



GRANT HIGH SCHOOL

Band Handbook

YOUR DIRECTOR	
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BEST TIME TO REACH ME	3:30 – 4:00 PM, or by appointment. Preps 1st and 8th period.
CLASSES	Wind Ensemble • Symphonic Band • Jazz Ensemble • Jazz II • Jazz III • Jazz Lab

What's Inside

This handbook covers everything you and your family need to know about being part of the Grant Band this year — what each ensemble is, what we expect of each other, how grading works, and what to wear.

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Three things to do first

- Put every concert and festival date on the family calendar. *Performances are our final exam.*
- Save Mr. McCurdy's email so you can reach him about conflicts.
- Talk as a family about Fair Share (see Section 5). Help is available, and no student's experience changes based on what is given.

1 Course Descriptions

Every student in the Grant Band is also a member of Pep Band. Ensembles are listed below with what they play, who they are for, and what it takes to get in.

ENSEMBLE	WHO IT'S FOR	HOW TO GET IN
Symphonic Band	Preparatory concert band, primarily 9th and 10th graders of various ability levels	Open with instrument experience or director approval
Wind Ensemble	The premier concert ensemble — advanced musicians playing challenging wind band literature	Audition and director approval
Jazz Lab	Preparatory jazz group; prior experience on an instrument required, no jazz experience needed	Open with instrument experience
Jazz Ensemble	The premier jazz ensemble — the most advanced jazz musicians at Grant	Audition and director approval
Jazz II	Second jazz ensemble, studying standard and contemporary jazz literature	Audition and director approval
Jazz III	Third jazz ensemble, studying standard and contemporary jazz literature	Audition and director approval
Pep Band	Every member of the Grant Band — popular music at games, assemblies, and community events	Automatic with band enrollment

Symphonic Band

Symphonic Band is a preparatory concert ensemble for Wind Ensemble consisting of primarily 9th and 10th graders. The ensemble contains members of various ability levels, but previous band experience or director's approval is required. Students in the Symphonic Band will play a wide variety of literature to aid in further refining their playing as individual and group performers while continuing to grow in their aural abilities regarding blend and balance, intonation, rhythmic accuracy, and the production of characteristic tone.

The ensemble will perform in at least three concerts and one festival, and be a part of the marching and pep bands.

Wind Ensemble

► **Prerequisites:** Audition and director approval

Wind Ensemble is the premier concert ensemble on campus and is composed of advanced musicians who perform challenging standard and contemporary wind band literature. A strong emphasis on professionalism is placed upon the members as they rehearse and perform for four concerts, at least three festivals, possibly a tour, and to be a part of the marching and pep bands. Wind Ensemble members are expected to hold regular sectionals.

Jazz Lab

Jazz Lab is a preparatory ensemble for the Jazz Ensembles. The group studies and performs standard and contemporary jazz in the combo and possibly big band mediums. A strong emphasis is placed on jazz style and interpretation, improvisation, and performance. Prior experience on an instrument is required, but no previous jazz experience is needed. Members will perform in at least three concerts and be a part of the marching and pep bands.

Jazz Ensemble

► Prerequisites: Audition and director approval

Jazz Ensemble is the premier jazz ensemble on campus. The ensemble is composed of the most advanced jazz musicians at Grant and will study the most difficult standard and contemporary jazz literature. Students will work on improving their improvisation, ensemble performance in big band and combo mediums, and individual jazz performance abilities. Members will perform continually throughout the year at various concerts (at Grant and in the community), recruiting events, fundraisers, and festivals, and be a part of the marching and pep bands.

Jazz II

► Prerequisites: Audition and director approval

Jazz II is the second jazz ensemble on campus. The ensemble is composed of auditioned jazz musicians at Grant and will study standard and contemporary jazz literature. Students will work on improving their improvisation, ensemble performance in big band and combo mediums, and individual jazz performance abilities. Members will perform continually throughout the year at various concerts (at Grant and in the community), recruiting events, fundraisers, and festivals, and be a part of the marching and pep bands.

Jazz III

► Prerequisites: Audition and director approval

Jazz III is the third jazz ensemble on campus. The ensemble is composed of auditioned jazz musicians at Grant and will study standard and contemporary jazz literature. Students will work on improving their improvisation, ensemble performance in big band and combo mediums, and individual jazz performance abilities. Members will perform continually throughout the year at various concerts (at Grant and in the community), recruiting events, fundraisers, and festivals, and be a part of the marching and pep bands.

Pep Band

Pep Band consists of all members of the Grant Band — students from Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, Jazz Ensemble, Jazz II, Jazz III, and Jazz Lab — and performs popular music from all different time periods at athletic events, pep assemblies, and community events. Rehearsals for this group occur during school and performances occur primarily outside of the regular school day.

2 Other Performance Opportunities

These are optional, and they are some of the fastest ways to grow as a musician.

Pit Orchestra

Pit Orchestra performs for the fall musical each year. Participation is by audition only. This group performs professional music at professional levels. While participation in this ensemble is optional, the commitment made is very serious. Grant High School prides itself on using student musicians in its productions whenever possible. Rehearsals and performances are outside of the regular school day.

Solo & Chamber Ensembles

All Grant Band members have the opportunity to perform at the PIL Solo/Ensemble Festival (for a small fee). At this event students have the possibility of qualifying for the OSAA State Solo Competition. This is one of the best ways to advance quickly as a musician and practice good musician habits.

Jazz Combos

Jazz Combos are entirely student-run groups that meet outside of the regular school day. These groups may have opportunities to perform at fundraisers, concerts, and festivals throughout the year. To be sponsored by the band program, ALL members of the group must be enrolled in the Grant Band.

3 What We're Working Toward

Student Objectives

1. Perform a variety of musical repertoire that expands the students' understanding and performance of rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic content in an ensemble setting.
2. Advance musical performance skills at the individual and ensemble level.
3. Develop the students' understanding of music theory elements within an ensemble setting.
4. Demonstrate understanding of breathing, embouchure, technique, posture, and other physical processes in relation to sound production.
5. Improve character attributes of professionalism, self-discipline, teamwork, dedication, and responsibility as a member of a unified team.
6. Have fun making music!

National Core Arts Standards

The music program at Grant High School is designed to give students a strong music education so that they can become lifelong learners and lovers of this art. As a district, we believe that the National Core Arts Standards help enhance the overall musical understanding and development of each student. For more information, see nationalartsstandards.org.

4 Requirements & Standards

Preparation

Each musician is expected to take whatever steps are necessary to prepare our music to the best of their ability. This includes home practice, performance tests, in-class testing, worksheets, and sectionals.

Attendance

Unnecessary absence and tardiness mar the effectiveness of the ensemble. Unique in nature, band requires the presence of all team members to adequately work on both individual skills — rhythm, articulation, air support — as well as ensemble skills such as blend, balance, intonation, and dynamics. We are counting on each other in order to succeed.

Timely attendance is crucial for a performing ensemble. The ensemble cannot begin group work until all students are seated and ready; it is very disruptive and hurts efficiency when one person comes in late.

Come to every rehearsal with

- A pencil and your band folder
- Your working instrument and all sheet music checked out to you
- Any warm-up books
- Plenty of reeds, valve oil, and cleaning and maintenance supplies

If you have to miss

In case of illness, departmental or professional conflict, members must notify the director in writing before the absence. In the case of last-minute conflicts, members are expected to make every effort to notify the director. You may:

- Send an email
- Use the Remind app
- Bring a written note from your parents to the band office

Excused absences for medical reasons, family emergencies, illness, and extraordinary events will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Communication is the key to your success in this area.

When a student is absent from class or a performance, one day is given for each day absent from class to make up assignments. For a pre-arranged absence, check with Mr. McCurdy at least one week in advance.

Please schedule around us when you can

Avoid making doctor or dental appointments during band rehearsals, and make every attempt to schedule work and special events — birthday parties, mini-vacations — around the band schedule. You matter. Everyone is valued in this program: commit to the program, commit to the ensemble, and commit to the schedule.

Performance Attendance

Attendance at all performances is required — this is our “final exam.” We will be adhering to our new Grant attendance policy this year, which is found [here](#).

Eligibility threshold

If students fall below 90% average daily attendance and their “Learning Minutes Lost” balance exceeds 200 minutes, they will be temporarily ineligible to participate in performances. That missed performance will need to be made up some other way — most typically a project or playing assignment.

Classroom & Rehearsal Expectations

- Maintain a 95–100% attendance level.
- Continually meet the performance standards in your class.
- Have your parts prepared at the highest level at all times.
- Attend all festivals and competitions for your ensemble.
- Be on time, with music, folder, and pencil, seated when the bell rings.
- Do not work on other homework while other sections are rehearsing.
- Show respect for yourself and others in the class at all times.
- Remember proper performance attire for ALL performances.
- Exhibit positive and supportive behavior at all times.
- Behave in a manner that does not disrupt the educational process.
- No food or drink in the classroom, except water.
- Complete the assignments for class.

Travel

In accordance with school board policy:

NO student may ride with another student driver to or from any school activity. All students must travel on the band bus, if one is provided, unless excused in advance with a parent’s note and a purpose. Not wanting to ride the bus is not an acceptable reason.

Traveling on the band bus is an important time for students to bond with members of their own group and, more importantly, with those who perform in other groups.

5 Fundraising: The Fair Share Program

Each year the Bands of Grant High School perform and compete at many local, regional, state, and northwest contests, festivals, and other events. In addition to the transportation and participation costs involved in these activities, there are operational expenses including instrument repair, sheet music purchases, equipment maintenance and upgrades, uniforms and clothing, and section coaches and clinicians.

Throughout the year, the band program holds numerous fundraising activities to cover the annual transportation and operating expenses. To help raise this money, students and their families are asked to set a goal to contribute or fundraise a fair share amount each year.

\$50,000

Total program fundraising goal this year

\$300

Suggested family fair share, per year

There are many ways students and families can meet this goal. For some families, simply donating \$300 to the program is affordable and easiest. Fair share donations may be made in one payment or in several installments — for example, \$20 a month.

For many families, a donation of that amount is not financially possible. We accept any and all help, and no student's education will change in any way due to how much is given.

Need help with Fair Share? Fill out this form — [all responses are anonymous](#).

6 Grading Policy

Every student will receive an “A.”

Grades are based on making a good-faith effort to complete the course — not on the individual outcomes of each scoring metric.

The rationale behind this policy is to encourage intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation. Grades in artistic and collaborative classes are often subjective in nature. By eliminating the pressure of “getting an A,” students are able to engage in meaningful learning activities, reflections, and honest refinement of their own skills without fear of repercussions on their transcript.

Student progress will still be monitored and evaluated through assignments and in-class activities. Verbal and written feedback will also be provided to encourage students to learn, grow, and develop more advanced skills. This grading policy is inspired by the Generals LEAD philosophy, as well as by — and it reinforces — the National Core Arts Standards of Creating, Performing/Presenting/Producing, Responding, and Connecting.

Instrumental music is a participation and performance class. The educational quality of the material learned is based on daily effort, regular attendance, and the dedication a student exhibits during class, rehearsals, and performances. Because of this, instrumental music students are opting in to a social contract in order to benefit the learning of all. Violations of this contract will result in a lower overall grade.

Behaviors that will lower a grade

- Failing to complete classroom assignments
- Skipping class, or frequently arriving late
- Failure to meaningfully participate in classroom activities
- Disruptive or mean-spirited behavior
- Missing performances

What does this mean in everyday class?

Come to class, try your best, and complete all of the assignments, quizzes, and evaluations — and you will receive an A, no matter how well you played, scored, or evaluated. The scoring metrics are designed to help you know where you're at and what you need to do to improve. They are not used to penalize you, so long as you try.

7 Outside Opportunities for Musical Development

★ Starred activities are the best value for your time and money.

PERFORMANCE

Perform a solo or in a small ensemble for a community group, church service, or public event

Member of PYP, PYJO, MYS, or AJAM

★ BEST VALUE

Regular member of a worship band

Perform at District Solo/Ensemble contest

★ BEST VALUE

Perform at State Solo/Ensemble

Audition for WIBC, All-State, or All-Northwest

★ BEST VALUE

Auditions for college admissions and scholarships

Selected for and participate in WIBC, All-State, or All-Northwest

★ BEST VALUE

Perform in the GHS pit orchestra for a musical

★ BEST VALUE

LISTENING

Attend an outside-of-school concert, any genre

★ BEST VALUE

Attend a school concert that you are not performing in

COMPOSITION & PRIVATE STUDY

Write or arrange a piece of music

Transcribe and memorize a solo from a recording

★ BEST VALUE

Weekly private lessons on your instrument or piano

★ BEST VALUE

LEADERSHIP & TEACHING

Give weekly lessons on your instrument

Help out in a middle school music classroom (check with Mr. McCurdy before reaching out)

8 Performance Attire

A uniform gives our musicians a sense of pride for our organization. Unification of our “look” boosts our self-esteem and allows us to present ourselves as professionals.

Everyone, every performance: black dress shoes and black socks. If you wear heels, please make them closed-toe and low-heeled.

ENSEMBLE	OPTION 1	OPTION 2
Symphonic Band	Black Oxford shirt or black blouse Black tuxedo/dress slacks or black skirt	
Wind Ensemble	Black suit jacket and pants (men’s-style cut) Black Oxford shirt Black long tie	Black suit jacket (women’s-style cut) — or — Black blouse with black skirt or black slacks
Jazz Lab & Jazz Ensembles	Black Oxford-style shirt Black slacks	Black blouse or dress shirt Black skirt or black slacks

Please let Mr. McCurdy know if you need help, in any way, acquiring the proper uniform.

9 Classroom Procedures

- **Attendance is essential** to successfully understand concepts taught in the band course. The full attendance policy is in Section 4.
- **Professional behavior** must also be practiced in order to maximize educational opportunities. Disruptive and disrespectful behavior may result in grade deduction and parental contact.
- **Come into class and immediately get your instrument out.** Sit in your assigned seat with all materials and start warming up. You will be given an extra 2 minutes at the beginning and end of class to assemble and disassemble your instrument.
- **Keep the band room and instrument storage area clean** and free from non-music-related items. Do not keep personal belongings in these areas — they are not secure.

No gum in the band room

**No food or liquid other than water
in rehearsal**

All of these expectations are great practice as you prepare to enter the real world. If you choose to make these concepts a part of your personality and behavior, you will have built a solid professional foundation for success in any field.

Students who have a positive attitude, work hard, follow the procedures and rules, and behave appropriately in all situations **THRIVE** in the music program at Grant.

Welcome to the Grant Band Program!