

# How to Join River Bluff Music Ensembles



Band, Choir, and Orchestra  
River Bluff Middle School  
2018-2019

Mr. Elliott Rittenberry  
Mrs. Erika Meyer  
Mr. Ethan Zick

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Thank you for taking a few moments to read and learn more about the music program in the Stoughton Area School District. We are very proud of the music program and our students achievements. We firmly believe the music program offers one of the best educational experiences possible for your child!

The Stoughton Music Department is proud to offer many strong musical offerings for your student from their entrance to River Bluff Middle School as 6th grade students, all the way up through their graduation from Stoughton High School. With hundreds of students and parents involved in this program that is actively performing and giving in the community, there is a place for every student in the Stoughton Music Department!

Statistics indicate that if your child participates in music, he or she is likely to earn higher grades and score higher on standardized tests. There is powerful evidence of a link between musical instruction and intelligence. The next page will help you gain more information about the benefits of participating in music.

Our school and community and the Stoughton Music Department is committed to the value of an excellent music education for our children! Our hope is that this booklet will help answer many of the questions you may have about the Stoughton music program, and how to get started. We look forward to many years of collaboration together, and are delighted at the opportunity to have you with us!

With thanks and much appreciation,

*The Stoughton Music Department*

## *Why Take Music?*

Students of the arts continue to outperform their non-arts peers on the SAT, according to the College Entrance Examination Board. In 2006, SAT test takers with music performance courses scored 57 points higher on the verbal portion of the test, and 43 points higher on the math portion than students with no coursework experience in the arts.

“GE hires a lot of engineers. We want young people who can do more than add up a string of numbers and write a coherent sentence. They must be able to solve problems, communicate ideas and be sensitive to the world around them. **Participation in the arts is one of the best ways to develop these abilities.**”

***V. Smith, President of The General Electric (GE) Foundation***

“In fact, mastery of the arts and humanities is just as closely correlated with high earnings, and, according to our analysis, that will continue to be true. History, **music**, drawing, painting, and economics will give our students an edge just as surely as the study of math and science.”

***Tough Choices or Tough Times: The Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 2007 p.29***

“The academic benefits of arts education also go beyond math and reading. An analysis of U.S. Department of Education data on 25,000 middle and high school students found that students who were highly involved in the arts performed better on a variety of academic measures than other students.”

**Commentary by Rod Paige and Mike Huckabee, Education Week, January 26, 2005, p. 40, 52**



## How Do I Join?

### **Band:**

- 1.) Complete Student Mouthpiece Testing (December 4-6, during school)
- 2.) Attend 6th Grade Music Parent Night
- 3.) Get an instrument
- 4.) Register your student for Band as 6th grade elective

### **Choir:**

- 1.) Attend 6th Grade Music Parent Night
- 2.) Register your student for Choir as 6th grade elective

### **Orchestra:**

- 1.) Attend 6th Grade Music Parent Night
- 2.) Get an instrument
- 3.) Register your student for Orchestra as 6th grade elective

**6th grade students are strongly encouraged to take more than one music ensemble!**

## What Instruments Can Students

### Choose From?

Circle your first choice, star your second choice.

### Band

#### **Woodwinds**



Flute



Clarinet



Alto Saxophone

#### **Brass**



Trumpet



French Horn



Trombone



Baritone

Tuba

#### **Percussion**

(This includes both!)



### Orchestra



Violin



Viola



Cello



Bass

## ***Band Information***

### **Mouthpiece Testing**

### **December 4, 5, 6 (during school)**

**Mouthpiece Testing** is the process of trying different size mouthpieces. Students will try mouthpieces from each instrument available (flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, french horn, trombone, baritone, and tuba). A music educator will lead students through this process helping to narrow down what instrument will work best to them.

Students are told that finding the right fitting instrument is like finding the right size shoe - sometimes your favorite kind doesn't always fit you best! This process helps the student find where they will find the most success. Don't worry if the student isn't there when we are; we can also do mouthpiece testing by appointment. Just contact Mr. Rittenberry, Band Director.



## **Percussion Information**



The percussionist is a unique member of the band because they are the musicians called upon to play parts ranging from melody on a xylophone, to a cymbal crash, to a snare drum roll. A percussionist who plays throughout middle school and high school will have learned and played 30-40 different instruments! Therefore, the percussionist must have strong music reading skills and a good sense of rhythm, and can also benefit from having had prior piano experience.

Students interested in percussion will "audition" during mouthpiece testing, as it is a highly sought after instrument. Be sure to have a second choice ready in case you are not selected for percussion.

## ***THREE WAYS TO GET AN INSTRUMENT***

1. Rent from Ward Brodt Music Store or Heid Music
  - Families can sign up for an instrument on **Music Department Parent Night** \_\_\_\_\_. Please visit their website or call them using the contact information listed.
    - *Please do this prior to the school year to ensure your student will have an instrument delivered to school for the first day of band or orchestra.*
2. Provide own Instrument
  - It is acceptable to purchase your own instrument. Please be cautious when making new instrument purchases, as the quality and playability of less expensive instruments can be a problem. Mr. Rittenberry or Mrs. Meyer can happily assist you with this as needed.
3. Rent a School Instrument
  - Students renting larger instruments such as the **French Horn, Baritone, Tuba, Cello, and Bass** will rent from River Bluff Middle School.
  - *It is our mission to not let cost stop your student from being a part of our ensembles at River Bluff.* Please contact Mrs. Meyer or Mr. Rittenberry as soon as possible to make arrangements if a school instrument is needed for an instrument *other than those listed above*.

### **Where do I get instrument and necessary supplies?**

Ward Brodt Music  
Steve Mellin, Ward Brodt Sales Representative  
(608)-661-8600 [www.wardbrodt.com](http://www.wardbrodt.com)

Heid Music  
Craig Mason, Heid Music Sales Representative  
(608)-829-1969 [www.heidmusic.com](http://www.heidmusic.com)

## Music Q and A

**When should I rent my instrument?** Although you will not need your instrument until September, it is better to secure arrangements with Ward Brodt Music or Heid Music during the Informational Parent Night on January 17th.

**What instruments does the school rent?** Students renting larger instruments such as the **French Horn, Baritone, Tuba, Cello, and Bass** will rent from River Bluff Middle School by paying a rental fee. However, these students will still need to purchase the correct supplies.

**Do the schools have smaller instruments to rent?** While the middle schools do own some smaller instruments such as trumpets, clarinets, and flutes, these instruments are reserved for those in **financial need**. Please contact Mr. Rittenberry or Mrs. Meyer for information on this.

**Where can I get the instrument and necessary supplies?**

Ward Brodt Music  
Steve Mellin, Ward Brodt Sales Representative  
(608)-661-8600 [www.wardbrodt.com](http://www.wardbrodt.com)

Heid Music  
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## Music Q and A

**Can my student be involved with other activities besides music?** OF COURSE, YES! Our middle schools are very lucky to have many different clubs and programs that students can join. All of these groups work very hard to make sure that we can share our students' time. Music students are involved in sports, forensics, the school musical, student council, and much, much more!

**When do these music ensembles meet?** In 6th-8th grade, band, choir, and orchestra all meet during the curricular school day.

**What opportunities are available in music at the Middle School?** Outside of the ensembles during the regular school day, we have some offerings outside of the school day to push your student to new musical heights! The band program offers Jazz Band to 7th and 8th grade students. Our choral program offers an auditioned chamber choir called Valhalla Singers and the school musical, both available to 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students.

**Can a student participate in more than one music?** YES! We support River Bluff Students taking two music ensembles.

**Does being in music take up a lot of time?** Like any new skill, learning an instrument or how to use your voice takes patience and practice. Students will reach their potential through consistent practice.

## **Music Enrollment Check-Off List**

☐ My student had a mouthpiece sampling and selected an instrument (Band only)

☐ My student and I attended the Parent Information Night

☐ We have made arrangements for an instrument and supplies (Band or Orchestra)

☐ My student has signed up for the desired music class when registering for 6th grade electives

***DISCLAIMER:*** If one of these boxes is not checked, you need to contact the 6th grade music teacher for desired music class.

## **Meet the River Bluff Middle School Music Teachers**

Mrs. Meyer

5th-8th Grade Orchestra

[erika.meyer@stoughton.k12.wi.us](mailto:erika.meyer@stoughton.k12.wi.us)



Mr. Rittenberry

6th-8th Grade Band

[elliott.rittenberry@stoughton.k12.wi.us](mailto:elliott.rittenberry@stoughton.k12.wi.us)

(608)-877-5588



Mr. Zick

6th-8th Grade Choir

[ethan.zick@stoughton.k12.wi.us](mailto:ethan.zick@stoughton.k12.wi.us)



### **Important Dates**

December 4, 5, 6 - Mouthpiece Testing

January 17 - Parent Informational Night

May 14, 7pm - 6th Grade Orientation

# **High School**

## **Music Opportunities**

There are several auditioned music ensembles at the high school. A majority of the students in these ensembles started their musical journey during their time at River Bluff.

### **Auditioned Ensembles at SHS:**

- ❖ Symphonic Band
- ❖ Jazz Band
- ❖ Viking Marching Band
- ❖ Symphony Orchestra
- ❖ Chamber Strings
- ❖ Concert Choir
- ❖ Madrigal Singers
- ❖ JazzKor

