

HIGH SCHOOL BAND CHOIR & ORCHESTRA GUIDELINES 2026- 2027



United Independent School District Fine Arts Department

High School Band, Choir & Orchestra Guidelines 2026 - 2027

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PREFACE TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS

The Fine Arts Department has prepared these guidelines for band, choir and orchestra students as well as parents in United I.S.D.

As a member of a UISD Fine Arts program, you are joining an organization built on excellence, accountability, and pride. Membership is a privilege that carries real responsibility. These guidelines protect every student's opportunity to perform, grow, and represent this program with distinction. By signing this document, you and your family are making a commitment — to your directors, your peers, and to your program.

Additional sources of information important to each group can be found in the district's publication entitled Student Code of Conduct and Student Handbook and each group's individual campus handbook.

Should questions or concerns arise, parents and students should first contact the director of the group and then campus administration. For matters that are not resolved at the campus level, and after sufficient efforts have been made to do so, contact the Fine Arts Department at (956) 473- 7121.

PREFACE TO STAFF MEMBERS

The Fine Arts Department and United I.S.D. seeks to have uniformity across the district with band, choir and orchestra programs. These guidelines contain standard practices within the district, UISD District policy, TEA/UIIL Side by Side policies and requirements that align with employee job descriptions. It is UISD's premise that all organizations will promote and participate in University Interscholastic League (UIL) and Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) events and auditions. Participation in UIL/TMEA events will enhance each student's musical learning which in turn helps improve the performance of a musical group.

It is important to note that individual campus organization handbooks may not supersede or conflict with the guidelines set forth in this document

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Director of Fine Arts

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I. Enrollment/Participation

Students are eligible for membership in Band, Choir and Orchestra by enrollment in the class and through audition with the teacher. For advanced performing ensembles, placement will be determined by the TMEA audition results and the campus audition process (specific details are outlined in section V.) Students may only audition at a campus within their attendance zone or at a school where they have been officially approved for a transfer. A student who has been accepted for membership must maintain a full time student status as per Texas Education Agency (TEA) and University Interscholastic League (UIL) Guidelines.

High School students who are not enrolled in a band, choir or orchestra class due to academic graduation requirements may participate in band, choir and orchestra activities and events provided they meet requirements outlined below. In order to qualify and participate in the varsity ensembles (top performing group) class enrollment will be required by the director due to the difficulty level of the music that is performed. Class enrollment is also necessary since there are few rehearsals after school and students not enrolled would not have sufficient rehearsal time with the full performing ensemble. Students not enrolled in the band, choir and orchestra class may participate in the other performing and competing Non-varsity ensembles provided the following conditions have been met and which also apply to all members:

- a. Attend all rehearsals held before or after school, and on weekends
- b. Attend all performances required for their group
- c. Meet musical performance requirements established by the teacher
- d. Audition (tryout) with a director and any other requirements set forth by the teaching staff

Failure to comply with these requirements may result in demotion in chair or group placement, which may eventually lead to dismissal from the program.

II. Rehearsal/Performance Expectations

In order to maintain successful band, choir and orchestra programs whereby students are prepared musically for all events and competitions, additional rehearsals will be necessary. The rehearsals can be scheduled by either groups or sections in each program. Teachers will conduct before or after school rehearsals Monday through Friday and sometimes on Saturdays when necessary. Furthermore, students must attend all performances and competitions/evaluations scheduled for their group.

1. Rehearsals may take place on Sundays only with prior approval of the campus Principal and the Director of Fine Arts.
2. Students/Parents are responsible for remaining informed of all program schedules, updates, and announcements via all designated communication platforms (e.g., CutTime, BandApp, Google Classroom, or campus equivalents). Failure to check designated platforms does not constitute an excuse for a missed rehearsal, performance, or obligation
3. Teachers responsible for organized extra rehearsals will open and secure the rehearsal facility.

4. Students will be supervised during all rehearsals. A teacher will remain at the rehearsal or performance site until all students have left the area.
5. Students may not be released from classes to perform for community requested activities without the approval of the Principal or designee.

PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (19 TAC §76.1001, Subchapter AA)

- (a) An extracurricular activity is an activity sponsored by the University Interscholastic League (UIL), the school district board of trustees, or an organization sanctioned by resolution of the board of trustees. The activity is not necessarily directly related to instruction of the essential knowledge and skills but may have an indirect relation to some areas of the curriculum. Extracurricular activities include, but are not limited to, public performances, contests, demonstrations, displays, and club activities, with the exception of public performances specified in paragraph (2) of this subsection.
- (1) In addition, an activity shall be subject to the provisions for an extracurricular activity if any one of the following criteria apply:
 - (A) the activity is competitive;
 - (B) the activity is held in conjunction with another activity that is considered to be extracurricular;
 - (C) the activity is held off campus, except in a case in which adequate facilities do not exist on campus;
 - (D) the general public is invited; or
 - (E) an admission is charged.
- (2) A student ineligible to participate in an extracurricular activity, but who is enrolled in a state approved course that requires demonstration of the mastery of the essential knowledge and skills in a public performance, may participate in the performance subject to the following requirements and limitations.
 - (A) Only the criterion listed in paragraph (1)(D) of this subsection applies to the performance.
 - (B) The requirement for student participation in public is stated in the essential knowledge and skills of the course

Required Competitions/Evaluations for UISD Groups

1. U.I.L. Concert & Sight Reading Evaluations

High school bands, choirs and orchestras (Varsity, Non-Varsity & Sub Non-Varsity) are required to participate in the U.I.L. Concert and Sight-Reading Evaluations each year. Non-participation due to eligibility problems will require prior approval of the campus Principal and the Director of Fine Arts. Directors are to send written notification prior to the UIL Evaluation entry deadline.

2. U.I.L. Solo and Ensemble Contest

Each high school band, choir and orchestra will participate in the U.I.L. Solo and Ensemble Competition held in February.

3. TMEA All-District, All-Region, All-Area, All-State Competitions

High school band, choir and orchestras will prepare students to participate in individual competitions that are available in their specific area. These include but not limited TMEA District, Region, Area and State competitions. Other competitions are Region 9th Grade, Mariachi, Jazz, and Area Orchestra auditions. Directors will certify who must audition for these groups

4. Other Contests

- a. Organizations may participate in other contests as long as the Principal and the Director of Fine Arts approve them.
- b. All bands and orchestras will participate in the UISD Pre-UIL Band & Orchestra Evaluation. All choirs will participate in a local Pre-UIL Evaluation.
- c. Notification of all contest results should be given to the Principal and forwarded to the Director of Fine Arts on the first week following the competition.
- d. High school marching bands may enter two or more out-of-town pre or post-UIL marching contest **budget permitting. If a school wishes to enter more than two out-of-town pre or post-UIL marching contest, they may be required to fund this trip from non-district budgets.**

Parades

1. All high school bands will participate in the annual WBCA Grand Parade.
2. For the years that Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) conference conflicts with the WBCA parades, all high school bands must still participate in the parades as stated in number 1.

III. Grading/Assessment

School District/campus policies will be followed for grading and assessment of Band, Choir and Orchestra classes. Parents and students should know that these courses will require participation in extracurricular activities, performances and competitions as an expectation of class enrollment/participation. The teacher may consider the students participation in the extracurricular activity including extra rehearsals when assigning the grade for the grading period during which the extracurricular activity occurred. A student may not fail a class solely on participation in the extracurricular activity component of the class. (as per TEA-UIL Side by Side) The exception to this provision is a student who is ineligible to participate in an extracurricular activity. In this case, students shall not suffer a grade penalty for failure to participate in the extracurricular activity or public performance.

IV. Eligibility (excerpt from UIL Website)

A student who receives, at the end of any grading period...a grade below 70 in any class ...or a student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) may not participate in extracurricular activities for three school weeks. An ineligible student may practice or rehearse, however. The student regains eligibility after the seven calendar day waiting period has ended following a grading period or the three school week evaluation period....provided that he or she has earned a passing grade (70 or above) in all classes. For viewing the district eligibility calendars go to the district website under the Fine Arts department. <https://www.uisd.net/> You can also obtain additional information on the UIL Website at <https://www.uiltexas.org/>

V. Auditions, Chair & Group Placement

Group and chair (rank) placement in the various performing ensembles will be based on auditions or by director placement. All members will be required to audition so they can be placed in a performing ensemble that they are best suited for. In an effort to promote the Texas Music Educators Association All State process, high school group/chair/rank placements can be determined by the student's ranking at the TMEA's District/Region/Area tryouts, however directors may have periodic chair auditions. For those students that do not qualify for District/Region/ Area, placement or ranking will be determined by the auditions conducted at each campus. Students that were fully prepared to compete and miss the District auditions due to circumstances beyond their control, directors may take this into consideration during the campus auditions. Directors shall document the tryouts properly using audition forms and evaluate students individually. Further information may be found in the individual campus organization's handbook.

VI. Uniforms

Budget permitting, UISD will continue to provide a marching band uniform for each high school band & color guard every 7 years. Orchestra & Choir programs will also be provided with funding for adding uniforms to their programs. Additional uniforms such as band concert attire (tuxedos or gowns), mariachi, and specialized auxiliary uniforms may be the responsibility of each band program through their campus budgets. Students shall be responsible for loss or damage of uniforms that are district property. Uniforms must not be altered unless approved by the director. Parents will be required to dry clean the uniform as needed. Fees for uniform maintenance are required at each campus. During performance season, students are expected to maintain a personal appearance consistent with the visual standards of the ensemble as directed by campus directors. Hair color, length, and styling during competition season may be subject to director guidance to ensure uniformity of visual presentation.

VII. Awards

High School seniors may qualify for a school award jacket (budget permitting) provided they have maintained their membership for 4 years in the organization. Exceptions to this guideline will be handled on a case by case basis. Additional information may be found in the campus organization handbook. *Ex. A student who voluntarily withdraws or is removed from the program for disciplinary or eligibility reasons after receiving their award jacket will be required to return the jacket to the program. The jacket will be held by the director and returned upon graduation. Accepting the jacket constitutes agreement to this condition.*

VIII. Officers/Drum Majors

Directors may elect to have student officers in each organization. Student officer positions for each organization will be selected by a process as per each organization's procedure and handbook. Officer positions are not a requirement of the district and therefore left at the discretion of each director.

All band drum major positions will be filled by auditions with one or more judges. Additional specific information regarding the audition process and requirements will be provided by the band directors prior to the auditions.

IX. Mariachi Guidelines

1. The United I.S.D. Mariachi groups are allowed to perform for all school sponsored/district sponsored events as well as community (City of Laredo) related events.
2. The Mariachi groups will not perform at social events such as weddings, quinceañeras, and private parties. Events such as retirement dinners or receptions held in honor of school or city personnel may take place provided the approval of the school principal is obtained and the students are available to perform.
3. For all performances, the head band/orchestra director must be notified, and the approval of the principal must be obtained prior to accepting any performance. The director in turn, must have time to insure that the students are available to perform.
4. When traveling to an engagement, students should travel in school buses. If other arrangements must be made, waivers, and liability forms must be submitted prior to the trip.
5. Under no circumstances, are students to drive themselves and other students, to a performance during the school day. For performances held before and after school, and on the weekends, students may be transported in private vehicles provided that waivers are signed by the parents releasing the District and driver of any liability.
6. According to 19 TAC §76.1: (musical groups can perform only once per school week)
g) Limitations on practice, rehearsal, and student participation in extracurricular activities during the school week shall be as follows:

(1) For any given extracurricular activity, a student **may not** participate in more than **one activity per school week**, excluding holidays...

7. Donations for performances may be accepted (this includes Mother's Day Serenatas). These donations should be deposited in school activity accounts. **Students should not receive money for any performance.**
8. Mariachi groups must follow the U.I.L./T.E.A. Side by Side policies for all rehearsals and performances.

X. District Owned Musical Instruments

Specific district owned musical instruments will be available for student use in band and orchestra. Band members may be required to rent or purchase an instrument depending on the availability of the campus instrument inventory. Contact the school band directors for availability of musical instruments. Students and parents are responsible for musical instruments assigned to them. Should loss or damage occur to an instrument, restitution to UISD will be required. A musical instrument and uniform maintenance fee may be required from each student when using district owned instruments/uniforms.

XI. Allowable Fees

Fine Arts students who use school owned instruments, equipment, uniforms, and accessories may be required to pay a **Maintenance/Usage** fee which is set by the district. These funds are to be collected by the director and deposited into the campus Activity Fund. The Head Director is responsible for keeping a detailed account of all funds collected. *Fees/Dues collected can only be used for maintenance, replacement of instruments, accessories and uniform cleaning. Parents will be responsible for shoes, shirts/polos and any other uniform accessories. Directors may request monies for meals for events.

Middle School *Fees/Dues may not surpass \$75.00 per semester.

High School *Fees/Dues may not surpass \$150.00 per semester.

**monies used for equipment, fees, events, etc...*

AUTHORIZED FEES

(FP Legal) A Board may require payment of:

8. **A reasonable fee, not to exceed the actual annual maintenance cost, for the use of musical instruments and uniforms owned or rented by the District. Education Code 11.158(a), (d), (h)**

XII. Student Extracurricular Insurance

The District annually purchases Extra-Curricular Activities Student Insurance to cover medical costs for accidents occurring during extra-curricular activities at High Schools and Middle Schools and for Cheerleading and Dance programs at the elementary schools. Covered activities include practices, special events, and related out of town activities. For additional details visit the district website and look under the Risk Management department. <https://www.uisd.net/risk-management>

XIII. UISD Drug Testing Policy

A Student and Parent/Guardian Consent to Random Drug Testing form must be completed and submitted before the student may participate in any activity. For current forms and procedures, visit the UISD Risk Management Department at <https://www.uisd.net/risk-management> **The completed form must be turned into the respective coach, sponsor or school official before the student is allowed to participate in any activity.** The designated campus administrator should ensure that all forms are filed and are kept in a secure environment.

XIV. High School Marching Bands

Effective the fourth Monday in August a marching band and its auxiliary components are limited to a maximum of eight hours of rehearsal outside of the academic school day per calendar week. Exception: For schools that begin instruction prior to the fourth Monday in August the limit of eight hours of rehearsal outside of the academic school day per calendar week shall begin on the Tuesday immediately following Labor Day. Schools under this exception shall be limited to eight hours of rehearsal outside of the academic day per school week until the Tuesday immediately following Labor Day. Additional Marching Band information can be found on the UIL Website. <https://www.uiltexas.org/>

XV. Color Guard/Winter Guard Enrollment

In order to enroll in a high school band color guard or winter guard class, a student must obtain the band director's approval and then go through an audition process. Students that received instruction on a woodwind/brass/percussion instrument in middle school or high school will be required to enroll in band as an instrumentalist and not as a guard member. Additional specific details regarding this requirement may be addressed in the campus band handbook or with the director.

XVI. Extracurricular Trips

All school trips will require a field trip packet for approval. The Fine Arts Department will assist fine arts personnel with these requests. For trips that are out of State, further approval from the Superintendent will be required **prior to announcing** this trip to students and parents.

XVII. Alternating Events for UISD High School Bands

There are certain events in which UISD high school bands take turns representing the district or assist in hosting. A yearly schedule will be given to each teacher so they can include this in their calendar of events.

XVIII. Booster Club Guidelines

Booster clubs are not a requirement for band, choir or orchestra programs in United I.S.D. Parent or community organizations may be formed to promote the school program or to complement a particular student group or activity. Parent organizations are required to follow the UIL Booster Club Guidelines found on the UIL Website. <https://www.uil texas.org/>

Booster clubs also must follow additional guidelines in UISD. Refer to Parent Organizational Guidelines on the district website <https://www.uisd.net/>

XIX. UIL Eligibility Calendars (updated calendars can be found on the Fine Arts webpage listed separately by August)

XX. Digital and Social Media Conduct

Students and parents/guardians are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism and dignity on all digital platforms, including social media, group messaging applications, and online forums. Conduct deemed disruptive, defamatory, or harmful to the program, its directors, or its members may result in removal from program communication channels and/or disciplinary action as per the UISD Student Code of Conduct.

XXI. Parent/Student Agreement

Acknowledgement

Date _____

I have read the 2026-2027 United I.S.D. Band, Choir & Orchestra Guidelines and agree to adhere to these rules as a condition of my membership in these organizations. I understand that failure to do so will result in disciplinary measures related to my participation in the group. Furthermore, I understand that communication with program staff must follow the proper chain: Campus Director → Head Director → Assistant Principal → Principal → Fine Arts Director. I understand that bypassing this chain should occur only under extreme circumstances. I understand that proactive, professional communication is a requirement of this program, not an option.

Student Name _____

Student Signature _____

I have read the 2026-2027 United I.S.D. Band, Choir & Orchestra Guidelines and understand that as a condition of my child's membership in these organizations, he or she must follow the rules set forth in this document. I understand there will be consequences that my child will face if he or she fails to adhere to these rules. Furthermore, I understand that communication with program staff must follow the proper chain: Campus Director → Head Director → Assistant Principal → Principal → Fine Arts Director. I understand that bypassing this chain should occur only under extreme circumstances. I understand that proactive, professional communication is a requirement of this program, not an option.

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____