

WESTONKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS



music

music in westonka



“I would not be who I am today without my music education. I’ve learned how to be better academically, musically, socially and personally because of music in my life. It’s shaped me more than anything. Now, I can’t live without it.”

—Leah Pinault, MWHS class of 2014

Overview

Music education in Westonka Public Schools is a core discipline, essential to the growth and development of all students. The Westonka music staff believe that a music education for all children is vital for its aesthetic, historical, cultural and educational value. The K-12 music program strives to provide students the opportunity to create, perform and respond to music through a variety of experiences and activities.

The goal of the Westonka music department is to make special contributions to each child’s creative development, and team building and cooperative learning skills. In addition, music knowledge and performance helps increase critical thinking skills, concentration, self-discipline and self-expression.

Elementary music

Hilltop and Shirley Hills primary schools use two basic approaches to teaching music education: Orff Schulwerk and Kodaly. They are considered best practices in developing a child’s musical skill and repertoire.

Orff Schulwerk Approach - Sing, Say, Dance & Play

The Orff Approach of music education very rudimentary forms of everyday activity for the purpose of music creation by music students. It is a “child-centered way of learning” music education that treats music as a basic system, like language. Just as every child can learn language without formal instruction, so can every child learn music by a gentle and friendly approach. [Learn more>>](#)

Kodaly Method

The Kodaly Method is a way of developing musical skills and teaching musical concepts beginning in very young children. This method uses folk songs, Curwen hand signs, pictures, movable-do, rhythm symbols and syllables.

[Learn more>>](#)



elementary & middle school music

Elementary music continued

Grandfriends' Day - Primary school Grandfriends Day celebrations feature grade-level vocal concerts for grandparents and special friends.

Operetta - The Operetta has been a Westonka tradition since 1978. It is a great opportunity for students in grades 2-4 to audition, rehearse and perform a musical as an after school activity. Hilltop Primary School celebrated the 40-year anniversary of its first Operetta in 2018 with a performance of "The Wizard of Oz."

Musical Excursions - As an extension of the music classroom; both Hilltop and Shirley Hills expose students to live music performances through field trips to Orchestra Hall or the Ordway. This allows students to witness and experience music in a new and exciting way. Not only learning about the instruments of the orchestra but seeing people play them in real-life has been a wonderful opportunity for them.

Variety Show - Every student has the opportunity to audition for and participate in a Variety Show at both elementary schools. This is a fun chance for students to show their unique talents and interests while gaining confidence through performance.

Middle school music

Grandview Middle School students take elective band and choir classes.

Middle Singers - Middle Singers is an auditioned ensemble open to any 5th, 6th, or 7th grade student at Grandview. This ensemble does community outreach in Mound, bringing singing and music to many organizations throughout Mound.

Middle Level Band Contest - Instrumentalists in grades 5-7, as well as eighth-graders from Mound Westonka High School, compete in the West Metro Middle Level Solo and Ensemble Festival each spring. Judges listen to each performance critically, and then share written and oral feedback with each soloist or ensemble.

Annual Musical - Grandview students put on a musical each spring. In 2018, "Aladdin, Jr." hit the Grandview stage.



secondary music



High school music

Students at Mound Westonka High School take elective band and choir courses that build on skills taught at the elementary and middle school levels. MWHS band and choir programs have active parent booster groups that work to financially support the purchase of instruments and music, honors opportunities and tours.

- Concert Band (grade 8)
- Symphonic Band (grades 9-12)
- Wind Ensemble (grades 9-12, audition required)
- Varsity Women's Chorus (grades 8-12)
- Varsity Men's Chorus (grades 8-12)
- Concert Choir (grades 9-12, audition required)

Pep band - The MWHS Pep Band supports the school community through performances at sporting events, as well as at pep fests, parades and student celebrations assemblies.

Jazz band - The MWHS Jazz Band is an auditioned, extra-curricular band that performs jazz and popular music. Jazz Band annually performs three concerts and participates in various festivals, as well as the Section Jazz Band Contest.

Fall musical - Each fall, the Mound Westonka High School band and choir programs come together to put on a fall musical. The musicians are continually honored by the Hennepin Theatre Trust with SpotLight Musical Theatre Awards.

Madd Jazz - Madd Jazz is a 12-member auditioned, extra-curricular vocal jazz ensemble that performs jazz and other popular music. Madd Jazz carols extensively in the community during the Holiday season, including weekly appearances at Lord Fletchers. They perform at all MWHS Choir concerts throughout the year, at the Region 2AA Solo/Ensemble Contest and at other community events.



why music?

“The MWHS music programs have taught me the value of dedication and hard work, not just in the classroom, but in life in general. There is such a noticeable difference when you put in the time and heart into something as great as music; you can convey all sorts of messages to the audience and have amazing effects on people’s lives.”

—Tom Lloyd, MWHS class of 2015

Translated into the language of business, a prospective employee may describe the benefits of their music education thusly:

- Creative and comfortable with themselves
- Performs well under pressure
- Self-disciplined, self-starter, takes personal initiative
- Good planning and project management skills
- Leadership skills
- Teamwork skills

Transferable skills

Producing performances based on planned growth (time to learn the music) makes musicians good project managers, able to plan ahead toward individual or group goals. Musicians come to understand that it is only through working effectively with others (accompanists, conductors and or other performers) that a performance will be successful.

Middle school and high school students who participated in instrumental music scored significantly higher than their non-band peers on standardized tests. University studies conducted in Georgia and Texas found significant correlations between the number of years of instrumental music instruction and academic achievement in math, science and language arts.

Source: University of Sarasota Study, Jeffrey Lynn Kluball; East Texas State University Study, Daryl Erick Trent



why music?



Why music?

Data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 showed that music participants received more academic honors and awards than non-music students, and that the percentage of music participants receiving A's and B's was higher than the percentage of non-participants receiving those grades.

Source: National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 First Follow-Up (1990), U.S. Department of Education.

High school music students score higher on SATs in both verbal and math than their peers. In 2001, SAT takers with coursework/experience in music performance scored 57 points higher on the verbal portion of the test and 41 points higher on the math portion than students with no coursework/experience in the arts.

Source: Profile of SAT and Achievement Test Takers, The College Board, compiled by Music Educators National Conference, 2001

A 10-year study, tracking more than 25,000 students, shows that music-making improves test scores. Regardless of socioeconomic background, music-making students get higher marks in standardized tests than those who had no music involvement. The test scores studied were not only standardized tests, such as the SAT, but also in reading proficiency exams.

Source: Dr. James Catterall, UCLA, 1997

Med school musicians

Music majors are the most likely group of college grads to be admitted to medical school. Physician and biologist Lewis Thomas studied the undergraduate majors of medical school applicants. He found that 66 percent of music majors who applied to med school were admitted, the highest percentage of any group. In comparison, 44 percent of biochemistry majors were admitted. Also, a study of 7,500 university students revealed that music majors scored the highest reading scores among all majors including English, biology, chemistry and math.

Sources: "The Comparative Academic Abilities of Students in Education and in Other Areas of a Multi-focus University," Peter H. Wood, ERIC Document No. ED327480; "The Case for Music in the Schools," Phi Delta Kappan, February, 1994



careers in music

Creativity in the workforce

The arts develop a globally competitive workforce. As more analytical and technical jobs are being outsourced to other countries, it is important to develop creativity in children to keep them on the cutting edge of innovation.

Chris Morrissey '99, professional musician

Morrissey is a professional songwriter, bassist and singer. As a bassist, he's logged hundreds of thousands of miles touring five continents with the Jim Campilongo Trio, Mark Guiliana's "Beat Music", Ben Kweller, Andrew Bird, Dosh, Mason Jennings, Gretchen Parlato, and most recently with five-time grammy nominee and multi-platinum selling artist Sara Bareilles, for whom he also acts as music director.

As a leader, Mr. Morrissey has released three records to high praise: "The Morning World" (2009), "Cannon Falls Forever" (2011) and "North Hero" (2013), and performs regularly in New York with his bands.



music awards



Award-winning music program

Westonka musicians earn local and state awards every year. Recent awards include:

- Superior ratings for MWHS Wind Ensemble and Jazz Band at Region 2AA Large Group Contest
- Eight Wright County Conference Honor Band members
- Two U of MN Honor Band members
- One MBDA Honor Band member
- One All-State Concert Band member
- Superior ratings for Concert Choir and Madd Jazz in Region 2AA contest
- Four Wright County Conference Honor Choir members
- Two ACDA Honor Choir selections
- Two All-State Choir members
- Two Carnegie Hall Honors Performance Series participants
- Hennepin Theatre Trust SpotLight Musical Theatre Awards for 2017 fall musical, “Sweet Charity”
 - Six individual SpotLight Awards, including three individual Outstanding awards
 - Outstanding Overall Performance SpotLight Award
 - Outstanding Ensemble Performance SpotLight Award
 - Outstanding Acting Performance by an Ensemble SpotLight Award
 - Outstanding Movement/Dance Performance by an Ensemble SpotLight Award
 - Outstanding Light and Sound Board Operators SpotLight Award
- Nine band and choir students selected to the Minnesota Ambassadors of Music and toured Europe in the summer of 2016

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Contact us

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