

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ABOUT MUSIC EDUCATION AND ORCHESTRA AT WVHS

Q) DOES A STUDENT NEED TO CONTINUE INSTRUCTION IN ART, MUSIC AND DRAMA DURING HIGH SCHOOL IF HE OR SHE DOES NOT PLAN TO PURSUE THOSE FIELDS PROFESSIONALLY?

A) All students study mathematics; how many will become mathematicians? All students study literature; how many will become professional authors or playwrights? All students study American History; how many will become historians or politicians? Is instruction in these content areas useless if the student does not pursue that subject as a career? Of course not. Each day adults are faced with problems, situations, and experiences of all kinds. How individuals deal with those problems and opportunities is often a reflection of their education. How well an adult understands and evaluates music, art, and drama as part of everyday life, or within a formal setting, is also a reflection of education. Appreciation of the Fine Arts is not a natural talent. It must be developed the same way as any other talent or knowledge.

The creative arts provide us with a unique and vital perspective about our world. As performers or supporters of music, dance, art, or theatre, with each experience we have the possibility of being inspired and seeing the world through a different lens. Those experiences are critical to our personal growth because they play a major role in spurring our own creativity. An education enriched by the creative arts should be considered essential for everyone.

John Sculley
Former Chairman, Apple Computer, Inc.

Q) CAN PARTICIPATION IN HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC GROUPS BENEFIT A STUDENT WHEN APPLYING FOR COLLEGE?

A) YES! College administrators are looking beyond test scores, and core curriculum grade point averages in determining a student's character, intellectual capacity, creative attitude, and potential for success. Participation in a wide variety of high school programs, especially the Fine Arts, has become a valued measure of student achievement. According to the Admissions Director of Coe College in Iowa, "The things that go into making a good musician -- discipline, hard work, problem-solving -- are what make good students in general." Research has revealed that high school music students consistently have higher grade point averages than non-music students in the same school, and music students tend to score 30 to 50 points higher than their non-music peers on SAT exams. One of the valuable outcomes of education is the expansion of imagination. The act of music creation demands enormous self-discipline and teaches students how to handle frustration and failure in pursuit of both tangible and intangible ideas. It requires setting goals, determining a technique, figuring out how to apply it, and continually making evaluations and revisions. In other words, student musicians are creatively thinking and discovering unique solutions to problems.

Q) IS IT POSSIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS OR DRAMA PRODUCTIONS AND A MUSIC ENSEMBLE?

A) Each year music students can be found on the roster of most every sports team sponsored by WVHS, including football, basketball, baseball, softball, swimming, diving, track, cross country, soccer, volleyball, tennis and wrestling. In addition to athletics, music students frequently participate in the following academic/co-curricular activities: theatre productions, cheerleaders, poms, orchesis, yearbook, debate, Snowball, Mosaic Ensemble, student government, and various scholastic teams.

Q) IS IT POSSIBLE TO BE IN BOTH ORCHESTRA AND CHOIR AS A FRESHMAN?

A) Yes, students may sign up to be in 2 classes – choir for one period and orchestra for one period – as you are allowed 2 electives. You may have to take a few classes online in the summer over the course of your HS career in order to fit all your courses in, but it is very doable and we have generally 10-20 students per grade level successfully enrolled in both choir and orchestra (or band).

Q) WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THE MUSIC CURRICULUM AT WAUBONSIE VALLEY H.S.?

A) The primary goal of the music curriculum is the systematic development of musical understanding and musical skills. Conductors teach the merits of the music performed and the process needed to present and appreciate the music as the composer intended. Great music motivates learning and provides unique opportunities for life changing experiences.

1. Establish standards of aesthetic judgment by which to evaluate and enjoy musical and other artistic experiences
2. Acquire and develop the technical skills of music performance
3. Study the role music has played in world cultures throughout history
4. Study artistic styles and forms of music from earliest times to present
5. Discover the creative potential within each student
6. Prepare for an adult life of music-making as a performer or consumer, on either a professional or amateur level.

Q) WHAT IS AESTHETIC EDUCATION?

A) Aesthetic education can be defined as instruction that has as its goal the shaping of sensitivity to, and the perception of, beauty and expressiveness in art, music, drama, dance, architecture, nature or life in general. Aesthetic education develops sensitivity through the study of elements and processes of artistic creation. Music teachers help students to understand the elements of music (rhythm, melody, harmony, timbre, form) and methods composer have developed to combine these elements in order that they become enlightened, discriminating consumers of music. An education in the arts can help a student understand that life is more than historical records, mathematical equations and scientific facts.

Q) WHAT DOES MUSIC OFFER THE AVERAGE STUDENT?

A) Music offers the opportunity to explore and view life through the world of sound. Every student is capable of developing some kind of relationship with music, be it creator, performer, or listener. As this relationship is developed, so is the student's ability to experience and enjoy aspects of life that many people fail to realize. Interest and motivation can be sparked or possibly rekindled at any age. The music course offerings at WVHS are designed to encompass a wide variety of musical talents, interests, and backgrounds.

Q) WHAT DOES A STUDENT GAIN FROM TAKING PART IN THE PERFORMANCE OF MUSIC?

A) Music is a performing art. Without the performing artist the work of the composer remains trapped in the notes on the paper. An artistic experience with music requires the combined efforts of the composer and the performer. Participation in a performance ensemble offers a student the opportunity to develop musical skills simultaneously with the development of musical perception. Lastly, the performance of music can cultivate the self-discipline required of a productive group member or leader, as well as self-confidence and a sense of pride, accomplishment, and identity. The greatest gift one person can give to another is to share his/her culture. To share artistic creations is to share our deepest values and dreams.

Q) WHAT OPPORTUNITIES EXIST AT WVHS FOR THE STUDENT THAT IS GIFTED IN MUSIC?

A) Students with outstanding ability in music have numerous opportunities each year to participate in a variety of music festivals, clinics, field trips, and competitions, including: private instrumental instruction, Pit Orchestra, Jazz Band, Percussion Ensemble, the IHSA Solo & Ensemble Festival, the District 204 Honors Recital, the Fox Valley Music Festival, and the Illinois Music Educators Association District and All-State Festivals.