

Grading in the Lake Highlands Band Program

The Lake Highlands Band Program is built off of a rich tradition and history of excellence. The band has been nationally recognized since the 1960's, performing at state, national, and international conventions. One of the major reasons this program has sustained the decades of change is the high level of expectation and individual accountability held for every member of the band program. In order for our band program to remain at the top of it's class, there are certain expectations that every member must adhere to and work towards. The following packet will explain the grading procedures for every member of the LHHS Band Program, grades 9-12.

Objective Sheets

The LHHS Band Program uses a unique system of accountability known as the objective sheet system. Objective sheets are student objectives that are set forth on a six weeks basis for every member of the program. Each class or ensemble uses a specific objective sheet for their needs and goals. The purpose behind the use of objective sheets is to give a child a visual aid that enables them to see what they have and have not completed at a mastery level. Different than numerical grades, the objective sheet is a pass/try again system. This means that students come in to "pass off" or play music for directors for a mastery level completion. If a musician masters the exercise and plays it at the director's expectation level, then the student earns a signature or initial by the appropriate objective. For example:

Pass off warm up 2A from memory due date: 10-1-08 Initial: JB

The student comes in to play for a director and performs the exercise for the director's approval. If the objective is not performed correctly, the student is given 3 opportunities to retry until they are asked to come back and try again after further practice. By choosing to give the student multiple chances, the program is teaching the student proper practice habits and how to master a skill, not earn a 70 or passing grade. Though a student may try and earn enough to pass, they will be sent back to practice if they have not mastered the skill or objective. **There are unlimited opportunities to come back and try again.** The whole system is encouraging mastery of skills and performing at the highest level. If students came in and played for a grade, they would never truly master each skill. They would merely earn a B or an A. We are looking for students to earn a 100 on every exercise.

Pass Off's

Pass offs are opportunities for students to come and play for a director in a smaller group setting. Pass off's may be done in groups of 3 or less, or individually. Playing for a director on a frequent basis enables directors to keep watchful eyes on students musical growth. Sometimes students begin to pick up bad habits such as not tapping their foot, changing their embouchure, or posture and hand position changes that can cause sever technical issues in a musicians

growth. The more a director can hear a student play their instrument in a small setting, the better that student will become through watchful care of the director. Pass off's may also be done with private lesson teachers. Student's who are enrolled in private lessons have another person that can hear them play and hold them accountable. If the lesson teacher approves the pass off, they initial by the objective. Lesson teachers can pass off most any objective, except for marching show step off's with music. Lesson teachers are not involved in marching band drill, therefore they do not know what to look for. Pass offs may be done before, after, or during school.

Grading Categories

RISD has divided the music curriculum into 4 main categories. Listed below is the information taken from the LHHS Band Handbook. This is decided upon by RISD and is non negotiable. As you can see below, the objective sheet system is 50% of a student's grade in band. If they do not turn in an objective sheet, they would be eligible for a maximum grade of 50. Objective sheets are always due 2 days prior to the six weeks cut off. Usually Tuesday!

Participation (25%)

- ✓ The student will receive a grade for each before and after school sectional and rehearsal during a grading period
- ✓ The student will be on task on focused during all rehearsals
- ✓ The student will have instrument, music, pencil, and supplies
- ✓ The student will be prepared to play his/her part successfully
- ✓ The student will mark music and take notes as needed
- ✓ An unexcused absence from a before or after school rehearsal or sectional will lower a student's participation average of the six weeks by 20 points
- ✓ Tardies lower a students participation average by 5 points

Skills (25%) (objective sheet)

- ✓ The student will be expected to improve individual music skills
- ✓ The students individual skill development will be evaluated through taped music tests, individual playing tests, scale tests, and written tests
- ✓ The student will be evaluated on improvement of ensemble skills during daily rehearsals

Fundamentals (25%) (objective sheet)

- ✓ The student will be expected to improve performance fundamentals
- ✓ The student will be evaluated for improvement of music fundamentals through daily observation during the "basics" part of each rehearsal and during sectionals
- ✓ The student will be expected to demonstrate correct posture, hand position, embouchure, air production, articulation and attentiveness as monitored during rehearsals
- ✓ The student will be expected to develop a historical knowledge of the literature relative to his/her respective instrument

Performance (25%)

- ✓ The student will receive a grade for each performance during a grading period
- ✓ Performances will be counted as major exams
- ✓ The number of performances will be determined by the performance calendar
- ✓ If no public performance occurs during a grading period, the performance grade will be based upon informal classroom performances determined by the director

Summary of grading

It is the goal of RISD and the Lake Highlands High School Band Program to provide every child with an opportunity to excel in band. Although the standards are set high, it is our goal that every child leaves the program a better musician, young adult, and responsible citizen.

Extra credit may be given at the discretion of each individual director. Should a student need extra credit, they must approach the director of their ensemble and ask for assistance.

Being in any part of our band program requires certain extra rehearsals, in class assignments, and out of class performances. Being enrolled in private lessons is a great way to further every student's musical growth. Scholarships are available through the band program for any student who applies and is in need. Being involved in private lessons is not an extra credit grade, but is strongly encouraged.

Attendance at rehearsals and sectionals is part of the participation grade. Attendance at performances is part of the performance grade. Students who chose not to attend all events will have their grade docked. It is the responsibility of the student and parent to ensure the child is on time and prepared for every rehearsal/performance. The fall is very busy during marching season and the band directors will do everything they can to give back time to students when the season slows down. Should a student be late or absent, proper documentation is required.