

DOWNING MUSIC

DOWNING MIDDLE SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAMS INFORMATION GUIDE

Be a part of the fun!

Your son or daughter is invited to be a part of the Downing Music Programs! Students are able to choose from band, choir or orchestra, and with two electives, they can even pick two! Not only will students learn to perform or learn how to sing, they learn the essentials of teamwork, self-motivation, self-discipline, individual responsibility, and social skills that prove to be effective in any career, sport, or other activity.

OUR GOALS

The Music Directors at Downing are committed to four main goals with regard to every student in the music programs. They hope that each student will allow music to help them:

1. Become a better person
2. Improve academically
3. Become a great musician
4. Develop a greater appreciation for life-long enjoyment of music.



Why Choose Music?

Music classes at Downing are a great way to meet new friends. Band, Choir and Orchestra have lots of fun group activities that allow students to mingle with 6th, 7th and 8th graders. Many current Downing music students have met their closest friends in the music programs. Students will learn to

play many different styles of music, including classical, holiday, popular, traditional and folk.

Students will have many opportunities to perform individually and as a member of a large ensemble throughout the school year.



Band



Choir



Orchestra

How Much Money Will This Cost?

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Fortunately **NOT MUCH!** Sure it will cost **SOME** money, but we are able to work out arrangements with a local music store and they are able to offer discounts on the purchase of an instrument, or can set you up on a monthly payment plan over the course of time.

In fact, they even offer an instrument rental program. This program is perfect for beginning students who may be “experimenting” with their commitment to something new.

The rental program protects you from investing money in an instrument while not being 100% certain that your child will continue in his or her band or orchestra instruction.

A select number of school-owned instruments are also available for student use. This may be an option if finances are a major concern to your family. Please don't let this stop your child from enjoying a great experience in music classes!

Each music class also requires an “activity fee” which covers many of the costs that may come up during the year, including t-shirts and bus fees.

Scholarships for the activity fee are available if necessary.

How Much Time Is Required?

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As a beginning music student, very little time is required outside of school. Students have several concerts and may have a few rehearsals outside of school. Beyond that, other opportunities for students to participate include solo and small group contests, as well as private lessons. Neither are mandatory, but ARE highly encouraged.

Students will also be required to engage in regular home practice routines, like having homework from a regular academic class. Our home practice requirements are minimal, leaving plenty of time for participation in other activities and school work.



ABOUT GRADES

Research shows that participation in music programs will affect your child's grades for the better.

Dr. Mike Moses, former Texas Commissioner of Education, states that “current research indicates that the fine arts, especially music, influences the brain and actually stimulates spatial intelligence. Students who participate in an arts program experience important learning transfers in academic areas.”

STUDENTS SPEAK: WHY DOWNING MUSIC?



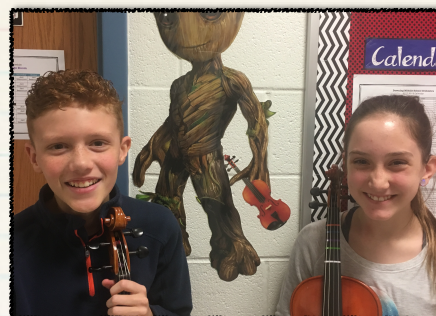
“Band is so much FUN! We love learning to play our instruments and we've made so many new FRIENDS! Mrs. Clardy and Mr. Castro are so cool! They make this class easy and FUN! We look forward to it every day!”

— Jacqueline Stevenson and Derrick Seele



“The amount of fun in practicing and singing in a concert is very cool. Also, Mrs. Rybowicz is the best ever! Everyone is so friendly, the music is amazing, and you learn so much about your musical talents. We are all a musical family. We laugh together and we love each other!”

— Riley Martens and Colton Sanchez



“Orchestra is our favorite class! Our instruments are so much fun and Ms. Hardwick and Ms. Smith make it really easy to learn how to play! The music is really great we've made a ton of new friends in orchestra! Orch Dorks are AWESOME!”

— Olivia Simmons and Sam Bulmer

About the Directors



MRS. CLARDY

Mary Clardy is the Director of Bands at Downing Middle School. Mrs. Clardy is in her thirtieth year of teaching and her fifth year at Downing Middle School. Mrs. Clardy holds a Bachelors Degree in Music from Louisiana Tech University and a Masters Degree in Music Education from Lamar University. She played clarinet in the top performing ensembles at both universities, as well as bass clarinet and Eb clarinet in the band at Lamar University. She began her career in music in Woodville ISD, serving as Head Band Director of Woodville Middle School. She then moved to Houston to teach at Stovall Middle School in Aldine ISD and later became an assistant, and then the Head Band Director, at Aldine High School. In 2007, Mrs. Clardy and her husband Dick Clardy, along with their infant daughter Mackenzie, moved to Lubbock, Texas. In Lubbock, Mrs. Clardy taught at Irons Middle School as the assistant director. Mrs. Clardy's ensembles have earned Sweepstakes at Texas UIL Concert and Sightreading Contests, "Best in Class" at the Lone Star Music Festival in Dallas, "Best in Class" at the Greater Southwest Music Festival in Amarillo, "Overall Outstanding" at the Lone Star Showcase of Music at UNT and, in 2015, the Downing Symphonic Band was named as a "Commended Winner" in the Foundation for Music Education's National Wind Band Honors Contest.

When she is not teaching, Mrs. Clardy enjoys spending time with her family. They enjoy traveling, snow skiing and attending music events. Mrs. Clardy also enjoys running in her spare time. She is an eight time marathoner and most recently completed her first 1/2 marathon at Disney World in 2012.



MR. CASTRO

Alex Castro is originally from Commerce, TX, he graduated Cum Laude and received his Bachelor of Music Education degree from Texas A&M University-Commerce. While at Commerce he had the opportunity to perform in the wind ensemble, jazz band, trombone choir, and over a dozen chamber ensembles. He was a featured soloist with the TAMU-C Wind Ensemble at the 2013 Texas Music Educators Association Convention, hosted in San Antonio. He has also performed, through TAMU-C, in New Orleans and New York City's Carnegie Hall.

Mr. Castro graduated Magna Cum Laude from Texas Christian University in the spring of 2016, earning his Master's Degree in Trombone Performance. While at TCU he performed with the wind symphony, symphony orchestra, jazz ensemble, and trombone choir- which performed at the 2014 International Trombone Festival hosted at the Eastman School of Music.

An active freelancer and educator in the DFW area, he performs frequently with the Dallas Opera, Longview Symphony, and the Dallas Winds-whom he joined at the 2015 World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles Convention in San Jose, CA. Additionally, he is a member of BLAST OF BRASS, a chamber brass group which hosts a yearly camp at Texas A&M University-Commerce, hailing guests artists such as Brian Bowman, Pat Sheridan, Jeff Nelsen, and many of the top international brass musicians.



MS. HARDWICK

Bethany Hardwick is the Director of Orchestras at Downing Middle School. She is in her eighth year of teaching. Ms. Hardwick's orchestras have consistently received numerous awards, including Sweepstakes awards at UIL and Superior ratings, Best in Class and Best in Festival awards at the Director's Choice Festival. While at Downing, Ms. Hardwick and her students created the annual Downing Rockestra, in which they perform classic and current rock songs and plays along with a live rock band! Members of the Downing Orchestra have won numerous awards at Solo and Ensemble and are regularly placed in the All-District and All-Region Orchestras. The Downing Orchestra also performs in numerous community events as well as alongside other fine arts students in the DMS musicals every year. In 2015, Ms. Hardwick was named a quarterfinalist for the Grammy Music Educator Award. She was also named the Downing Middle School 2016 Teacher of the Year!

Ms. Hardwick is a graduate of the University of North Texas, where she earned a degree in Music Education. While at UNT, she performed regularly with the UNT Symphony Orchestra, UNT Mariachi Aguilas, and UNT Jazz Strings. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in Music Education through Boston University.

Ms. Hardwick performs regularly with several local groups, ranging from rock to country to mariachi, on violin, electric violin, ukulele, and mandolin. When she's not hanging with the Orch Dorks, Ms. Hardwick loves to bake, play with her dogs, Zooney and Penny Lane, and curl up with a good book. She loves Harry Potter, Doctor Who, Audrey Hepburn, and Dr. Pepper!



MRS. RYBOWICZ

Kimberly Rybowicz is the Director of Choirs at Downing Middle School and is in her 6th year of teaching. Mrs. Rybowicz' choirs receive UIL Sweepstakes awards every year. Her choirs have also won Superior and Best in Class trophies at the Director's Choice and American Classics competitions. In 2014, the Varsity Men's Choir was recognized for the National Choral Honors Awards. Mrs. Rybowicz' singers are consistent stars in the Downing musicals and are awarded Superior Scores and Best in Room Awards at Solo and Ensemble competition every year. Since starting at Downing, she has had over 100 students in All-Region and All-District Choirs. While at Downing, Mrs. Rybowicz and her 8th grade girls have created an all-girls a cappella ensemble called the Downing Diamonds. The Diamonds perform in several concerts each year and have been invited to perform for numerous community social and sporting events.

Mrs. Rybowicz began singing in elementary school and hasn't stopped since. She earned her Bachelors degree from UT San Antonio and attended the University of North Texas receiving her Masters Degree in Opera Performance. While at UNT, Mrs. Rybowicz starred in several main stage operas, won the annual UNT Concerto Competition, and was awarded the Outstanding Masters Student designation at her graduation. She has performed and won awards throughout Texas, New York, and Europe. When Mrs. Rybowicz isn't rocking out in choir you can find her going to rock concerts, baking, watching the Great British Bake Off and hanging out with her choir director husband and cuddling with her golden retriever, Kansas. Mrs. Rybowicz loves directing music for the Downing musical every year! And she makes the world's best cupcakes!



MS. SMITH

Kelsey Smith loves being a part of the orchestra program at Downing Middle School! She is in her second year of teaching. In addition to teaching at Downing, she is also the Director of Orchestras at Lamar Middle School.

Ms. Smith recently completed her master's degree in cello performance at the University of North Texas, where she studied with Nikola Ruzzevic. Ms. Smith started playing cello in the elementary orchestra program in her hometown of Scottsdale, AZ. While at UNT, she performed with the symphony orchestra, and in April of 2016, was a member of the winning group of the strings division of the UNT Chamber Music Competition. Prior to coming to UNT, Ms. Smith earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Music from Luther College in Decorah, IA, where she studied with Eric Kutz.

Ms. Smith continues to play in various ensembles throughout the DFW area, as well as with her string quartet.

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NUMBERS TO NOTE

The number of points
higher that music students
score on standardized
tests like the SAT

89

The percentage of the
nation's major
universities that report
that participation in a
musical organization is a
higher consideration than
standardized test scores
for admission decisions

70

The percentage of college
music majors who applied
and were accepted to
medical school

66

The percentage of
Downing students who
are involved in the music
programs at Downing

70

Can My Child Participate in Other Activities AND Music?

YES! Not only is participation in other Downing organizations possible, it is highly encouraged! However, it is important to remember that commitment to the music programs and practice time is necessary.

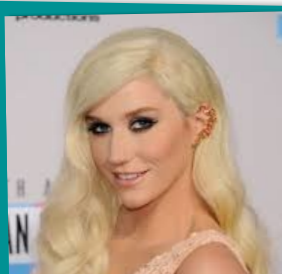
Many of the skills each student will learn in music classes (teamwork, group accountability, etc.) will be GREAT assets toward their participation in athletic programs, or any other organization.

In fact, many great athletes, actors, professional musicians, and politicians were active in music classes!

Celebrity Musicians



Tony Hawk
Violin



Ke\$ha
Trumpet



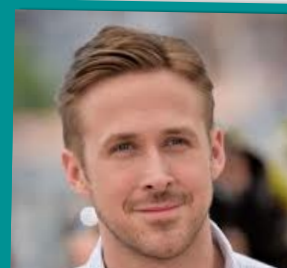
Troy Aikman
Choir



Jimmy Kimmel
Clarinet



Amy Adams
Choir



Ryan Gosling
Cello



Lenny Kravitz
Choir



John Mayer
Viola



Jennifer Garner
Saxophone

Make an Appointment to Choose Your Instrument



Here's How It All Works...

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1. Sign your child up for Band, Choir, or Orchestra and return it to your child's 5th grade classroom teacher ASAP. Students are welcome to choose fine arts for both of their electives.
2. Use the instrument and choral selection guide to help your child choose what they may be interested in. Keep in mind that there are no guarantees that a specific instrument will be a good choice for your child. The music directors will make sure your student finds an instrument or voice class they can be successful with.
3. If your child is interested in an instrumental music class, schedule an appointment for your child's instrument selection interview. You can sign up via email, or at the Parent Meeting on February 25th. During the interview, your child will be tested on their 3 favorite

instruments. This process will take about 15 minutes.

4. Make arrangements for renting your child's instrument and required supply kit. Music rental companies will be at Downing to make this process easier for you!
5. Choir classes are split by gender. Sixth graders are assigned to either the 6th Grade Boys Choir or 6th Grade Girls Choir. No audition is necessary.

PLEASE KEEP IN MIND...

Just like a sports team, not everyone can play the same position. Not everyone who wants to play a certain instrument will be able to do so. Instrument selection will be based on a number of things, including physical characteristics and instrument availability.

DO NOT immediately run out and get an instrument until you have met with the directors at one of the Instrument Selection dates. Do not purchase an instrument without first consulting one of the Downing music directors.

IF YOU CANNOT MAKE THE DATE

Please contact the directors and we will happily make an appointment with you to find the perfect instrument for your child! Do not hesitate to contact us with any questions about the programs.

Instrument Selection Dates

Band:

February 26th
4:30-7:00 pm

March 21st
4:30-7:00 pm

Downing Band Hall

Sign up for an appointment with the Band Directors before attending

Orchestra:

February 15th
5:00 - 8:00 pm

February 27th
5:00-8:00 pm

DMS Orchestra Room

Sign up for an appointment with the Orchestra Directors before attending

Choir:

Classes are gender based.

No appointment is needed.

CONTACT THE BAND

Mrs. Clardy
Mr. Castro

email: clardym@lisd.net
phone number: 972-350-1456
website: www.downingmsband.com

CONTACT THE CHOIR

Mrs. Rybowicz

email: rybowiczk@lisd.net
phone number: 972-350-1457
website: www.downingchoir.org

CONTACT THE ORCHESTRA

Ms. Hardwick
Ms. Smith

email: hardwickb@lisd.net
phone number: 972-350-1450
website: www.downingorchestra.com