

**Decatur Central HS**  
**Winter Percussion Ensemble**  
**Organizational Handbook**  
**2023-2024**



Sam Merkling, Percussion Director

[www.dchsbands.org](http://www.dchsbands.org)



Dear Parents and Guardians,

On behalf of the Decatur Central HS Band Department, welcome to the 2024 Winter Percussion Ensemble (WPE) Season! We are excited to continue the tradition of excellence that this program has offered and are looking forward to providing a great season of learning, hard work, and great memories for your students in this ensemble.

The WPE at Decatur Central is an extracurricular opportunity that serves as an extension of the band department. Enrollment is open to any current DCHS student, or students who are a part of the middle school music program. Membership in this ensemble requires students to be committed to constantly striving for excellence. This high level of commitment and dedication is rewarded with constant success.

In this Handbook, you will find policies, procedures, and guidelines for students participating in the Winter Percussion Ensemble at DCHS. Please take the time to read the handbook in its entirety and ensure that your students understand their responsibilities. The end of this document will contain several pages, which should be signed and returned after the audition process is completed.

We wish you all Good Luck and Good Skill this WPE Season!

- Mr. Halstead and Mr. Bess

### **WPE Program Highlights**

**2005:** IPA Class A State Champion

**2008:** IPA Class A State Champion

**2008 - 2018:** WGI Semi-Finalists

**2010:** WGI Class A 7th Place National Finalist

**2013:** IPA Open Class State Champion

**2014:** WGI Class A 8th Place National Finalist

**2015:** WGI Class A 7th Place National Finalist

**2016:** IPA Open Class Bronze Medalists

**2018:** IPA Class A Concert State Champion

**2018:** WGI Class A Concert World Champion

**2022:** IPA Open Class State Champion

**2023:** WGI 12th Place National Finalist



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## WPE Program Staff

The WPE Staff will consist of the following members:

**Sam Merkling, Ensemble Director\***

Email: [Sammerkling@gmail.com](mailto:Sammerkling@gmail.com)

**Mr. Halstead, WPE Coordinator\***

Email: [chalstead@decaturproud.org](mailto:chalstead@decaturproud.org)

Phone: (317) 856-5288 x.01625

**Mr. Bess, Director of Bands**

Email: [abess@decaturproud.org](mailto:abess@decaturproud.org)

Phone: (317) 856-5288 x.01626

**Matthew Molloy, Front Ensemble Coordinator**

**Adam England, Front Ensemble Instructor**

**Isaiah Mason, Snare Instructor**

**Jonah York, Tenor Instructor**

**Dave Isaacs, Music and Sound Design**

**Cal Lennon, Drill Design**

***\*Please direct all WPE-related questions to Sam Merkling or Mr. Halstead.***

## WPE Lead Parents

**Michelle Colbert, Tim Slater, and Kristin Slater** will be serving as co-lead parents for WPE this season. These parents will be your main contact people and coordinators for volunteers, food, chaperones, uniforms, props, transportation, etc. Please make sure you have the contact information for these individuals.



## Parent Involvement

### **Contest Hosting:**

We will host three indoor contests at DCHS this Spring. Adult volunteers must help us run these contests. Each contest we run will generate about \$7,000-8,000 for the band program. These contests help keep your WPE fees low, and we need your help! Save the following dates:

**February 24, 2024: IPA Invitational at Decatur Central HS**

**March 9, 2024: ISCGA Divisional Finals at Decatur Central HS\***

**April 12, 2024: ISSMA Concert Band Contest at Decatur Central HS**

*\*WPE will be performing at Center Grove on March 9th, 2024. Please feel free to support your student on this day, but we will need your help hosting our home event.*

### **Food Donations:**

Parents have been very gracious about providing food for the members and staff of the WPE on camp days and before we leave for competitions on Saturdays. Similar to the marching season, we will graciously accept any snack/water donations to help feed our members when on the road this WPE Season. Kristin Slater will be the co-lead running point on food donations this season.

### **Semi/Transportation:**

Having a truck driver is critical! The WPE will use a box truck this season for each Saturday contest. We would like to have at least 2 parents who can drive a truck for the WPE. A performance calendar is provided in this packet. Band Booster, Inc. covers the gas money and rental of a truck (if needed). If you can drive, please contact Tim Slater, WPE Co-Lead, for more information.

### **Prop Crew:**

We will once again need parent support moving props on and off the gym floor at each contest. We will also need support building props once the designs are finalized. Parents will be contacted once we are ready to begin production.

### **Chaperones:**

Michelle Coar is the WPE co-lead who will coordinate parent chaperones and volunteers each weekend. Please be on the lookout for communication from her regarding this.



## Communication

### **Google Calendar:**

All Band and Guard department events are added to this Google Calendar. I encourage you to subscribe so that you can see all of our events in one place!

<https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0?cid=Y185MzMzMWRlYjI0ZmViYml2MDFINGJmZGVhMjAyYzE4ZWxNzliNGRmMWJkNmZkNDI2ZTI4YWMxMTcwMTA0MjdiQGdyb3VwLmNhbGVuZGFyLmdvb2dsZS5jb20>

### **iCalendar Link**

[https://calendar.google.com/calendar/ical/c\\_93331deb24febbb601e4bfdea202c18ec179b4df1bd6fd426e28ac117010427b%40group.calendar.google.com/public/basic.ics](https://calendar.google.com/calendar/ical/c_93331deb24febbb601e4bfdea202c18ec179b4df1bd6fd426e28ac117010427b%40group.calendar.google.com/public/basic.ics)

### **Slack:**

Slack is a free app for mobile devices that allows for quick and easy communication with parents and students regarding schedule information for WPE events. Please download the Slack app from the app store and use the code provided after auditions to join WPE 2024.

## Policies and Procedures

### **Attendance:**

Students who plan on marching or playing in the WPE should expect to be at all practices. Attendance is the key to our success, and WPE is one of the finest marching and concert class percussion ensembles in the state of Indiana and has received frequent recognition in the national circuit. Please communicate all absences with Sam Merkling and Mr. Halstead at least 24 hours in advance. Repeated unexcused absences will result in membership review by the Directors and potential removal from the ensemble.

### **Grade Requirements:**

Students in WPE are expected to excel in all areas, especially academically. You must pass a minimum of six classes to participate in WPE. Failure to meet these requirements will result in immediate membership suspension. Grades checks occur every other week. Academic irresponsibility is not acceptable.



### **Leaving a Contest Site with a Parent:**

Parents/Guardians wanting to take their child home from a contest site must notify Sam Merkling and sign out with a chaperone. Both student and parent will need to be present and the chaperone might ask for parent identification. The student is responsible for making proper arrangements for their uniform and equipment.

## **Fees**

The 2024 Membership Fee for the WPE Season is \$600. Once auditions are complete, and students are assigned a spot in the ensemble a payment schedule will begin to aid with payment completion. Fees are vital to the operation of this ensemble and help pay for staff, contest registration, tarps, props, uniforms, arrangements, transportation, and more.

<b>Payment Schedule (\$600 Total)</b>	
<b>Payment Date</b>	<b>Payment</b>
December 7, 2023	\$150 (Commitment Fee)
January 8, 2024	\$150
February 8, 2024	\$100
March 8, 2024	\$100
April 1, 2024	\$100

### **Assistance with Fees:**

#### **1. Contest Volunteer Credit:**

- a. Family members can earn \$100 towards their band fees for assistance with major event hosting. \$50 was earned for volunteering in the Fall, and the additional \$50 can be earned for assisting with two winter season events.

#### **2. Concession Credit (Fall Football Season):**

- a. Families can receive a credit of \$10 per football game (\$50 limit per family) for volunteering at our concession stand.

#### **3. Multi-Child Discount:**

- a. Families with two or more students involved in performance ensembles will receive a \$100 discount on fees for the second child and each additional child.



## SAT Information

### **Dates to Avoid:**

Please avoid March 9th, 2024 when scheduling your student's SAT. This is a contest day.