Feb. 27,29 March 1, 3 and 7.
- *Think about three instruments that you would like to try. Keep an open mind. The directors will help you pick the one that is just right for you.
- *Visit www.arborcreekband.org and click on the future band member page. There you can listen to all the instruments.
- *You can sign up for an appointment at the parent meeting. After that call or email Jodi Rosen to schedule a time to try the instruments: rosenj@lisd.net
- *Mark “Band” as your first choice on the registration form that you’ll get from a ACMS counselor.
- *There will be a meeting in May to discuss rental fees and supplies needed for band. Financial assistance is available.

Everything you always wanted to know about the...

ARBOR CREEK BAND!



Look inside to find out about the cool instruments you can play and the fun things you'll get to do next year in band!

You can be in Sports, Athletics and other activities and be in the BAND, too!!

Many of Arbor Creek's Band members are in activities like football, volleyball, basketball, track, student council, cheerleading, and more!



You'll have friends in BAND!

Not only will you enjoy making music during class and at concerts with people you know, you'll also have fun with them going to contests and other fun activities. This year we have around 350 students in our band program!



Band is fun and achievable!

Even if you have never played an instrument before you can still be in band. We'll teach you everything you need to know.

No experience is necessary—

YOU CAN DO IT!

Instruments available to play in the 6th grade:

Flute

Oboe

Bassoon

Clarinet

Alto Saxophone

Cornet (Trumpet)

French Horn

Trombone

Euphonium (Baritone)

Tuba

Percussion

Visit our website at
www.arborcreekband.org
to learn more about these cool
instruments!
You can Be Successful in Band!

The Arbor Creek Band has a long tradition of success, from winning outstanding band with the 6th grade bands at the Sandy Lake Festival to consistent first division trophies at UIL Contest and other festivals with the 7th and 8th graders. In addition, the ACMS 2011 Honors Band placed 5th in the T.M.E.A. State Championships! Add to that the fact that the Hebron H.S. Band is one of the best bands in the country, it's easy to see that our kids have a lot of chances to experience success in our band program.

Join the Band!



Contact the Band Directors:

Marty Nelson

nelsonme@lisd.net

972-350-2587

Kim Cooley

hawbaker-cooleyk@lisd.net

972-350-2588

ACMS Band Instrument Appointment Info

Thanks for signing your student up for a “Try the Instruments” appointment!
Here is some information about what we will be doing and what happens next 😊

- We will work with your student for 15 minutes or so to find an instrument that they are interested in and physically suited for.
- It's important that the student is physically suited to play the instrument that they will play in the 6th grade. Students who are not suited to their instrument do not do well in the long run and so do not continue. For example, a student with full lips may not do well on trumpet but be brilliant on trombone. A student who has trouble making a sound on a flute might find the clarinet easy to make a sound on. Initial success on forming and embouchure and making a sound are often good indicators of success in the 6th grade.
- Today we will be picking the instrument that your student will play next year should he/she elect to take band. We are obviously hoping that they will! When your student signs up for band, we will tell the counselors what instrument class they need to be in. In the 6th grade our beginner classes are scheduled by instrument.
- Some students will need to have two choices. Students who end up having saxophone as their first choice will need to have a second choice picked out. At the end of all the appointments we will look back at our notes and pick the 15 students that would be best for saxophone. The others will get to play their second choice. (They are all fun to play!) We inform everyone about our choice via email.
- Students that are interested in percussion will be given a basic screening test tonight to determine if they should come to the separate percussion tryout on March 7. If your student is interested in percussion, be sure to tell the director that is working with you today.
- In May, we will email you information on how to obtain an instrument, suggested instrument brands, and more! There will also be an instrument drive May 22th from 5:00-7:30PM at ACMS. This will be a convenient way for you to make arrangements to secure your students instrument and supplies for next year. Financial assistance in acquiring these items is available for those that need it.
- If your student is interested in learning a band instrument, the 6th grade is the year to do it. That is the only year that we have beginning band.
- We have some instruments start before school begins so that they can get a head start. These instruments are oboe, bassoon and clarinet. These will take place in the morning the week of August 13-17.
- Thanks so much for coming to find out more about band. We are looking forward to a great beginner band next year!

Marty Nelson
nelsonme@lisd.net

Try the Instrument Appointments Frequently Asked Questions

1. Instruments that are available to play in the 6th grade are Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Clarinet, Alto Saxophone, Cornet (Trumpet,) French Horn, Trombone, Euphonium, Percussion.
2. Tonight you will be signing up for an appointment so that your student can try a couple of the instruments that they may be interested in. It's a fun process for the students and the parents!
3. If your student is unsure about what instrument they would like to play, we can give them ideas and help guide them to the instrument they are best suited for. You can also visit the band website at www.arborcreekband.org. Find the "Future Band Members" tab on the left margin and click "Instrument Selection Guide."
4. You will receive a card showing your scheduled appointment. We will also send you an email reminder about the appointment.
5. Please be sure to let us know ahead of time if your student is sick the night of their appointment. This contact info is on your appointment card.
6. Appointments will be in the ACMS Band Hall. The ACMS Band Directors are Marty Nelson and Kim Cooley. There will also be a third Band director that will be helping us.
7. Appointments last about 15 minutes. During that time we will let your student try a couple of instruments. We will be determining which instrument your student is physically best suited for. This is the instrument that your student will play next year should they decide to choose band as their elective. (We hope they will!) the 6th grade is the only year that we offer beginning band.
8. Students may be able to do Band and Choir in the 6th grade. If a student has played an Orchestra instrument prior to the 6th grade, the student may be in both Band and Orchestra. Students may also take Discovery and Band.
9. PERCUSSION: Students that are interested in percussion will sign up for a 15 minute appointment with one of the ACMS Band directors and will also register for the Percussion tryouts on Wednesday, March 7. If the student passes his/her screening for percussion at the initial 15 minute interview, he/she will be cleared to attend the March 7 tryout with Mr. Baldwin, the Hebron Cluster Percussion director and teacher of the ACMS Percussion class. The percussion class is limited to about 10-12 students each year. Students interested in Percussion will need to have a 2nd choice for an instrument in case they are not selected for percussion. (All the instruments are fun to play, so it's a win-win situation!)
10. There are some limits on numbers of students on certain instruments depending on the type of instrument or the size of the room where the class is taught.
 - a. Flute: This class needs to be limited to about 16 students.
 - b. Oboe: We are limited to a maximum of 3 students.
 - c. Bassoon: No more than 5 on this instrument.
 - d. Saxophone: We limit this class size to about 15.
11. If you already own an instrument that your student is interested in playing next year, please bring it with you to the appointment so that we can look it over.
12. Thanks for your patience as we get everyone scheduled tonight. If you have any questions while you are waiting in line, flag down Mr. Nelson and he will try to help you!
13. You will receive additional information about band, instruments and more at your student's appointment. Feel free to email Marty Nelson at nelsonme@lisd.net with your band questions. For appointment scheduling questions, please email Jodi Rosen at rosenj@lisd.net.

Thanks!!

Band in the 7th Grade

Everything you always wanted to know about Band next year!

FULL BAND EVERYDAY!

- No more like instrument classes. You haven't really been in "Band" yet.
- Flutes, oboes, bassoons, clarinets, bass clarinets, alto, tenor, bari saxes, trumpets, horns, trombones, euphoniums, tubas and percussion meet all together everyday!
- Your friends that are in other classes right now will be in your class next year.
- Full band is more fun and sounds cool!

Full Band!!





MORE PERFORMANCES!

- Performing is what being in Band in the 7th grade is all about!
- The number of performances that you will do is more than double the amount that you do in the 6th grade.
- 6th grade performances: Fall Recital, Winter Concert, Sandy Lake, Spring Concert, Solo Contest

Performances in 7th Grade

- Pep Rallies (3 or 4)
- Football Game
- HHS Halftime Show
- District Band Try-out
- District Band Concert
- Region Band Try-out
- Region Band Concert
- Winter Concert
- Solo Contest
- Pre-UIL Concert
- UIL Concert and Sight Reading Contest
- Sandy Lake (Concert)
- Eisemann (Sym, Honors)
- Murchison (Honors)
- Spring Concert
- Elementary Concerts (Honors)
- 5th Grade Tour (Honors)
- 5th Grade Parent Night (Honors)

You will perform a lot in the 7th
Grade!



MORE COMPETITION!

- Opportunities for competition will also be greater next year.
- The Honor and Symphonic Band students attend more contests than the Eagle Band.
- These contests provide chances for both group and individual recognition.
- The students also have an opportunity to sign up for challenges and participate in chair tests throughout the year.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES.

- **Next year, students can develop their leadership skills by being first chair, a section leader, or a Band officer.**



Washington

MORE CHALLENGING MUSIC!

- As our seventh and eighth graders improve they get to work on music that is more challenging and fun to play.
- We have been training you all year to be ready for all the fun music you'll get to do next year.
- You do not have any more scales to learn next year!
- And since they have a greater number of performances, they learn many more pieces of music.
- In the 7th grade we don't play out of the essential elements book any more...
- ...We play full band pieces everyday!

Some of the Full Band Pieces Performed by the Honors Band last year...

- ACMS Fight Song
- HHS Fight Song
- Frankenstein
- Let's Go Blue
- Iron Man
- Eat Em up Hawks
- The Hey Song
- Land of 1000 Dances
- Star Spangled Banner
- Winterwinds
- Santa Loves to Cha-Cha
- Snow Day
- Frosty the Snowman
- Trombones on the Husetop
- Jingle Bell Rock
- Ukrainian Bell Carol
- America the Beautiful
- They're Off
- A Longford Legend
- Intermezzo
- All District/Region
- 4 Spring Concert Pieces

MORE FUN AND SOCIAL!

- Having full band everyday, performing more often on challenging music and being able to compete more makes band in the seventh grade more interesting and enjoyable.
- Opportunities for social activities are also more numerous. We have pizza parties after rehearsals. Go to out to lunch after contests.
- Amazing Jakes after Eisemann Contest.
- Halloween Party
- Students have a good time going to competitions and our annual trip to Hurricane Harbor!

MORE FUN!



Band Next Year

- YOU CAN BE IN SPORTS, ATHLETICS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES AND BE IN THE BAND, TOO!
- Many Band students are in activities like football, volleyball, basketball, tennis, track, cross country, student council, cheerleading, yearbook staff, and more!
- YOU CAN TAKE Pre-AP AND BE IN THE BAND.

7th and 8th Grade Bands

- There are currently 3 bands for 7th and 8th graders.
- Honors Band: mostly 8th with some advanced 7th graders.
- Symphonic: 7th and 8th graders.
- Concert: mostly 7th graders.
- How do we choose?

End of the Year Test/Audition

- Every 6th grader will play an end of the year test/audition.
- This test will determine your grade for the 6th 6 weeks and your placement in band next year.
- The test takes place at the end of May.

How do we determine which band you make?

Playing Ability

- Scales from memory
- Etude
- Sight Reading

Responsibility

- Citizenship
- Attitude
- Eligibility
- Practice Records

Some Final Thoughts

- Band is more fun in the 7th grade.
- We want you to continue. We've been training you all year to get you ready for all the performances and competitions that we will do next year!
- You really haven't been in a "band" yet. That's what next year is all about!
- Band is a great group to belong to! Especially in high school!
- We will work with you to help you do all the other activities that you want to be a part of.
- Make a decision about your musical future based on your feelings about playing your instrument and music. Don't just do what others are doing. Think for yourself!
- There is so much for you to discover about playing your instrument! You have just scratched the surface!

Your Future in Band Could be...

- Lots of performances and concerts in middle school.
- Individual recognition at region band and solo contest.
- Lots of rewards and parties in middle school.
- Exciting marching band performances in HS.
- Opportunities to make the All-State band.
- Fun overnight trips.
- The Hebron HS Band is one of the best HS bands around! Consistent State Marching Finals placement. TMEA 5A State Honor Band 2011. Chicago Midwest Performance 2010.
- The HS Band is a lot of fun. You'll belong to a great group and have a lot of friends. They do a lot of social things together 😊
- A College scholarship to play your instrument.
- A lifelong ability to play music and get enjoyment from playing an instrument.

6th graders

Hi!

Your student is now considering what electives to take next year, and I wanted to send you some information about band.

Mrs. Cooley and I want to continue to be a part of your student's music education. We love being around the kids for three years and getting to see the growth that they achieve. And being in band in the 7th grade is totally different than what they experienced last year. It doesn't even come close. Plus they can do athletics and the other courses that they want and continue to discover their potential on their instrument.

I'm sure my parents said the same thing about my generation, but sometimes I feel that students are too quick to move on to the next thing. There is something to be said for getting the depth of experience that comes with sticking with something and seeing it through, at least past the fundamental level, which is where our beginners are getting to now. We have so much more that we want to teach them and show them, many things that are non-musical but which play an integral part of what we do in the 7th and 8th grade. Ideas like teamwork, responsibility, respect and the pride in putting in hard work towards a goal and then reaching it. The PowerPoint I am attaching explains a lot about the differences between this year and next.

Please let me know if you have any questions. We are looking forward to next year!

7th grade

Hi!

Mrs. Cooley and I just wanted to take a moment to let you know that we hope that your student will elect to continue to be a part of the ACMS band program next year. Their contributions have been wonderful this year and we are looking forward to all that they can achieve in the 8th grade.

Next year your student can look forward to more challenging music, expanded region and district competition opportunities, and more. The 8th grade year is where we see the students mature a lot as a musician, and really begin to develop leadership skills.

We hope that your student has plans to continue with us next year and continue on to the 9th grade. There is no time or the space in this email to say how great a program the Hebron Band has and all the wonderful opportunities that await your student there!

Thanks so much for having such great kids!

8th graders

Hi!

Just a reminder that the 8th graders have the orientation tonight at HHS. Please have them come by the band booth to check in with us and get some info from the HHS Band directors. I have attached a letter from Mr. Sealy.

Since it's that time of year when your student is deciding what to do next year in high school, I thought I'd send a note to encourage your student to be in the Hebron HS Band as a freshman.

We hope that your student will decide to be a part of the Hebron Band next year. High school band is a lot more fun than middle school. As they develop and progress through their high school years they learn so much more about their instrument and music performance. They also learn music much faster and play much more challenging and interesting pieces. Your student has worked to develop their musical talents for the last three years. It would be a shame not to discover what the possibilities can be in high school.

The social aspect also is an important part of their experience in the Hebron Band. The freshman band students will already belong to an amazing group when they experience their first day of school. As they navigate that 1st year of high school they'll have a built in support group to help them along the way. To this day, some of my best friends are people that I got to know through my high school band.

Some students may have some apprehension about marching band. I tell them that it's like any other skill. They didn't know how to play their instruments prior to the 6th grade. Ms. Cooley and I showed them step by step what they needed to do. Marching Band is no different. Mr. Sealy, Daffinee and Saldana will teach them all they need to know! I have played in a lot of wonderful performances so far in my life. My most favorite have been in marching band:-) Yes, the marching season can be time intensive. But the excitement of the performances, the pride the students take in what they are doing, and the camaraderie the students feel makes it an experience like no other.

Back when my son was an 8th grader, we fretted about what pre-AP classes to take, etc. That 8th grade orientation meeting with discussions about essays, financial planning, class rank and career decisions made me a little anxious! Now I can reflect back on the wonderful things he has accomplished and done as a member of the Hebron Band. He has accomplished all those things and been able to do very well in his core subjects. He was in the top 10% of his class, which was when we were planning for college. I only bring that up to show that students can do band and achieve their academic goals. (Fun fact to know- In 2011 the state SAT average was 1462. The Texas All State Symphonic Band average was 1915!)

The HHS Band really is a family. The kids have a great time together and look out for one another. The band parents work together to help make things run smoothly. It's a community that I think you and your 9th grader will enjoy being a part of.

I really enjoy teaching band because I get to work with the students for three years and then follow their progress for another four in high school. I hope your student will be in band as a freshman and discover what the Hebron Band has to offer them. I can't wait to see them in their marching uniforms next fall!

Sincerely,

Marty Nelson

Sample Documents

Heidrick Middle School

JOIN HEDRICK BAND

This year every single 5th grader has a chance to be in Fine Arts.

Check us out at www.hedrickband.com

There is a special 5th grader section with info and sounds of all the instruments. Join our group on facebook. Search for Hedrick Middle School Band Official.

Samuel L. Jackson and Ewan McGregor
French Horn

Recently you heard the Hedrick Middle School Band. Surely you heard an instrument that you would like to play. If you are unsure which instrument you want that is ok. Just come to instrument selection night and you will be able to try several instruments out. Each student should choose their top 3 instruments, and the band directors will help the student to decide what best fits both the student's desire and natural ability.

This instrument selection will take place at an appointment with a band directors. Please call Kaye at 469-713-5188 to set up a time. Parkway ES students will select instruments on February 16 and Hedrick and Vickery students will select instruments on February 21.



Dirk Nowitzki
Saxophone

We start from scratch—no prior experience or knowledge is necessary to join the band. We will teach you everything you need to know.

Being in band costs MUCH LESS than most people think—it's easy when you use the monthly payment plan.

On average, students who participate in school music organizations score **89 points higher on standardized tests like the SAT** than students without musical coursework.

WILL I HAVE TO GIVE UP ANY OTHER ACTIVITIES FOR BAND?

NO! Not only is participation in other Hedrick M.S. organizations possible—it is highly ENCOURAGED!! Most of the students in Athletics, Cheerleading, NJHS, FCA and many other activities are in the band.

Many of the skills each student will learn in band (teamwork, group accountability, etc.) will be GREAT assets toward their participations in athletic programs or any other organization.

In fact, many great athletes, actors, professional musicians, and politicians were active in band.



Gwen Stefani
Singer
Flute



Brandon Routh
Actor/Superman
Trumpet



HEDRICK WRANGLER BAND

WHAT IS BAND ALL ABOUT?

High Standards

- There are currently over 250 students in the HMS Band Program.
- Hedrick Bands have received Superior Ratings at UIL Concert/Sightreading Contest for over 30 years. They have also earned the Best in Class award at the Myerson Symphony Center, Murchison Performing Arts Center, Sandy Lake FunFest and various other festivals through out the Metroplex.
- Twenty Hedrick students earned spots in the All-District and All-Region bands out of over 2500 students auditioning.

Life Skills

- While in band, students will learn not only how to perform on a musical instrument, but they will also learn the essentials of teamwork, self-motivation, self-discipline, individual responsibility and social skills
- The Hedrick band directors strive to provide a supportive and encouraging environment, develop positive attitudes and emphasize high standards and accountability

SIGN ME UP!

3 simple steps to joining the wrangler band.

1. Sign up for band on your schedule card.
2. Return your schedule card to your 5th grade teacher.
3. Call Kay at 469-713-5188 to schedule an appointment to be fitted for an instrument on February 16 for Parkway ES or Feb. 21 for Vickery and Hedrick ES. There are a limited number of spots on some instruments, and they are filled on a first come first serve basis according to each child's request and abilities.

CAN I AFFORD IT?

Absolutely!!!! We have scholarships available.

We also are fortunate to have a local music store that offers

- Discounts on the purchase of an instrument.
- Monthly payment plans.
- Instrument rental plans perfect for the beginner who may be "experimenting" with their commitment to something new. The rental program protects you from investing in an instrument while not being 100% sure your child will continue their band instruction.
- We also have school owned-instruments of all kinds. **Every kid can be in band regardless of cost. We will not turn away anyone.**

Future Opportunities

- A recent survey states that **music majors have the highest rate of admittance to medical school**, a whopping 66.7%. Biochemistry the subject area closest related to medicine, has a rate of 59.2%
- 70% of the nation's major universities report that participation in a musical organization is a higher consideration than standardized test scores for admission decisions.
- Music students always **outperform non-music students on achievement tests in reading and math**. Because of their study of music, their skills are better in reading, anticipating, memory, listening, forecasting, recall and concentration.
—B. Friedman

What do you do in 6th grade band?

In 6th grade band you get to meet with a class that you picked! You will get to choose this class with your friends rather than the school choosing your classes.

Perform music in class every single day.

You also get to perform at up to 5 different concert events.

There are chances to go to fun competitions as a soloist or with the entire band at Sandy Lake.

We learn fun games like Note Name Twister and Rhythm Baseball.

You will play your first concert in October!

Hedrick Middle School

Future Band Member

Information Sheet

Student Name: _____

Student ID #: _____

Parent(s) Name: _____

Parent Email Address: _____

Please describe any previous musical experience your child has had:

Other helpful information: (Gifted and Talented class, Honor Roll, Special Education, Dyslexic, etc.)

Please indicate three instruments that interest you:

___ Flute

___ Cornet (Trumpet)

___ Oboe

___ French Horn

___ Bassoon

___ Trombone

___ Clarinet

___ Euphonium

___ Saxophone

___ Percussion

Instrument Selected: _____

Director Signature: _____

Congratulations _____, you have selected the _____!!

Please go to Music & Arts to set up your instrument rental and to order you supplies for class
before the 1st day of school.

Music & Arts is located at:

360 E. FM 3040 #820, Lewisville, TX 75067 (next to Christina's Mexican Restaurant),

Their phone number is (972) 315-8400 .

Questions: Email us at cooleyn@lisd.net or flanaganj@lisd.net. Or call: (972) 350-8942

Welcome to the Hedrick Band!!!

Congratulations _____, you have selected the _____!!

Please go to Music & Arts to set up your instrument rental and to order you supplies for class
before the 1st day of school.

Music & Arts is located at:

360 E. FM 3040 #820, Lewisville, TX 75067 (next to Christina's Mexican Restaurant),

Their phone number is (972) 315-8400 .

Questions: Email us at cooleyn@lisd.net or flanaganj@lisd.net Or call: (972)-350-8942

Welcome to the Hedrick Band!!!

Sample Documents

Rice Middle School

RICE MIDDLE SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

SIXTH GRADE MUSIC INFORMATION

RICE RAVEN MUSIC STAFF

JASON TUCKER—BAND DIRECTOR AND DEPARTMENT CHAIR

ROB CHILTON—ASSOCIATE BAND DIRECTOR

DAVID LIPE—ASSOCIATE BAND DIRECTOR

JENNIFER ALARCON—CHOIR DIRECTOR

DANA KELLY—ASSOCIATE CHOIR DIRECTOR

BARBARA FOX—ORCHESTRA DIRECTOR

CHRISTINA HARVEY—ASSOCIATE ORCHESTRA DIRECTOR

*“The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted.”*

*William Shakespeare
From The Merchant of Venice*

Music at Rice Middle School

January 24, 2012

Dear Parents of Future Rice MS Ravens,

Welcome to Rice Middle School! This is an exciting time as parents and students prepare for the transition from elementary to middle school, and it also a time for some important decisions for each family to make about music class selection for the sixth grade year. Our goal in the Rice Middle School Music Department is to help your family make an informed decision regarding music course selection in the sixth grade. Please read through this information packet carefully, and contact one of the directors if you have any questions or concerns.

We at Rice Middle School believe that music is an integral part of a quality education. In addition to the bountiful research heralding the intellectual rewards of music education, there are numerous emotional and social benefits to the formal study of music. Students in band, choir, and orchestra learn the importance of individual achievement, teamwork, and self-discipline while working in an environment designed to promote excellence through performance. Our ultimate goals are for each student to leave our program with both a better understanding of music as an art form and a lifelong passion for enjoying quality music.

In the sixth grade, students will select one of three available music courses: **band, choir, or orchestra**. Unlike elementary school, middle school music classes meet every day, resulting in accelerated development of performance skills. All of these courses are similar in many respects, but vary according to the musical medium and other relevant details. All three of our music programs at Rice are recognized statewide and nationally for excellence. Below is a brief description of each course. More detailed information is provided in the remainder of this packet.

Band—Students enrolled in band will learn to perform a musical instrument from the woodwind (flute, oboe, bassoon, clarinet, or saxophone), brass (French Horn, trumpet, trombone, euphonium, or tuba), or percussion (mallet and drum) families. Emphasis is placed on both physical development and musical understanding. **Prior knowledge or experience is not necessary to enroll in band.**

Choir—Students enrolled in choir will learn the skills needed to sing individually and as a group in a variety of styles. Emphasis will be placed on music reading and correct vocal technique. **Prior knowledge or experience is not necessary to enroll in choir.**

Orchestra—Students enrolled in orchestra will learn to play a string instrument (violin, viola, cello, or bass). Emphasis is placed on both physical development and musical understanding. **Prior knowledge or experience is not necessary to enroll in orchestra.**

Please read through the following pages for detailed information about each music program. Once your family has decided on your child's music elective for sixth grade, please complete the **Fine Arts Registration Card** and return it to your child's classroom teacher as soon as possible. Again, we are here to help in any way possible, so please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. Once more, welcome to Rice Middle School!

–The Rice Music Staff



Rice Raven Band



Jason Tucker, Rob Chilton, and David Lipe, Directors

January 24, 2012

Dear Fifth Grade Parents,

Welcome to Rice Middle School! As a sixth grade student, your child will have their first opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument in this school district. If you have ever heard one of the bands from the Plano ISD, you already know that our standards for quality are high, making band an excellent organization for your child. The Rice Raven Band has had a long tradition of excellence, including many successes in All-Region, UIL Contest, three state finalist finishes in the Texas Music Educators Association Honor Band Competition and recently even twice winning the National Windband Honors Competition for middle school bands. The following information will introduce you to the Rice Middle School beginning band program. We hope that you will strongly consider band as your elective music choice for next year.

Students begin band in the sixth grade at Rice Middle School. Beginning Band classes meet throughout the day in like-instrument classes. For example, all clarinet students will be in one class while trumpets meet in another and so on. Prior to a concert, we will combine the classes to give students the opportunity to play as a full band. In seventh and eighth grade, students meet as a full band on a daily basis.

There is no prerequisite for participation in the band. Students do not need to have prior experience reading music or playing another instrument. Students who have studied piano or another instrument will find that some things come a little quicker early on, but daily practice and effort are the main factors for success in band.

There are many instruments available in the beginning band, including those listed below. The directors will contact all students that have signed up to schedule interviews for instrument selection. ***Do not rent or purchase an instrument until you have met with the directors!*** The consequences of doing so can be very harmful to your child and quite expensive as well.

Available Band Instruments by Instrument Family

Woodwind: Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Clarinet*, and Alto Saxophone**

Brass: French Horn, Trumpet, Trombone, Euphonium (Baritone), and Tuba

Percussion: Snare Drum and Xylophone (All percussionists play both equally)

*Some clarinet players may also play bass clarinet in seventh grade.

**Some saxophone players may play tenor sax or bari sax in the seventh grade.

To better assist you with your decision about whether or not band is the best place for your child, we have compiled a list of the most commonly asked questions from parents and incoming students over the years. If you don't see your question here, feel free to call or e-mail. We'll be happy to explain anything for you.

How do we know which instrument to play?

Once you have signed up for band, we will schedule an interview with each student and their parents. At that time, we will consider several things to determine the best instrument for each student. The most important factors are student preferences and physical suitability to each instrument, but we must also consider instrument balance within the band. Our goal is to pair each student with the instrument that will promote the greatest chance for success and enjoyment in band.

Does band take a lot of time outside of school?

Except for a dress rehearsal just before a concert, there are no before or after school rehearsals required for sixth grade band students. Students may choose to come in before or after school for additional help or for private lessons. Students will need to practice for at least 20 to 30 minutes each day as part of their homework in band.

Do I have to buy an instrument?

Most parents rent an instrument through a local music retailer. Usually, these rental plans include an option to purchase the instrument, but these vary depending on the merchant and the parents' wishes. Some of the more expensive instruments are available from the school for a minimal yearly maintenance fee. Students using school instruments must purchase their own accessories (mouthpiece, cleaning supplies, etc.). Special arrangements can sometimes be made for families with financial need. *Financial issues should not be the primary factor in determining whether or not your child should take band.*

Can I be in athletics and band?

Although sixth grade students do not participate in athletics, many seventh and eighth grade band members also participate in our athletic teams. Many students also continue to be involved in band and athletics (including football) in high school. This is nothing to be concerned with when choosing any music class.

Does the Rice Band march at football games?

Marching band does not begin in Plano until high school. The Rice Raven seventh and eighth grade bands will play at some football games in the stands (except for our players on the football team, of course!).

What other things do band students do?

There are a number of ways to perform in the band program beyond the traditional concerts. Plano ISD band students may participate in marching band, parades, jazz and rock bands, small ensembles, symphony orchestras, solo recitals, colorguard, and more! Sixth grade beginning band is the first step toward a multitude of opportunities in music.

Are private lessons available?

Yes. Plano has a fantastic staff of supplemental music teachers available for weekly private lessons. The cost of private instruction is currently \$17.00 for a 25-30 minute lesson, and all private teachers are thoroughly screened and monitored by district staff for lesson quality and ethical practices. Private lessons are not required, however. More information is available from the directors.

Can band students win awards?

Yes. There are several opportunities each year for band students to earn recognition for group and individual accomplishments. If students do well enough in several competitions, they may win school jacket patches, medals, certificates, and trophies.

Can I play an instrument if I have asthma?

Yes. In fact, many doctors recommend playing a musical instrument as a way to strengthen the lungs for students suffering from asthma. Asthma is very rarely a concern for students wishing to join the band.

Is it true that braces make it harder to play an instrument?

No. In most cases a student that gets braces after playing for a while will just have to go through a brief adjustment period, with little or no long-term effects on their playing. Many students are not affected at all by the addition of braces. In rare instances braces may cause prolonged difficulty with playing, but there are usually options to correct this situation. The director will explain more about orthodontic issues when you come to your instrument selection meeting.

Is band fun?

YES! We work hard, but we have a great time doing it!

Again, if you have any unanswered questions about the Rice Raven Band, please don't hesitate to contact the directors by phone or email. We will also be attending the Rice informational meetings for all incoming sixth grade students, should you wish to visit at that time. Thank you, and we hope to see you in the Rice Raven Band next year!

Sincerely,

Jason Tucker
Director of Bands
(469) 752-6132
jason.tucker@pisd.edu

Rob Chilton
Associate Band Director
(469) 752-6131
rob.chilton@pisd.edu

David Lipe
Associate Band Director
(469) 752-6133
david.lipe@pisd.edu

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Rice Middle School Choir

Jennifer Alarcon & Dana Kelly, Directors

Welcome to Rice Middle School! As a sixth grader at Rice, you have the opportunity to take a music class every day, to study an instrument. Let me invite you to study your very own personal instrument: your voice! Each person's voice is unique, and as a member of the Choir Program at Rice, you will learn to use your voice to sing various kinds of music in a group of other sixth grade singers. The Choir Program at Rice currently includes Sixth Grade Beginning Choir, Select Treble Choir, Tenor-Bass Choir, A Cappella Men's Choir, A Cappella Treble Choir, and A Cappella Mixed Choir. During the spring semester, we also have the Sixth Grade Honor Choir, an extra-curricular choir of select sixth graders which meets before school, in addition to their regular choir class. In 7th and 8th grades, choir students are invited to audition for special ensembles such as our two pop choirs: Revolution and Innovation. The two pop choirs sing more contemporary music, as well as perform at pep rallies and other school and community events.

Choral singing is a vital part of each child's complete education. Ensemble music classes are one of the few classes in which students continually work toward a common goal. Each student contributes to the success of the group, and in the process learns not only musical skill but also respect for others, a spirit of cooperation, and a sense of pride and accomplishment.

All choir classes, regardless of grade level, teach and reinforce musical elements related to rhythm, melody, harmony, music history, music theory, vocal technique, and sight-singing. Melodic and rhythmic elements are taught using terminology familiar to any student who has taken elementary music in Plano ISD.

Below you will find a list of frequently asked questions about choir:

What will I learn in choir?

Each choir student learns proper singing/vocal technique. This includes appropriate breathing, posture, mouth position, diction, vowel formation, and tone production.

Sixth grade choir also provides an introduction to sight-singing skills, as students learn to read music notation and sing simple melodic ideas without assistance. In seventh and eighth grades, these sight-singing skills are relied upon to learn music in the classroom, compete as an ensemble in the annual UIL Concert and Sight-singing Festival, or compete as an individual for selection in the All-Region Choir.

What kind of music will we sing?

A variety of music is chosen each year, including music by major composers such as Bach, Handel, and Mozart, as well as music from major time periods in Music History, including Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and 20th Century music, folk songs, and spirituals. Songs in different languages may be selected, such as Latin, German, Hebrew, French, Spanish, or other languages. Finally, the choir prepares a concert each spring devised around a theme, which may include Broadway and/or Pop music. (*i.e. music from movies, Disney music, 1980's, show tunes*)

How often do we perform?

Four concerts are programmed each year: Fall, Winter/Seasonal, Pop Show and a final Spring Concert at the end of the school year. Participation in these concerts is mandatory, as performance is the culmination of classroom learning.

Do I have to try out for sixth grade choir?

No, you do not need to audition. You will be placed in a sixth grade choir class simply by signing up for choir.

Can I sign up for choir even if I wasn't in the choir at my elementary school?

Absolutely!

Is there homework in choir?

There is occasionally written work in choir. However, the vast majority of your grade will be determined based on your full participation and cooperation in class. This will include your daily posture, vocal technique, attitude, and effort. Additionally, students' sight-reading ability is tested regularly.

Do I have to sing a solo in a concert?

No, that is up to you. There will be opportunities for solo and small group singing throughout the year, but it is always your choice to audition for a large performance.

Are there opportunities for competitions and awards?

Yes! While most of these opportunities are designated for seventh and eighth grade students, in sixth grade choir the foundation is built for proper singing. In seventh and eighth grade, you may have an opportunity to compete with your choir at the UIL Concert and Sight-singing Festival, or you may compete as an individual in Solo & Ensemble Competition or audition for the All-Region Choir. As choir students progress through high school and senior high school, opportunities for competition increase, as well as opportunities for pop or jazz choir, full-scale musical productions, and state-level competitions.

If a sixth grade choir student exhibits outstanding progress and ability during the first semester of sixth grade choir, he/she may be invited to be a part of the Sixth Grade Honor Choir. This extra-curricular choir performs additional repertoire in the two spring choir concerts, and also schedules a community service performance during the spring semester.

Sixth graders also have the opportunity to sing individually for a judge in the annual Beginning Choir Solo Festival. Students will earn a rating and a medal for their performance at this April event.

We are looking forward to working with you and your student next year. Please feel free to contact Ms. Alarcon if you have any questions. Thank you for your support of the fine arts, and the fantastic music programs here at Rice.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Alarcon
Choral Director
(469) 752-6135
Jennifer.alarcon@pisd.edu

Dana Kelly
Assistant Director
(469) 752-6135
dana.kelly@pisd.edu

Rice Raven Orchestra

Barbara G. Fox, Director
Christina Harvey, Assistant Director

Dear Fifth Grade Parents,

Welcome to Rice Middle School! In the Plano school district, all sixth grade students have the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument. The Orchestra program in Plano ISD is known throughout the country as one of the most outstanding orchestra programs with a tradition of excellence for many years. We maintain that tradition of excellence today! The Rice Chamber Orchestra is the 2008 Honor Orchestra for the State of Texas! This is the best proof of the great group of students who are in orchestra. The following information will introduce you to the Rice Middle School Orchestra program and help you make a decision about your elective music choice for the 2012-2013 school year.

Students begin orchestra in the sixth grade at Rice Middle School and Beginning Orchestra classes meet every day. There is no prerequisite for participation in orchestra. Students do NOT need to know how to read music or know how to play an instrument to join the orchestra. Students who have studied piano or another instrument will find that some things may be easier for them. Effort and daily practice will help with each student's success.

Once your student has signed up for orchestra, we will contact you and we will meet to help you choose the instrument that is right for your student. Please do not rent or purchase an instrument before our meeting.

The instrument choices for orchestra are: VIOLIN, VIOLA, CELLO, BASS

When choosing your child's music elective, many questions can arise. I will answer as many as I can with this letter. If you have other questions, please do not hesitate to call, e-mail, or come to Rice to talk.

FACTS: The Violin family of instruments was developed in Italy in the 17th Century. The modern violin family consists of the violin, viola and cello, along with the double bass or string bass. The bass is actually from an even earlier family of stringed instruments called viol's.

The playing ranges of the instruments in the modern violin family overlap each other, but the tone quality and physical size of each distinguishes them from one another. Both the Violin and the Viola are played under the chin, the viola being the larger of the two instruments. The cello is played sitting down with the instrument between the knees, and its' playing range reaches an octave lower than the viola. The bass is played standing or sitting on a stool and is even lower than the cello.

The violin family are the “bowed” string instruments in the world today. There are times when they are plucked as well. They are used in classical, jazz, rock and other types of popular music, where they are often amplified or created as electric instruments. The violin is used extensively in classical music, fiddle music, country music and folk music. The bass plays an indispensable part in both classical and jazz music forms.

I hope you will consider the Orchestra Family for your Middle School music choice. We look forward to meeting you.

Mrs. Fox

Barbara G. Fox, Director
Rice Middle School
8500 Gifford Dr.
Plano, TX 75025
469-752-6137
Barbara.fox2@pisd.edu

Ms. Harvey

Christina Harvey, Assistant Director
469-752-6137
Christina.harvey@pisd.edu

Rice Middle School Raven Band

**2012-2013
Beginning Band
Parent Information Meeting**

Program Philosophy

- Success-Based
- Personal Responsibility and Ownership of Learning
- Cooperation and Interdependence
- Goal-Setting and Problem-Solving
- Tradition of Excellence

"Vision without action is just a dream. Action without vision is simply passing the time. Action with vision is making a positive difference."

-Joel Barker

Rice Middle School Band Staff

- **Jason Tucker, Director of Bands**
 - Director of Bands at Rice MS since the school opened in 1999
 - Graduate of Plano East Senior High
 - B.M.E. from New Mexico State with Distinction (French Horn)
 - M.E. from University of North Texas
 - Member: Phi Beta Mu International Bandmasters Fraternity, Alpha Chi and Golden Key National Honor Societies, Texas Bandmasters Association, Texas Music Educators Association, Texas Association of Jazz Educators, and the American School Band Directors Association
 - 2004 Rice Middle School Experienced Teacher of the Year
- **Rob Chilton, Associate Director**
 - Joined the Rice MS staff in 2007
 - B.M.E. from Southern Methodist University (Oboe)
 - Member: Texas Music Educators Association, Texas Bandmasters Association
 - 2008 Rice Middle School Beginning Teacher of the Year
- **David Lipe, Associate Director**
 - Joined the Rice MS staff in 2009
 - B.M. from Stephen F. Austin State University (percussion)
 - Member: Texas Music Educators Association

Honors and Awards

- UIL and Plano ISD Sweepstakes for twelve consecutive years (out of twelve!).
- Three-time state finalist in the TMEA Honor Band competition.
- Five times advanced to the TMEA Honor Band area finals.
- Best in Class and Best in Contest at numerous invitational festivals.
- Twice National Windband Honors Award Winner
- 97 students named to the Region 25 All-Region Band this year (67 more than any other school).
- Almost 400 students received first-division awards at solo and ensemble this year.

Cluster Band Staff

Jasper High School

- Jackie Digby, Director of Bands
- Charley Hendrix, Associate Director
- David Herring, Associate Director

Plano West Senior High

- James Hannah, Director of Bands
- Alan Brawdy, Associate Director

"The common idea that success spoils people by making them vain, egotistic, and self-complacent is erroneous; on the contrary it makes them, for the most part, humble, tolerant, and kind. Failure makes people bitter and cruel."

-W. Somerset Maugham

The Realities of Formal Music Education

- Music is a performance-based, curricular subject as well as a fine art. It is not merely an activity.
- Beginning band has a set of assessed objectives tied to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).
- Band also coexists as an activity and a campus organization.
- Band should be *enjoyable*, but is not always recreational.

Requirements Beyond Class

- Daily Practice
- Dress Rehearsals
- Concerts
- "Select Band"
- Tutorials/Objective Pass-Offs
- Friday Badge-Line Day

Curricular Goals

- Performance Proficiency
- Music Literacy
- Cultural and Historical Perspective
- Aesthetic Appreciation
- Self-Esteem Through Achievement

Practice

- Students who practice consistently and correctly will be successful in band.
- Contrary to the popular saying, practice does not make perfect. Practice makes *permanent*.
- A typical sixth-grade practice session should last about 20-25 minutes after six weeks of instruction.

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act, but a habit."

-Aristotle

Class Structure

Beginning Band classes meet in like-instrument classes in order to maximize individual student learning by focusing on specific skills required of each instrument family.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| ● Flute | ● French Horn |
| ● Double Reed | ● Trumpet |
| ● Oboe | ● Trombone |
| ● Bassoon | ● Low Brass |
| ● Clarinet | ● Euphonium |
| ● Saxophone (alto only) | ● Tuba |
| | ● Percussion |

Instrument Selection Interviews

- One-On-One Meeting Style
- Percussion and Saxophone
- Why the Report Card and Questionnaire?
- What to Expect

*"Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied over with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action."*

-William Shakespeare

Instrument Selection

- Educated versus Emotional Decisions
 - Students must be motivated to practice
 - Regardless of their initial enthusiasm, students will lose interest in an instrument that they cannot learn successfully.
- Parent Objectivity is Crucial
- The Three Critical Components of Instrument Selection
 - Preference
 - Physical Suitability
 - Ensemble Balance and Instrument Limitations

Okay, What Does it Cost?

- There are some initial supplies for each instrument (books, binders, mallets and sticks for percussion, etc.). These vary quite a bit.
- Monthly rental rates depend on the instrument and its condition.
 - Flutes, Trumpets, and Trombones are about \$40 per month (\$1.35 per day)
 - Clarinets and Percussion (Xylophone) are about \$50 per month (\$1.70 per day)
 - Saxophones are about \$65 per month (\$2.20 per day)
- More expensive school-owned instruments (oboe, bassoon, French Horn, euphonium, and tuba) are available for an annual fee.

School-Provided Instruments

- Some instruments are provided by the school. There is a fee for usage.
 - Oboe
 - Bassoon
 - French Horn
 - Euphonium
 - Tuba

Approved Instruments

- Our list of approved instruments is based on several key criteria:
 - Performance (tone, response, tuning, etc.)
 - Durability
 - Consistency
 - Value (cost vs. quality)
- We thoroughly evaluate and reevaluate makes and models of instrument each year to keep our list current.

Rented or Purchased Instruments

- Flute
- Clarinet
- Alto Saxophone
- Trumpet
- Trombone
- Percussion
 - Practice Pad and/or Snare Drum
 - Practice Xylophone or Marimba (no bell kits)

Where to Get an Instrument

- Local Music Stores
 - Provide competitive pricing
 - Know our expectations
 - Couple service with sales
 - Often package to our specifications
- Internet Companies
 - Sometimes less expensive
 - Often have to purchase accessories and substitute components separately, which may negate cost savings
 - Service can be a concern

Rental Programs

- Most local stores offer three options for obtaining an instrument:
 1. Rent with option to purchase later
 2. Purchase with buy-back option
 3. Cash discount purchases

Family Instruments

- Family instruments are sometimes a good option.
- Keep in mind that technology has changed a lot over the years, however.
- Keep in mind that just because you have it doesn't mean that your child should play it. It is one consideration among many.
- Be sure to have a director inspect any instrument you already have for quality and possible repair or service needs.

Rent vs. Purchase

- Purchasing is less expensive over time.
- Renting allows you to spend less money up front and opens up several options down the road.
 - If your child excels in music, you may wish to trade your beginner instrument in for a better quality instrument, applying a portion of your rental balance to the new instrument.
 - You can return the instrument to the music store at the end of the year if your child does not continue to participate in band beyond sixth grade.
- Some parents choose to purchase a beginner level instrument even if their child plans to upgrade later on. The beginner horn is then used as an outdoor instrument for high school marching band.

Where Not to Get an Instrument



- BEWARE OF INSTRUMENT-SHAPED-OBJECTS (ISO's)!
 - Cheap is not synonymous with bargain, value, or inexpensive.
 - Students will not succeed on a poor-quality substitute instrument
 - Mainstream department stores have begun to sell inferior toy-grade instruments claiming that they are "great for school music programs." They are not.

New versus Used Instruments

- Used costs less.
- There is always the "shiny" effect.
- Good quality used instruments often play better than new instruments
 - "Breaking In" has already happened
 - Many are trade-ins for better instruments and have been cared for very well.
- Poor used instruments may have damage that is irreparable and can impair your child's chances of success.

Other Warnings

- Instruments purchased in foreign countries often do not work well in U.S. schools. They are often set to different tuning specifications and can even use different key systems. Quality control also varies greatly in different countries.
- Always contact Mr. Tucker before obtaining any instrument that is not listed on our approved list.

Mr. Tucker's Recommendations

- Shop with a reputable dealer, preferably locally.
- Never purchase an instrument from a discount store.
- Never purchase an instrument in a foreign country.

Parent Involvement

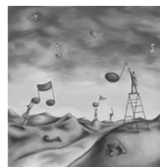
- Monitor practice
 - Weekly Assignment Sheets
 - Practice Records
 - Objective Sheets
 - Badge Sheets
- Opportunities to Volunteer
 - Limited opportunities in 6th grade due to fewer activities
 - Copying music, recording, etc.

Delivery Options

- Williamson's Music and Music and Arts Center will deliver instruments to the school if you choose for them to do so.
- If you take possession of your instrument before school begins, do not allow your child to handle the instrument
 - Damaging the instrument is probable.
 - There is a risk of developing bad habits.

CHARMS

- We use the CHARMS music management software district-wide.



CHARMS music office assistant

web-based management
for your school music office

harmony from chaos
By Thomas O'Connell
#1 in a series

- CHARMS includes many features that are helpful for parents and students.

www.charmsoffice.com

Private Lessons

- Private lessons are available.
- Private teachers are district-approved and screened for quality and safety.
- There may be limited availability.
- You may start lessons in the summer to get a "head start" if you like.
- Lessons are \$17.00 per 25-30 minute lesson for the 2011-2012 school year.
- Lessons are held once per week.

SmartMusic

- SmartMusic is a powerful practice and assessment tool that students can purchase as a subscription at home.
- SmartMusic contains all of the lines from our *Accent on Achievement* method books.
- We plan to demonstrate this program at our fall Open House for you, however, you can check it out at www.smartmusic.com

Are there any questions?

Please ask about anything we may have overlooked.

We will also be able to answer individual questions after the conclusion of the presentation.

Contacting the Directors

Jason Tucker, Director
jason.tucker@pisd.edu
(469) 752-6132

Rob Chilton, Associate Director
rob.chilton@pisd.edu
(469) 752-6131

David Lipe, Associate Director
david.lipe@pisd.edu
(469) 752-6133



Rice Raven Band

To the parents of:
<Name>
<Address>
<City, State, ZIP>

Your scheduled meeting time is:
<Date>
<Time>

June 15, 2012



Dear Rice Raven Band Members and Parents,

Welcome to the Rice Raven Band! We hope you are very excited about becoming a Rice Raven and are looking forward to learning to play a musical instrument in sixth grade. We are certainly excited about meeting you and selecting your instrument for next year. There is much to be done in preparation for your first year in band, so please read the following information very carefully and contact the band directors if you have any questions.

First of all, we will be holding a very important parent meeting to go over critical information and answer questions regarding your child and the Rice Raven Band. This meeting will be held in the Rice Middle School Cafeteria on **Tuesday, February 21st**. The meeting will begin at **6:30 PM** and should take a little less than an hour. Information about the overall band program, financial issues, and the instrument selection process will be presented at this meeting.

All students entering the Rice Raven Band must attend an instrument selection meeting, even if the student has played an instrument before. Instrument selection meetings will take place on February 24th and 25th. A director will be meeting with each student and his or her parents individually to determine the best instrument for each child. **Your child's interview will be held in the Rice Raven Band Hall at the date and time listed above.** Because of the large number of students enrolled in band next year, we would appreciate it if everyone could come at the specified time. *If there is an unavoidable conflict which with your designated time, please call or email Mr. Tucker as soon as possible to schedule an alternate meeting time.*

Instrument selection is primarily based on three factors. These are considered collectively during the interview to determine the most appropriate instrument for each child.

1. **Student Preference**—We primarily consider the likes and dislikes of each student when making instrument selection.
2. **Physical Attributes**—Some students will have physical characteristics that make it easier to play certain instruments, but difficult or impossible to play others. The director will be able to identify and explain some of these to you during your interview.
3. **Instrumentation**—In order to play properly, a band must have the appropriate number of players on each instrument. Additionally, the number of instruments available may limit placement on some school-owned instruments, and scheduling needs can affect class sizes.

Some parents and students may feel a bit cautious or anxious about meeting with the band directors to decide on an instrument. Usually this is due to a misconception that the director will “force” a child to play an instrument that they do not like. Please rest assured that this is **not** the case at Rice Middle School. Although the band director does make final instrument placements, we believe in a consensus process so that everyone involved is happy with the choice of instrument for each child. The single most important issue is to make sure each child will be successful in band.

Each interview will usually take about fifteen minutes. During that time, a director will visit with each student to learn a little about his or her personality and interests. The director will also check for things like facial structure, reach, hand shape, manual dexterity, and coordination. Each student will also have an opportunity to produce a basic sound on several instruments. We encourage parents and students to be involved in this process, so please feel free to ask any questions of the director during the interview.

Included in this packet you will find a map to the Rice Middle School Band Hall as well as a listing and description of the instruments of the Beginning Band. Please look over this list to get a better idea of the instruments available. We will let you see and hold each of these instruments when we meet for your interview.

All students wishing to play **saxophone** or **percussion** must select a second-choice instrument. Due to the normally high interest in these two instruments, we will not place students on saxophone or percussion until all candidates have been interviewed. Mr. Lipe, our associate director and percussion specialist, will evaluate percussion candidates and recommend placement for those students who demonstrate appropriate aptitude. A Rice Band Director will do likewise for all saxophone candidates. Students who are not placed on saxophone or percussion will be placed on their second instrument choice. Notification will be made by mail after the process is complete. Please see the separate page on percussion for more information about this special instrument choice.

If you already have an instrument at home that you might want to play next year, be sure to bring it with you to your meeting so that the directors can inspect it for suitability and possible repair needs.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call or e-mail us. We are not usually able to answer the phone during the day, but our 24-hour voice mail will take your message, and we will return your call as soon as possible. Be sure to leave a daytime and evening number and allow at least a day for your call to be returned, since our schedule is quite hectic this time of year. **E-mail messages are usually returned more quickly.**

We are looking forward to meeting you in the coming weeks. Please let us know if we can be of any assistance. Welcome again to the Rice Raven Band!

Sincerely,

Jason Tucker
Director of Bands
(469) 752-6132
jason.tucker@pisd.edu

Rob Chilton
Associate Director
(469) 752-6131
rob.chilton@pisd.edu

David Lipe
Associate Director
(469) 752-6133
david.lipe@pisd.edu

Instruments of the Beginning Band

The Woodwind Family

Flute—The flute is the highest instrument in the beginning band. The flute is made of silver or a silver-plated brass alloy and is played by blowing across an opening in one end while fingers press keys to change notes. With its clear, penetrating sound, the flute often plays the melody in band. Some advanced flute players will have the opportunity to occasionally play the piccolo, which is an even smaller and higher cousin of the flute. Flute players should have somewhat full, even lips and be able to blow a lot of air. There will be about 16 flutes in the Rice Beginning Band.



Oboe—The oboe is a double reed instrument. This means that the player must blow through two tightly joined cane reeds instead of a mouthpiece to produce a brilliant and distinct sound. The oboe is a very special instrument, and only a select few students will be chosen to play it. Good oboe players are usually hard working and fairly independent with high grades. Good oboists are highly sought by universities and colleges, often receiving substantial scholarships. Only 5 students will be selected to play oboe in the Rice Beginning Band.



Bassoon—The bassoon is also a double reed instrument. It is the lowest member of the woodwind family and has a very dignified and majestic sound. The bassoon is one of the most specialized instruments in the band, and only a select few students will be chosen to play it. Good bassoon players are usually intelligent and often enjoy puzzles and mind-bending games. Exceptionally small hands can be problematic for the bassoon. Good bassoonists are highly sought by universities and colleges, often receiving substantial scholarships. Only 5 students will be selected to play bassoon in the Rice Beginning Band.



Clarinet—The clarinet is the most popular of the woodwind instruments. The clarinet produces a large, beautiful sound that ranges from very high to very low in pitch. Most quality clarinets are made of a special wood, called grenadilla, that only grows in the savanna of Africa. Some advanced clarinet players will also have the opportunity to play other types of clarinets, including the alto, bass, and contra-alto clarinets. This is a very versatile instrument suited for a variety of people. About 30 students will play clarinet in the Rice Beginning Band.



Alto Saxophone—The saxophone is a woodwind instrument even though it is made of brass. Most people know the saxophone as they have heard it in jazz or rock music, but the sound of the saxophone in the concert band is quite different. The saxophone's key system is similar to a clarinet, but is much more complicated. Some saxophone players will have the opportunity to play tenor or baritone saxophone after sixth grade. Saxophone players must have appropriate jaw structure, good manual dexterity, and excellent control of facial muscles. The saxophone class is limited to around 16 students in the Rice Beginning Band.



The Brass Family

French Horn—The French Horn is one of the most majestic and versatile instruments in the band. Recognized by its distinct coiled shape, the horn is often used to blend with both brass and woodwind sounds. It is also one of the most commonly heard instruments in motion picture soundtracks, and it has the widest range of any brass instrument. Horn players must have a good sense of pitch. Good horn players are highly sought by universities and colleges, often receiving substantial scholarships. 16 students will play French Horn.



Trumpet/Cornet—The trumpet is the highest and most popular member of the brass family. Recognized by its bright, clear sound, the trumpet is frequently used to play the melody. In addition to the concert band, the trumpet is used in marching band, jazz band, and the symphony orchestra. The cornet, a close cousin of the trumpet, is used in beginning band due to its warm sound and easier holding position. Good trumpet players usually have thin, even lips and are often very outgoing. About 30 students will play trumpet.



Trombone—Easily recognized by its long slide, the trombone is one of the most powerful instruments in the band. Playing primarily in the lower range of the band, the trombone is used both as a melodic and a supporting instrument. Trombones are used in virtually every type of musical group, including jazz, rock, and marching band as well as the symphony orchestra. Good trombone players should have a good ear for pitch and arms sufficiently long to reach the lower slide positions. About 25 students will play trombone.



Euphonium—Often called the baritone, the euphonium has one of the richest sounds in the band. The euphonium plays in the same range as the trombone, but its winding cone-shaped tube gives it a much darker tone. Though originally designed as a harmony instrument, the euphonium has grown to become one of the most popular band instruments for solo playing in recent years. We will select 10 students to play euphonium in the Rice Beginning Band.



Tuba—The tuba is the most important instrument in the band. It is the largest and lowest of the wind instruments, and it produces the fundamental sound upon which all others are built. Despite its relatively large size, *even the smallest student can easily handle the tuba with proper instruction*. Good tuba players are generally intelligent and assertive, with a passion for their instruments. Tuba players do not have to carry their instruments home every night, though they are welcome to if they like. Instead, they practice before or after school in one of our special practice rooms, or on their mouthpieces at home. Good tuba players are highly sought by universities and colleges, often receiving substantial scholarships. Only 10 students will be chosen to play tuba in the Rice Beginning Band next year.



Percussion

Percussion—Percussion is one of the most misunderstood sections of the band. Often referred to as the “drums”, this name is actually a very incomplete description of what is involved in the beginning percussion class. Percussionists learn to play a number of instruments, including mallet instruments like the bells and xylophone, battery percussion like the snare and bass drums, and accessory percussion instruments like the tambourine and triangle. The majority of the beginning percussion year is spent on a xylophone and a practice pad, though percussionists will have opportunities to play on a great many different instruments. The percussion class is limited to about 20 students in the Rice Beginning Band. Please see the attached information sheet for more information on percussion at Rice Middle School.



So You Want to Play Drums?

There is no “drum” class at Rice Middle School. The Beginning Band does, however, offer percussion as an instrument option. Percussion is both one of the most popular and most misunderstood beginning band instruments offered at Rice. Percussionists are musicians who specialize in instruments played by some form of striking or shaking. Beginning percussionists spend a roughly equal amount of time learning to play two basic instrument types: the snare drum practice pad and mallet percussion (xylophone, bells, etc.). In addition, beginning percussionists learn some basic techniques required to play cymbals, bass drum, and other accessory percussion instruments.

How many kids get to play percussion?

The percussion class is limited to approximately 10% of the total enrollment in beginning band. This means there will be about 16-18 students selected to play percussion this year. The exact number may vary slightly, as it will depend on how many prospective percussionists are qualified for the instrument.

What is the selection process?

Students who want to play percussion will actually go through a two-step process to select an instrument. They will first meet with the directors at their scheduled meeting time to make sure percussion is their top choice and to select a second-choice instrument if percussion does not work out for them. Then, the percussion candidate will attend a second meeting with Mr. Lipe, our associate director and percussion specialist. Mr. Lipe will thoroughly evaluate each student for percussion aptitude and consult with Mr. Tucker for final instrument placement. Students will be notified of their placement by mail. Students who do not play percussion will be placed on their second-choice instrument.

What things do you look for in a percussionist?

First of all, we want people who are excited about playing percussion!

Percussionists should mostly be able to demonstrate good rhythmic understanding and physical coordination and control. In addition, percussionists must be well behaved and hard working, since they will learn two instruments at the same time. Percussionists will need 30-45 minutes for practice each day, which is about the same or slightly more than other instruments. As with any instrument, piano experience is helpful for the percussionist, though it is not required.

Percussionists should also be willing to commit to private lessons throughout the school year. These lessons are currently \$17.00 per week for a 25 minute lesson and are taught by a professional percussion specialist who has been thoroughly screened by district staff. Private lessons can be scheduled before school, after school, or even during your band class. Due to the specialized nature of percussion, these lessons are very important, and it is also very important that the teacher be approved by our cluster directors to insure consistency with our curriculum.

What about drum set?

We do not teach beginning band percussionists to play drum set beyond basic exposure. Drum set techniques are often counterproductive to development of good technique in the early part of students' percussion study. Once our students have a good foundation in beginning percussion, we will teach some basic drum set techniques in 7th and 8th grade. All beginning percussionists do have the opportunity to learn some marching drumline techniques in the spring semester, however.

Is percussion fun?

Absolutely, if it is the right instrument for you! One thing that is absolutely true is that children love to do things that they do well. If percussion is a good choice for you and you are willing to work hard to learn it, you will get very good and have a great time doing it. While it may seem that we are almost trying to discourage students from exploring percussion as an instrument choice, the opposite is actually true. **We want excellent percussionists in the Rice Raven Band, and we want to give every child the opportunity to succeed.**

Any questions?

Jot down any questions or concerns you have about playing percussion in the Rice Band this year and bring them to your instrument selection meeting.

We're looking forward to meeting you and hope that percussion will be a good choice for you in our band!

Beginning Band Instrument Selection Checklist

Here are the steps to follow in order to have a smooth instrument selection process:

- 1. Attend the Parent Information Meeting on Tuesday, February 21st, at 6:30 PM in the Rice Middle School cafeteria.**
- 2. Complete the Beginning Band Survey on the back of this page with your child.**
- 3. Mark in your calendar the individually scheduled instrument selection meeting time listed on the included letter.**
- 4. Attend your instrument selection meeting and bring the items below.**
- 5. Reviews the paperwork enclosed in this letter so that you are familiar with the instruments and know what to expect.**

Additional information will be provided at your scheduled meeting.

What to bring to your instrument selection meeting:

- The completed Beginning Band Survey (on the back of this page)**
- Your child's most recent report card or grades printout from MyPISD.net/Parent Portal**
- Any family instrument(s) your child might be interested in playing. The directors will need to inspect the instrument.**
- Any questions you might have for the directors**

(Please fill out the back of this page)

Beginning Band Survey

Please take just a moment to answer the questions below. Your answers will be very helpful in determining which instrument will be best for you, however your answers will NOT exclude you from any instrument you are interested in playing.

Your Name: _____ Your Elementary School: _____

1. Why did you decide to join the band at Rice?
2. Do you have any prior musical experience other than your elementary school music? If so, please explain.
3. Have any of your family members played an instrument before? If so, please tell us who, what instrument they played, and for how long.
4. What activities are you involved in outside of school (sports, scouting, etc.)? How much time do you spend in these activities?
5. Which of the following best describes your residential situation?*

- We are very settled and not planning to move anytime soon.
- There is a slight chance we will move within the next three years.
- There is a pretty good chance we will move within the next three years.
- We will probably or definitely be moving soon.

*Some instruments at Rice are not available at all schools. We would like to make sure you are aware of these if you may move.

6. How will you get to and from school next year (walk, carpool, bus, etc.)?
7. Do you have any other special circumstances that we should know about?

Bring this with you to your meeting!

Rice Middle School Raven Band

Jason Tucker, Rob Chilton, and David Lipe, Directors

February 6, 2012

Dear Beginning Band Parents,

What a fantastic year we have had in beginning band so far! I hope you are as pleased as we are with the progress your child has made this year! The time will soon come for us to begin preparations for our spring concert and beginning solo contest, but even before then we must be looking ahead to next year.

As you may be aware, it is almost time for your child to select elective courses for seventh grade, and your child will soon receive scheduling information listing his or her choices for elective classes next year. With this in mind, I wanted to take a moment to tell you about the similarities and differences between beginning band classes and seventh grade performing band classes.

First however, I would like to remind you that music education is an investment in your child's future. Not only is it an enjoyable thing to learn to play a musical instrument proficiently, but also more and more research is confirming that music improves social and intellectual development in students who study music formally. Every year an increasing number of colleges and universities are giving priority to applicants with a music background for both admissions and scholarships. In our increasingly technological society, creative reasoning skills are becoming a premium commodity. Music has been shown to be one of the most effective media for developing this level of creativity. In addition, music classes tend to attract an excellent peer group for your child. These friendships are incredibly powerful and usually positive influences for students at this age.

With this in mind, consider the exciting opportunities that await seventh and eighth grade band students. Instead of the like-instrument classes in sixth grade, seventh and eighth grade students are combined to form complete bands with full instrumentation. The daily emphasis shifts from technique-building method books to literature and performance. In other words, lines out of the book are replaced with "real" music.

Seventh and eighth grade band classes are grouped based on student development and ability. This ensures that all students are challenged appropriately without being overwhelmed. Students will be placed into one of our four high-quality seventh and eighth grade bands at Rice based on both their daily performance and a live audition of prepared music. There are no "bad" bands at Rice Middle School. The following is a brief description of each of the Raven Bands:

- **Concert Band**—The Concert Bands are the standard performing groups at Rice where most seventh graders will be placed. Performance requirements are light to moderate throughout the year. Our two Concert Bands (Navy and Maroon) are equal in ability level.
- **Symphonic Band**—The Symphonic Band is an advanced ensemble designed to meet the needs of eighth grade students as well as some more proficient seventh grade musicians. The Symphonic Band will focus on musical growth through challenging literature.
- **Wind Ensemble**—The Wind Ensemble is the most advanced performance group in the Rice Band program. Comprised mostly of eighth grade students, this band is designed to meet the needs of our most skilled musicians by performing high school level literature.

In seventh grade band, students will perform more frequently and for a greater variety of events. Students will have the opportunity to play at formal concerts, pep rallies, full symphony orchestra, and band competitions. In addition, seventh grade students may compete in individual events such as All-Region Band auditions and district solo and ensemble competitions. As performances increase in frequency, playing skills will be developed more rapidly. To assist with this accelerated development, performing band students generally have a section rehearsal before or after school one day a week. This is the only regular time commitment beyond daily practice for seventh grade band students.

The basic principles of playing an instrument remain the same. Everything learned in sixth grade will be reinforced and refined in the performing bands in seventh and eighth grade. The only difference will be the emphasis on ensemble skills along with individual performance skills.

There are several other issues I would like to point out in the event that they may assist you in determining your child's schedule for next year. These are as follows:

- **Band students may participate in athletics and other extracurricular activities without any problem, even through high school.** The directors and coaches work closely together to resolve conflicts whenever they occur. **This includes students who are interested in trying out for basketball.** We have developed a system that resolves all athletic conflicts with band.
- Students with high enough reading test scores will receive a waiver for their semester of reading in seventh grade. This means that it will be possible for these students to take band, foreign language, *and* athletics in seventh grade without any adjustments.
- Performing band classes are prerequisite courses. Once a student leaves the band program, they normally cannot rejoin at a later date.
- Students that continue with band through high school may gain **two** additional elective credits as a result of the PE waiver obtained through marching band.
- Band satisfies the fine arts requirement needed in high school under the state's graduation plan.
- At the senior high, the top-performing band is an honors course, and students placed in that band receive additional grade points toward their GPA just as with any other honors class. Research also shows that, on average, band students score substantially above their non-musical peers in both GPA and standardized test scores (SAT, ACT, etc.).
- Most top universities give extra consideration to students involved in music programs. Many of our alumni have been accepted to their choice schools over their non-musical peers with higher GPA and class rank because they were members of the band.

I hope this information has been helpful as you begin to weigh your child's scheduling options for seventh grade. I am also enclosing several samples of schedules for seventh grade students to demonstrate how band fits in with other elective choices. Please remember that I am here to assist you in any way possible. Don't hesitate to call or e-mail me if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your time, and we look forward to continuing your child's music education in the 2012-2013 Rice Raven Band!

Sincerely,

Jason Tucker
Director of Bands
(469) 752-6132

Sample Seventh Grade Schedules

Schedule One – A student that has received the reading waiver and wishes to take a foreign language and athletics in addition to band.

<u>Semester I</u>	<u>Semester II</u>
Language Arts	Language Arts
Math	Math
Texas History	Texas History
Science	Science
Athletics (counts as P.E.)	Athletics
Band	Band
Foreign Language	Foreign Language

Schedule Two – A student that wishes to take foreign language and athletics (including basketball) in addition to band.

<u>Semester I</u>	<u>Semester II</u>
Language Arts	Language Arts
Math	Math
Texas History	Texas History
Science	Science
Athletics	Reading
Band	Athletics/Band*
Foreign Language	Foreign Language

**Band is removed from the schedule until basketball season ends then the schedule is changed back to band.*

Schedule Three – A student that has received the reading waiver and wishes to take an elective in addition to band.

<u>Semester I</u>	<u>Semester II</u>
Language Arts	Language Arts
Math	Math
Texas History	Texas History
Science	Science
P.E.	Other Elective
Band	Band
Other Elective	Other Elective

Schedule Four – A student that wishes to take an elective in addition to band.

<u>Semester I</u>	<u>Semester II</u>
Language Arts	Language Arts
Math	Math
Texas History	Texas History
Science	Science
P.E.	Reading
Band	Band
Other Elective	Other Elective