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WESTFIELD HIGH SCHOOL BANDS
AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN, LIVE,
AND LOVE MUSIC

Band Survival Guide



What is the Band Program?

The Westfield Band program is an award-winning program that offers students of all abilities an opportunity to learn, live, and love music. The Westfield Band has eight performance groups including the Wind Symphony, the Symphonic Band, the Concert Band, Jazz I, Jazz II, the Percussion Ensemble, the Color Guard, and Marching Bulldogs. Each of these groups has gained local, state, and national recognition in the short time Westfield has been open.

What's the Marching Band schedule?

Marching band camp begins August 11 and runs through football season. The band performs at up to 4 or 5 weekend competitions, 5 footballs games, and any playoffs games. September and October include approximately three after school or evening practices per week. (See our 2008-2009 calendar at www.westfieldband.org/iCalendar.htm. Marching music can be downloaded from the website beginning in July for personal practice over the summer.

Is Marching Band Required?

Marching band is required for Wind Symphony and Symphonic Band students and optional (but encouraged) for Concert Band students. Our 2008 show is "Exotic Impressions."

I heard Marching Band is tough...

Yes, marching band is physically and mentally challenging, but also a lot of fun! Marching band is a great way for freshman to make new friends, form relationships with upperclassmen, and become familiar with the school. It eases the transition from middle to high school. Students never forget the

Can I mix academics, sports, and band?

The class schedule at Westfield High School is made to allow these students to take a full schedule of classes (including AP) and play in one of the bands during all four years. Some sports are easier to work around than others. Since we have several "levels" of band, we are usually able to place you in the appropriate band to make things work, so you can enjoy athletics and band during your high school career!

How are high school bands recognized for superior performance? What is Honor Band?

High school bands obtain the distinction of Virginia State Honor Band by earning superior ratings at both the State Marching and District Concert Band festivals sponsored by the Virginia Band & Orchestra Directors Association (VBODA). Westfield High School as achieved this status several times since the founding of the school as shown on the outside wall of the school.

Is there a student recognition/awards program?

Students earn "points" for their participation in band ensembles, auditions, fundraisers, and other activities. Students that earn 20 or more points in a year receive a letter.

What else do I need to know?

The band website www.WestfieldBand.org has lots more information. You can also contact the Band Director or band booster president as listed on the back of this brochure.

Each of the individual music groups has their own booster organization (WHSBBO for band). WHSBBO is a 501(c)(3) non-profit incorporation, and all parents/guardians of band students are automatically members. WHSBBO volunteers provide a wide variety of administrative, logistical, physical, and financial support. Some examples include chaperoning events, running fundraisers, managing our inventory of uniforms and instruments, preparing concert programs, transporting large instruments, and collecting and processing forms and payments. We need many more volunteers and need to fill a few more leadership positions. See our WHSBBO organization chart and talk to a band parent to get involved in this tremendous organization. Band boosters also attend and cheer like crazy at all performances!

How are payments made?

Most band fees and forms are submitted to “cashiers” during the August 10 band kick-off meeting. However, there are many times during the year when you’ll need to make payments, submit permission forms, etc. Most of these are submitted to the “black box” in the band room, which is a locked, slotted box mounted to the wall of the band room just inside the main entrance.

The band program is very active –how do I stay informed?

Most communication is from the band director in class and via our band booster website (www.westfieldband.org/). Some announcements and messages are via email, so be sure to add your address(es) to our email list.

exhilaration of that first night performing to a cheering crowd under the lights!

What do I need for marching band camp?

White T-shirts, hats, sunscreen, sunglasses, and water are musts during camp - but we also we try to avoid the mid-day sun and heat. Marchers also need a 3-ring binder with non-glare sheet protectors to hold their marching drill. We do not march flutes, but rather piccolos; therefore, flute players need to rent or purchase a piccolo for marching band.

When do I get my uniforms?

Band members will be issued marching band and concert uniforms. Uniform fittings occur during band camp. They will not require alterations other than hemming.

What is color guard?

The Color Guard complements and accents the marching musicians with their colorful flags, weapons, and maneuvers. Winter Guard participates in indoor guard competitions in the winter and early spring.

Tell me about the wind ensembles...

Wind Symphony, Symphonic Band, Concert Band, and Jazz I are academic classes that begin when school begins. All band assignments and chair positions are made by audition/assessment by the director(s). Concerts are in October, December, February, and May. A spring trip is tentatively scheduled for March or April 2009. The bands typically have one additional after school or evening rehearsal per week beginning after marching band season.

What is percussion ensemble?

Percussion ensemble includes all percussionists. They typically perform in a concert in January. The percussionists in the Wind Symphony and Symphonic Band will attend these classes. Percussionists who have not been assigned to these bands will attend a separate percussion class. An advanced group of percussionists will have one after school or evening rehearsal per week beginning after marching band season.

Do I need private lessons?

Private instruction is critically important for learning the mechanics and techniques of playing your instrument – skills that are not generally covered during ensemble instruction at Westfield. However, private lessons are not required, and students who do not take lessons are not penalized in any way. You can find a list of qualified teachers at: <http://www.westfieldband.org/documents/2006BandPrivateTeachers.pdf>.

Should I upgrade my instrument?

Yes! Students often find their beginner line instruments inadequate for their level of musicianship at high school.

What are the band fees?

Unfortunately the school system doesn't provide enough funding to provide the high-quality band program we'd like. The Westfield High School Band Booster Organization (WHSBBO) was formed to support the band program, including collecting fees and fundraising. Part of the funds raised goes into the fundraising accounts to pay fees or the cost of trips. Last year's fee was \$340 for most students. Next year's fees will be determined by the WHSBBO

board of directors over the summer and will be paid at our 2008-2009 band kick-off meeting on August 10.

How much will the spring trip cost?

Spring trips typically cost between \$700 and \$900, depending on location and venue.

Are there any additional costs?

Students who are using school-owned instruments need to pay an annual rental fee of \$92 due upon receipt of the instrument. All percussion students pay an annual rental fee of \$52 due soon after school starts. Rental fees are paid directly to Westfield HS and not to WHSBBO. Marching band students will need to purchase marching band shoes (\$32). Certain wind ensemble students will need to purchase tux shirts or blouses (all other uniform items will be issued to students for use during the year). There are also occasional optional costs for items such as such as spirit wear, meals, donations, etc.

Are there fundraising opportunities?

There are many fundraising opportunities throughout the year. Students active in fundraising build fundraising account balances that cover the costs of spring trip and some of their band fees.

What are the WHSMBC and WHSBBO?

The Westfield High School Music Department (band, chorus, orchestra, and guitar) has an umbrella booster organization called the Westfield High School Music Booster Club (WHSMBC). The primary activities of the WHSMBC are joint music department fundraisers (Tag Day and Fruit Sale).