

GENERAL MUSIC

General music classes are provided for grades 5, 6 & 7:

5th Grade

Students will explore the elements of music: timbre (sound), melody, harmony, rhythm, and form. Special emphasis will be placed upon studying melody and rhythm through singing.

6th Grade

Students will continue to explore music through a variety of topics including reading and notating music (especially focusing on rhythm), improvising simple melodies, beginning ear training, and an introduction to musical composition and dictation. Two additional topics will be studying musical theatre and a brief glimpse at some important composers and their most historical compositions.

7th Grade

Students will read, notate music, compose, and arrange music through the study of music theory. Students will explore music history by examining music as it relates to history making connections between music and other arts and subjects.

Additional exploratory courses for 8th grade students are available as a choice.

Songwriting 101

This class provides an opportunity to explore writing songs, studying lyrics and how songs impact our lives. Instruction will include how to play ukuleles to accompany some of our newly composed songs on the ukulele. We will use mallet instruments to improvise and compose through collaboration with other students.

Drama

In addition to studying different types of drama performance, one of the sections will involve a musical theater unit and students will get to perform 3-5 minute musical theater presentations.

WHAT WE LEARN IN MUSIC

The Middle School Music Program uses a scaffolding approach to learning music. Essential skills and concepts are learned, reviewed and constructed upon each year. Our assessments are based on standards and benchmarks that align with the national music standards.

Most learning occurs in a formative assessment environment. Our project-based learning allows for collaborative and innovative work from our students. Our vertical approach to teaching in grades 5 – 8 allows us to build the program and make life-long connections with students.

The K-12 Music program is supported by Decorah Music Boosters. We encourage you to become part of this organization.



DECORAH MIDDLE SCHOOL

MUSIC DEPARTMENT

DMS MISSION STATEMENT

Learning-Thriving-Creating Our Legacy

Decorah Middle School, in partnership with its parents and community, will strive to instill in its students high standards for learning, integrity, leadership, and citizenship.



ORCHESTRA

5th Grade

During the first-year of orchestra the students learn to hold their instruments and bow properly. They develop music reading skills and work together as an ensemble to play music. The importance of developing good practice habits is a theme during 5th grade.

6th Grade

In the 6th grade the students continue to work on basic skills. They explore different key signatures, finger patterns and bowing styles. The students begin to play more challenging music and an emphasis is placed on making connections between music and their other school subject areas.

7th Grade

Orchestra members in the 7th grade will begin to refine their technical playing and build confidence in playing in upper positions and using vibrato. The 7th grade orchestra performs with the 8th grade orchestra during concerts.

8th Grade

The 8th graders are beginning their transition into high school level music. A continued focus is on playing in upper positions and increasing the range of notes that are being played. Time is spent on advancing rhythms, ensemble playing and learning a variety of bowing techniques. The 8th graders perform together with the 7th graders in concert.

Method Books:

5th Grade: "String Basics" Book 1 (Kjos Music Co.)

6th Grade: "String Basics" Book 2 (Kjos Music Co.)

7th Grade/8th Grade: "String Basics" Book 3 (Kjos Music Co.)

- Students meet for orchestra class on odd or even days throughout the school year and have one small group lesson per week.
- Honors orchestra opportunities are open to 7th and 8th graders.
- Concerts are held in early winter and spring with a mid-winter solo/ensemble festival for students in 7th-8th grade.

Sarah Kowitz sarah.kowitz@decorah.school
563-382-8427 ext.1123

BAND

5th Grade

During the first-year of band the students learn to hold their instruments and sit properly. They develop music reading skills and work together as an ensemble to play music. The importance of developing good practice habits is a theme during 5th grade.

- Students meet for band class on odd days throughout the school year and have one small group lesson per week.
- Concerts are held in winter and spring

6th Grade

In the 6th grade the students continue to work on basic skills. They explore different key signatures, learn new notes and fingerings and musical styles. The students begin to play more challenging music, and an emphasis is placed on making connections between music and their other school subject areas.

- Students meet for band class on even days throughout the school year and have one small group lesson per week.
- Concerts are held in the fall and spring.
- Students work on an ensemble project.

7th & 8th Grades

Band members in the 7th & 8th grade continue to refine their skills.

- Students meet for band class on odd or even days throughout the school year and have one small group lesson per week.
- Honor band and jazz band opportunities are open to 7th and 8th graders.
- Concerts are held the fall, mid-winter and spring.
- Students perform in a solo festival.

Method Books:

Standard of Excellence Band Method;

Bruce Pearson/Kjos Music Co.

Book 1 – 5th Grade, Book 2- 6th Grade

Rubank Band Advanced Method, Vol.1 - 7th & 8th Grades

Additional Resources for music include:

First Performance - Bruce Pearson – 5th grade

First Performance Plus - Bruce Pearson – 6th grade

Bach and Before for Band – David Newell – 7th & 8th grade

Dustin Bliven dustin.bliven@decorah.school

563-382-3643 HS ext. 1217 563-382-8427 MS ext. 1119

Matt Cody matt.cody@decorah.school

563-382-8427 ext. 1120

Chris Hadley christopher.hadley@decorah.school

563-382-8427 ext. 1121

CHORUS

5th & 6th Grades

Students will work on singing skills and beginning vocal technique such as breathing, opening their mouths to shape and match vowels, and singing with correct posture. Students will work on pitch accuracy and singing in tune. Students will learn harmony from singing in 2-3 vocal parts and keeping these vocal parts balanced. Students will develop musical literacy by working on how to read music through singing solfege, learning the hand signals for the solfege, and learning rhythm through the rhythmic solfege method of ta-ka-di-mi.

- Students meet for chorus on odd or even days throughout the school year.
- Students may audition for the state of Iowa Opus Honor Choirs.
- Concerts include a Holiday Concert for both grades and the 6th Grade Musical for everyone in the 6th grade.

7th & 8th Grades

Students will continue to work on singing skills and building their vocal technique. More work will be spent on shaping and matching vowels. Students will continue to work on pitch accuracy and intonation. Part singing will increase from singing in 2-3 parts to singing in 3-4 parts. This will create more harmonies and we will continue to work on balance. Students will continue to raise their level of musical literacy by working on how to read music through singing solfege, signing the hand signals for the solfege, and learning rhythm through the rhythmic solfege method of ta-ka-di-mi.

- Students meet for chorus on odd or even days throughout the school year.
- Students may audition for the state of Iowa Opus Honor Choirs.
- Concerts include a Holiday Concert near the end of the first semester and the Pops Concert near the end of the second semester.
- Students may audition for Dolce Voce, a choir for treble clef singers, or Viking Voices, a choir for bass clef singers. These ensembles meet before school and after sports practices.

Dean Beckman dean.beckman@decorah.school

563-382-8427 ext.1122