Webb Bridge Middle School

Band Handbook

2026-2027

Webb Bridge Middle School Band

Mr. Stroud, Band Director

Mr. Stallings, Band Director

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the 2026-2027 Webb Bridge Middle School Band Program. Your two band directors this year are Kirk Stroud and Erick Stallings. Please know that it is our sincere hope that all students in the Webb Bridge Band have a positive experience that they can take with them as they progress into high school.

Being a member of the band has many benefits that go beyond becoming a musician. Numerous studies have shown that students who are involved in music have higher test scores and get accepted to some of the best colleges. The music students are also typically the leaders within the school and community. Band provides a great opportunity to become a musician, but also brings with it many attributes that students should strive for: Work Ethic, Persistence, Dedication, Commitment, etc. Joining band in middle school also sets you up for success at the high school level. Alpharetta High School Band is nationally recognized and performs frequently at state and national conventions along with nationally recognized parades.

Overall, band can be very rewarding and filled with many opportunities for performance. Again, we look forward to providing musical experiences and opportunities throughout this band year.

Very Sincerely,

Kirk Stroud
Stroud@fultonschools.org
Webb Bridge Middle School, Band Director

Erick Stallings
Stallingsel@fultonschools.org
Webb Bridge Middle School, Band Director

WBMS Band Activity Fee

At WBMS, we work to create vibrant, rigorous music programs that inspire passion in our students. Unfortunately, music programs are very costly and supply-intensive. In lieu of most fundraising, our band is asking families to contribute $141/performer.

- **Binder**: Each student will receive a 1'' binder to use in the classroom throughout the year.
- **Band Polo/Concert Shirt**: Each student will receive a band polo/concert shirt for their band uniform if needed (7th and 8th Grade Students)
- **Instruction**: Throughout the year we will have clinicians come in and provide specialized instruction. The band fee will help to cover costs associated with bringing in some of the best directors and performers around.
- **Participation Fees**: Participation fees include (1) entry fees for full-band participation in the annual GMEA Large Group Performance Evaluation, and (2) Fees for other events as they may arise.
- **Instrument Repair**: Maintaining school owned instruments throughout the year is crucial in order to provide quality school owned instruments.
- **Student Recognition**: Student recognition includes (1) ALL GMEA medals and plaques, (2) concert receptions, (3) all end-of-year awards, and expenses for any other recognition events or materials as the need arises.
- **Miscellaneous**: This category covers any and all expenses tied to the running of the Webb Bridge Band program that may arise.
- **Local School Fee**

Please email Stallingsel@fultonschools.org if you are having difficulty with this fee.

Communication

Communication is essential in any large performing group. Below are some ways in which we will be communicating with parents and students throughout the year.

Band Website
Please always visit: wbmsbands.org for the band calendar, up-to-date information, announcements and information relating to the band.
Email
Students and parents will receive frequent emails from their directors throughout the year.
Canvas
For assignments we will be utilizing Canvas to communicate with the students in each class.

Best Way to get in touch

Mr. Stroud: Stroud@fultonschools.org
Mr. Stallings: Stallingsel@fultonschools.org
Band Rooms Numbers: 205/210

About the Program

Webb Bridge Middle School has always had a commitment to excellence in music performance. The Webb Bridge Middle School Band Program consists of approximately 400 students in 6th, 7th and 8th Grade. The program has various concert ensembles and a jazz ensemble program.

The band students at Webb Bridge consistently earn superior ratings at Georgia Music Educators Association Solo & Ensemble Festival, Large Group Performance Evaluation and have students that participate in both the district honor band and All-State Band. Recently, the 8th Grade Symphonic Band was invited to perform at the 2025 Georgia Music Educators Association In-Service Conference, the Music for All Southeastern Regional Concert Band Festival, and the University of Georgia's Midfest Band Festival as an invited ensemble. The bands at Webb Bridge Middle School have performed at the Trills and Thrills Music Festivals, consistently earning superior ratings, and the Universal Stars Program in Orlando, Florida.

The Webb Bridge Middle School Band students feed directly into the Alpharetta High School Band Program, which has performed at the National Concert Band Festival, Georgia Music Educators State Convention, University of Georgia's Janfest and Midwest with the Alpharetta Symphony.

Kirk Stroud, Band Director

Kirk Stroud is in his 21st year of teaching and 14th year as Band Director at Webb Bridge Middle School in Alpharetta, Georgia. He received his Bachelor of Music Education from Kennesaw State University where he studied trombone with Colin Williams and Richard Brady. In 2014, Mr. Stroud received his Master of Music Education from The University of Georgia.

Prior to Webb Bridge, Mr. Stroud was the Assistant Director of Bands at Campbell Middle and High School in Smyrna, GA for the Cobb County School District.

During his time at Webb Bridge, the band program has grown and earned consistent superior ratings at Large Group Performance Evaluation. In 2019 the 8th Grade Symphonic Band performed as an invited ensemble at the Music For All Southeastern Regional Concert Festival and the University of Georgia Midfest Band Festival.

Mr. Stroud has been recognized at Webb Bridge by the National League of Junior Cotillions Best-Mannered Teacher (2014), Rotary Club International Teacher of the Quarter (2015), Teacher of the Year (2017) and has received the National Band Associations Citation of Excellence (2019, 2025). Professional affiliations include Georgia Music Educators Association, National Association for Music Education and the Professional Association of Georgia Educators.

Mr. Stroud lives in Alpharetta, Georgia with his wife, Nicole, daughter, Maren, and our Cockapoo named Hugo!

Erick Stallings, Band Director

Erick Stallings is excited to be in his 4th year at Webb Bridge Middle School as one of the band directors. Prior to his work at Webb, he was the director at Holcomb Bridge Middle School where students consistently received superior and excellent ratings at LGPE. Numerous students have been selected for All-District and All-State band during Mr. Stallings' tenure. Prior to HBMS, Mr. Stallings taught 10 years at Mill Creek Middle School in Woodstock, GA. When Mr. Stallings departed Mill Creek, the band program had grown to nearly 350 students in grades 6-8 with consistent superior ratings at large group performance evaluations as well as many students earning a spot in the District Nine Honor Bands and the Georgia All-State Bands.

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A native of Tennessee, Mr. Stallings received his Bachelor of Music in music education from Tennessee Technological University in 1996. In 2002, Mr. Stallings received his Master of Music with concentrations in wind conducting and clarinet performance from the University of Florida. In 2001, he won the graduate concerto competition and performed Weber's First Clarinet Concerto with the UF Orchestra. While in Florida, Erick served as principal clarinetist of the Ocala Symphony and the Central Florida Philharmonic for several years. In 2010, Mr. Stallings completed his Educational Specialist degree with a specialization in BrainSMART Instructional Leadership from Nova Southeastern University.

Mr. Stallings began his teaching career at Dunnellon Middle School in Dunnellon, Florida in 2002 where he revitalized a struggling band program back to excellence. He was awarded the Tom Bishop Award for Band Improvement from the Florida Bandmasters Association. Mr. Stallings also co-directed the bands at Etowah High School from 2006-2008 prior to teaching at Mill Creek. Mr. Stallings lives in Roswell with his wife and two elementary aged daughters. He enjoys cruises, traveling, fishing, and hiking in his free time.

Band Uniform

The Webb Bridge Band uniform for 2026-2027 consists of:

6th, 7th & 8th Grade Band Students

- Band Polo for 6th and 7th Grade (provided through the band fee if needed)
- 8th Grade Symphonic/Concert Band Concert Shirt (provided through the band fee)
- Solid Black Pants/Slacks – please no jeans, leggings or pants with sequins/designs
- Black Dress Belt – if you want to wear a belt
- Black Dress Shoes/Flats – please no tennis shoes
- Black Socks for black dress shoes – not required for flats

The Band Polo/Concert Band Shirt must be tucked in for all band concerts/events throughout the year unless instructed otherwise.

We prepare our music to be performed at a high level of performance and we want to look our very best when we perform!

WBMS Band Materials

Binders:

- All Band Students: Students will be provided a hard 1'' binder for music and warm-ups.

Method Books: (All provided through the band fee)

- 6th Grade: Sound Innovations – Book 1 (provided through band fee – replacement cost for this book will be paid for by the student's family at $10 per book)
- 7th / 8th Grade: Habits of a Successful Middle School Musician (loaned to each student)

Help Sessions

The band room is open on Monday - Friday mornings beginning at around 8:00 AM. Students must wait outside until Mr. Stroud or Mr. Stallings comes down to the front office to allow the band students to go to the band room. Please refer to the calendar for specific days throughout the year that the band room is being utilized – we will also communicate this via email and within the class period.

Instrument Storage

Students will be assigned a storage space in which they may keep their instrument at school when not in use. This space is to be used for the student's instrument and folder only and should not be shared or changed without permission from the band director. School instrument storage is a privilege, which will be taken away from students who abuse it.

All students will have an opportunity before school to drop their instrument off at their storage space.

All students will have an opportunity after school to pick up their instrument from their storage space in order to practice at home.

Individual Instrument Materials (All required 6th Grade Required Materials will be sent home in a packet)

***Disclaimer Alert**: The WBMS Music Staff DOES NOT ENDORSE any particular brand; the brands listed below are suggestions based on our combined 40 plus years of experience. Remember you should expect to spend at least $1000 for a quality new instrument/$500 used. Please trust us! Please let us know if you find a used instrument and we can provide our professional input. Most people rent in the beginning.*

Flute: **Yamaha**, Gemeinhardt, Jupiter, Pearl, Eastman, Trevor James

- Tuning rod (specific to your make and model of flute)
- Cleaning Swab (handkerchief, bandana, or similar to wrap around tuning rod)

Oboe/Bassoon: **Yamaha**, Fox/Renard, Jupiter, Selmer (email directors for upgrades)

- 3 reeds always (Jones medium-soft but Preferably hand-made reeds as they work much better) *Please email directors for Oboe Reed Makers
- Reed case
- Small canister (prescription bottle – cleaned out!) for reed soaking,
- Weighted silk swabs (two separate ones for boot joint and wing joint),
- (Bassoon) bocal brush (or long pipe cleaners)

All Clarinets: **Yamaha,** Buffet, Backun, Jupiter

- Soprano (Regular Bb)
    - Mouthpiece: Premier by Hite or Upgraded Mouthpiece: D'Addario Woodwinds Reserve X5
    - Ligature: Bonade Inverted Ligature or BG-L4R-Revelation Ligature
- Bass Clarinet Mouthpiece: Yamaha 5C or Upgraded Mouthpiece Vandoren B44
    - Ligature: Bonade Inverted Ligature or BG-LR9 Revelation Ligature
- 4 reeds in a reed case always (Vandoren Traditional: strength 2 ½ for 6th grade, strength 3 for 7th grade, strength 3 ½ for 8th grade)
- Mouthpiece patches
- Weighted silk swab
- Cork grease

All Saxes: Yamaha, Selmer, Yanagisawa, Buffet, Eastman

- Alto Mouthpiece: Yamaha 4C Alto or Upgrade: Vandoren AL3 (SM711) Sax
    - Ligature: BG L12 RSJ Ligature Alto or Bonade Alto Saxophone Ligature (2254U)
- Tenor Mouthpiece: Yamaha 4C Tenor or Upgrade: Vandoren TL3 (SM721) Sax
    - Ligature: BG L13 Ligature Tenor or Bonade Tenor Ligature (2255UG)
- Bari Mouthpiece: Yamaha 4C Bari or Upgrade: Vandoren BL3 (SM731) Sax
    - Ligature BG L15 Ligature Baritone Sax or Vandoren LC29P
- 4 reeds in a reed case always (Vandoren Traditional: strength 2 ½ for 6th grade, strength 3 for 7th/8th
- Mouthpiece patches
- Weighted silk swab
- Cork grease.

Trumpet: **Yamaha**, Bach, Jupiter, Eastman, Holton, King

- Valve oil (Blue Juice, Al Cass, or Yamaha Synthetic) & Tuning slide grease
- Mouthpiece brush
- Cleaning cloth
- Bach 5C mouthpiece or equivalent is best.

French Horn: **Yamaha**, Conn, Holton, Eastman

- Valve oil (Hetman Rotor Lubricant - 12 Standard) & Tuning slide grease,
- Mouthpiece brush.
- Holton Farkas MC or Schilke 30 mouthpiece

Trombone: **Yamaha**, Bach, Jupiter, Eastman, Holton, King
For Trombone upgrades-Look for a large bore trombone with an open wrap/trigger

- Slide lubricant (Superslick Trombone Cream)
- Trombone Misting Water bottle (small 2-4oz)
- Tuning slide grease
- Mouthpiece brush
- Bach 6 ½ AL small or Yamaha 48 small shank mouthpiece (in most cases) or equivalent

Euphonium & Tuba

- Valve oil (Blue Juice, Al Cass, or Yamaha Synthetic) & Tuning slide grease
- Tuning slide grease
- For euphonium, a Bach 6 ½ AL small or Yamaha 48 small shank mouthpiece (in most cases)
- For tuba, Conn Helleberg 7B mouthpiece is best. Bach 18 or equivalent is also good.

Percussion:

- 6th Grade:
  - Bell Kit
  - "Real Feel" 12" practice pad
  - Innovative Percussion Intermediate Mallet Pack FP2 or Vic Firth EP2 Intermediate Pack (or equivalent – see below)
- 7th / 8th Grade:
  - Bell Kit
  - "Real Feel" 12" practice pad
  - Innovative Percussion Intermediate Mallet Pack FP2 or Vic Firth EP2 Intermediate Pack (or equivalent – see below)

***All percussion sticks and bags must be labeled. Every stick bag will have a strip of duct tape (your choice) and every mallet/stick must have that same color tape wrapped around it. This will help with not mixing up your students stick/mallet with other students.**

Instruments

A major component to band class is having your instrument in class every day. The instrument needs to be in working order so that the student can progress daily in their musical study.
If your instrument does have to go in for maintenance or repair, please notify the directors.

Most local music retailers that provide instrument repair will provide a loaner for the time the instrument is out. Please request this when you drop an instrument off for repair.

Note: Please make sure you get your mouthpiece when you drop your instrument off for repair. If the instrument repair shop does not provide for you a "loaner" instrument we can usually provide one until the instrument is returned to you. This will help minimize lost instructional time in band class.

- *School-Owned Instruments (primarily Bass Clarinet, Bassoon, Tenor/Bari Sax, French Horn, Euphonium, Tuba)*
    - Students who need to have access to a school-owned instrument **(based on availability)** will be issued a school owned instrument. *Instruments not listed above are available in VERY limited quantities for those who cannot obtain an instrument through an outside source.*
    - Students and the parents of students who use school-owned instruments must sign a Fulton County liability/loan contract. In signing the contract, parents/guardians are assuming responsibility for any major repairs incurred during the period of use. **Students using school-owned instruments are required to provide their own mouthpieces.** Please refer to the materials list for appropriate mouthpieces. In the event of loss or major damages inflicted upon the instrument (major scratches, dents, dented valves, broken piping, curled bells, etc.) **the student (parent) is financially responsible for replacement/repair.** These instruments are **very expensive** and are purchased on a very limited budget. Students are responsible for cleaning instruments and performing regular upkeep duties, such as oiling valves, greasing slides, and applying cork grease where needed. Please be sure to keep cases latched when applicable.

WBMS Band Class Structure

6th Grade Band

- **6th Grade is the best time to join band!** The only beginning band, orchestra and chorus classes are offered in 6th grade. Virtually all students at Webb Bridge choose to join one of these groups, and 6th grade is the only time. Don't miss this opportunity to perform!
- **The band includes brass, woodwind & percussion instruments.** The instruments in the band are very versatile and can be used in a wide variety of performance situations, including concert band, symphony orchestra, jazz band, chamber groups, rock bands, and many more! The instrument choices are: Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Alto Sax, Trumpet, French Horn, Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba, and Percussion (snare drum and bells).
- **We will help you find the instrument that fits you best.** The physical characteristics of each person's face, mouth and hands are unique. These unique features help determine which instruments will fit each individual person. When a student joins band, they are asked to provide three choices of instruments they would like to play. The directors will evaluate each student to determine which of these instruments is the best fit. By using this careful process, each student is guided to an instrument that they will be successful with for many years to come!
- This individual evaluation only takes a minute or two and will be done during the first 2 weeks of school. We will also make available some appointments in the band room

before school. The band directors have been doing this successfully for years, so we will have no problem pairing each student with their ideal instrument!

- **Previous musical experience is not necessary!** Most band students start with absolutely no formal training playing a musical instrument. Band classes are taught in a way that students with no previous experience can become successful, while those few students that already play will be challenged and continue to make progress.
- The 6th Grade Band is split into two evenly balanced ensembles at the 2nd 9 Weeks.
- The 6th Grade Band Class is a formal class for which students earn academic credit.

7th Grade Band

- The 7th Grade Band is split into two evenly balanced ensembles.
- The 7th Grade Band Class is a formal class for which students earn academic credit.
- Chair placements within each section are determined by the most recent full band playing test.
- The Concert Band performs primarily Level 2 Concert Band Literature.

8th Grade Band

The 8th Grade Band Classes will have a mix of students that participate in one of the following ensembles. The ensemble placement will be determined by audition.

- **8th Grade Concert Band**
    - The 8th Grade Concert Band is a formal class for which students earn academic credit.
    - Students are placed into the Concert Band by formal performance audition.
    - Chair placements within each section are determined by the most recent full band playing test.
    - The 8th Grade Concert Band performs primarily Levels 2 to 3 Concert Band Literature

- **8th Grade Symphonic Band**
    - The 8th Grade Symphonic Band is a formal class for which students earn academic credit.
    - Students are placed into the Symphonic Band by formal performance audition.
    - Chair placements within each section are determined by the most recent full band playing test.
    - The Symphonic Band performs primarily Levels 3 and 4 Concert Band Literature

Switching Instruments

Some students will be asked to change instruments so that our band can have a balanced instrumentation. This is the perfect opportunity for selected students to learn to play a new instrument. Typically, switches will remain within instrument families (ex: clarinet-bassoon, trumpet-euphonium, etc.) Of course, there are some exceptions to this rule. **Please note: Students may NOT switch to percussion instruments (unless the band is in need of more**

percussion players). All instrument changes must be approved by the directors. Instrument changes are based on ensemble need, as well as the availability of school-owned instruments.

- ***As a general rule, students are expected to remain on the same instrument from 6th Grade to 8th Grade. This helps with keeping the ensembles progressing towards more advanced music literature and helps with the student developing skills on his or her instrument that will help them as they move into high school band.***

Purchasing New Instruments

Parents/guardians who wish to purchase a new instrument should feel free to contact the directors. Unfortunately, there are lots of inferior instruments out there which do not perform well with keys that bend easily and instruments that play out of tune. We will be more than happy to recommend a great step-up instrument that will serve them throughout high school. **Always keep your beginner model instrument for use with the marching band in high school!**

Grading System

GRADE CATEGORIES AND WEIGHTS

Teachers work with their PLC to create Balanced Assessment Plans prior to each unit of study. Not all assessments are graded or count in a student's average. Grades are a representation of what a student knows, has learned and can demonstrate. All middle school course gradebooks at WBMS (and in Fulton County) are set up the same:

- 50% - Major: An assignment or assessment that is cumulative in nature that measures learning targets from multiple standards/skills. (Concert Performance Objectives, Major Playing Tests)
- 40% - Minor: An assignment or assessment that measures an individual learning target, standard, or subset of learning targets/standards/skills within a unit. (Minor Playing Tests)
- 10% - Practice: Daily assignments, observations, and/or engagement activities given in class or for homework to build pre-requisite skills, measure progress towards mastery of a learning target or standard, enrich, and/or remediate skills.

Please see the student handbook for more detailed information related to grading.

PASS-OFFS ASSIGNMENTS

The 6th Grade Band will play assigned lines from the book in class. Students will perform the line until they are able to play the line in its entirety without mistake. Once the line is performed in this manner, it will be considered a passed-off. Students will continue through the method book in this manner. Students are expected to pass-off at least one line per week.

Concert Attendance

Students are expected to attend their concerts. A band is a performing group which can only develop to its fullest potential when each member is fulfilling his/her role completely. Absences

not only affect the learning of one student, who misses the summative assessment, but also the learning of the other band students. Concert dates and times are published on the Band Website (**www.wbmsbands.org**) and in concert letters that go out via email approximately two weeks before each concert event.

How to handle conflicts
Students should be encouraged to participate in a variety of activities at this age, and sometimes conflicts will occur. Use the following guidelines to resolve any conflicts:
1. Subscribe to the band calendar online at wbmsbands.org with your smartphone/device.
2. Copy the Band Calendar (included in this handbook) into your family calendar.
3. Notify the directors of any school conflicts as soon as possible but not more than 2 weeks before the concert so that the directors may make arrangements.

Make-Up Policy
Missing a concert is the same as missing an exam or summary project in another class, and therefore requires an individual make-up performance with the teacher. The make-up will consist of recording a playing test at home and submitting electronically within 48 hours after the concert. The material for such playing tests will include the music performed by the band on that concert.

Daily Classroom Expectations

During Class
1. Enter class as directed, get your instrument out, and report to your assigned chair.
2. Only percussion students should touch and practice on percussion instruments unless specifically directed by the directors. **This includes when rehearsal is complete.**
3. Be prepared and seated on time. Follow directions on the board to prepare for each rehearsal. Students will be permitted to play before class the given warm-up exercises outlined in the class directions. After a director or a staff member steps on the podium, all talking stops and we will warm-up together as a group.
4. Be attentive during class.
5. **Respect** the right of others to learn.
6. Play only when directed to do so.
7. If you must ask a question during class, please raise your hand. Talking and conversation is not allowed during rehearsals except to ask questions or during teacher-directed class discussions.
8. Have all assigned music prepared on schedule.
9. Follow all verbal and written instructions.
10. At the end of the rehearsal, quietly pack up instrument and music, return them to the storage areas, and return to your seat. **All percussion students must place all equipment back neatly.**
11. Pick up any trash near your chair. Straighten your chair and stand so that the room will be ready for the next class.
12. Do not leave the room until you have been dismissed.

Behavior Guidelines

Our standards for musical excellence in band are high, as so they should be for conduct as well. Students are encouraged to follow Class Expectations included in this packet. If students follow these guidelines, they will enjoy a very productive, positive and fun year with the band.

Please refer to the student handbook regarding the WBMS Discipline cycle for the 2026-2027 school year.

Private Lessons

We encourage every student – 6th, 7th, and 8th grade – to take private instruction from an accomplished musician. Private lessons make the most of your band investment, allowing for individual attention and a specialist's advice. Furthermore, lessons typically raise your audition scores for Honor Band and All-State; it is rare for students to make these groups without taking private lessons. As an added benefit, private lessons help the band improve.

As the saying goes, "Make the *individual* better, and the band will get better."

Contact the directors before choosing a private lesson teacher. We know the area very well and can help pair you with a qualified instructor.

Webb Bridge Band Student Recognition Program

Many of our Webb Bridge band students are recognized throughout the year for outstanding achievement in instrumental music. The areas for recognition are outlined below.

GMEA Honor Band and All-State Band

Students have the opportunity to earn a seat in the GMEA District 5 Honor Band and the GMEA All-State Band through an audition process. The audition consists of performing four major scales (as posted on www.GMEA.org) from memory plus the chromatic scale for the full range of the student's instrument from memory. In addition to scales, students must successfully sightread two musical samples which are written in contrasting styles. Students preparing for the All-State Band audition must prepare to perform the etude for their specific instrument as posted on www.GMEA.org. Students performing in one or both of these groups will also earn a GMEA medal. Registration forms will be sent home.

The Webb Bridge Band Wall of Fame

Students earning a seat in the All-State band will have a name imprinted on a plaque on permanent display in the band room on the All-State Band Wall of Fame.

Please continue to visit www.wbmsbands.org for the latest news and information about the Webb Bridge Middle Bands!