

Rice Middle School Raven Band

Band Placement Audition Information

April 24, 2020

Dear Raven Band Students and Parents,

Despite the uncertainties of the coming weeks and how we will bring the current school year to a close, we must prepare our students for the 2020-2021 school year. Part of this process involves our band placement auditions for current 6th and 7th graders.

This year will be different than in previous years. Normally, students would audition in person for the directors during their band classes. Due to the COVID-19 sequester, this year's auditions will be submitted in a recorded format. Last week, copies of this year's audition music were uploaded to each class page on Google Classroom. Additional copies of the audition music and required scales will be included in another email very soon and will include audition information and procedures.

After all audition recordings are received and evaluated, the directors will collaborate and determine the most appropriate band placement for each student. Although the auditions are the main tool in placing students, additional factors that will affect placement include daily class preparation, overall musical progress and performance, participation in applicable band events, knowledge of music theory and related concepts, and student conduct.

There are three levels of 7th and 8th grade performing bands at Rice Middle School. All performing bands will be collaboratively taught by the band directors next year. Since no two classes are exactly alike, the level of performance and challenge in each ensemble changes from year to year. However, the following are some general descriptions of the band levels:

- The Concert Band is the standard performing ensemble at Rice Middle School. The concepts and difficulty of music taught in Concert Band are aligned with the state and district curriculum for 7th and 8th grade.
- The Symphonic Band is an advanced ensemble that performs music equivalent to advanced 8th grade standards. The Symphonic Band requires a higher level of commitment than Concert Band but is not quite as demanding as Wind Ensemble.
- The Wind Ensemble performs the most advanced literature. UIL and TMEA classify our Wind Ensemble as a varsity group for evaluations and competitions. There is a high level of commitment required of students invited to be members of the Wind Ensemble.

It is important for students to remember that band placement is not a “win-lose” situation. All bands at Rice Middle School are of high quality and are very successful. Band placements group students into ensembles to challenge them appropriately without overwhelming them. A student overwhelmed by the difficulty of the music will become frustrated and will develop a negative attitude. Likewise, a student who is not sufficiently challenged will usually slow in his or her musical development. For this reason, there is not a set instrumentation for each band. Proper instrumental balance will be maintained in each band to create a quality musical experience for the entire ensemble while simultaneously meeting the needs of individual students.

Students can become much more anxious about the audition process than they should. If your child does his or her best, all will be fine. The audition material will be easier for some students and more difficult for others. Unlike a playing test, in which we aspire for mastery from every student, the purpose of an audition is to group students according to their developmental level. **We expect students to make mistakes in placement auditions.** The number and types of mistakes allow us to more fairly and accurately evaluate and place each student in the correct ensemble. Please have your child visit with his or her director if he or she is experiencing an undue amount of anxiety related to the upcoming auditions.

We are hoping to announce placements prior to the last day of school, but that may not be possible under the current circumstances. We will provide more specific information when we have a better idea of our situation in May. Once announced, some students will be pleased with their placements, while others may be disappointed. **We encourage parents to guide your children in dealing appropriately with either response.**

The directors will not change any placement as a result of parental pressure. We are happy to visit with students at an appropriate time to offer suggestions for continued growth and improvement. Band placements cannot be appealed.

More details about the audition process itself will be provided very soon. Once you receive this information, please contact me if you have any unanswered questions regarding the audition and band placement process. I look forward to continuing as a partner in your child's musical growth and development next year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jason Tucker', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Jason Tucker
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