



# Fowler Middle School Falcon Band

Directors: David Dunham, Jenny Denis, Donald Bruce, and Jason Gonzalez (percussion)  
469-633-5070 3801 McDermott Rd. Plano, TX. 75025 [www.fowlerband.com](http://www.fowlerband.com)

Dear Falcon Band Students & Parents,

Welcome to the FALCON BAND!!!! The new school year is approaching and we are soon to begin making music! Thank you in advance for your support, and particularly for encouraging your child to study music. This investment of time, effort, and energy will produce lifelong dividends! Your child is about to be a part of one of the best band programs in the State of Texas!!!

This fall we will be the largest band in the 100 year history of Frisco ISD! Counting the older students we will have a total of 342 in the 2010-2011 Falcon Band! Don't worry, the students are all spread out in classes across the school day and NOT all at one time. We have 160 sixth graders in beginning band (almost half the 6<sup>th</sup> grade class).

We also use email as our primary means for communicating with our parents. To protect your personal information, I send Band emails to you with you email in Blind Copy (bc:). You can even send us additional email addresses where you would like information to be sent. [dunhamd@friscoisd.org](mailto:dunhamd@friscoisd.org)

All information about the band can be found on our web site [www.fowlerband.com](http://www.fowlerband.com) . Please make it a point to check this website often for information about anything to do with the band program. It is updated often.

We have also included attached to this email a color-coded Beginning Band Calendar to post on your refrigerator.

**This letter is a reminder that your student will need to have an instrument, accessories, supplies, and books by the SECOND DAY of class on August 24th.**

If you have already rented/purchased an instrument from a music store, they will deliver it to the school prior to the first day. If you have not secured your instrument and materials, please do so as soon as possible! Music companies tend to run out of instruments and materials this time of year, and reordering could take several weeks!! Unless you have had private lessons this summer, **DON'T TRY TO PLAY ON YOUR INSTRUMENT.** Wait until we all play together this fall so you won't develop bad habits or damage your instrument during assembly. If you have trouble finding good deals on instruments, please contact us and let us see if we can help. If there is a financial hardship in getting an instrument, let us know!! Maybe we can help!! Note: The musical instruments sold at Sam's Club and at Sears are, in my personal opinion, of very poor quality, unreliable and non-repairable, making it impossible for students to be successful in learning their instruments. Please do not buy them. They cannot be used in the Fowler MS Band.

Besides an instrument and the listed mouthpieces every beginning band student needs:

- **Essential Elements 2000 book & CD/DVD** (make sure it is for your instrument, not for percussion students)
- **Wessels 5 Min. Music Theory book** (make sure it is for your instrument, not for percussion students)
- **A wire music stand for home practice**
- **A small metronome/tuner (time keeper)** Korg TM-40 (not for percussion students)

**Please see pages 3 & 4 of this document for instruments, accessories, and supplies.**

## **THE FOWLER MIDDLE SCHOOL BEGINNING BAND PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

1. Each beginning band class meets for 46 minutes **EVERY DAY** and is set up in "like" classes
  - Beginning Flute Class
  - Beginning Clarinet Class (2 sections)
  - Beginning Saxophone Class
  - Beginning Oboe, Bassoon Class
  - Beginning Trombone (2 sections)
  - Beginning Trumpet Class (2 sections)
  - Beginning French Horn Class (2 sections)
  - Beginning Baritone Class
  - Beginning Tuba Class
  - Beginning Percussion Class (2 sections)
2. There is no Athletics in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. All sixth grade students are required to take a Physical Education class (PE). Once a student is in the seventh and eighth grade, they may participate in band, athletics, and other electives. There is not a conflict with these activities! Students can do both band and sports - MANY of our students do so!!
3. There will be only FIVE public performances this first year. Other than the following events there will not be ANY after school obligations this school year as far as the beginning band is concerned!

- (1) The first concert is an informal playing demonstration & will be **November 11th** at 6:30pm (Fowler MS Gym).
- (2) Winter Band Concert will be the first time the student play together as a band: **Tuesday, February 8<sup>th</sup>** in the Fowler gym. In preparation for our concert we will have two after-school rehearsals on Monday, February 7<sup>th</sup> from 4-5:30pm.
- (2) Solo Contest for beginners (in front of a judge). Tuesday, **April 5<sup>th</sup>**, after school between 5pm-7pm at Fowler MS
- (3) Sandy Lake Music Festival (Carrollton) **Thursday, April 21<sup>st</sup>**. In preparation for this contest we will have two after-school rehearsals on April 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> from 4:00-5:30 p.m. These rehearsals are some of the few times during the year that all of the beginning classes are combined into a fully instrumented band to prepare for the contest and our final concert.
- (4) Our final concert is **Thursday, May 5<sup>th</sup>** at 6:30pm (Fowler MS Gym). In preparation for our concert we will have two after-school rehearsals on May 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> from 4-5:30pm.

4. The following items are Band Fees in addition to instrument and musical supplies. We do not want to “surprise you” with expenses throughout the year so we are disclosing the “fine print” of band participation.

Please send a CHECK (no cash) made out to “Fowler Band” for a total of \$28.00 to the Fowler Flight Camp on August 13<sup>th</sup> or on the first day of school.

\$13.00 - Band T-Shirt (For performances, field trips & pep rally days)

\$10.00 - Social Fee for parties, sodas, awards, special “treats” etc.

\$ 5.00 - Solo Contest Fee

Remember that instruments that play on “reeds” such as the clarinet, oboe, bassoon, and saxophone will have to purchase reeds on a monthly or bi-monthly basis depending on reed usage and proper care.

There will be an optional cost next spring for our end of year trip to Hurricane Harbor in Arlington (June 4, 2011) of \$32.00. We will NOT take any money for this optional trip until February of 2011.

5. For normal progress, all band students are required to practice at least 10-15 minutes per day, five days per week the first six-week grading period of the year. After the first six-weeks, they will be required to practice 20-30 minutes a day, 5 days per week (2.5 hours per week) the remainder of the school year. This will be documented on a practice sheet given to each student at the beginning of each semester. In order to receive an “A” on their practice sheet that week, students must practice a minimum of 2.5 hours and turn it in on time. An important part of the six-weeks grade will be based on the amount of daily home practice. If a student cannot practice on a given day due to an unavoidable conflict, the practice time should be made up on another day within that practice week. We strongly encourage equally distributed practice time in order to promote musical success through an established routine. Parents will sign the student's practice sheet each to verify the amount of home practice. Practice sheets will be checked each week. As a result of this important grading factor, **ALL band students MUST take their instruments home EVERY DAY after the first few weeks of school.**

6. Some of the very large and very expensive instruments are owned by the school and may be issued to students selected by the director for that instrument (i.e. oboe, bassoon, French horn, euphonium/baritone, and tuba). Frisco ISD requires us to charge a usage fee for school owned instruments of \$50 per semester. This fee is for routine chemical cleaning and adjustment the summer following use. Remember, this is ONLY for school owned instruments: oboes, bassoons, French horns, baritones & tubas, NOT for instruments you rent at a music company.

7. **Private lessons are a VITAL ELEMENT in a student's musical life.** The opportunity to study privately with a professional musician is one of the most important factors to individual success. Like a personal trainer, these professionals provide detailed, specific, one-on-one instruction tailored for your child. Of the students who make the Texas All-State Band, roughly 98% take private lessons! Lessons are taught at Fowler Middle School before, during, or after school and are dependent upon the teacher's schedule. They will be 30 mins. per week at a cost of \$16 per lesson. **Though optional, it is strongly recommend that you consider private lessons as a part of your student's musical education.** As was discussed at the instrument selection meeting last February, due to their difficulty we expect all French horn, oboe, bassoon, and percussionists to take private lessons throughout the year.

8. **Beginning Tuba players ONLY:** We will be starting your child on a smaller instrument called a euphonium (baritone) for the first semester and then moving them over to tuba in November. We will provide a baritone mouthpiece until time to play tuba. You need to purchase a Conn Helleberg 120S tuba mouthpiece, the music stand, Korg MT-40 metronome/tuner, Essential Element 2000 (for TUBA), and Tuba 5 min. Theory Book before the first day of school. We will hold on to your tuba mouthpiece until it is needed.

**FINALLY:** It is a privilege to have your child as a new musician at Fowler Middle School!!! Thank you for your support of music education! As parents, you play an important role in everything we do. We pride ourselves on being a well-organized program, and if there are ANY questions or concerns, please contact us!

E-mail is the best way to contact us and we always return email the same day it is received, even in the summer!