

# DMS Music

## Learning - Thriving - Creating Our Legacy

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### Decorah Middle School Mission Statement:

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.

**Decorah Middle School**  
405 Winnebago Street  
Decorah, Iowa 52101  
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### 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.

### General Music

#### 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.

The K-12 Music program is supported by:

**Decorah  
Performing Arts Boosters**

We encourage you to become part of this organization!

### 8th Grade Exploratory Options

#### 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.



# Orchestra

## 5<sup>th</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

In the 6<sup>th</sup> 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.

## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

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

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

The 8<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> graders perform together with the 7<sup>th</sup> graders in concert.

## Method Books:

5<sup>th</sup> Grade: *String Basics* Book 1 (Kjos Music)

6<sup>th</sup> Grade: *String Basics* Book 2 (Kjos Music)

7<sup>th</sup> Grade/8<sup>th</sup> Grade: *String Basics* Book 3 (Kjos Music)

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 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

Concerts are held in early winter and spring with a mid-winter solo/ensemble festival for students in 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade.



# Band

## 5<sup>th</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

- 5<sup>th</sup> grade band meets on odd days
- Students have one small group lesson per week.
- Concerts are held in winter and spring.

## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

In the 6<sup>th</sup> 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.

- 6<sup>th</sup> grade band meets on even days
- Students have one small group lesson per week.
- Concerts are held in fall and spring. Students work on an ensemble project.

## 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grades

Band members in the 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade continue to refine their skills.

- 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade band meets on odd or even days.
- Students have one small group lesson per week.
- Honor band and jazz band opportunities are open to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Concerts are held the fall, mid-winter and spring.
- Students perform in a solo festival.

## Method Books:

5<sup>th</sup> Grade: *Standard of Excellence Band Method*, Book 1 (Bruce Pearson/Kjos)

6<sup>th</sup> Grade: *Standard of Excellence Band Method*, Book 2 (Bruce Pearson/Kjos)

7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grades: *Rubank Band Advanced Method*, Vol. 1

## Additional Resources used:

5<sup>th</sup> grade: *First Performance* (B. Pearson)

6<sup>th</sup> grade: *First Performance Plus* (Pearson)

7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grades: *Bach and Before for Band* (David Newell)

# Chorus

## 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> 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.

- 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade 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 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Musical for everyone in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

## 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> 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.

- 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade 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.

