

**Blue Valley West Band Program**  
**Informational Packet**

2017-2018



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# Blue Valley West Band Mission Statement

As members of the  
Blue Valley West Band,  
we value:

**INTEGRITY** – building character  
**FAMILY** – unity in pursuit  
**PRIDE** – fulfillment through effort



*BLUE VALLEY WEST RED & SILVER BRIGADE*  
2016-2017

# **BVW Jaguar Band**

## **Course Offerings & Enrollment**

All students will audition at the end of each school year and will be placed in a concert ensemble that best suits their abilities. Each concert ensemble meets for the full year in the same class and performs at football games and concerts throughout the year.

In the enrollment system and course description handbook, these classes are listed as Symphonic Marching Band and Concert Band. These are used mostly interchangeably - what matters is that you enroll in a band class for both semesters. After auditions, we send rosters to the counselors telling them exactly which block you should be in.

**Bottom line: to enroll in band, enroll in either  
Symphonic Marching Band (PA0936/PA0937) or  
Concert Band (PA0940/PA0941)**

### **Symphonic Wind Ensemble - 1st block year-round**

The BVW Symphonic Wind Ensemble is the top band at Blue Valley West. Membership is selected through auditions in the late spring of the previous year. Membership is highly competitive, and this ensemble performs high-quality band literature for high school and college bands at a very high level.

### **Symphonic Band - 2nd block year-round**

The BVW Symphonic Band is the second band at Blue Valley West. Membership is selected through auditions in the late spring of the previous year and may be altered during re-auditions during the fall. This ensemble is focused on developing and refining ensemble and individual musicianship, and it also performs high-quality band literature appropriate for high school bands.

### **Concert Band - 3rd block year-round**

The BVW Concert Band is the third band at Blue Valley West. This ensemble is open to any band student, though membership is determined through audition. This ensemble is focused on developing individual musical ability through fundamental exercises, large ensemble rehearsal, and small ensemble performances.

### **But what about marching band?**

In the fall, all students enrolled in a concert ensemble are members of the **Spirit of Blue Valley West Marching Band**. They will perform at home football games and a possible local parade or festival. All students will perform pregame, a fun halftime show, and pep tunes in the stands. All of this will be learned during class time - no outside rehearsal required except for on the day of a home game.

The **Red & Silver Brigade Competitive Marching Band** is an optional activity that is open to any student enrolled in a concert ensemble. All rehearsals for the Competitive Marching Band take place after school or on the weekends. The Competitive Marching Band travels to several regional and national-level competitions over the course of the season. The process to join this group will be explained more after enrollment.

## Other band and music theory classes

### **Jazz Ensemble – 4<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> block - full year course**

There are currently two Jazz Ensemble classes at West. Jazz Ensemble I, the top jazz band, meets during 4<sup>th</sup> block. Jazz Ensemble II meets during 6<sup>th</sup> block. At the beginning of the school year, students wanting to be in Jazz Ensemble I will audition for a spot in that group. Jazz Ensemble II is currently open to any student in a band class who also wants to be in jazz band. Both jazz bands attend several festivals during the course of the school year.

### **Honors Music Theory – 5th block - full year course**

This full-year course is designed for students interested in majoring in music in college or working in a music profession. It is a preparatory course for college music theory classes. Students will learn music theory analysis, develop strong ear-training and sight-singing skills, and work on independent projects related to music theory, composition, and history.

## Other opportunities outside of class

### **Lab Jazz – after school jazz band**

Lab Jazz meets after school on Tuesday and Thursday from 3-4 PM starting in November. This jazz band is open to any student who wants to play jazz and is led by older students in Jazz Ensemble I. Many students in this group learn or play a secondary instrument. Lab Jazz performs at several concerts and possibly a festival each year.

### **Pep Band – basketball games**

Pep Band begins with basketball season (December - early March). This is optional - attending your required games can you earn you credit towards a letter in band.

### **Color Guard/Winter Guard**

The Color Guard is the main visual component of the marching band. During the fall, color guard members are enrolled in 1<sup>st</sup> block Symphonic Marching Band and rehearse during that class, as well as at full marching band rehearsals. Winter Guard's season runs from December through March and is an all-guard ensemble that travels to compete. Membership for both groups is through audition. Read the Color Guard information page and ask Kate Anthony or a guard member if you have questions!

### **Percussion Group**

Percussion Group is a percussion-only small ensemble that rehearses Tuesday and Thursday evenings with Mr. Westcott. They perform in February and host our annual Percussion Festival at the end of March.

### **Tri-M Music Honor Society**

Tri-M is an honor society for high school students designed to recognize academic and musical achievement and to provide leadership and service opportunities to young musicians. Enrollment in a music course is a requirement to be accepted.

*Why do band/color guard?  
Here's what students are saying about it...*

**Morgan Hennessy, Senior:** “Performing with the guard is the best feeling ever!”

**Elizabeth Davidson, Senior:** “I was unsure about joining color guard because I had a very busy schedule dancing outside of school. I decided to try it and although I was busy, I had so much fun.”

**Faith Marble, Senior:** “I used to march but then I realized color guard wasn't what I thought it was. I decided to go to auditions, even though it was hard I fell in love and would never go back.”

**Anna Ferguson, Senior:** “I joined color guard because my brother suggested it. Ever since then I've loved it.

**Fletcher Turner, Senior:** “I did band because it's something I'm extremely passionate for. I wouldn't trade it for anything else.

**Robert Viazzoli, Junior:** “I played piano for 11 years. I felt like I needed something else, something more exciting. Marching band definitely did the trick.”

**Brandon Kohnle, Junior:** “I like band because I can express myself through a different medium and play Star Wars.” (All-State musician)

**Connor O'Neill, Junior:** “It gave me a chance to make new friends and have great experiences.”

**Kelly Bushouse, Junior:** “It makes me feel like I have a place that I will always be accepted and will always belong.” (All-State musician)

**Mac McArthur, Sophomore:** “Band had given me a lot of opportunities and I have gotten a lot better at playing.”

**Tess Ryan, Sophomore:** “I've wanted to join band since before I can remember, and there hasn't been a day that I've regretted joining marching band or concert band. I've met lots of interesting people, and expanded my knowledge for music in general.”



## From the Parents...

These are the most frequently asked questions that we hear from the parents of middle school band students.

Here are some answers from some of our current BVW Band parents!

1. "Why do you believe it is beneficial for your student to be in band?"

I believe that marching band has taught my son things that he might not have learned from me or my husband (What do we know, right?). He learned commitment, responsibility, time management, team building, and how to be a reliable member of an organization. He definitely became more punctual and aware of how his actions affect others. He has had a sense of pride that I'm not sure he would have felt anywhere else. He had friends before he even started his Freshman year, due to summer practices. I think this made his transition from Middle School to High School much easier. The entire band is a big family and I know my son felt that from Day 1! I could go on and on...

2. "Is marching band expensive?"

I'm not sure I could put a price on the benefits (see above). It might be a little expensive for some, but no more so than many other school activities. In addition, there are numerous fundraisers available to all marching band families. Several of our marchers have raised 100% of their marching bands fees simply by fundraising.

3. "Are there ways to offset the costs of marching band and trips?"

Yes, we have many fundraising opportunities that directly benefit individual students: Grocery store coupon books, Scrip Gift cards, Butter Braids to name a few. As mentioned previously, several of our marchers have raised 100% of their marching bands fees simply by fundraising.

4. "How busy will my student really be in the fall?"

While the schedule looks daunting, the competitive band schedule is actually about the same (or less) time commitment as playing a sport - the time is just divided differently into the evening and weekend rehearsals. We found the schedule very manageable, even in October, which is the busiest time for them. Your student will definitely be busy with band, classes, and other activities, but they'll be having so much fun that they'll enjoy it!

5. "Did you feel as if marching band added too much stress with classes?"

While the extra rehearsal time can be stressful, we saw our son really get organized and become more responsible during marching band season. He was dedicated to the activity and didn't want his grades to suffer, so he worked out a homework schedule that worked with band rehearsals. Many students do homework together after school before rehearsal and help each other stay on track.

6. “Wouldn’t another AP class be a better way for our student to get ready for college?”

BVW offers lots of great AP courses, but none of them can match the experience that band has given our daughter. Band has taught her a lot about the subject matter – music – but it’s also taught her how to manage her time, be a better performer, prepare for rehearsal and classes effectively, and what it means to be a part of something larger than herself. These are skills that students just don’t learn in their academic classes. Colleges also look for things other than academics on applications, such as activity involvement. Her commitment to the band program for four years shows that she is a trustworthy and dedicated student.

7. “What is a band booster and how do I get involved?”

The BVW Band Boosters are made up of parents of band students. Just by having a student in the band program, you join the boosters! There are so many ways to get involved, and for most of them you don’t even have to take an office or join the booster board! We always need parents to help build props, move equipment, alter uniforms, hand out snacks and food, donate water, etc. There will be sign-ups to help with everything you can think of throughout the season. There’s a place for everyone to help in the boosters!

8. “What were your biggest concerns about band as an 8th grade parent?”

Our biggest concerns were the time commitment of marching band and the amount of money it can cost. We were afraid our daughter would be overwhelmed by the time it took, that her grades would suffer, and that she wouldn’t enjoy it. The opposite turned out to be true - she had a blast! She’s so happy she did it and said “she can’t imagine her life without marching band now.” The cost seemed like a lot at first, but once we saw the breakdown of what it paid for, the type of travel the band does, and how INCREDIBLE the show was, we knew it was worth it for her to have this experience.

9. “Do you believe your student has had a positive experience in band thus far?”

Absolutely! His experience was 100% positive. It’s a lot of hard work, but my son felt the payoff almost immediately. When he came home after his first summer practice, he was so excited - he couldn’t wait to get back out there! He has gotten the opportunity to travel and see many other fantastic bands perform, as well as be part of a band family that works well together and always supports each other. To me, that’s priceless!

## Sample Four-Year Plans

### Normal Courseload

	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior
1	Band	Band	Band	Band
2	Algebra I	Geometry	Algebra II	Pre Calc.
3	ELA 9	ELA 10	ELA 11	ELA 12
4	Biology	Physical Science	Chemistry	Elective
5	Spanish 1	Spanish 2	Spanish 3	Spanish 4
6	Technology Elective	Modern World History	US History	US Gov./Gov. Elec
7	PE	Health/Elective	Elective	Elective

### Lots of AP Classes

	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior
1	Band	Band	Band	Band
2	Hrs. Geometry	Hrs. Algebra II	Hrs. Pre-Calc Accel.	AP Calc BC
3	HELA 9	HELA 10	AP Lang	AP Lit
4	Hrs. Bio	Chemistry	AP Physics I	AP Physics II
5	Spanish 2.5	Spanish 3.5	Hrs. Spanish 4	AP Spanish 5
6	Tech. Elec.	AP Euro	APUSH	AP Stats
7	PE	Health/Elec.	AP Chem	AP Gov/Elec



## Sample Four-Year Plans

### Lots of Art Classes/Electives

	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior
1	Band	Band	Band	Band
2	Design Fund./ Drawing I	Drawing II/ Painting I	Painting II	Photography I & II
3	Algebra I	Geometry	Algebra II	Pre Calc.
4	HELA 9	HELA 10	AP Lang	AP Lit
5	Hhrs. Bio	Chemistry	Anatomy	AP Bio
6	Tech. Elec.	Western World	APUSH	Elective
7	PE	Health/Elec.	Elective	US Gov./ Gov. Elec.

### Multiple Music Courses

	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior
1	Band	Band	Band	Band
2	Tech. Elec.	Jazz Band	Jazz Band	Jazz Band
3	Choir	Choir	Choir	Choir
4	ELA 9	ELA 10	ELA 11	ELA 12
5	Algebra I	Geometry	Algebra II	Adv. Algebra
6	Biology	Earth-Space	Physical Science	Health/Music Theory
7	PE	Western World	US History	US Gov./ Gov. Elec.