

# Advice for incoming 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Students uncertain about joining the WRS Band Program...

*in the words of current/former WRS Band members*



You will never be able to recreate the moments you are playing music with others, and when you perform at a concert you are playing with all the other students and it is magical.

Kellie, Flute (Class of 2005)

Give it a try! Mr. Zilke is a really great teacher who will help you become a better student in band and in general. You will have some of the best memories of junior high in band so try it. You can always drop it in 8th grade if you don't like it, but it will be harder to join in 8th grade and play your instrument again if you take a year off.

Sarah, Saxophone (Class of 2006)

Stick it out! Even if you don't want to become a professional tuba player, being part of a group ensemble is an amazing experience that only gets better with time. I promise, the more effort you put into learning your instrument, the more fun you will have. Also, band is a great place to meet new friends!

Hanna, flute (Class of 2007)

Band is such a great opportunity to not only use a different part of your brain during the school day but it also allows you to be a team player in a different way than on a sports team. It is also such a great place for community and friends!

Rachael, Clarinet (Class of 2007)

You'll always regret not giving something a chance. I'd rather say I tried, then live life thinking "what if" or "I should have"

Blake, Trombone (Class of 2008)

Do it! No doubt in my mind. The things you learn, the people you meet, the experiences you have will shape you for the future. No matter what else you have on your plate or whether you don't think it's your thing... just go for it. Don't leave anything on the table. Make sure you try it all, and if it's not for you, we'll now you know. But it will make you a more well rounded individual and I see it to this day. In my life I see and hear things differently because I was surrounded by music and involved in band. Whether it's the beats, or the sound, or just having an appreciation for certain things I come across in my life, I can attribute those things to my time in band and music. I wouldn't trade my time in band for anything and would do it over again in a heartbeat.

Neal, Trombone (Class of 2009)

I always recommend to stick it out! As much as I found a community in the band program in junior high, I did even more so in high school. I played my trumpet all the way up through college and met some of my best friends there as well!

Natalie, Trumpet (Class of 2010)

Talk to somebody who has been through the program before and truly weigh your options. I considered quitting because of all the excuses you hear "It's too hard, I'm not good enough at it, it takes too much of my time, it's boring" etc. My parents encouraged me to give it one more year and if I still felt that way at the end of the year they'd let me move on, but when that time came I was so happy to be a part of it that any thoughts of quitting were long gone. I know plenty of people who wish they had continued but I don't know anybody that wishes they'd let it go sooner.

Shannon, Trombone (Class of 2011)

Band can take you places. I ended up meeting even more lifelong friends by continuing band in college, and got to have once in a lifetime experiences like performing at Disney World and Carnegie Hall. I got free trips to New York and Florida, and a subsidized trip to Australia and New Zealand. Band people are good people, and spending time learning a specific skill like music will help you become a more well-rounded, perseverant human being. I wouldn't trade me experiences in band for anything.

Lisa, Clarinet (Class of 2011)

Band opens up a lot of opportunities, and imparts valuable knowledge on its participants. I am no longer active with my instrument but I still use skills I learned through music and band today in my career that is nowhere related to music. I would not be where I am today without the guidance and discipline that I got from my music education.

Max, Trombone (Class of 2012)

I met my boyfriend here, truly to this day after years of college and high school some of my fondest memories are from band and people from band.

Charlee, Clarinet (Class of 2012)

Music is one of the few subjects where the human spirit is alive. Unlike your math or science class, your band becomes a community and a working breathing music making machine. Although it's hard practice and there will always be hurdles in the way, band(as well as orchestra and choir) are the best ways to keep the music inside of you alive and make friendship bonds that will last a lifetime!  
James R.B., Baritone/Euphonium (Class of 2013)

Just do it. If you don't like it, you can drop it, but give it a try! But if you stick with it, it can take you places (literally!) I've been able to travel with band in high school and college.

I truly can say my life is better because band and it has kept me sane. It is a constant that will always be there. I think there's a lot of pressure to do x, y, or z, especially in middle school and band isn't "cool" but the better you get at your instrument, the cooler the songs you get to play!

I currently play with local bands and the Chicago Bar Association Orchestra. No matter how bad my day, rehearsal is sanctuary.

Kate, Bassoon & Flute (Class of 2013)

Do it! If you try it out and don't love it, then you know you tried. Band was a safe space where I could not worry about school or sports and just had time to make music and let go. Band is a way to meet new people and challenge yourself in a different area than academics or athletics. Mr. Zilke is truly the best and you be so happy you decided to do band.  
Anja, Trumpet (Class of 2014)

Band is a great way to express yourself. If you truly love playing the instrument you play or even if you don't feel like you're a confident player, WRS band and Mr. Zilke will make it a positive and welcoming experience. Also, you can still be apart of Band, while participating in sports outside of school and it will help you build time management skills for high school. I had such a positive experience and will remember my time at WRS band for years to come.

Natalie, Flute (Class of 2017)

My piece advice for a student who is unsure if they want to continue in band or to anyone is that it is probably the only part of your day where you can do something fun but still be counted as educational. Band is super fun because band people in general are energetic and outgoing people who like to make the best out of a bad situation. They are the people who will support you no matter what and there's also this incredible bond formed within band members because you all like music. I don't regret using one of my electives for band because while there I learned to push myself to try for higher section parts/seat but also that was when I actually started paying attention to the key signature. I have zero regret of being involved in the music program.  
Giselle, Clarinet (Class of 2019)

Try it out for the first year! You will never know until you give it a chance with a positive mindset. It's not for everyone but middle school and high school band is such a different experience from elementary school. It's so fulfilling and by the end of the year, you will be so proud of yourself and your peers and you will be part of such an amazing community.  
Nivi, French Horn (Class of 2019)

If you had fun playing your instrument you should continue to do band. I was on the fence as well but now I'm in marching band, jazz band, and concert band, and I love them all.  
Riley, Percussion (Class of 2021)

It only becomes more special and fun, with marching band being involved with the full show to playing in the pep rally's and state achievements. Getting closer to college you also play harder music to get you there. There can be hardships but can feel the best in the end. And because of that I keep getting better and see how far I want to go.  
Aaron, Baritone/euphonium (Class of 2021)

You'll regret not joining.  
Brighton, Percussion (Class of 2021)

I would say do it you won't regret it. Mr.Zilke is a really good teacher and I grew so much as a musician during jr high and you will too.  
Rosie, Percussion (Class of 2022)

Give Band a chance! If not for the new people you'll meet and the music itself, do it for Band's unique class structure. It serves as a break in your day from the monotony of school. In addition, there are rarely any in-class or homework assignments; it'll save your mental health!  
Junya, Alto Saxophone (Class of 2022)

It's not a really long time commitment in high school, and it also makes colleges want to accept you more because colleges favor band students due to them usually being more active in school.  
Vishakh, Alto Saxophone (Class of 2022)

I would tell them to try it and give it a chance because it turns out fun in the end.  
Angel, Trumpet (Class of 2022)

I was in the same boat, when Covid hit it was very difficult to play virtually and I considered quitting. Luckily I stuck through with it and I am so glad that I did! Mr Zilke creates an amazing environment to play in and if you really enjoy your instrument I can guarantee that the WRS band program is for you!  
Gibson, Trumpet (Class of 2022)

I know Mr. Zilke or your current band director have told you or will tell you that if you're on the fence about band, do it. Do it. If you don't like it, you can always work out a change in your classes, but band is so worth it. It's literally the best part of my day and sometimes it's the only thing that I look forward to. Please give it a try. It's worth it.  
Kayla, Clarinet/Alto Saxophone (Class of 2023)

Honestly the best advice I can give is to just keep an open mind about your abilities and music. If you have self-perceived limits for yourself, then you won't be able to grow to the full extent that you can. If you want to have fun, then you'll have fun. If you want to get better at your instrument, you'll get better. So just have fun with it and enjoy it so you can become the best person you can be.  
Stephanie, Trumpet (Class of 2023)

I would say to give it a chance. I've found that it's an amazing opportunity and it's so worth it, especially for the experience of playing together as a community. I hope that you try out the band program and that you find it fun and exciting.  
Sandhya, Flute (Class of 2023)

I would say to just keep working on it. When I was in sixth grade learning my instrument I wanted to quit so bad. The notes were just too hard and I didn't want to keep going. But something made me keep going and here I am now. Once I learned all the notes band was actually fun. So just keep going and you might get better.  
Selma, flute (Class of 2024)

When we picked our electives last year, I originally chose to take French instead of band. I switched to band during the summer and I am so glad I did. I have made so many new friends in band that I don't have any other classes with. Band is a great way to come together as students because both lunch periods are together.  
Frankie, Clarinet (Class of 2024)

You may not want to join, to be honest I was not entirely sure I want to join but I was glad I did this band has taught me so much not just musically but emotionally  
Daniel, Baritone Saxophone (Class of 2024)