

Reasons to join Band!

We talk a lot about the value and importance of extracurricular activities for kids. Want to know a really good one? Band! The point being, music is like spinach or broccoli or apples – really good for your child’s growth (mental, mostly, though there’s evidence music also helps with the physical stuff).

Consider these little nuggets from a Harris poll showing how more musically inclined kids tend to also go farther in education:

- 65% of those with a high school education participated in a music program

- That figure climbs to 86% for college graduates

- It reaches nearly 90% for post-graduates

- And if income matters to you, note that 83% of people earning \$150,000 or more per year participated in school music programs.

So why or how is music such an important predictor of achievement? Here are some reasons why your child should join band:

- The music itself. Turns out human brains are wired for music and numerous studies have demonstrated that kids who learn music – sing, play an instrument, etc. – also are more adept at language, mathematics, and demonstrate higher verbal IQ scores. Music also is a great stress alleviator, reducing levels of depression and anxiety, which is especially important for teens. (And it’s not just for kids. Music is known to slow the brain’s aging process, help with sleep, and give the immune system a boost.)

- ***The band.*** Like any team activity – perhaps even more so – band members must learn to play within and as part of the larger group. This commitment to teamwork, the discipline and dedication, the memorization and mastery of an instrument – all combine to develop life skills that will help your child as he or she moves into adulthood and forms lasting relationships (with a mate, kids, colleagues, etc.). Those skills also help us overcome professional and personal obstacles and hurdles, and to recognize the importance of working as part of a team.

- ***The friendships and networks.*** Kids who play together for years in an orchestra or band will enjoy lifelong friendships that, coupled with their potential for higher achievement, make them ideal networks for professional advancement (most people still get jobs through personal connections).

- ***Grit and determination.*** Every parent from time to time reminds his or her child that life is hard. Fortunately, participation in extracurricular activities like band – with their constant requirement for kids to fail and try again until they at last succeed – teaches kids grit and determination. And these two qualities better than most are predictors of how well kids will do in life.

The bottom line: Kids who participate in band will enjoy numerous benefits that, as with any extracurricular activity, outweigh the hassles and headaches associated with practice.