



Black River Public
School

Music Handbook
2019-2020

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*Forms can be found on teacher websites

Letter of Welcome

August 2019

It is with great pleasure that we welcome all of you to the 2019-2020 school year! The music department has planned a season of wonderful performance, festival, and fun that is sure to excite and educate every member of the Black River Public School community. You are part of one of the top 100 communities for music education, as identified by NAMM, and one of the finest music programs in the state! Be proud of yourselves! Please take the time to read this material so that you will be familiar with its contents.

WE ASK THAT EACH STUDENT AND PARENT COMPLETE AND TURN IN THE HANDBOOK AGREEMENT FORM.

It is mandatory that each student returns the completed form to his or her respective director by Thursday, August 29, 2019. *This is worth 10 points toward your grade.*

We have included a schedule of all the important dates for the upcoming school year. Please take the time to put these dates on your home calendars. Reminders will be sent out shortly before each date. Up to date information can also be obtained from the director's website.

We're looking forward to another great year!

Cordially,

Rachel Andrews, Tammy Clark, and Jon Montgomery

Contact Information

Rachel Andrews – Director of Choirs, Elementary Music

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Jon Montgomery – Director of Bands, Elementary Music

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BLACK RIVER FINE ARTS BOOSTERS

Fine Arts Boosters supports the teachers and educational goals of the Fine Arts Department including Art, Band, Choir and Orchestra. Our volunteers support the Fine Arts program in many capacities throughout the year. In addition, we sponsor two major fundraisers to defray costs for student trips, 'wish list' items, and enrichment opportunities for the benefit of students in the Fine Arts Department.

Fine Arts Boosters 2019-2020 Committee

Chair – Terree Brncick

Art – Diane Lynch

Band - Open

Choir - Beth Tyler

Orchestra - Julie Benson

Treasurer - Tracy Frederick

Faculty Liaison - Tammy Clark

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Be a Fine Arts Booster

Sign up for 'Shiftboard'

The best way to stay informed (and learn about opportunities to pitch in and volunteer) is to sign up for the 'Fine Arts team' on Shiftboard, or if you already have a Shiftboard account, check it to see if all the information is up to date.

Fundraising Activities

RATFEST

You won't want to miss the family fun, entertainment, and yes, food, too. This event is for the entire Black River community and will include some of the best music and art around. This year's Ratfest will be held on Friday, November 15, from 5pm-8pm in the Lyceum building.

Other Activities to Support Your Student

Uniform Exchange Closet

Check out the uniform exchange closet for concert uniform parts for lower level groups. Bring your outgrown, clean, gently used black pants/skirts, black shoes, and white shirts/blouses to donate. Contact Mr. Montgomery for more information.

Calendar of Events

Mon, Aug 26 Beginning Orchestra Rental Night, 7pm, Large Ens. Room
Fri, Sept 27 All Choirs sing National Anthem at Homecoming Game
Tues, Oct 1 Adventures in Harmony Concert 7:30 pm at Zeeland East HS
(HS Choir Boys only)
Wed, Oct 9 Orchestra Concert, 7pm, Main Gym
Wed, Oct 16 Fall Band Concert, 7pm, Gym
Tues, Oct 22 Choir Concert, 7pm, Auxiliary Gym
Sat. Nov 16 Musical Theatre Solo & Ensemble
Wed, Dec 4 Vocal Elements/Chamber Choir Concert 7pm Auxiliary Gym
Wed, Dec 11 Band Concert, 7pm, Gym
Thurs, Dec 5 Beg, Prep, Concert Orchestra Concert, 7pm, Main Gym
Thurs, Dec 12 Concert Choir, Chamber Choir, Adv. Orch Concert, 7pm,
location TBD
Sat, Feb 1 High School Vocal Solo & Ensemble
Sat, Feb 8 Band & Orch Solo & Ensemble at West Ottawa
Tues. Feb. 24 Choir Concert 7 pm Auxiliary Gym
Wed, Feb. 26 Band Concert 7pm Gym
Fri, March 6 BRTC Musical: *Little Women* 7:00 pm at Cityside MS
Sat, March 7 *Little Women* 2:00 & 7:00 pm
Tues, March 10 Beg/Prep at 6:30pm, Conc/Adv at 7:30pm, Main Gym
Sat, Mar 14 State Solo & Ensemble (Instrumental)
Wed, Feb 26 Band Concert, 7pm, Gym
Sat. April 13 State Solo & Ensemble (Vocal)
Wed, April 22 Fine Arts Festival, BRPS
Sat, May 2 MS Vocal Solo & Ensemble

Some dates and times may change. We will notify you as soon as possible about any changes to the calendar.

General Guidelines

It is assumed that each music student has elected this program because of a sincere desire to participate with his/her best efforts in all facets of the program throughout the entire school year. Excellence can only be achieved through a personal commitment from each student.

- Each student is assigned music, and where applicable, a uniform, and additional equipment. *These become the student's sole responsibility until they are returned before the close of school.* It is expected that each student keep all materials issued to him/her in excellent condition. Furthermore, it is expected that students treat other students' materials with respect.
- An excuse for absence from a performance or musical event must be submitted to the director in writing **at least two weeks prior to the scheduled performance.** *Please note that this is only for consideration.*
- Excuses for emergencies or illness will be treated as exceptions **only at the discretion of the director.** Make every effort to contact your director in the event of an emergency absence. Not having a ride to a concert will be treated as an unexcused absence, so again, please plan ahead.
- If you are a student with a job, be sure to give your employer all of your extra rehearsal and performance dates at the beginning of the school year. Make sure that your manager writes them down, and keep checking with him/her to make sure they don't schedule you to work when you have a school obligation that counts toward your grade point average and graduation credit requirements. **You will not be excused from a rehearsal or performance to work!**
- Steps for appeal to the director's decision regarding concert/performance absences are as follows: a-The Director, b-The Dean of Students, c-The Head of School.

School Related Conflicts

We firmly believe one of our strengths, as a department, is that you participate in total school life. From time to time, this will create some conflicts. Rest assured, we will try our best to reduce the conflicts, but we need your help. The following school policy shall be the guideline for students who experience conflicts between school related activities.

- When a conflict occurs between a performance and a scheduled practice, students are expected to attend the performance without loss of group membership or standing in the other activity.
- When a conflict occurs between scheduled practices, after notifying the director/coach, the student may choose either activity without loss of group membership in the other activity; however, frequently missing rehearsal sessions may jeopardize a student's standing within his/her group.
- When a conflict occurs between competitions and performances, the student may choose either activity without loss of group membership or standing in the activity. There may be times when students may participate in one activity and part of the other by special approval of the sponsors.
- The student must communicate scheduling conflicts to the director and coach at least two weeks prior to the conflict.
- It is expected that repeated conflicts be treated fairly.
- Regardless, if a student misses an event which is part of their grade, it is expected that the student arrange a time to make up that missed event to receive points. (Just like if you missed a test in math or science.)

Note: Directors and coaches will work with you to help you avoid these conflicts.

***Communication and forethought on your part
are essential to aid this process.***

Grading Criteria

If you are a serious music student and positively contribute to the success of the group, you will find that you will never have to be concerned about achieving a good grade in the ensembles at Black River Public School.

Depending upon the term, not all the criteria will be used.

Assessments (various points)

Performance Based

- Playing tests covering assigned music
- Scale tests
- Sight-reading

Written

- Music theory quizzes
- Writing assignments
- Concert reviews- one per semester, 200 pts

Performances (300 points per concert performance)

Attendance at the event

- Punctual for pre-concert warm-up
- Proper uniform
- Music mastered
- Appropriate behavior on and off the stage

Absences

An excuse for absence from a performance or musical event must be submitted to the director in writing at least two weeks prior to the scheduled performance.

Students with an excused absence may be required to complete an assignment to receive credit. Failure to do so will result in an unexcused absence (0 points for that concert).

Concert performances and concert reports are worth 30%-40% of the term grade depending on the class.

Participation

- Follow Classroom Expectations (pg. 10)
- Be on time and organized to participate
- Bring *ALL* necessary materials for musical success
- Contribute positively to the success of the rehearsal
- No gum/food/pop at any musical rehearsal
- Practice individually outside of class.

Final Exam

At the end of each term, students will have an exam based upon material covered during that class. It may be performance based or written.

CONCERT REVIEW RUBRIC

| Elements | Distinguished | Proficient | Progressing | Unsatisfactory |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|---|
| Introduction 40 | *The paper begins with a strong introduction which explains the type of performance, the date, location, and vocals or instrumentation. | *The paper begins with an introduction which mostly explains the type of performance, the date, location, and vocals or instrumentation. | *The paper begins with an introduction, but it is brief. *Provides little information | *The introduction is missing. |
| Discussion of Music 50 | *Describes in detail the overall impression of the music that is performed. *Describes in detail one piece from the performance: includes title, composer, mood, and impression of the piece. | *Somewhat describes the overall impression of the music that is performed. *Somewhat describes one piece from the performance. | *Weakly describes the overall impression of the music that is performed. *Mentions one specific piece from the performance but offers no description. | *The discussion of music is missing. |
| Discussion of Etiquette 50 | *Describes the behavior of the audience members, and gives specific examples of how it affected the performance. *Describes the behavior of the performers: preparation, public speaking, talking, and stage etiquette. | *Describes the behavior of audience members, but does not give specific examples of how it affected the performance. *Describes the behavior of the performers, but did not address all elements: preparation, public speaking, talking, and stage etiquette. | *Mentions behavior of audience members briefly but lacks details. *Mentions the behavior of the performers briefly but lacks details. | *The discussion of etiquette is missing. |
| Conclusion 40 | *Clearly restates overall impression of the performance including interest in seeing a performance of this type in the future. | *Restates overall impression of the performance, but does not include interest in seeing a performance of this type in the future. | *Mentions overall impression of the performance briefly, but does not include interest in seeing a performance of this type in the future. | *The conclusion is missing. |
| Grammar, spelling, structure 20 | *Contains little to no spelling errors. *Makes use of correct grammar, punctuation and syntax. | *Contains some spelling errors. *Makes use of correct grammar, punctuation and syntax most of the time. | *Contains some spelling errors. *Contains some grammar, punctuation and syntax errors. | *There are many grammar and spelling errors throughout the paper. |

Classroom Expectations

- Be in your seat with your instrument, ALL necessary supplies, and music ready two (2) minutes after the official start time. Rehearsal begins at this moment.
- When the rehearsal begins, immediately cease playing and talking. Give your ATTENTION and EYES to the person on the podium. Strive to never miss a downbeat.
- Have and utilize a PENCIL at every rehearsal for the rest of your existence.
- Only practice on the days that you eat.
- Treat the opinions and abilities of each musician and teacher with the respect they deserve and demand.
- Prepare your INDIVIDUAL music outside of class so the ENSEMBLE may excel during rehearsal. Ensemble success depends upon individual preparation. Band, orchestra, and choir classes are not about your individual ability. It is about bringing us together as a group.

ALL WORK AND INTERACTION IN THE BLACK RIVER PUBLIC
SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAM IS BASED ON A MUTUAL
UNDERSTANDING OF
RESPECT AND TEAMWORK.

WE REHEARSE COLLECTIVELY TO ACHIEVE WHAT NONE OF US
ARE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH INDIVIDUALLY.

*Through collaboratively following these guidelines, we increase the
potential for outstanding musical results!*

Concert Attire

Advanced Level Ensembles

Tuxedo*
Tie*
Cumberbund*
Wing Collar Tux Shirt
Black Socks
Black Dress*
Black Dress Shoes

**Indicates school provided items*

Beginning and Intermediate Level Ensembles

Short or Long-Sleeved Plain White Dress Shirts (not t-shirts or tank tops)
Black Dress Pants/Skirt
Black Socks or stockings
Black Dress Shoes

- Unless excused by the director, the full uniform (as specified above) must be worn at all performances. Failure to comply will result in a student not being allowed to perform and will be graded as an unexcused absence.
- Students may receive special permission from the directors to deviate from the uniform due to special circumstances.
- When uniforms are returned they are required to be professionally cleaned.

Concert Etiquette

The musical ensembles of Black River Public School are noted for their musical achievement. However, one aspect of our reputation that is often overlooked is the care we take in maintaining a disciplined and mature decorum in our concert presentations. Our groups are constantly aware of the importance of the positive attitude and appearance of any performing organization, even before a musical note is heard. This approach makes the audience immediately aware that our musicians place great importance on their music from the beginning of their entrance until the last sound of the applause is heard. One important aspect of this discipline is the attitude of performers toward each other.

Members of our ensembles realize that they are part of a team; a team that is only as strong as its weakest member. Thus, they are encouraged to support one another for the good of the team. An important member of this performance team is the audience. It is crucial that the audience demonstrate the same support and encouragement as the rest of the team members. We would like to make some practical suggestions, which may serve to strengthen this support.

- Prior to entering the auditorium, turn off cell phones. At no time should you use your phone during a performance.
- Please hold your applause until the piece is concluded as signaled by the conductor (usually he/she will put arms down when finished). This is especially important during multi-movement selections.
- Please do not go to your seat, leave your seat, or return to your seat until there is a break in the program. This break would occur at the end of a piece, or more easily, at the end of a particular group. Constant movement and whispering by the audience not only breaks the concentration of the performers, but also breaks the concentration of the listeners.
- All performers are required to listen to the other groups performing until the concert is finished – ***no student is allowed to leave early*** – please do not ask – everyone can come up with a reason why they must leave.
- Please use discretion in taking photos during a performance. Flash photos taken during a performance are extremely distracting for all and may cause a performer to make a mistake.
- Please do not bring food or drink into the auditorium or concert venue—unless permitted.

- Ensemble members seated in the audience need to remember these suggestions, also. All of our students are well aware of the amount of time and effort that has been given in preparation for these concerts. We all want to do our best.

Equipment and Uniforms

Each instrumental student is responsible for the care of his or her own music, uniform, instrument and accessories. We highly recommend that students keep their equipment in a locked instrumental locker. Each instrumental student is assigned a lock and locker at the beginning of the year. Alterations may be made to the uniforms; however, no uniforms may be cut without verbal or written approval from the directors. Uniforms may also be professionally dry cleaned throughout the course of the season at your own expense.

A student who loses or damages any school property, whether intentional or unintentional, will be financially responsible.

Extra Credit

**Extra credit can only account for 10% of the final grade.*

- Attending performances at other schools, the Grand Rapids Youth Symphony, Holland Area Youth Orchestra, Holland Chorale, Opera Grand Rapids, Civic Theatre, Broadway Theatre Guild, St. Cecilia, area colleges, etc... can be used toward extra credit. A copy of the program signed by the parent is required for ten extra credit points.
- Students who give extra-curricular performances in church or civic events, alone or in small groups, may also earn extra points. See your director for specific information.
- Students who participate in Solo and Ensemble will receive extra credit points. Students receiving a Division I or II will receive ten points. Students receiving a Division III or lower will need to perform the event for their director to determine the areas which caused the lower rating if they still care to receive extra credit points.

Private Lessons

Individual excellence is largely the determining factor for ensemble success. Each member of the BRPS Music Program is encouraged to study his or her individual instrument with a qualified professional. Private study offers an outstanding opportunity to work one-on-one with a specialist.

When possible, we strive to facilitate lessons through the BRPS Music Program, and some lessons may be offered right at school. All private teachers would work as independent contractors, and payment for lessons would be handled directly between the participating family and instructor.

Contact your director if interested in private lessons.

Festival & MSVMA Sponsored Events

Black River Public School bands, orchestras and choirs participate in festival activities. Many of our ensembles attend District Festival or Heritage Festival. A letter will go out in January to the parents/guardians of students in the ensembles participating in Festival. Groups participating in Festival will prepare a concert of three pieces and will sight-read more pieces as part of the day's events. Festival dates are on the calendar and specific times and locations will be announced closer to the event.



Music Awards

In order to qualify for an award, a student must have no unexcused absences, maintained a “B” average for the year, and have no record of disciplinary action within the instrumental music department. They must have participated in their school music group for the entire year.

Varsity Letter: *For High School Students Only*

In order to receive a varsity letter, a student needs to earn six points. **Each school year a student is enrolled in a performing ensemble they are awarded 1 point.**

Students who excel in music can earn their varsity letter earlier by participating in the following:

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| All-State Groups | Automatic Varsity Letter |
| Solo & Ensemble--1 st Division | 1 point |
| HAYO/Holland Chorale/St. Cecilia/GRYSO | 1 point |
| Private Lessons During Full Academic Year | 2 points |
| Second Music Ensemble | 1 point |
| Pit Orchestra (you may count this toward your varsity letter in music OR varsity letter in theatre, but not both) | 1 point |
| District or Collegiate Honors Groups | 2 points |

After the issuance of the varsity letter, students who earn additional honor points in multiples of 4 will be awarded a Music Department pin. Students may obtain an application to record their points earned from the BRPS website. It is important for students to keep documentation (programs, rating sheets, etc.) to verify their eligibility.

In addition, there are several special awards that are given to students based upon musical contribution, spirit and student nomination. Some examples are the John Philip Sousa Award, the National School Orchestra Award, and the Louis Armstrong Jazz Award.