



Freshman Bands Syllabus

2025-2026

West Aurora High School Bands

Welcome to the West Aurora High School Department of Bands! Making music at West High since the fall of 1919, our program currently features 6 wind bands, 4 jazz bands, numerous chamber ensembles, the Blackhawk Marching Band, and the Blackhawk Basketball Pep Bands. Our mission is to promote musical appreciation, knowledge, and participation through the study and performance of quality instrumental repertoire. The performance based classes and ensembles in our program feature unique content that offers unparalleled aesthetic experiences, rigorous performance demands, and are worthy of academic study. Participation in these courses and ensembles is the best and most direct way to experience the art of music making, one that will assist students in developing a greater understanding of themselves and humanity. The Band Faculty of West Aurora High School welcomes you to our family!

Freshman Band (FA008)

Freshman Band is a performance-based, year-long course designed for 9th-grade wind and percussion students. The focus is on building foundational skills in tone production, rhythm, music reading, and ensemble performance through age-appropriate concert band literature. The ensemble rehearses daily and performs at scheduled concerts throughout the school year, with some events occurring outside of regular school hours. Freshman Band prepares students for continued growth and success in upper-level ensembles. Additional performance opportunities may include festivals, solo and chamber ensembles, and community events.

Instructor Information

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Curriculum At A Glance

Students will demonstrate entry-level high-school technique, tone quality, listening, and musicality appropriate to grade 2-3 wind and percussion literature.

- Students will perform with entry-level pitch accuracy, intonation, and tone quality.
- Students will perform entry-level rhythms and in advanced time signatures.
- Students will develop and apply entry-level ensemble skills and rehearsal techniques.
- Students will interpret expressively with guidance.
- Students will perform various styles, genres, and forms.
- Students will differentiate key centers & scales.
- Students will evaluate and analyze.

Required Materials

Each student is required to have their own personal metronome and tuner, a pencil, and instrument in good playing condition with all of the normal accessories associated with their instrument (mutes, valve oil, slide lubricant, mouthpiece, at least three good reeds at all times, and mallets). Students using a school-owned instrument (including percussionists) are required to pay an annual rental fee of \$50. Music and folders are supplied by West Aurora Bands and must be kept in good condition.

Concert Performance Attire

The West Aurora band program wears **ALL BLACK** for concerts and festivals. A band concert is a formal event, not like a pep rally or football game. Serious musicians avoid creating visual distractions that take the audience's attention away from the music. Please read below to make sure you know what to purchase for your student. If students are not wearing the correct attire they may not be allowed on stage to perform. **Concert attire must be dress material... no jeans, no chains, and no colors other than the specified material.** Please contact a director if you need assistance in obtaining concert attire.

Each student must provide:

- ☐ Black dress shoes of your choice (NO black tennis shoes, such as Converse or Crocks)
- ☐ Long Black dress socks if wearing shoes that call for socks (no white socks)
- ☐ Black dress slacks/pants or a dress that is mid-calf length
 - Dress slacks/pants are preferred
 - If your pants have belt loops, please have a black belt, as well
- ☐ Black button up dress shirt, blouse, or other formal black top of your choice
 - Shoulders and back covered, front should be modest, avoid deep necklines
- ☐ Optional:
 - Black suit coat or blazer (coats must be black, not grey or pin striped)
 - Black neck-tie



Learning Goals

Students will become aware of various ensemble and rehearsal techniques, wind & percussion repertoire, and performance techniques. Students will also expand their knowledge in theory, history, pedagogy, etc. through application. Refinement of ensemble skills towards high school entry-level will be an omnipresent goal in every rehearsal.

Rehearsal Philosophy

Rehearsals are not to learn your individual parts – rather they are to learn everyone else's part. Rehearsals are time to work collectively, not individually. Your part is your responsibility. The goal, when we are all together, is to make music, not to learn fingerings or rhythms.

Band Values

Students of West Aurora High School Bands...

- Instill respect and pride for each other, our equipment, and our facilities.
- Create a family-like atmosphere throughout the band.
- Maintain a positive focus with high energy.
- Take initiative ourselves and encourage others to self-motivate.
- Always strive for excellence with a positive attitude.

Expectations

- Instruments, music, and folders must be put away in their assigned areas when not in use.
- Lockers and classrooms should be kept clean of non-music related items
- No food, gum, or beverages will be allowed in rehearsal at any time
- Practice rooms are designed for practicing only. Students are not allowed to use the practice rooms for any other purpose unless given permission by the teacher. Students must sign in to practice rooms using QR code on practice room doors.
- Cell phones may only be used for music rehearsal purposes.
- At all other times during band class, the cell phone should be off and away.
- It is not okay for you to use your phone during band class unless given permission to do so.

Private Lessons

Students who study their instrument with a qualified private instructor get better on their instrument faster than those who do not. It is no secret that the best musicians in our schools are the ones that take 30 minutes to an hour out of their week and study privately with a professional. It is highly recommended that students in the Wind Symphony take advantage of the opportunity to study with a qualified private instructor from our private instructor list found on our website.

Communication

The West Aurora Band Staff works hard to communicate clearly, concisely, timely, and accurately with students and parents. We utilize many methods of communication listed below, however the most important tool of communication that we count on is our students. We also communicate through in-school handouts, up to date websites (www.wabands.org),

posted announcements in class, verbal announcements at concerts, email, Schoology, facebook, and other social media.

Grading

Student grades are based on individual assessment, participation, and assignments. Attached to this syllabus is the WAHS Bands grading plan.

Concerts

It is expected that all students attend performances outside of school. As conflicts arise with sports and activities, the directors will always look for a way to find compromise between the events. Students are expected to record all important dates in their personal calendars and communicate early about potential conflicts. Please reference the last page in this syllabus for important dates this school year.

While almost every concert we perform at West High is free to attend, there may be an occasional performance at West High or other that may require a ticket for entry. If any concert requires a paid ticket, that will be specified to students and families prior to the event.

Transportation Expectations

1. All students must ride the school provided transportation to and from away events unless alternate transportation arrangements (with documentation) are made prior to the day of the event.
2. After the event (if alternate transportation is pre-approved) students, with the parent/guardian must sign out with a music teacher.
3. Students may not leave with anyone other than the adult/parent/guardian that has prior authorization to take the student.
4. No alternate transportation arrangements will be made the day of the event.

Whenever an ensemble from West High travels, it does so via school provided transportation. No personal vehicles are allowed unless a written notice from a parent/guardian is provided prior to departure. Due to issues with liability, students may not travel together in personal vehicles. All members must also fill out a Medical Release & Parent Permission Forms for legal purposes.

Extra-Curricular Offerings (Extensions of the Concert Ensemble Experience)

It is no surprise that students who take advantage of one of our many extracurricular performance ensembles improve faster on their instrument than those who do not. West Aurora Bands offer several extra curricular music ensemble opportunities for students to be a part of both in-school and outside of school hours. For a detailed list and description of our extra-curricular offerings, please visit www.wabands.org.

Students may elect to participate in one of our three jazz bands or one of our numerous chamber ensembles that rehearse primarily during the school day with some additional rehearsals outside of the school day. In addition we offer an Early Bird Jazz Band for students who wish to participate without an audition. We also are proud to offer Blackhawk Marching Band and Basketball Pep Bands, both of which take place outside of regular school hours.

The West Aurora High School Band Boosters

The West Aurora Band Boosters support our program through supplying volunteers and by finances for special events outside the general school budget. We welcome and strongly encourage ALL parents and members of the community interested in supporting the West Aurora Bands to get involved with this amazing organization and help in any way that you are able.



West Aurora High School Bands Grading Plan

Summative Assessments (70%):

Quarterly individual performance assessments are critical to the success and growth of student musicians. Students in performance-based music classes who do not complete **assessments** by due date will forfeit their opportunity to submit their best recording and will only have one opportunity to perform their assessment live for a teacher.

Assessment Retakes:

- Retakes promote a growth mindset and continuous improvement, facilitate mastery learning, and support students in reaching their full academic potential.
- Retakes are available to any student who wishes to improve their assessment grade.
- Retakes are highly recommended for students earning below a 70% on any assessment.
- Students must utilize teacher feedback and complete additional practice and preparation before submitting a retake.

Performance-based assessments in music require practice and preparation. It is our philosophy that growth is a process and that music students may retake any performance-based assessment as many times as necessary to achieve desired success throughout the semester. The relearning process includes additional practice and when necessary, teacher intervention.

Participation (15%):

Music students in performance-based courses are expected to be present and actively engaged in rehearsal and performance as shown through posture, facial expression, breath support, attentiveness, and kinesthetic and aesthetic awareness. Students receive teacher feedback on their engagement through a formative assessment rubric.

Students are expected to attend and participate in all ensemble performances which generally take place outside of the school day. The performance is the culmination of several weeks of in-class ensemble work. Teachers and students are relying on all members being present at the culminating event. Missing a performance may result in an alternative assignment. Performance dates listed in this syllabus.

In addition, West Aurora Bands have a philosophy of teaching and expecting excellence in academic behaviors. Music students are expected to come to class with their music, pencil,

accessories, and instrument in good playing conditioning every day. Students who come unprepared to class repeatedly will result in a reduction in participation points and a staff member contacting parent(s)/guardian(s).

Academic behaviors are defined as arriving ready to work (with necessary supplies and materials), participating in class, and completing homework (Farrington et al., 2012).

Assignments (15%):

- Assignments will provide opportunities to reinforce concepts foster academic growth, develop essential skills, and cultivate independent study habits
- Assignments will be aligned to the learning goals and will be purposeful
- Assignments will emphasize the importance of practice and will inform future instruction

In-class assignments in music may include annotating music, written assignments, listening assignments, reading assignments, etc. Students who do not complete in-class assignments will not receive credit.

In addition to at-home practice, students may, at times, have additional purposeful and meaningful **homework assignments** that will reinforce the essential skills and concepts being covered in class.

Formative Assessments/Activities (0%):

At times, West Aurora Bands will monitor student learning and provide ongoing feedback through formative assessment or activities which serve as ongoing checks for understanding for the purpose of instructional decision-making.

Freshman Bands Important Dates

September

24 11:59 PM - ILMEA Audition Video Submissions Due to Teachers (Select Students)

October

8 11:59 PM - ILMEA Composition Contest and FMES Applications Due to Teachers
(Select Students)

14 7 - 9 PM - Freshman Band Combined Rehearsal (Auditorium)

15 6:00 PM - Freshman Bands Fall Concert (Auditorium)

November

01 ILMEA District IX Jazz Festival (Neaqua Valley HS) *Select Students*

08 ILMEA District IX Concert Festival (Dundee-Crown HS) *Select Students*

December

08 7 - 9 PM - Freshman Band Combined Rehearsal (Auditorium)

11 8:00 pm - Freshman Bands Concert (Auditorium)

January

17 Elmhurst University Honors Band Festival (Elmhurst, IL) *Select Students*

28-31 ILMEA All-State Music Festival/Conference (Peoria, IL) *Select Students*

February

10 Upstate 8 Band Festival (Ridgewood Community High School) *Select Students*

18 7 - 9 PM Black History Month Community Celebration Performance

25 4 PM - 9 PM West Aurora High School Solo/Ensemble Festival

March

07 SD129 Fine Arts Festival

April

29 7:30 PM - Night of Percussion Concert (Auditorium)

May

13 7:30 pm - Wind Symphony Concert (Auditorium)