

FISD Bands Private Lesson Handbook 2020-2021

Principles of the Program

Purpose

1. To improve the quality of music education in the Forney ISD.
2. To provide for the individual differences of music students.
3. To boost the achievement level of all students.
4. To aid the student in mastery of essential elements as set forth by the Texas Education Code.
5. To provide private teaching in the school building before, during, and after school hours allowing students to take advantage of the convenience, expense, and time saving factors lost by traveling elsewhere for this instruction.
6. To provide the student with one-on-one guidance by a specialist on the student's instrument.
7. To aid the student in attaining the musical goals as set forth in the FISD School Curriculum Guides.

Qualifications

Student

1. Strongly encouraged for all students enrolled in band at an FISD Campus – any and all students qualify for private lessons

Teacher

2. Qualified persons by training and experience – hand selected and certified by the Director of Bands and approved by the Director of Fine Arts.

General Information

- Lessons are 25 - 30 minutes long and will take place before – during – or after school
 - At selected FISD Campuses
- Lessons are \$19 per lesson
 - There will be some scholarship money available for lessons (varies on booster program)
 - Payment will be made directly from student to teacher
 - Directors should not be given lesson teacher money
 - Scholarship will be based on approval from a director
 - Payment will be made to director
 - Director will supplement with scholarship
- Lessons will cover – tone production – technique – general musicianship
 - Will also assist with any and all classroom music
 - All Region – Solo and Ensemble – Concert Band

Missed Payment Policy

Payment for each lesson is expected either monthly or weekly – dependant on arrangements made with the lesson teacher. **In the event that a student falls behind in payments, it is the private instructor's responsibility to contact the parent to discuss payment.** The campus directors will be more than happy to help in any way, but the lesson teachers need to make the first contact to parents before directors get involved.

Private teachers must bring it to the head director's attention before a student becomes more than 2 or 3 weeks behind in payment. Private teachers should call the parents at the point when the student becomes 1 month behind. The teacher may choose to continue teaching the student into the second month; however, the band program will not be responsible for any back payments. The purpose of this policy is to protect both the teacher and student from having to deal with excessive financial debts. Neither the band directors nor FISD Band Programs will be responsible for paying for missed private lessons. **At least 24 hours needs to be provided for any lesson missed – whether it is illness – family emergency – etc...many of our lesson teachers travel great distances and it is of great cost to them when a lesson is missed.** Exceptions to the 24 hour rule may only be cleared by a director. If the exception is not cleared that decision is final. **Again, the most important aspect is communicating with your campus director so he/she can assist you while the problem is still manageable.**

Missed Lessons and Scholarship Students

An important aspect of scholarships is making certain that we use our financial aide monies wisely. If a student on scholarship misses a lesson without following the 24-hour policy they will be financially responsible in full for the missed lesson. Scholarship money will not be used to pay for students not being responsible. Scholarship money varies per campus depending on booster fundraisers.

Scheduling

Scheduling of lessons shall be initiated by each campus director for the private teacher and students. The directors will be proactive and make sure that lessons are set up at the beginning of each semester. Private lessons will observe all school holidays. The director will furnish each lesson teacher with a school and band calendar.

Cooperative Obligations

- **FISD/Boosters will furnish**
 - Facilities
 - Scheduling
 - Orientation of Staff
 - Scholarship Opportunities for those in need (varies on booster program)
- **Lesson Staff will provide**
 - Professional, reliable, and quality instruction
 - Consistent teaching schedule
 - Notification of payment(s)
- **Students will**
 - Practice and be prepared for each lesson
 - Understand that the private teachers' livelihoods depend on prompt and consistent payment
 - Attend all lessons on time and make up lessons missed

It is important to realize that the degree of success is directly proportional to the degree of effort and dedication.

Curriculum Expectations

Due to the individualized nature of the private lesson program, it is highly impractical to suggest an overall, specific plan for the private teacher and his students. However, there are several items of importance that the private teacher will be pushing the students toward.

1. Beginning Book and Beginning Supplemental Materials should be emphasized during the 6th grade year.
2. Scales (12 major and chromatic) and HS/MS All-Region contest music should be emphasized during the fall – grades 8 – 12.
3. Solo and Ensemble Materials should be emphasized once All Region is over (early Dec.) through the Solo and Ensemble Contest.
4. From Feb. – the end of the year individual development is the priority – scales, technique, tone, vibrato, musicianship, articulation, etc...
 - a. The Students will receive recommendations on method books to purchase during this time.
 - b. The purchasing of these materials will be strongly encouraged and recommended.

Student Performance Grades

There are several MAJOR performance grades taken during the school year:

1. Marching Band Music
2. All Region Music and Scales (tested yearly)
3. Solo and Ensemble Music
4. UIL Concert Band Music

All Region Preparation

Directors at each campus will be testing students on the All-Region etudes and scales during the fall semester. The directors are limited in the amount of time they can spend teaching the music during sectionals and during class. This is why the private lesson program is so important – by taking lessons the student has the best opportunity to prepare this music.

Solo and Ensemble Preparation

Performing at the solo and ensemble contest is a priority for all eligible students in the band program. Preparation for the event is mandatory for all students eligible or not. Due to the varying natures of solos and ensembles these are best learned in the private lesson setting. Directors have a limited amount of time to help teach the solos.

Addendum

Each campus will have differences in the approach to All-Region and Solo and Ensemble – as well as different approaches to grading. Please check the campus specific syllabi accordingly.

Please understand that the deadlines associated with all these assignments are driven by UIL and TMEA deadlines. Be aware of these deadlines and plan to be more than prepared before the deadlines approach.

Musical Expectations

Private Lessons will focus and enhance the following concepts with each student:

Motivation
Tone Quality
Intonation
Musicianship
Technical Facility
Sight Reading
Basic Music Theory (In reference to music the students are performing)
Practice Techniques

1. **Motivation:** This is perhaps the single most important factor for success in any endeavor. The private teacher must continually seek new methods of getting the students to be self-motivated. Teachers should also realize that different personalities require different approaches. However, almost all human beings respond to positive encouragement and success. It is imperative that these be used to instill motivation in your students. The successful teachers are those that are truly able to motivate their students.
2. **Tone Quality:** Beautiful tone quality is the result of physical actions and mental concepts. Proper attention must be paid to correct breathing, embouchure, and correct adjustment of the mouthpiece and/or reed. Correct modeling of a good tone is of utmost importance in developing the students' aural concepts.
3. **Intonation:** Playing in tune is a result of good tone quality in addition to learning to match pitch. Training a student to listen critically is a lesson for all levels of musicians. It is helpful for the teacher to be discriminating in the knowing when to play along with the student.
4. **Musicianship:** Sensitive musicianship is a result of constant encouragement by the teacher for the student to perform with feeling, emotion, and sensitivity. Once good tone, technique, and intonation are established, a student can then give proper attention to dynamics, phrasing, tempo, and other nuances.
5. **Technical Facility:** Good technique is a result of consistent and constant drill that enables the student to adequately manipulate the instrument and perform music. Assigning appropriate materials requiring practice time in order to master these skills are very important. Major and minor scales and interval studies must be a portion of these materials.
6. **Sight Reading:** The ability to sight read successfully is a result of a combination of technique and music literacy. Students should have a grasp of rhythm and note-reading skills that aid them in playing new material. The private teacher should outline steps that will enable students of all levels to successfully sight read music appropriate to their level of musicianship.
7. **Basic Music Theory:** Knowledge of theory is the result of the private lesson teacher's consistent use of language referring to the basic elements of music theory. Constant reference to key signatures, intervals, music terms, and rhythm counting must be a part of each lesson.
8. **Practice Techniques:** These techniques are a result of the student learning order, importance, and benefits of consistent practice. The student should listen and retain all information about organizing and keeping track of their weekly practice times.

Guide to Appropriate Practice Habits

Guide to Region Band and Solo Preparation

When you play a solo or region music, you must understand that it is classified as serious music literature. Further, you must perform and practice the music accurately and precisely. By following the steps listed below, you can achieve a high level of performance. By following the steps listed below, you can achieve a high level of performance.

- Play all the notes in the music correctly. Make sure that each note has a clear and good sound. Good sound is achieved by maintaining good air support and a firm embouchure. Strive to keep your facial muscles still as you play. Make the best sound possible every time you play your horn.
- Play all the rhythms accurately. Make sure that each rhythm is counted correctly. Make sure that you maintain a steady slow tempo when learning your solo. **Use a metronome!**
- Play the entire selection at a slow pace. One half of the correct tempo is a good starting tempo. For instance, if a selection is marked at 120 bpm, then a good beginning tempo is 55 – 60 bpm. Increase the tempo 5 – 10 bpm per week.
- Play the music with the correct style. For instance, make sure you are aware of accented notes, staccato notes, legato notes, slurs, and non slurred notes. Articulation and achieving the correct style go hand in hand.
- Play the music with all dynamic markings in place. Make sure that you are aware of crescendos, decrescendos, and other dynamic markings. It is a good idea to highlight or circle dynamic markings to remind you they are there while performing.
- Lastly, it is important to practice your music daily with all the above parameters in place. You must play with the best possible sound on your instrument each and every time that you perform or practice! High level work is difficult – but it goes a long way. Remember hard work guarantees nothing, but without it, you do not stand a chance for top performance.

In closing

We believe that each individual is the most important aspect of the band program. Without great individual performance there is no great ensemble performance. There is no other factor more significant in the development of great musicians and great music programs than private lessons. Our desire is that every student enrolls in private lessons and takes their individual development seriously so the overall program can be successful.

