

The LASALLE ACADEMY band program is a vertically structured, sequential system that is predicated on individual skill development. Band is an academic, co-curricular course offering provided as a fine arts elective for all students in the school in grades 5-8. The following is a philosophical overview of the program along with specific scope and sequence information.

At each of the four levels there are specific "points of emphasis" that are the most important areas of instruction. At each level, these points of emphasis are slightly different. At the elementary level, grades 5 and 6, students must be taught basic fundamentals (breathing, embouchure formation, stick technique), basic music literacy, care and maintenance of the instrument and an introduction to ensemble development (i.e. knowing how to play in a band). At the middle school level, grades 7 and 8, the primary focus is on individual technique development, meeting instrumentation goals and continuing ensemble development. Emphasis will be placed on musicality, expression in playing, balance and blend, and intonation and a more mature understanding of each individual's role within the band at any given place in the music.

Elementary (grade 5 and grade 6)

General Philosophy

Students are given the opportunity to begin an instrument in the fifth grade. The major focus of instruction at the elementary level is to give students proper habits from the outset. If students start with improper techniques, they will reach a point (sometimes within months, sometimes within years) where they will "hit the wall" and stop progressing because of these physical limitations.

Points of Emphasis

1. Introduce proper breathing technique and use of air (woodwind & brass)
Learning to breath and then use air efficiently and effectively is a crucial, basic skill and a prerequisite to instrumental music success.
2. Introduce note reading. All students will learn either bass or treble clef and be proficient at identifying all pitches in that clef.
3. Introduce proper stick technique (percussion)
Stick technique that is the heart of the instructional method used for percussionists throughout the program.
4. Introduce correct embouchure formation and tone production (woodwind and brass)
It is critically important to the long term success of the instrumental music student that the embouchure is taught correctly from the start in order to produce proper tone.
5. Introduce fingerings and basic music literacy.
Students should be able to recognize and understand basic rhythms, including whole, half, dotted half, quarter, dotted quarter, and eighth notes and rests.

This continues on in 6th grade with slightly more complex rhythms, varied time signatures and more difficult key signatures.

6. Introduce instrument care and maintenance of instruments
Students need to understand how to care for the instruments that represent a significant monetary investment. These instruments, in most cases, must last a student at least through high school and often well into adulthood.
7. Introduce ensemble development.
In addition to the individual skills needed to play an instrument, students need to learn how to play with others in an ensemble.

Instructional Methods

Students in Beginning Band will use the Essential Elements 2000- Book 1. Students are encouraged to use Smart Music at home as a practice resource. Students will be asked to demonstrate proper breathing, embouchure, and tone production in each class session.

Students in 6th grade Intermediate Band will use Essential Elements 2000 book 1 and begin in Book 2. Additional sheet music will supplement the lessons and advanced students will have the opportunity to participate in SBCSC Honor Band and ISSMA solo and ensemble contest. Also, advanced 6th graders will be able to audition for Jazz band.

Instructional Setting

Students are divided into classes either by woodwinds, or brass. Percussionists will be moved between the two classes depending on the most appropriate setting for them at the time. All percussionists will begin with the bell kit in 5th grade. When students become comfortable and confident with note reading and technique on mallet instruments, snare drum will be introduced. Also, it is our goal to have a percussionist come in to provide the percussion students with a private sectional once per week in the 5th grade. By the end of 5th grade percussionist should have had exposure to mallets, snare, bass, cymbals, suspended cymbal and several auxiliary percussion instruments. 6th grade percussion will introduce timpani, drum set, and additional auxiliary percussion instruments.

Classes meet every other day for 40 minutes. As we near a performance, we will combine the woodwind, brass and percussion to prepare for a concert.

Each week students will be given specific material that they are expected to practice at home. Playing tests and occasional written tests will be administered to evaluate the student's progress.

Middle School (7 & 8)

General Philosophy

This level is in many ways the key to a successful band program. Students must develop their individual technique to enable them to perform the band literature that they will play when they get to the high school band. It is also crucial to meet the instrumentation goals in order to ultimately have a balanced high school band, as well as a balanced middle school band.

Points of Emphasis

1. Refine individual technique and musicianship.
Through the use of Essential Elements 2000 book 2 and Foundations for Superior Performance method books, individual technique will be emphasized.
2. Refine embouchure, tone production, intonation, phrasing and musical expression.
3. Meet instrumentation goals and start to develop a true "band sound".
At the middle school level, the instrumentation must be enlarged to prepare for the more difficult band literature that is performed at the high school level. The middle school band should include the following instruments: **Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Clarinet, Bass clarinet, Alto sax, Tenor sax, Baritone sax, French Horn, Trumpet, Trombone, Baritone, Tuba, and Percussion. It might be necessary at this time to switch a student from a more popular instrument to address instrumentation issues.**
4. Refine music literacy.
There will be an emphasis on rhythms and counting, in both lessons and band rehearsals. Students should be able to sight count, clap, and play any rhythms including notes up to sixteenth notes and rests in any combinations. Introduce concepts of ensemble balance and blend.
5. Students need to know how to blend their individual part in order to produce a properly balanced total band sound. Balance and blend depends on the part being played within a section (i.e. 1st, 2nd, or 3rd parts), the relative pitch of the instrument (i.e. high/low), tone quality, and the type of musical material being played (i.e. melodic, harmonic, rhythmic).

Instructional Methods

The seventh and eighth grade students will be divided into two performing ensembles. The **Concert Band**, made up of predominantly seventh graders will continue to develop their technical skill and music literacy by continuing on in the Essential Elements 2000 method book. There will also be work done almost daily from the Foundations for Superior Performance Method. Sheet music becomes the main teaching tool at this level. The goal of this band is to perform high quality performances of Easy and possibly some Medium Easy music. The **Symphonic**

Band, comprised of our 7th and 8th graders who have demonstrated a good work ethic and exceptional musical ability, uses the Foundations for Superior Performance Method each class period. We usually create our own rhythmic studies for this group. The goal of this band is to perform at a high quality music that is generally Medium Easy level and an occasional piece at the Medium level. This band is for students who are up for the challenge and enjoy working on difficult music.

All students in 7th and 8th grade will be expected to perform at solo and ensemble contest either by doing a solo or by participating in a small ensemble. Significant class time is spent on this project because this is the one time of the year that each individual student can work on music that is exactly the right level for that particular student. This time of year is usually where we see the most individual growth from each student.

Instructional setting

In seventh and eighth grade class periods are 80 minutes long. Students have band every other day. Typically we will meet as a large group and then warm- up, tune, work on technique or chorales and then we split the group for sectional work on music. One teacher leads the brass and percussion sectional and another teacher leads the woodwind rehearsal. After rehearsing specifics of the music in sectionals, we typically come back together as a whole band. Obviously we try to have variety in our lesson plans and we supplement the above plan by working in time in the music keyboard lab where students are able to enrich their music theory knowledge or experiment with creating and composing.

Students in 7th and 8th grade will have the opportunity to audition for SBCSC Honor Band, participate in solo and ensemble contest, perform at least 4 concerts per year, audition for jazz band, and be recommended for IBA All-region Band.

Private lessons are offered once per week at the school on most instruments and are encouraged, but not required.

Jazz Bands

We have two levels of jazz band at LaSalle Academy. Students will be selected for **Jazz 1** based upon playing ability, prior demonstrated work ethic, responsibility and instrumentation needs. This band will perform frequently in the community and will rehearse in the mornings from 7:30-8:05 on B days.

Jazz 2 is comprised of students in grades 6, 7, and 8 who play saxophone, trumpet, trombone, piano, drums, or bass. This group will introduce the fundamentals of the jazz style and very beginning improvisation. This group will meet one day per week after school and will start after the fall sports season.

Awards and Accomplishments.

- The 2010 Symphonic Band was awarded the "With Distinction" award designating it as one of the top performing ensembles in the state at the ISSMA Organizational Contest in Division 1. This was the first time a South Bend Band has received this award.
- Eight 8th grade band members were selected for the 2010 All State Band. This was the most from any school in the state.
- LaSalle Academy hosts the Indiana All-Region Band.
- LaSalle Concert Bands have received a Superior rating at ISSMA contest in each year that they performed.
- LaSalle Jazz Bands have performed at the South Bend Symphony concerts, for the St. Joseph Hospital, with the Conservatory of Dance at St. Mary's, for the Superintendent's holiday luncheon, for the South Bend Alumni luncheons and for various other community events.
- There were over 200 LaSalle band students who successfully participated in the ISSMA Solo and Ensemble contest.
- A LaSalle band alumni led a flute choir as an after school activity and performed at a nursing home.
- LaSalle band students have gone on to participate in college bands and currently are performing with Notre Dame, Indiana University, and Purdue University.