

Future Belleville West Students and Families:

We hope this letter finds you well and that you are enjoying your last semester in junior high school. We are writing to share the many instrumental opportunities we have in the Music Department at Belleville West High School. Whether you wish to continue studying music or would like to begin, we have classes and ensembles that will help you meet your goals! Go to **bellevillewestmusic.org** and check out the homepage to listen to and watch the Belleville West Bands!

Music performance ensembles include band, percussion ensemble, and four jazz bands. Instrumental Music, a class that meets opposite lunch, is designed to help musicians of all levels and instruments master their current instruments or learn a secondary instrument while introducing music theory. For students who wish to prepare themselves for music instruction at a university or desire a deeper understanding of music, we offer introductory classes in music theory and music appreciation through SWIC, which are dual credit classes and award up to six college level credit hours. Our course offerings are diverse and allow our students to tailor a musical experience that best fits their schedules and interests.

Many of our bands perform off campus and frequently travel across the Midwest. Our Jazz Band is highly visible at civic functions and is sought after to perform across the Metro East. The band, performing as the Marching Maroons, performs at multiple competitions, home football games, and parades across Illinois. Our ensembles offer access to many unique performances and activities.

The time spent rehearsing and performing together fosters a strong camaraderie and work ethic among our musicians. Many lifelong friendships are built in the music department. Our students meet and work with students from all levels and backgrounds. Indeed, the music department is a wonderful place to immerse oneself in the Belleville West social fabric.

We value the fact that our students are involved with multiple activities and welcome new students to explore many curricular and co-curricular opportunities at West. Our faculty and staff welcome all students to find what inspires them.

See the attached document for information about our course offerings and frequently asked questions. You may also visit our website, **bellevillewestmusic.org**. As always, feel free to give us a call or send us an E-mail. We are happy to help in your transition to high school and look forward to meeting you!

Respectfully,

Michael Pond-Jones
Director of Instrumental Music

Scott Wilson
Associate Director of Instrumental Music



Belleville West Instrumental Music Course Descriptions

Concert Band/Marching Band. Symphonic Band/Marching Band. Percussion Ensemble:

The Concert Band, Symphonic Band, and Percussion Ensemble are performing groups consisting of students from all grade levels of the high school. During the first semester of the academic year, students from these ensembles join members of the color guard to form the Marching Maroons. All students attend a two week summer band camp on the West campus prior to the start of school during which students receive professional



instrumental lessons and learn how to march. The Marching Maroons perform for athletic events, band festivals, and community parades throughout Illinois and the Greater St. Louis area. The Marching Maroons is the most active and visible band in our department and joining is a wonderful way to immerse oneself in Belleville West and meet many people before the semester begins. At the conclusion of the marching season, performance study in Concert Band, Symphonic Band, and Percussion ensemble includes standard literature by traditional and contemporary composers. Students must enroll for the fall semester if electing to take only one semester; the marching band component is required. For continuous enrollment, taking driver's education and health during summer school is highly encouraged. Notes: Concert Band/Marching Band is open enrollment and does not require instructor consent. First year students must sign up for Marching Band/Concert Band first semester when enrolling in band.(Course 1801) Percussionists enroll in Course 1918. Admission to the Symphonic Band is through audition and consent of the instructor and takes place during the second quarter.

Jazz Band: Jazz Band is an advanced ensemble consisting of students from all classes, but primarily juniors and seniors. This ensemble features the study of music of significant jazz composers and performers and the study of jazz improvisation. Students are selected from the Symphonic Band. Admission is through audition and consent of the instructor. Participation in this class includes one full class period and numerous public performances including home basketball games.

Jazz Ensemble: This ensemble meets each day for one-half hour and is composed of students from all classes. Students are selected from the Symphonic Band, Concert Band, and Orchestra. Admission is by audition and consent of the instructor. Coursework includes the fundamental study of jazz improvisation and the performance of traditional and contemporary compositions. Admission is by consent of the instructor.

Instrumental Music Class: Enrollment is highly suggested for First Year students. This class consists of woodwind, brass, string and percussion students from all grade levels and meets for one-half hour each day. This provides supplemental instruction for the student in Concert or Symphonic Band as a second instrumental class. Scheduled opposite the lunch hour, this will enable students to continue study while completing Health and/or Driver Education requirements. This class is open enrollment and does not require instructor consent.

Fundamentals of Music: This academic, non-performance class has been designed to explore the fundamental elements of music including pitch and rhythmic notation, melody, harmony, and musical composition. This course is available to students in grades 10, 11 or 12. In addition, this class is offered for dual credit; MUS 104 - Fundamentals of Music on the SWIC campus. Students may enroll for college credit while taking the class on the West campus.

Music Appreciation: This academic, non-performance class explores Western music from the Middle Ages through the present. In addition to learning musical elements and orchestral instruments, students will be introduced to the compositions of the master composers and stylistic characteristics of the various musical eras. A writing component is required. This course is available to students in grades 10, 11 or 12. In addition, this class is offered for dual credit; MUS 101 - Music Appreciation on the SWIC campus. Students may enroll for college credit while taking the class on the West campus.

Color Guard/Winter Guard: Students will participate in Marching Band during the first semester of the academic year. The Color Guard performs for athletic events, band festivals, and community parades in Illinois and the greater St. Louis area. All students attend a mandatory summer band camp on the West campus. During the second semester, Color Guard functions as a Winter Guard and performs at several Winter Guard festivals. Attendance at after school rehearsals, additional camp dates, and performances are mandatory. Additional information may be obtained at bellevillewestmusic.org or by contacting Mr. Wilson at 222-7629.

Frequently Asked Questions

I am a first year student and would like to join a band. Where do I start?

First year students enroll in Concert Band/Marching Band. Concert Band is “home base” for you and is where everyone’s band journey begins. First year students also often elect to take Instrumental Music, for which no audition is required, or Jazz Ensemble, which requires an audition. We will send you information in the mail about our summer evening sessions, band camp, and schedule of events once we have you on the roster. Concert Band Course Code is 1801. Instrumental Music Course Code is 1850/1851.

What can I expect as a first year student?

You will first attend a camp on the Belleville West campus that involves upwards of 150 musicians. During this time you will truly become a high schooler and learn the ways of our band. Do not be intimidated! You will be welcomed and have a role in the band immediately. On the first day of school, you will already know your way around campus and know many classmates as a result of band camp. After the camp, the band performs for school functions, football games, band festivals, parades, and concerts. Because of the large amount of preparation, you will see a large growth in your musicianship your freshman year. By the end of the school year, you will have performed for hundreds of thousands of people across Illinois. Note: make sure you can attend the marching band camp. The 2024 camp dates are 22 - 26 July and 29 - 2 August. Attendance at camp is a mandatory part of the class.



How do I join a Jazz Ensemble?

Call or E-mail Mr. Pond-Jones. We will have you come in after school and take a brief audition. You do not need anything prepared. After a successful audition, we will pass your name to the guidance department for enrollment.

Does participation in a band require much time?

As all activities in high school require a high amount of dedication, so do ensembles in the music department. At times during the year, you will need to be very conscientious of your schedule. However, we understand that our students have many commitments, and we work to ensure that our students can be involved all over campus and meet family obligations. Band students are typically highly involved in theatre, debate, the school newspaper, scholar

bowl, bowling, tennis, cross country, the National Honors Society, and school yearbook. Students with great time management are capable of keeping a part-time job. We take pride in the level of school and community involvement and scholastic achievement found among our students.

Is there a band fee?

Yes, there are two band fees. One fee is paid to the district and one is paid to the West Band Parents Association. Our band fees are very modest compared to peer schools and we strive to make band possible for all students. Information on fees is mailed after enrollment. Fees pay for uniforms, meals, music, travel, and equipment usage.

Does the band provide instruments?

We have various instruments available for your use. Though we recommend having your own instrument, we are happy to help you get started with a school-owned instrument. No fees are charged for instrument rental.

As a parent, how do I become involved?

We have a band booster organization! Parents are very important in the successful operation of our band. The West Band Parents Organization meets the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm.. You may find more information at bellevillewestmusic.org.

Feel free to reach out to us with any questions you have. We look forward to working with you!



Mr. Michael Pond-Jones
Director of Instrumental Music
mpondjones@bths201.org
618.222.7687

Mr. Scott Wilson
Associate Director of Instrumental Music
swilson@bths201.org
618.222.7629

*****PLEASE READ IMPORTANT NOTE*****

Summer Health and Driver Education Information

Students who select **an hour and a half of music classes** (vocal, instrumental or a combination of both) will be exempt from physical education (PE); however, **all students must complete the Health requirement**. Currently, an on-line health class is offered for music students only the summer after their freshman year which allows each music student greater flexibility in scheduling classes during the academic year. We strongly recommend that you take advantage of this option if at all possible. Each student enrolled in Health or Driver Education during the summer is then able to continue music study the entire year and make consistent progress throughout the academic year. As you enroll, please consider these various options.

OUR GRADUATES

Recent graduates of our program have acquired the academic foundation, musical understanding, and leadership skill necessary to find success at prestigious institutions across the country including, the Eastman School of Music, the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, Notre Dame, University of Missouri, Cincinnati Conservatory, the Juilliard School, Northwestern University, the University of Illinois, and Yale.

HONORS

In recent years, our music students have been recognized as outstanding throughout Illinois, receiving consistently first division ratings from the Illinois High School Association. During each school year, a significant number of West students are selected by audition as All-State Musicians and National Honor Musicians by the Illinois Music Educators Association. The West Jazz Band continues to perform across the state and frequently receives honors and first place designations. We are most proud of the accomplishments of our music students at West as they include members of the Distinguished Scholar Program and the National Honor Society, as well as Illinois State Scholars, National Merit students, school valedictorians, numerous citizenship award winners, and all-conference and all-state athletes.



SPECIAL INDIVIDUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Music is a rich professional field with many opportunities for individual growth. Over the course of the school year, Belleville West Instrumental Music participates in many auditioned and nominated ensembles, music events, and individual opportunities. These include

Illinois Music Education Association

The Illinois Music Education Association sponsors district and state level jazz, orchestra, and concert honor bands. These are auditioned and require extensive preparation.

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Bi-State Honor Band Festival

Each year, the department nominates a few members from each section to participate in the SIUE Bi-State Festival. Some of those nominated are then chosen to participate by the festival organizers. Work to be among the strongest musicians in your section and you may find yourself at this festival.

Illinois High School Association Solo and Ensemble Contest

A volunteer event, and open to all music students, this contest is a wonderful place to stretch your musicianship, whether you are performing a solo or performing within a chamber ensemble. This festival is judged, and each musician/ensemble receives comments and a division (score/place).

Dual Credit Classes

We offer two dual credit classes at Belleville West through Southwestern Illinois College. These classes are a wonderful way (and affordable and practical way) to expand your understanding of music. Musicians receive academic credit at Belleville West and also 6 credit hours at SWIC while taking the courses.



Private Applied Lessons

The Music Department keeps contact information for trusted music professionals who can help student musicians learn much more quickly and work towards state honors, prepare for university auditions, and earn higher placement within ensembles at West. We highly support taking weekly music lessons and strive to find professional musicians who are educationally-minded and keep lessons affordable for our students. Please ask the band office for further information.

Jazz Festivals

Each year the jazz ensembles at Belleville West participate in the multiple jazz festivals in order to seek out further instruction and develop understanding of America's indigenous art form, jazz.