

DMS Music

Learning - Thriving - Creating Our Legacy

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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.

The K-12 Music program is supported by:

**Decorah
Performing Arts Boosters**

We encourage you to become part of this organization!

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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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 composition.

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. We will also study careers in music and beginning ukulele skills.

7th Grade

7th grade students will experience instruction that is designed to meet students at their individual skill levels while developing their musical skills through performing, creating, and listening activities. Lessons are adapted to support each student's growth in musical literacy, creativity, and understanding of diverse musical styles.

8th Grade Exploratory Options

Drama and Musical Theater

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

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)
6th Grade: *String Basics* Book 2 (Kjos Music)
7th Grade/8th 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 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.



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.

- 5th grade band meets on odd days
- Students 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.

- 6th 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.

7th & 8th Grades

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

- 7th & 8th 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 7th and 8th graders.
- Concerts are held the fall, mid-winter and spring.
- Students perform in a solo festival.

Method Books:

5th Grade: *Standard of Excellence Band Method*, Book 1 (Bruce Pearson/Kjos)
6th Grade: *Standard of Excellence Band Method*, Book 2 (Bruce Pearson/Kjos)
7th & 8th Grades: *Dependent on where students left off/are currently*

Additional Resources used:

5th grade: *First Performance* (B. Pearson)
6th grade: *First Performance Plus* (Pearson)
7th & 8th grades: *Habits of a Successful Middle School Musician* (Scott Rush)

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.

- 5th & 6th 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 Winter 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.

- 7th & 8th 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 Winter Concert near the end of the first semester and the Pops Concert near the end of the second semester.

