

Band Handbook

Learn to play!

Join **TODAY!**

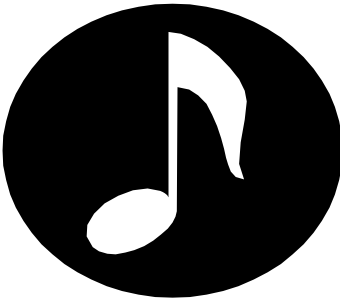


LOOK INSIDE TO LEARN ABOUT THE CMS BAND

PROGRAM'S TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE. THIS

HANDBOOK CONTAINS ALL OF THE INFORMATION YOU NEED

TO BE A SUCCESSFUL BAND MEMBER!!

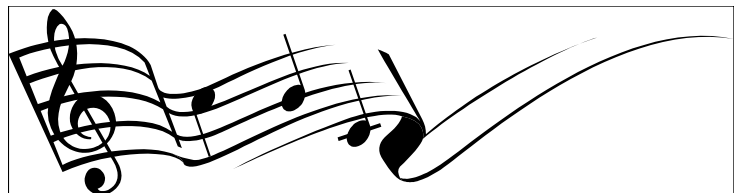


A CMS Band Publication

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Why Music?

MUSIC IS A SCIENCE

It is exact, and it demands exact acoustics. A conductor's full score is a chart, a graph which indicates frequencies, intensities, volume changes, melody and harmony all at once and with the most exact control of time.

MUSIC IS MATHEMATICAL

It is rhythmically based on the subdivisions of time into fractions which must be done instantaneously-not worked out on paper.

MUSIC IS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Most of the terms are in Italian, German, or French and the notation is certainly not English, but a highly developed kind of shorthand that uses symbols to represent ideas. The semantics of music is the most complete and universal language.

MUSIC IS HISTORY

Music usually reflects the environment and times of its creation-often even the country, the cultural diversity of the community in which it is written, and the prior experiences of the composer's life.

MUSIC IS PHYSICAL EDUCATION

It requires fantastic coordination of fingers, hands, arms, legs, cheek and facial muscles in addition to extraordinary control of the diaphragm, back, stomach, and chest muscles which respond instantly to the sound the ear hears and the mind interprets.

MUSIC DEVELOPS INSIGHT AND DEMANDS RESEARCH

Music is all of these things, but most of all...

MUSIC IS ART

It allows a human being to take all these dry, difficult techniques and use them to create emotion. That is one thing science cannot duplicate-humanism, feeling, emotion-call it what you will.

THIS IS WHY WE TEACH MUSIC

**Not because we expect you to major in music
Not because we expect you to play or sing all your life**

**MATH
LANGUAGE
HISTORY
READING
SCIENCE**

But...

*So you will be human
So you will recognize beauty
So you will be closer to an infinite beyond this world
So you will have something to cling to
So you will have more love, more compassion, more
gentleness, and more good-in short... more life*

Class Descriptions

Wind Ensemble: The Wind Ensemble is a full year class and is open to eighth grade students with at least two years of previous instruction in wind or percussion instruments.

The ensemble consists of modern band instrumentation and provides instruction in advanced instrumental skills such as instrumental technique, small ensemble performance, and solo performance, as well as an emphasis on fundamental concepts of rhythm, tone production, ensemble balance and blend, and overall ensemble sonority. The **Wind Ensemble** is a class that meets every day and performs in several concerts and festivals each year. Private study is strongly encouraged. Thirty minutes a day of practice at home is expected.

R

espect People and Property

- No using any equipment that is not yours
- Be responsible with your supplies
- No running/horseplay/screaming
- No harmful words or actions
- No food/drink/gum/candy

E

nter Focused and On Time

- Bring your instrument, music and a pencil every day
- Immediately prepare for class
- Read the board and prepare for music-making
- Enter quietly, exit quietly

S

tay On Task and Work Hard

- Follow directions
- Ask intelligent questions
- Hand in assignments on time
- Be musically prepared for each rehearsal
- Mark your music as you learn

P

lay Only at Appropriate Times

- Pay attention
- Play when asked; learn while others are playing
- Stop playing when the conductor stops
- Listen to suggestions for improvement

E

xemplify Amazing!

- You are a part of an amazing group!
- Exercise etiquette during rehearsal and concerts
- Treat all teachers/visitors with respect
- Keep all grades at "A"mazing

C

are for your instruments

- Keep instruments in safe places
- Keep your instrument clean
- Protect your instrument

T

eamwork

- Prepare your part
- Be a positive influence
- Help others learn
- Encourage others
- Compete with yourself

Classroom Policies & Procedures

- Show **Respect**
 - **Respect** the teachers
 - **Respect** your fellow musicians
 - **Respect** the equipment of both our orchestra and our guitar programs,
 - **Respect** the classroom by keeping it clean.
- No food, drink, candy, or gum is allowed in the classroom. This policy will be strictly enforced.
- Students are not allowed to use the wipe-off boards or Promethean board without permission.
- Playing instruments other than your own without permission from the director is strictly forbidden. This policy applies to all instruments, including the guitars and piano.
- **Any intentional or accidental damage that occurs to an instrument will be paid for by the student responsible. This includes any damage that occurs inside or outside of the classroom, whether it is your instrument or someone else's.**
- All events (Concerts, MPA, Field trips and off campus performances) require a **2.0 GPA** by OCPS Extra-Curricular Activity Policy.
- Furthermore, CMS Guitar students will not have any 3's in conduct, serious discipline problems or owe money to the program.
- All decisions about event eligibility will be at the discretion of the director. It is important to remember that one ineligible student can lower the performance level of the group by his/her absence.
- All members are to be on their best behavior at all times. Please represent our program in the most positive manner at all events and show the same respect to members of the audience and other programs.



Course Descriptions

Symphonic Band: The **Symphonic Band** is a full year class and is open to seventh and eighth grade students with at least one year of previous instruction in wind or percussion instruments. The ensemble consists of modern band instrumentation and provides instruction in basic instrumental skills such as instrumental technique, proper embouchure, hand position, posture, listening and breathing skills, as well as an emphasis on fundamental concepts of rhythm, tone production, ensemble balance and blend, and an overall ensemble sonority. The **Symphonic Band** is a class that meets every day and performs in several concerts and festivals each year. Private study is encouraged. Thirty minutes a day of practice at home is expected.

Beginning, Cadet and Concert Bands: The **Beginning, Cadet and Concert Bands** are full year classes and are open to sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students with little or no previous instruction in wind or percussion instruments. Basic instrumental skills such as instrumental technique, proper embouchure, and hand position, posture, listening and breathing skills will be emphasized. Instruction will also be given in the basics of learning to read and understand music. The **Beginning, Cadet and Concert Bands** are classes that meet every day and performs in several concerts each year. Private study is encouraged. Thirty minutes a day of practice at home is expected.

Jazz Band: The **CMS Jazz Machine** is a full year class and is open seventh and eighth grade students who play Saxophone, Trumpet, Trombone, Piano, Bass, Drums and Guitar. Woodwind, Brass, and percussion players must also be enrolled in a concert band class. Pianists, bassists, and Guitarists may participate in jazz band if they are in 6th-8th grade and need not be enrolled in a Concert band class. However, they are encouraged to learn a wind or percussion instrument in a concert band. An audition may be required to participate in this ensemble. During Jazz Band rehearsals we will study music in the styles of Swing, Latin, and Funk, as well as the basics of improvisation and jazz harmony. The **CMS Jazz Machine** is a class that meets every day and will perform in several concerts each year. Private study is encouraged. Thirty minutes a day of practice at home is expected.

Code of Conduct

All band students are responsible for reading and adhering to the ORANGE COUNTY CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT. Here in the band room, our goal is to make each student a better musician and improve the quality of our performances. ANY classroom disruption, from something as minor talking to your neighbor to something as major as a fight, keeps us from reaching that goal. Always come in ready to play and make music. Any classroom disruptions will be dealt with as listed below.

Consequences

Misconduct will be dealt with in accordance to the school wide discipline step plans. In the band room we will observe the following steps to correct inappropriate behavior:

1st Offence – Warning 2nd Offence – Written Assignment and “0” Class Participation Grade

3rd Offence – Detention and Step 4th Offence - Double Detention 5th Offence – Referral

Any students with repeated misconduct, or those who continually reach only the 1st or 2nd step, may receive detentions or referrals.

Any serious Level Three or Level Four offences will result in a referral. Please review the OCPS Code of Conduct.

Tardy Policy

1st Offence – Warning 2nd Offence – Detention 3rd Offence - Double Detention and Step 4th Offence – Referral

Every Student begins each nine weeks with a “Clean Slate”. Tardy is defined as late to the room **OR** late to your seat for the start of rehearsal.

Attendance

Band members are expected to attend all rehearsals and performances. These events are naturally part of the grading process.

Students must also be on time and prepared for all band functions. All After School rehearsals (ASRs) will be part of the YMCA

After School Zone (ASZ). Each band member will need to turn in the YMCA ASZ form to Mr. Nichols. The program is free and it only takes a few minutes to fill out the form. Absence from after school rehearsals and performances: Full attendance is essential to the success of the band. Even one student being absent can turn a potentially great performance into a mediocre event. The director must be notified of absences at least 3 weeks prior to the performance and 24 hours for a rehearsal.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES FROM PERFORMANCES AND REHEARSALS WILL RESULT IN THE LOWERING OF THE STUDENT'S GRADE.

Except in cases of family emergency or illness; band members **WILL NOT** be excused from after school rehearsals or concerts. In cases of emergency or illness students must provide a written parental excuse and ask for a make-up assignment within one week of their return to school.

Grading Policy

Class Participation, Concert Attendance, Written Assignments and playing assessments will determine a student's grade in Band. The weighted grading percentages are listed below.

Concert Bands

Karate Progress 35%: Students will need to Band Karate Requirements (BKR) to earn their points for this category. See the Band Karate section for a comprehensive description of our playing assessment system.

Concert Attendance 30%: Students will earn an "A" if they arrive on time, in the proper dress, with the proper materials, and behave in a manner appropriate for a Conway Middle School band student.

Class Participation 25%: Students will earn 2 points per day. Points will be deducted when students are tardy or unprepared for class, and for poor behavior.

Written Work 10%: Pitch and rhythm worksheets, work sheets in relation to video's, guest teacher assignments, scale tests, signature forms, concert letters, all make up the 4th and grading category.

Jazz Band

Skill Checks 35%: Once per marking period students will perform their Skill Checks.

Concert Attendance 25%: Students will earn an "A" if they arrive on time, in the proper dress, with the proper materials, and behave in a manner appropriate for a Conway Middle School band student.

Class Participation 25%: Students will earn 2 points per day. Points will be deducted when students are tardy or unprepared for class, and for poor behavior.

Written Work 10%: Pitch and rhythm worksheets, work sheets in relation to video's, guest teacher assignments, scale tests, signature forms, concert letters, all make up the 4th and grading category.

OCPS Policy regarding event supervision: OCPS employees are not responsible for supervising students who arrive on school grounds more than 30 minutes before a school activity is scheduled to begin or students remaining on school grounds more than 30 minutes after the school-sponsored activity ends.

Practice Routine

Most middle school students take the wrong approach to practicing. They take out their horns, toot a few notes and play their favorite songs. **THIS IS NOT PRACTICING!**

In order to accomplish the most amount of work in the least amount of time, you must have a plan when you practice. To begin with, each instrumentalist must start off with his or her mouthpiece. This is a very important part of the skill of playing an instrument. Flutes work on playing a low note and a high note with just the head joint. All other Woodwind instruments should concentrate on proper embouchure with just the mouthpiece. Brass players should work on a siren with their mouthpieces.

The next step is very important. Each session should begin with **LONG TONES**. This means playing very long notes on a scale or chromatic pattern. Most professional musicians play very slow whole notes going downward chromatically. The reason for playing long tones is to develop a characteristic tone quality. Tone quality is the single most important skill in playing an instrument. If you do not sound good, no one will want to listen to you. While playing these long tones concentrate on embouchure, breath control, and your overall sound.

After playing long tones move onto scales. Scales teach key signatures, technique, and flexibility. Articulations can be worked out in various combinations to help make the most of an exercise. After scales; work on music that you **NEED TO PRACTICE**. Fix mistakes by counting and saying the rhythms while fingering the notes. Slow practice will help to minimize and fix mistakes because you have more time to think about what you are playing. **ISOLATE PROBLEM AREAS** by playing two or three measures at a time and then play the entire piece.

After working out the more difficult selections, then allow yourself to play through pieces that you are already able to play. Make certain that you are **ALWAYS** playing with a good tone!

Morning and Afternoon Practice

The band room will be open most mornings from 8:45 to 9:25 and select afternoons from 4:00 to 5:00 for students to practice and do Band Karate or Skill Checks. This does not mean that the band room is a place to gather and socialize. Students in the band room during these times will be required to practice or to perform Band Karate or Skill Checks. Any student who is NOT following these directions will be asked to leave the band room. Please check the posted schedule for exact times that the Band Room will be open and remember if the door is locked, the band room is closed.

How to Contact Mr. Nichols

Band Office Phone: 407-249-6420 x5034228

Mr. Nichols' email address: keith.nichols@ocps.net

CMS Band Webpage <http://teacherpress.ocps.net/keithnichols>

Use and Care of Music

DO NOT FOLD, TEAR, OR OTHERWISE DAMAGE MUSIC.

Do not make excessive or unnecessary marks on music. **ALWAYS USE PENCIL. NEVER INK!** Concert music will be placed in folders for each of the seventh and eighth grade ensembles, including Jazz Band. Students will be responsible for the music in their assigned folder. Students will need to pay for any music that is damaged or lost. Students are encouraged to sign out folders and take them home to practice. Please use the folder sign out sheet and take the entire folder, not just one piece of music. Sight reading folders are NOT to be taken out of the Band room.

School Instrument Rental

Normally the band does not provide instruments for student use; however, there are exceptions to this rule. Conway Middle School rents the following instruments on a first come, first served basis: Oboe, Bassoon, Bass Clarinet, Tenor Sax, Baritone Sax, French Horn, Baritone Horn and Tuba.

Students issued a school instrument and percussionists are asked to pay an Instrument Repair Donation. The amount for wind and percussion instruments is \$40.00. The donations cover the instrument rental for the entire year. This fee will not cover any damage, such as dents or broken parts, brought about by the student. Such repairs will be the responsibility of the student and parent. The school will cover repairs brought on by normal wear and tear. Students using school owned instruments will also need to buy their own mouth piece and accessories such as reeds and valve oil. All supplies are available from area music stores.

Band Webpage, Bulletin Boards, Canvas and Newsletters

Check the bulletin and white boards daily for pertinent information. There will also be several items placed each week on the morning and afternoon announcements. On the boards you will find the work for the day, Rank System information, as well as information on upcoming concerts, clinics, and music camps. Students are responsible for all information that is posted and played over the announcements.

Several times during the year the director will send out a copy of the "Band Notes" newsletter. This publication will help to keep parents, students, and Conway faculty apprised of the events going on in our music department. It is our goal this year to post the newsletter on the website and email the newsletter to parents and students. We hope that using the electronic versions of the newsletter will reduce the number of copies that need to be made with each publication.

The band Webpage is another area where students can find vital information and bonus opportunities.

Band Lockers

Each band member will be assigned a locker. The director will make locker assignments during the first week of school for Symphonic Band, Jazz Band, and Wind Ensemble students. After the instrument selection process is completed, Beginning, Concert, and Cadet Band members will be given locker assignments. Students are responsible for providing their own **COMBINATION LOCK**. Key locks are not permitted. All combinations will need to be given to the director. Only instruments, music, and other band related materials are to be kept in band lockers. Books, coats, hats, shoes, etc., are not allowed to be stored in the band lockers. For reasons of security, students are NOT to share their locker combination with any other students.

Supplies

Supplies such as reeds, oil, cork grease, and swabs, may be purchased from the school or ordered from area music stores to be delivered to the school. Students who need to purchase accessories need to do so at the beginning and end of the school day, not before or during class. This means that students will have to plan ahead to be certain to have the appropriate materials for class.

Flute – Cleaning Cloth and Cleaning Rod

Clarinet – Reeds (Van Doran), Silk Cleaning Cloth, Vaseline, Mouthpiece Brush

Saxes - Reeds (Van Doran), Silk Cleaning Cloth, Vaseline, Mouthpiece Brush

Oboe – Silk Cleaning Cloth, Reeds

Bassoon – Silk Cleaning Cloth, Reads

** Students should have **FOUR** good reeds at all times **

Brass – Cleaning Snake, Mouthpiece Brush, Tuning Slide Cream, Valve Oil (Trp/Euph/Tuba), Rotor Oil (Frn), Slide Cream and Spray Bottle (Bone)

Percussion – Vic Firth S1 General Snare Drum Sticks, Innovative Percussion F10 Bell/Xylo Mallets. Percussion Kit - Comes with either bell set & snare drum, or bell set and practice pad.

** Please talk to Mr. Nichols before you purchase any instrument. There are many low quality instruments out there. Let us help you to find the right one. **

Repairs

Accidents do happen and when they do, the director can make minor repairs. There is a mouthpiece puller in the Band Room if needed. Please do NOT attempt to pull out a stuck mouthpiece with pliers or by any other means. You could cause further damage to the horn or mouthpiece. Please do not take your instrument to the repair shop before your director has looked it over! Instruments can stay in the shop for weeks at a time for a repair the director could do in a few minutes.

Uniforms

The Conway Middle School Band Uniform will consist of the following:

Symphonic Band, Jazz Band, Wind Ensemble:

Black long sleeve dress shirt, Black Pants, Black Socks, Black Shoes.

Beginning and Cadet Bands

Band T-Shirt, Black Pants, Black Socks, Black Shoes.

Black dress shirts and band T-shirts will be ordered through the school in early October. Students are encouraged to wear their FBA medals on their uniforms. Jeans, sneakers, skirts, or clothing of the wrong color will not be allowed. Without the proper attire a student may not be allowed to perform and will receive a “0” for the performance. If finances present a problem, please contact the director as soon as possible so we can help you out.

Private Lessons

Even though the director will work with all students on an individual basis, the value of private study cannot be overstated. Band class is essentially an ensemble practice, while in private study students can progress individually at a much faster rate. A list of Private Lesson Instructors is available from Mr. Nichols.

All State Band and All County Honor Bands

The All State Band and All County MS Honors Band are ensembles, drawn through auditions, from the finest musicians from across the state of Florida. Auditions are held in September for the All State Band and in November for the All County Band. Participation in these events is a great honor. All students who are capable are encouraged to prepare the All State Band Audition Materials and audition. A fee is required to participate in the auditions.

Solo and Ensemble Music Performance Assessment

The Solo and Ensemble MPA of the Florida Bandmasters Association is held during the month of February each year. The opportunity to be evaluated as a soloist or a member of a small ensemble is a wonderful learning experience. Participation in MPA by seventh and eighth grade students is encouraged by the director and will count toward your grade during that marking period.

Music must be selected from the FBA music list. An original score (no photo copies) must be provided for the judge, and an accompanist must be provided with all solos. The accompanist will need to be paid a fee for their work. The director can provide you a list of accompanists. Students must sign up with the director to participate in MPA. A small fee is required to participate in MPA. Medals will be awarded to students who achieve a Superior rating.

Music Performance Assessment

Concert MPA, sponsored by the Florida Bandmasters Association. The performance of each ensemble will be evaluated by three highly qualified judges and rated on a musical scale of Poor, Fair, Good, Excellent, and Superior. After the Concert MPA performance the ensemble will move to another room and be evaluated on their ability to sight read music they have never played before, rated by a fourth judge using the same rating scale. This is a valuable experience for many musical reasons and takes place in March or April each year. Every student in the band must thoroughly prepare for this performance since the whole band is being evaluated. Obviously a Superior rating is the ultimate goal, although the experience of the Concert MPA is not built on a rating, but rather on musical goals. The school will pay for all fees for the Concert MPA.

Rehearsal / Performance Procedures

Every Band member should bring instruments, music, and proper equipment to each rehearsal and performance. Every student needs a pencil in rehearsal every day.

There should be no individual playing before each rehearsal or at any time during a rehearsal unless the director specifically deems it necessary. Instrumental warm up will be done as an ensemble under the leadership of the director. There is to be no talking or disturbance during rehearsals. Subdued talking is permitted with the director's permission, or when the director leaves the podium. Gum chewing or eating food is not permitted in the band room during rehearsals or in performances at any time.

Each student will be seated with all of the required materials at the designated time or the student is marked tardy. After the student is set up and seated, work should begin on the daily rhythm or other daily assignment. If there is no assignment for the day, please silently finger through the music. Always remember that music begins and ends with silence. There should never be any loud talking or horseplay in the band room. Posture is of the utmost importance. Students should avoid crossing legs or ankles, or resting feet on cases when seated in chairs. **DO NOT LEAN BACK IN CHAIRS OR LEAN ON MUSIC STANDS!**

Music stands will need to be put in the stand carts at the end of each rehearsal. All folders, instruments, and personal belongings need to be put away, and lockers locked at the end of rehearsal. It is also a good idea to keep your locker closed and locked during rehearsals. Please check the door and bulletin boards for important information when entering the classroom.

Chaperones / Band Trips

No band organization of any size can function with out the use of parental support. There are simply too many details for the director to handle as one person. At the very least, parents are needed to chaperone the concerts and field trips. Although we do not travel as much as a high school band might, there will be trips and we will need parents to chaperone them. Parents may sign up to become chaperones by contacting the band office or by sending a note in with their student. In accordance to OCPS policy, all chaperones must be a member of ADDitions, and fill out the appropriate paperwork. The ADDitions form can be found on the OPCS web site. Parents will also need to fill out the OCPS chaperone form for each trip.

The complete Conway Middle School Band Uniform will be properly worn when in public. You are representing Conway Middle School whenever you are on a band function. Horseplay and screaming are prohibited on the bus, and all usual bus rules apply. Students may not change busses without permission from the director. Roll will be checked each time before the busses leave. No eating or drinking will be permitted on the busses. Students are responsible for their own instruments, music, and equipment. **DO NOT FORGET ANYTHING!** Always double-check your belongings before we leave the school.

Any student riding home with a parent will need to provide the director with a written request three days prior to the trip. Parents must appear in person and check out with the chaperones on the student's bus before departure. Except in extreme cases, all students must ride on the bus to the site.

Upon arrival at a destination, all students will remain seated and quiet until instructed to unload by the director or chaperone in charge. Conduct of students in public eating-places should be subdued and courteous.

Band Karate

The Karate belt system is used in martial arts training to mark the progress a student has made in their study. Similarly, to display your proficiency on your instrument by earning belts for Band Karate. A completed Band Karate Requirement includes demonstrating:

1. You know the material, inside and out.
2. You understand the material and all concepts introduced prior to the material.
3. You can perform the material with 100% accuracy.

Playing grades (35% of term grade) will be based on how many requirements have been completed each term.

Returning players (Symphonic Band, Wind Ensemble and 2nd year Concert Band students) will start Band Karate in September. First Year Players will begin Band Karate in November.

Here are a few common questions:

What is Band Karate? A playing assessment system used to measure a student's progress as a musician. It is also a good way to put grades into Progressbook that are based on the students' success.

How will grades be posted? In an effort to make it easier for parents and students to track their Band Kaate progress, we will have 2-4 separate grading points for Band Karate, depending on school & class schedules. If you look in Progressbook, you will see several items related to Band Karate. For Example: “Band Karate Grade #1, # 2, #3, & #4. This is where the actual grades will be placed.

After testing the new system last year, I was able to determine that the math portion of the grading work. Each term the students will need to complete 6-8 Band Karate Requirements (BKR’s). Each grading point (Band Karate Grade #...) has a specific due date with a specific number of BKR’s due at that time, meaning that students will have 4 separate grades for Band Karate. For example: if a student completes 2 BKR’s by the 1st grade point, and not the 4 required for the second grade point, their grade will balance out as long as they complete the requirements for grading points 3 & 4. On the surface this will seem more complicated. However, after thinking this through all summer and testing it out last year, I think this will be better for the students in the long run. The short and simple version is this: Get your Band Karate completed on time and you are fine!

Some students will choose to get their BKR’s completed early. It is possible for a student to get ahead and complete all of their BKR’s (and do more beyond the 8) well before the final deadline. I will, of course, encourage this and award bonus points for completing more than the required 8 BKR’s before the deadlines. 7th & 8th grade students will also earn “freebies” for doing Solo & Ensemble MPA, All County Auditions, and scheduled after school rehearsals. Students who finish Black Belt early will have grades of 100 placed into the BK grades.

How Do I play them for Mr. N? Every year this is our biggest stumbling block. The “go around the room and everyone plays during class once per week” is not an effective system. Students will be able to play BKR’s any morning the Band room is open. Most days I am open at 8:45. I am open after school a few days each month from 4-5. I will set up a before class schedule a few days each week. There may be a few days at the end of the term where we will have a full class Band Karate day during our regular rehearsal time. The ultimate answer is that students are responsible for completing their BKR’s on time. I will offer up what free time I have available, however, students are ultimately responsible for showing up to play them. With our new Digital Curriculum, I’m looking into the possibility of students submitting recordings through Canvas.

Updates for Band Karate 2018-2019

As we move into our 4th year of Band Karate; I think we have completed the largest of the adjustments needed to be made to our playing assessment system. Please remember that the goal of ANY playing assessment system is for me to assist the students to improve their playing. Grades are attached to the system to encourage all students to participate. It is critical that I hear each student individually on a regular basis; **THAT** is the most important part of the system for me. Starting in the 2018-2019 school year the Band Karate System is designed to be completed by the end of the 1st semester in the 8th grade. The new system is designed so 6th graders (as well as 7th & 8th grade beginners) will begin Band Karate in the 2nd term of their 1st year of playing. Students will be finished with Band Karate in two ways: A. They have finished all of the BKR’s & earned their Black Belts. B. We have reached the 2nd semester of their 3rd year of playing.

A few things to ponder

1. Students can proceed at their own pace. The grading scales will be set up so the average student doing the required lines each term will finish Black Belt by December of their 3rd year of playing. Students who push ahead can finish as early as the 3rd term of their 2nd year of playing. (It would be VERY difficult to finish Black Belt much sooner than that. The music that needs to be performed is at a higher level than even the above average student to complete before March of their 2nd year.)
2. Bonuses for participating in Solo & Ensemble, All County & All State Bands can speed the completion of the belts.
3. We will modify the grade scales for the 3rd year players in the 2nd semester by eliminating Band Karate and replacing it with MPA preparation exercises, scale tests, etc. (details to follow).
4. As the updated system is designed to be completed in 2.5 years: students who begin playing in the 7th or 8th grade will need to work extra diligently to reach Black Belt. As Mentioned above: I will set goal for the current 8th graders, as well as those who join our program from other schools. I have also eliminated the musical terms tests (except for the Black-Belt test)
5. I am looking into awards/rewards for those students who complete Black Belt. Especially for those who finish early.

What do students have to play? There are 10 “Belts”. Each “Belt” has 4-7 requirements (BKR’s) 90% of the BKR’s are lines in the method books. The other 10% are made up of scales, tuning, terms tests, and rhythm lines. 95% of the students are playing 3-4 pages ahead of where the BKR’s are in the books. Ex: most of the White & Yellow belt lines are performed by the beginners during the Winter Concert. A full list of the BKR’s is on the Band webpage and posted in the Band Room

How are students graded? BKR’s are not graded individually (that would be a playing test). Students are graded based on the number of BKR’s that they complete. The number of BKR’s, as well as the grading scale, will vary throughout the year. Exact numbers of BKS’s need and the grading scale is always listed in the Band room and on the Band webpage.

Dear Band Parent,

It is my sincere hope that all of you will take the time to sit down and read through the Conway Band Handbook with your child to ensure their success in the Conway Band program.

I am very excited to get the school year started and get back to making music. There is a tradition of excellence here at Conway and it is my hope to continue the tradition with this generation of Conway Band members. That tradition begins in the band room, continues in your practice rooms at home, and will culminate at our performances.

Please sign the form below and return it to Mr. Nichols as quickly as possible. Feel free to call the school at any time for further information or clarification on the items contained in the Handbook. My phone number and e-mail once again are:
407-249-6420 x5032228 and keith.nichols@ocps.net

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN By Friday August 24th.

I have read and understand the Conway Band Handbook along with my child.

Student's Name _____ Class Period _____

Student's Signature _____

Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

Contact Phone # _____

Student's Email Address _____
(please print neatly)

Parent's Email Address _____
(please print neatly)