



WILLIAM ELLIS MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND

Achieving Excellence through Pride and Performance

Your child's days of middle school are rapidly approaching, and I wanted to take this time to inform you about a great opportunity - Your child will get a chance to join the middle school band! Students will need to join band their 6th grade year so they can successfully learn how to play their instruments in the beginning course. This is a once in a lifetime chance for your child's educational experience.

It is my belief that every child should have the chance to experience the many benefits of participating in a middle school band program. Through this participation in the William Ellis Middle School band your child will learn an endless amount of life skills such as self-confidence, teamwork, lasting friendships, and above all, a life long appreciation and enjoyment of music.

How can my child sign up for band?

To register for band, mark the necessary box on your child's middle school registration and indicate the top three choices of instruments your child might like to play. To find out what instrument best suits your child, sign up for a time slot to try out each instrument at WEMS on **April 28th, 2021 in the WEMS cafeteria**. **This meeting is not required, but will give you and your student a better understanding of what instrument he/she will be successful on in band class.** During this time you and your child will have a chance to meet the band director, try out which instrument your child thinks he/she may want to play next year, and receive information on how to rent/buy an instrument. Students will be using a mouthpiece testing kit packaged for individual one time use at this event.

If you cannot attend the meeting, please contact me at jamesa@davie.k12.nc.us to ask any questions about their instrument choices or the band program. Make sure and also check out the band webpage at www.ellismiddleschoolband.weebly.com for more information.

One of the important things to remember when choosing an instrument is to always have a second choice. In order to have a successful band program at William Ellis Middle School, we have to have the correct number of instruments. This will limit how many of each instrument I can take in the 6th grade band.

What instruments do we begin in 6th grade?

Your child will be able to choose from these instruments: flute, clarinet, alto saxophone (we only take 4), tenor saxophone (we only take 2), trumpet, trombone, and percussion (we only take 8).

How do I get an instrument?

The parent/guardian will be responsible for obtaining the instrument over the summer. William Ellis Middle School works with several different music stores in the area. All of these stores offer a great Rental-Purchase plan that is designed specifically for the beginning band students. They are also aware of what brands we use at William Ellis Middle as well as our Method Book and the needed accessories that are required for the class.

If you have an instrument at home already, that is fine too! I do encourage you to have one of the music stores look at the instrument before the school year begins. This way we can make sure it is in the proper playing condition and your student will be set up for success.

Please stay away from purchasing instruments sold online. They look the same as other instruments and the price looks great, but the quality in which they are made greatly affects the sound and they cannot be repaired at a local music store. Do not purchase an instrument online unless you have cleared it with Mrs. James. China is starting to sell a lot of instruments at what seems like a great price for a poor quality. **Rule of thumb... if it comes with gloves or pretty colors, it is not a good choice!**

PLEASE DO NOT GO OUT AND PURCHASE ANY INSTRUMENT UNTIL YOU HAVE EITHER COME TO THE INSTRUMENT TRY-OUT NIGHT OR YOU HAVE CONTACTED ME.

How much will band cost?

If your child wants to participate in the band but money might be a conflict, please let me know. We have school instruments that can be borrowed from the school. I believe every child has the right to participate in the band program and I don't want financial reasons to prevent your child from being a part of this experience. Depending on the instrument that the student plays, they will also need to buy reeds, valve oil, and cork grease periodically throughout the year at a very small price. During their 7th grade and 8th grade year in band we will take a band trip (7th – Carowinds, 8th – Overnight trip). We provide plenty of opportunities for you to fundraiser for those trips when the time comes. Both trips are pending this year.

What programs are offered in band?

Beginning Band – 6th Grade

Intermediate Band – 7th Grade

Advanced Band – 8th Grade

Percussion Ensemble 6th, 7th and 8th Grade

Jazz Band – 7th and 8th Grade

Can my student take other classes than band? Does the band interfere with sports?

Please remember that even though your child has joined the band program they are still able to explore their other interests in any other exploratory class offered at WEMS. Students will still have an opportunity to take art, drama/musical theatre (8th), and chorus (when offered at WEMS), technology, health, P.E., and computer.

Don't forget that this is THE ONLY year your child can sign up for the band!

Sports DO NOT interfere with band at Ellis! We work together to make sure the 2 concerts during the year are not on a sporting events night. Band is a scheduled class during the school day and it does not have after school practices. 90% of our band students are involved in a School sport, club or recreational sport.

How long does my student take band?

By signing up for band as a 6th grader you and your child are stating that you have committed to trying band for the yearlong class. After that year, you can decide if you would like to continue with band in the 7th and 8th grade.

If you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to send me an email or give me a call. I would love to talk to you about the band program we have here at WEMS.

Mandy James

Band Director

William Ellis Middle School

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