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**2024-2025
COMPETITIVE TEAM
SEASON INFORMATION**

WEST MICHIGAN ELITE



Our Program and its Benefits

While studying in our Competition Classes will provide a much higher level of dance training as well as the opportunity to perform at competitions and get feedback from other professionals in the industry on their craft, here's what makes WME different.

Our goals are to provide them with a place to call "second home" where they develop lifelong relationships with both peers and mentors, and to work closely with our Competition kids to help them become strong, appropriately independent, responsible people in society no matter where life takes them. Here are just a few of the things you'll see develop in your dancer.

Friendships

You'll never have a closer friend than those you make in dance class. There's something about going through the experiences of getting praises and criticisms together as well as changing in tight spaces, climbing on top of each other in choreography, lifting one another, and hanging out for long rehearsals that has been proven in studies to bond kids tighter than other activities.

Problem Solving Skills

Dancers know how to think on their feet. It could be a costume piece falling off, a prop falling down on stage, or just plain forgetting the steps. They have to know how to cope on the spot with so many different situations. These skills push forward into any career they choose in the future.

Teamwork

We spend a great amount of time stressing the importance of the team. We have good days and bad days as a team. It takes the whole team to do well or not so well. We spend time bonding as a team from our 6 year olds mixing with our 17 year olds. We are 1 Team that works together.



The Ability To Accept Criticism As Well As Praise

We always praise the kids for a job well done. But nothing gets better if they don't know to fix it. Our dancers learn to accept criticism as a good thing that leads to improvements and makes them stronger in the end. A great life skill to have in any given career choice.

The Value of Hard Work and Dedication

Everything takes practice. Nothing is just handed to anyone in life. Dancers learn this in Competition classes when it takes practice, rehearsals, and 100% all the time to get where they wanna go. They'll find they want to push themselves to get that next jump or trick which will translate to a great work ethic in everything they do.

Follow Us On Social Media

 @westmichiganelite
 @wme_dance

EMAIL:

wmepdance@gmail.com

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Responsibility & Discipline

Our Competition classes have rules and more structure than our recreational classes. This helps the kids grow faster in their craft. They learn to discipline themselves to these rules and think nothing of it in no time. Along with that, we will give them responsibilities at appropriate ages that alleviate them from parents. Dancers will be responsible to be dressed correctly, have their shoes, and even begin to prepare for a performance without mom or dad's help as they get older.

Counseling And Mentoring

Our job doesn't stop at, "point your toes!" Many times, we dance instructors find ourselves taking on the roll of "bartender for teens". They love to talk to us about things. And that is what we are there for in the end. It is not unusual to take 5 to address a school problem or a boyfriend issue, or just to have a group hug because someone had a bad day.

WHAT'S INSIDE

1 DANCER REQUIREMENTS

What is expected of each dancer such as how many classes, what technique is required, and what events they are required.

2 AUDITION INFORMATION

When, where and how to audition. What to expect at your audition.

3 COMMITMENT

Time commitments, Financial commitments, etc.

4 CODE OF CONDUCT

What is expected of each dancer in and out of class.

5 PARENT RESPONSIBILITY

What is expected of the parents.



Meet Our Teachers



CONTACT DETAILS

Email: wmepdance@gmail.com

Call/Text: 616-466-4408



CONTACT DETAILS

Email: abby.westmichiganelite@gmail.com

Text: 616-320-4274



CONTACT DETAILS

Email: abby.westmichiganelite@gmail.com

Text: 616-320-4274

DANCER REQUIREMENTS



AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

- Students must fill out an audition form prior to their audition and sign our 24-25 policies in their parent portal.
- All dancers are required to be in WME dress code for auditions (All black, tight-fitted dance clothing, hair in a secure bun, tights, and proper shoes) Being out of WME dress code will be noted on your audition negatively. The previous year's attendance and the work ethic demonstrated in front of the judges will also be taken into account.
- **Dancers account balance must be at \$0 to be accepted onto the team.**

SUMMER REQUIREMENTS

- Students must take the required "Summer Intensive" class.
- Students have until July 15 to notify the studio by email what spots they have selected. This is then their commitment to the team, promising that they will be in those dances through the end of the season. After your acceptance you will receive a payment plan form and the team contract. This is to be due back no later than July 25.
- Attend bootcamp July 29, 30, 31, Aug. 1, 5, 6, 7, 8 - 9am - Noon
- Attend choreography week July 29 - Aug. 9, Monday - Thursday (1pm - 4pm); Fridays 9am - 9pm.

SEASON REQUIREMENTS

- 1 Strength & Flexibility Class (*this class is free if taking 7 or more classes*)
- 1 Ballet Technique Class
- 1 Jazz Technique Class
- 1 Tap Technique Class - *Dancers may be exempt from tap if they meet ALL of the following: Are age 10 and older at the start of the season. Are not performing a Tap dance. And have taken tap for 2 years at WME or can show proof of previous years of tap.*
- Dancers will be selected for 1 required dance. Anything after the 1 dance they can choose from what dances they have been accepted into.
- Dancers who want a solo or duo must be in 2 group dances. Two solos require an additional group dance.
- Mini competitive members must be in a jazz and tap dance.
- First year members must be in a jazz and tap dance and are not eligible for a solo.

WHY TECHNIQUE CLASSES?

The technique classes serve as the cornerstone for a dancer's technical development across various styles. They provide a solid grounding in rhythm, counting, and body composition, allowing dancers to delve into different styles with confidence and proficiency.

Ballet technique offers numerous benefits that include: technique refinement, flexibility and strength, artistic expression, musicality and timing, performance presence, injury prevention, and more.

Tap technique also offers numerous benefits that include: Rhythm and musicality, footwork precision, creativity, physical fitness, auditory awareness, teamwork and collaboration, stage presence, and more.

AUDITION INFORMATION

WHEN ARE AUDITIONS

Wednesday, June 5; 5PM - 8PM

Please sign up in your portal and fill out the audition form

WHAT TO WEAR TO AUDITIONS

- All black, tight fitted clothing. Such as sports bra and spandex shorts. Please no loose fitted clothing.
- Hair should be up and out of the face, performance ready hair, meaning no fly-aways.
- Bring your jazz shoes, ballet shoes, tap shoes, turners, hip-hop sneakers, a water bottle, and anything that you might need during that time.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU ARRIVE

- Arrive early (15-20minutes) to make sure you check in, ask any questions, and allow yourself to warm up and stretch.
- When auditions begin, viewing and the room will be closed to anyone not auditioning.
- Once students check in, they should then put their things away. Put on jazz shoes. And begin warming up and stretching.

DURING THE AUDITION PROCESS

- Dancers will learn combinations to different styles so their teachers can see who dances well together.

AFTER AUDITIONS

- After you leave auditions, remind your dancer to not stress. If they fell out of a turn a million times that day due to nerves, it will be okay. Their teachers know how they dance and would not effect their placement.
- Your dancers placement will be determined on the Sunday after the Final Audition.
- It is against the policy of WME to allow dancers to select their team placement, their duo/trio partner, their style, song, costume, or their instructor. We place dancers according to their skill level and WHO THEY DANCE BEST WITH.
- Upon accepting a position with the WME Competitive Team, dancers are committed to these terms and policies, and abiding by all handbook rules. Dancers who fail to abide by any policies or handbook rules may be terminated from the team with no refunds. Dancers who choose to withdraw their position from the competitive team will be charged a \$100/dance re-blocking fee.

NEW THIS YEAR

WME ELITE TEAM

The Elite Team is an extension of our competitive team. This is only available for dancers who qualify at audition. An Elite Team Member exemplifies everything that it is to be a competitive team dancer.

- They have great work ethic
- Strive to always be improving their skill
- Happy to help
- Helpful to new team members and younger dancers
- Parents are helpful, know and follow the rules, and be an advocate for WME to our newer team members who are not so familiar with our rules, policies and systems.
- Dancing at level 3 or higher
- Shows great execution while dancing

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS OF AN ELITE MEMBER?

- Strength & Flexibility Class
- Jazz Technique Class
- Turns, Leaps and Jumps Class
- 2+ Ballet Technique Classes
- Tap Technique Class
- 1 group dance with the full competitive team
- 1 group dances with the elite team

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT OF ACCEPTING THE ELITE MEMBERSHIP?

- You will see even more improvement in your dancers technique and abilities with the added technique classes.
- They will get to do 1 exclusive dance as an Elite Team.

Audition
Application



Time Commitment

COMPETITIONS

All Dancers are required to participate in all competitions. Competitions take place in the late winter and spring. Every other year, we participate in a national competition that is mandatory as well. Competitions are mandatory – no exceptions - all dances attend all competitions! This year is a nationals year!

All Competitions dates will be set in early fall once dates come out. Competition info will not be shared, only competition dates and locations.

NATIONALS WILL BE SELECTED IN EARLY FALL - We are looking at a new location and potentially new competition this year for nationals. Be prepared to attend Nationals sometime in June or early July either mid-west, Tennessee, or East Coast.

Be On-Time

Students must arrive 15-20 minutes early to class to be able to do a full warm-up and stretch so the class time is taken for class instruction and technique. Students **MUST** arrive on time to their “CALL TIME” for competitions.

- Don't be late
- Of course, we understand during bad weather or the rare traffic backups that occur

WEEK OF COMPETITION DANCERS CANNOT MISS ANY CLASSES FOR ANY REASON. NO EXCEPTIONS. ALL COMP FEES WOULD BE FORFEITED. In the case of an illness the dancer should still show to class if they are not contagious and at least watch class. If they are contagious they are to stay home and watch class virtually.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

- Students must take the Summer Intensive Class. If you cannot meet the 5 class minimum, you will be required to schedule a 1 hour private for every day missed. Please make arrangements with Miss. Jes, this is an additional cost.
- Students are required to attend Team Bootcamp and Choreography Weeks. This is now taking place together the first two weeks of August. July 29 - August 9.
- If you cannot attend Bootcamp, you will be required to schedule a 1 hour private for every day missed. Please make arrangements with Miss. Jes, this is an added cost.
- Students are required attend their Choreography Classes
- In addition to the dancer's competitive dances all Competitive Dancers are required to take a ballet technique class, tap technique class, a jazz technique class, and a strength & flexibility class. (*please see further details on the requirements page*)
- Dancers are required to arrive 15-20 minutes early to prepare for class. Change, warm-up, fully stretch, and ready to go to get the most out of their class time.

Time Commitment *continued*

CLASS REQUIREMENTS CONTINUED

- 6 excused/unexcused absences per class are allowed throughout the year – including technique classes. We understand dancers do have other things going on, and we are happy to help work around them, however we do need them in each class to make our competition season a success.
- Dancers may be excluded from sections of the dance if they miss choreography. It is up to them to catch up, practice at home, get with a team member, or schedule a private lesson. If they can prove to their teacher that they are up to speed with the rest of the team, the teacher will choreograph them back in to the dance.
- Surpassing 6 absences will mean removal from the class/dance.
- PLEASE PUT IN AN ABSENCE REQUEST IN YOUR PORTAL, ALWAYS INFORM US OF ANY ABSENCES BY TEXTING THE COMPETITIVE DIRECTOR NUMBER.
- Dancers may be choreographed out of certain sections of a dance due to absence. This is not a punishment for missing but rather out of necessity to continue forward progress.
- Competition attendance is ABSOLUTELY MANDATORY.
- ABSOLUTELY, POSITIVELY NO: school trips, school plays, vacations, birthday parties, etc. on competition week/weekend that you intend to miss for.
- It is mandatory for students to be in all classes the week before competition. If a student misses the last class before a competition, they will NOT be allowed to compete and the entry fees will be forfeited.

CONVENTIONS

- Required to do 1 per year for all dancers
- Conventions are in October/November and will have a set fee (*approx. \$150 - \$400*)
- Opportunity to learn something new from different instructors from around the USA!
- We have learned that our dancers focus better without parents in the room, so during convention, we have a strict “hands-off” policy, meaning if you decide to come to watch, you are only there to watch.

EXTRAS

Any dancer who wishes to do more conventions or competitions must register through WME. Just let Miss. Jes know, and she will get you registered. Registering under another studio name is disloyal, against what it means to be a team/family, and forbidden. Dancers who want to attend any extra events must have a zero balance and pay at time of registration.

Audition
Application



Financial Commitment

SUMMER COSTS

Summer Intensives	\$299	Bootcamp	\$275
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****NEW THIS YEAR!****

To help streamline our rates and make it easier to charge accounts, we will be moving into all-inclusive pricing. Each class includes their choreography fees, competition fees, and tuition (10 months). These are all divided by 11 months this year (August - June). If you prefer a different payment plan we will set that up for you with your contract, the same way we did it last year.

Technique classes (*level 3 will not be in recital*) \$49/class/month

- Ballet Technique
- Tap Technique
- Jazz Technique
- Strength & Flexibility
- Pre-Pointe (*must qualify*)
- *NEW* Progressions (prerequisites) (performance quality, improv, combos, and more!)
- Pointe (must qualify)
- *NEW* 2nd Ballet Technique
- *NEW* 2nd Strength & Flexibility Class
- *NEW* Dance Tumbling (prerequisites)
- *NEW* Turns, Leaps, Jumps (prerequisites)

***NEW* UNLIMITED TECHNIQUE CLASSES** \$294/month (*11 classes for the price of 6*)

COMPETITIVE FEES

*Please note, with nationals being this year, our season runs 10 months
Fees are based on each dance they are in.*

Class Tuition		\$49/mo
Due August 1	Choreography Fees	Group: \$115; Duo/Trio: \$165; Solo: \$270
Due September 1	Convention Fee	\$315
Due October 1	Costume Fees	\$120
Due November 1	Regionals Fees	Group: \$90; Duo/Trio: \$100; Solo: \$190
Due November 1	Nationals Fees	Group: \$110; Duo/Trio: \$140; Solo: \$250
Due March 1	Recital Fee	\$70

*Payment Plans will be available upon signing your 2024 season contract
Please note that other fees such as Media Fees and Photography Fees are not included*

WME TEAM CODE OF CONDUCT

OBSERVING DRESS CODE

Our Performance and Competitive Teams do follow a dress code. We need dancers to be in dress code for different reasons. First, it unifies the group so when dancers are dancing in a group, the teacher can see everyone as a whole. Secondly, for technical purposes it allows teachers to make proper corrections for posture, body placement, and proper alignment while executing technique.



IF YOU WOULDN'T GO TO SWIM CLASS WITHOUT YOUR SWIMSUIT, DON'T COME TO DANCE CLASS WITHOUT YOUR DANCE CLOTHES AND SHOES!

Our team dress code is as follows:

- Proper shoes for class (*tap shoes during tap, ballet shoes during ballet, jazz shoes during jazz, ect.*)
- All black tight fitted clothing (*black sports bra, black spandex shorts, black leotard, black leggings, ect.*)
- Hair must be secured back in a bun. Keeping the hair out of the face is necessary as dancers often will fix their hair during class, or in a ponytail it will come around to whip them in the face.
- For Ballet Classes, dancers must be in a black leotard, pink tights, and pink ballet shoes.
- Students are expected to set an example for our recreational dancers.
- We do allow special WME comp wear as an alternative for all classes except ballet.
- Dancers should always have proper shoes for the right class.
- NO T-SHIRTS ALLOWED. NO SOCKS ALLOWED.
- Competitive dancers are expected to be an example for all other students to follow by setting the standard for them to follow.

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CODE OF CONDUCT CONT.

CLASSROOM & EVENT BEHAVIOR

- Attend class ready to work.
- Socialize before and after class only. **NO SOCIALIZING DURING CLASS.** Students may be asked to leave class if it gets out of hand, as this is disrespectful behavior.
- Always be respectful to their instructors. Instructors will alert the parents if any issues persist that aren't manageable in class.
- Dancers should always be kind to one another as well as other dance teams at competitions. You never talk bad about ANY OTHER dancer!
- Dancers should follow their competition etiquette rules handed out at all times.
- Dancers are responsible for getting dressed at competitions on their own. When quick changes arise, we may only need 2-3 moms to help. The more moms, the more stress we create for our dancers. Our younger dancers will need their mom's backstage to help.
- WME has a zero-tolerance policy for any bullying or mean-girl activity on the team. Meaning talking bad about another dancer, rude looks, rude comments, etc. inside the studio and outside the studio. They will get two warnings, and if the behavior persists, they will be removed from the team.
- Comp dancers should be positive representatives of our studio at all times whether in our building, in public venues, and on social media. Our staff will correct any dancer that fails to do so at all times. Parents are expected to support this.
- Working together as a team
- Gossip is forbidden
- Displaying good sportsmanship at all times to everyone
- Keeping positive attitudes regardless of awards
- Showing team spirit by wearing a WME team jacket at awards.
- ALWAYS respecting WME staff and other adults in charge.
- Staying with your team at events
- Any problem persists, the student will be reminded twice, then removed from our competitive

MAINTAINING COMPETITIVE DANCER STATUS AND THE "EVERYONE GETS A TROPHY SYNDROME"

Society today has done a disservice to the younger generations by taking away differentiation and declaring that everyone is always a winner; that everyone is equally special. In life, we know that this is not true. Someone is always more qualified for the job. Not everyone can be an NBA All-Star or a Pop Superstar. The same is true in any art, including dance. We do not operate under, nor do we promote the "everyone gets a trophy" standard. This does not mean that a group cannot have dancers with different strengths in it. We frequently have groups with some who are better at jumping, others who are more flexible, and some who are better turners amongst the class. And they all blend together beautifully. But it also means that every group member must work hard to maintain their spot in the group. And if they don't, they could lose it.

CODE OF CONDUCT CONT.


If at any time during the year, an instructor feels that a student is not keeping up with the rest of the class (whether it be falling behind in technique, failing to practice choreography, attendance, or behavioral issues), they have the authority to remove said student from that class. All students and parents will be notified ahead of time if the dancer is not working up to par and given a fair amount of time to change their habits assuming this is the student's desire. Sometimes students just change their mind – especially at a young age. And we want them to enjoy what they're doing. If that means doing dance at the recreational level again, we want to move them there so they still love dance.

Competitive dancers are positive representatives of WME and our team. Dancers are expected to be on good behavior in and outside of the studio. This includes: positive social media activity, maintain friendly relationships, maintain good grades, be respectful to school teachers, parents, dance teachers, and any adult figure, absolutely no alcohol, smoking, or drug use of any kind. Failure to adhere to any of these rules will result in termination from the team.

PARENTS RESPONSIBILITIES

Competitive dance requires a positive atmosphere from all involved. Cooperation between parents is expected at all times. Please show respect for our teaching staff, the other parents, and all of our dancers, as well as, our competitors. A positive and enthusiastic outlook extends to your child. Negative comments and feedback can be harmful to the progress and education of our students, and will not be tolerated.

- Parents, dancers, and families will be committed and loyal to this team. This means no sharing information with other studios or dancers, staying with your team at events, etc.
- Parents must support all competitive dancers and make sure their kids support each other. We do not condone unhealthy rivalry between our own dancers or jealousy and rivalry amongst our parents.
- All competitive parents must volunteer once during the season. Help with lunch planning, help with event planning, help in coordinating fundraising, help at recital.
- Competitive parents are also expected to set an example for other parents just as competitive dancers set the example for other dancers. This means stepping up and volunteering at other times we need help throughout the year if you're available, being our spokesperson if other parents are being negative about something, or simply following studio policy.
- For our younger dancers, parents should encourage and remind dancers to practice at home regularly and extra whenever necessary.
- Parents must learn to trust us as the dance professionals with ALL things dance just as you trust your doctor with all things medicinal. Please do not offer dance corrections to your child or anyone else's child. Let the instructors handle that and be the cheerleader we need you to be for our dancers.
- Parents agree to put in the extra time when needed by driving their students to and from extra practices, performances, and activities.
- Parents must keep their accounts up to date with auto pay information. It is studio policy that accounts all have a card on file. Payment plans will be set up at the beginning of the season how you choose on your contract.

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- Parents are NEVER to contact a competition directly unless Miss Jes has given specific instructions to do so. All necessary communication happens with the studio owner to competition.
 - Be kind and say positive things to ALL DANCERS FROM ALL STUDIOS at competition. It makes a huge difference to any kid. NEVER TALK BAD ABOUT ANOTHER DANCER OR DANCE! You never know who is listening!
 - Please clean up after yourselves and teach your children to do the same both in our studio and at events. It shows great disrespect to throw trash around and leave it there. We don't want to be "that studio".
 - *No "DANCE MOMS" allowed. Constant complaining or negativity towards the studio or it's instructors will get your child removed from the program.
 - If what you're about to say isn't nice, don't say anything at all. We don't build up our own kid by tearing someone else's down.
 - If there is a misunderstanding and feelings are hurt between your student and an instructor, go immediately to that instructor to talk it out. DO NOT discuss with other parents.
 - It is not acceptable to gossip about others in or out of the studio. Miss Jes has super ninja skills and is usually right there listening without being noticed. She'll find out. Don't do it.
 - It's never okay to post negative comments about our studio, our dancers, or other studio's dancers on Social Media.
 - Dances and any Choreography MAY NOT BE POSTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA. This opens the door for others to steal choreography. You can post videos of your dances only after the season is finished.
 - Moms are not allowed in the dance room. Please congregate into the office to watch on the TV. Being in the room is a distraction for our dancers and takes away from the learning.
 - Competition dances may not be performed outside of studio events. The previous years dances may be.
 - A dancer who dances at WME, will only dance at WME and no other dance school. A Ballet-only Company is allowed.
 - All questions go directly to Miss Jes: wmepdance@gmail.com
 - **ALWAYS READ YOUR EMAILS THOROUGHLY, CHECK YOUR HANDBOOK AND INFO PACKETS BEFORE EMAILING A QUESTION BACK.**

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WINS AND LOSSES TODAY WON'T DETERMINE HER CHARACTER WHEN SHE'S AN ADULT. BUT LEARNING HOW TO HANDLE THEM WILL.

FINAL NOTE

From Miss. Jes

This competitive team is something I am passionate about. I love not only teaching kids dances and choreography and seeing their faces when they achieve something they have been working on for weeks or months. But I love teaching them how to be hard working, respectful young people. I know it cannot be done alone and you need people in your corner to help. We are there for you every step of the way. I believe we are all a second family, and that's how it truly feels.

Dance is an extra-curricular activity. Being on the competitive team involves more dedication, not just with the commitment, but also with their heart and soul. Being a good dancer takes hard work, dedication, and passion. We give them the tools to practice, but it is up to them if they do the work.

Our three goals as a dance family is to work hard, try your best, and have fun. If they checked every single one of those in a performance, then they have succeeded in my book. Myself and the other teachers are always proud of our dancers and try our best to let them know, just how proud we are.

I'm excited to begin a new season with you!

Miss. Jessica

**Audition
Application**

