

## **Z. W. Eisengrein High School Band Grading Policy**

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The contents of this document apply to all students involved in the 9-12 High School Band Program at the Z. W. Eisengrein High School. The following policies and procedures regarding expectations and grading apply to all ensembles and courses within the program, including Concert Bands, Jazz Bands, and classes in music theory, music history, and other music elective courses and ensembles.

The grades that students receive as members of the Band Program are considered and earned based on many factors, as providing grades that are fair, justified, and appropriate is the number one priority. Grades are a requirement of the district for determining the extent to which student performance is meeting standards of excellence. Standards are defined at the district, State, and National levels, and as educators we will ensure that students are meeting these requirements by using engaging course materials as well as providing appropriate grades and feedback to all students.

*Grades serve a number of purposes in our school district...*

1. First, grades are used to inform students, parents, teachers, and administrators about student performance, growth, strengths, and areas for improvement. They are given as a source of feedback for both the teacher and student to reflect upon and improve future performance. For students, feedback comes in various forms and is intended to encourage strengths while reinforcing areas for improvement. The amount of feedback given on any particular task will reflect the nature of the task at hand.
2. Secondly, grades are used as a means of diagnosing student achievement and informing placement into appropriate course and ensemble levels. The most appropriate levels for each student are not necessarily reflective of students' potential, but they do reflect current ability level and demonstrated growth. Student grades will also inform the need for placement into advanced or remedial courses.
3. Finally, grades serve as a source of reflection for the teachers to analyze and refine their own performance to improve future instruction. Grades provide teachers with the chance to examine their delivery of materials, communication of expectations, creation of a positive learning environment, and execution of task-appropriate assessments.

## Basis for Grading

The assignment of grades is based on students' individual participation, accomplishment, and growth in class learning. The grades students receive will be reflective of their participation in class, participation in performances, attendance and preparation for each day, completion of projects, written in-class and homework assignments, written exams, and playing tests. Grades are divided and weighted based on the following scale:

Concerts/Performances	40%
Projects	20%
Tests/Exams	15%
Participation	15%
Homework/Classwork Assignments	10%

Most individual grades will be issued in the form of a percentage, with 100% being the highest level of achievement. Students will begin each class with 100% and either retain or lose points for areas of unpreparedness. Final grades will appear as letter grades that coincide with the appropriate final percentage, as standardized by school policy. The final grade that students receive will reflect the extent to which they have met the criteria established in their assignments, projects, performances, and courses as a whole. Table 1 shows the relationship between final percentage grades and the school-assigned final letter grade.

**Table 1.**  
*Table of Letter Grades and Corresponding Percentages*

Letter Grades	Percentage Grades
A+	>97%
A	94-97%
A-	92-93%
B+	89-91%
B	85-88%
B-	83-84%
C+	80-82%
C	76-79%
C-	74-75%
D+	71-73%
D	67-70%
D-	65-66%
F	<65%

Where appropriate, grades will also appear in the form of descriptive comments intended to provide meaningful feedback regarding areas of student accomplishment and areas for future improvement. These comments will be based on the assessment of students' ability to meet expectations laid out in the instructions and rubrics. Such assignments involving descriptive feedback will include creative projects and playing tests.

For assignments, projects, and exams involving rubrics, each level of student attainment will be dictated by numbers 0-4 which correspond with a percentage grade. Descriptive feedback may also be provided with graded rubrics, in some cases. The levels of attainment and their corresponding percentages can be seen below:

- 0 = 0-64% (failing grade)
- 1 = 65-73%
- 2 = 74-82%
- 3 = 83-91%
- 4 = 92% and above

Grades will **not** be awarded based on teacher favoritism or bias towards any particular student; gender, race, sexuality, nationality, or ethnicity of students; student political or social views; solely on the basis of meeting State or National standards; or on the basis of comparison to other students (unless otherwise noted for specific educational purposes). It is the school district's mission to provide students with valuable learning experiences, so grading based on any of the aforementioned criteria is strictly against school policy. Any situations involving discriminatory grading practices should be reported directly to school administration.

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## **Areas of Grading**

### **Participation – 15%**

Student participation is graded upon the observation of several variables. Participation includes attendance and punctuality, coming to school prepared for each day, as well as quality of participation (effort).

Each student will receive a daily participation grade that is worth 5 total points, or a total of 25 possible weekly points. It is the expectation that students come to every class and rehearsal prepared to learn and play. Not coming to class on time, not having instruments, music, pencils, and/or homework ready, and not remaining engaged will lead to a loss of daily participation points.

#### *Preparedness*

Maximum daily classroom points are earned when...

- 1pt. You are present in class and arrive on time.
- 1pt. You are prepared with your instrument, music, pencil, and homework.
- 1pt. You are engaged, ask and/or answer questions, and stay on task.
- 1pt. You refrain from creating or contributing to classroom disruptions.
- 1pt. You exhibit proper playing and rehearsal techniques.
  - For example, paying attention and being respectful; and
  - Playing with proper posture and hand positioning.

*“Positive Action”* – being prepared for classes and rehearsals means contributing to the preparation and performance of the entire ensemble. When everyone comes prepared, the ensemble as a whole will be ready for success!

### **Concerts/Performances – 40%**

In music class, performing comprises a significant part of what we do. Rehearsing and performing with others as well as practicing independently are what contribute to student development of important life skills such as discipline, teamwork, time management, and leadership, in addition to musical skills. It is the expectation that students attend and remain prepared for all concerts and performances. Data informing the basis of performance grades will be collected through observation as well as attainment of criteria levels related to adequate performance. *\*\*Please see Appendix A for the sample performance calendar and ensemble breakdown.*

*“Positive Action”* – your peers are counting on you (and you should count on them!) to do your part and come prepared to contribute at a high level. Performances only work if the **team** is there to support each other!

### **Tests & Exams – 15%**

The content learned in some courses lends itself to the need for written tests and exams. Students will take written tests in areas such as music theory, music history, and composition. Each of these exams will be graded upon the basis of completion and attainment of prior established criteria. Students who perform poorly will be allowed the chance to retake the test within one week of the first attempt. Only the higher of the two grades will be reported.

### **Homework & Classwork Assignments – 10%**

Students will be assigned work relevant to topics being covered and discussed in rehearsals and class. Topics for classwork will include music theory, music history, music composition, music improvisation, and practicing independently. Each of these areas will be graded based on attainment of criteria established in the instructions and rubrics of each task.

It is expected that students will practice their music outside of class as part of their homework grade. Students will fill out a practice log/calendar that must be signed by a parent or guardian and be submitted before each concert. Concert performance grades will then be considered based on students’ demonstration of practiced skills. Classes and/or individual students with high-achieving records of practicing may be granted prizes for their dedication and achievement.

*\*\*\*For information on topics to be covered each year, please reference Appendix B, the “Mock Curriculum: Student Achievement Track & Requirements.”*

### **Projects – 20%**

Each year, students will be expected to complete two semesterly projects. Project content will be relevant to the skills and materials being learned at each level of students’ education. *\*\*\*Please see Appendix B for examples of student projects.*

Projects comprise the second-greatest percentage of the overall grade because of their ability to provide a more authentic representation of achievement. Projects are accommodating of creativity and individuality, offering more options for demonstration of knowledge than written exams. As a result, they are weighted heavier than any written exam or assignment.

### **Extra Credit**

Students will have the option to complete additional work or performances in order to earn extra points in class. Extra credit will primarily be applied to students who exhibit interest in completing solo performances, but it may also be considered on a case-by-case basis for projects that far exceed the standards of expectation.

### **Communication**

Communication of grades is almost as important as the grades themselves. Students, parents, teachers, and administrators will be able to reference student grades on the district's online gradebook platform. The online platform will display summative letter grades as well as percentage grades for individual projects, assignments, tests, and participation. Students, parents, and administrators can expect grades to be posted no later than a week after the assignment, test, or project has been received. Some projects, such as larger creative projects and senior "capstones," may take longer to grade due to the nature of the task.

An in-class student binder system will be in place to organize and keep track of student grades, work, and progress. All classwork, homework, project, test, and participation grades will be posted in students' binders by the end of each week. On Fridays, students will be able to take their binders home for viewing to be returned on Monday with any questions or concerns.

In addition to the online platform, families and administrators will also be kept up to date about all things related to the program through a monthly newsletter. This newsletter will be sent home via email to all band families and will communicate information regarding, but not limited to...

- What is happening this month?
- What topics are students learning? What music are they playing?
- Reminders and updates about the band calendar: performances, fundraisers, events, trips, conferences, meetings (boosters, school board), etc.
- Boosters information, if applicable
- Big upcoming projects, tests, or assignments for students
- Updates on school policies and culture
- Student spotlights – feature of the month!
- Other acknowledgements for faculty, staff, parents, etc.
- Teacher contact information

Questions or concerns regarding information in the monthly newsletter should be addressed to the teacher specifically. All other questions regarding grading policies should be directed to Mr. Eisengrein at [zwe5@miami.edu](mailto:zwe5@miami.edu).

## Appendix A

### Mock Ensemble Layout & Concert Schedule

#### Intermediate Division Ensembles:

- **Concert Band** (typically 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade – seating and placement based on beginning-of-year auditions and performance considerations from prior year).
- **Jazz Band** (typically 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade)

*\*\*All freshmen spend at least one year in the intermediate division.*

#### Advanced Division Ensembles:

- **Wind Ensemble** (typically 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade – seating and placement based on beginning-of-year auditions and performance from prior year).
- **Concert Jazz Orchestra** (typically 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade – seating based on auditions involving section playing and soloing over a 12-bar blues).

*\*\*Seniors are not automatically placed into the advanced division; however, it is the expectation that they have reached the level of musicianship necessary for performing at that level by 12<sup>th</sup> grade.*

#### Extracurricular ensembles – chamber ensembles, Latin band, modern band, etc.

- Brass ensemble exists year-round, but the presence of other groups will vary depending on student interest.
  - Senior “capstone” project, conducting track: students choose to conduct one advanced group (CJO or WE) as well as an extracurricular group to conduct and rehearse, with teacher aide, for a concert. This may be an existing ensemble or one they create for the purposes of the project.

### Performance Calendar

Month	Event	Ensembles	Entry	Purpose
October	Elementary/Middle School Showcase	Wind Ensemble, CJO	Free!	Recruitment
December	Winter Concert 1	<b>Intermediate Division</b> bands, choir, orchestra	\$ - Thurs night	Showcase
	Winter Concert 2	<b>Advanced Division</b> bands, choir, orchestra	\$ - Fri night	Showcase
January	New Year’s Family Concert	Wind Ensemble	Free!!	Family Engagement
April	Spring Gala Concert/Dance	CJO	\$\$\$ - Fri night	BIG Fundraiser
May	Spring Concert 1	<b>Intermediate Division</b> bands, choir, orchestra	\$ - Thurs night	Showcase
	Spring Concert 2	<b>Advanced Division</b> bands, choir, orchestra	\$ - Fri night	Showcase

\*\*\*other trips, festivals, and performances are likely to occur but may differ year-to-year in their timing, location, and purpose.

## **Appendix B**

### **Mock Curriculum: Student Achievement Track & Requirements**

#### **9th Grade**

##### Assignments (10%)

- Music Theory, Ear Training, Basic Improv
- Music History

##### Projects (20%)

- 9<sup>th</sup> Grade identity project (Fall)
- 9<sup>th</sup> Grade instrument care project (late Fall or early Spring)

##### Performances (40%)

- Winter concert 1
- Spring concert 1
- Other trips or performances

##### Tests/Exams (15%)

- Basic Music Theory, Ear Training
- Music History
- Test for Proficient certificate level
- Other performance exams – scales, part checks, etc.

##### Participation (15%)

- Attendance
  - Includes attending at least one advanced division performance
- Preparation – instrument, music, homework, pencil, etc.
- Quality of participation, engagement

Extra credit

End-of-year summative/final grade

#### **10th Grade**

##### Assignments (10%)

- Music Theory, Ear Training, Improv
- Music History

##### Projects (20%)

- 10<sup>th</sup> Grade music history research projects (2)
- Extra credit

##### Performances (40%)

- Winter concert 1 or 2
- Spring concert 1 or 2
- If applicable: Recruiting Concert, WE Family Concert, CJO Spring Gala
- Other trips or performances

##### Tests/Exams (15%)

- Music Theory, Ear Training
- Music History
- Test for Intermediate certificate level
- Other performance exams – scales, part checks, etc.

##### Participation (15%)

- Attendance
- Preparation – instrument, music, homework, pencil, etc.
- Quality of participation, engagement

Extra credit

End-of-year summative/final grade

## **11th Grade**

### Assignments (10%)

- Music Theory, Ear Training
- Jazz Theory, Improv
- Music History
- Music composition

### Projects (20%)

- 11<sup>th</sup> Grade composition/arranging/theory project

### Performances (40%)

- Winter concert 1 or 2
- Spring concert 1 or 2
- If applicable: Recruiting Concert, WE Family Concert, CJO Spring Gala
- Other trips or performances

### Tests/Exams (15%)

- Music Theory, Jazz Theory, Ear Training
- Music History
- Other performance exams – scales, arpeggios, part checks, etc.

### Participation (15%)

- Attendance
- Preparation – instrument, music, homework, pencil, etc.
- Quality of participation, engagement

### Extra Credit

End-of-year summative/final grade

## **12th Grade**

### Assignments (10%)

- Advanced Theory, Ear Training, Improv
- Music Composition

### Projects (20%)

- 12<sup>th</sup> Grade identity project and reflection
- 12<sup>th</sup> Grade “senior capstone” creative project & presentation

### Performances (40%)

- Winter concert 2
- Spring concert 2
- Recruiting Concert, WE Family Concert, CJO Spring Gala
- Other trips or performances

### Tests/Exams (15%)

- Advanced Theory, Ear Training
- Other performance exams – scales, arpeggios, part checks, etc.

### Participation (15%)

- Attendance
- Preparation – instrument, music, homework, pencil, etc.
- Quality of participation, engagement

### Extra Credit

End-of-year summative/final grade