

# R • E • D • O • A • K



154 Louise Ritter Blvd • Red Oak, Texas 75154  
469.437.8818 www.redoakband.com

## Band Instrument Private Lesson Program

Dear Red Oak Band parents,

The RO Band Staff would like to invite you explore the possibility of taking your student's ability on his/her instrument to a higher level. Hopefully this letter will answer any questions you may have about the idea of taking "private lessons."

### Why private lessons?

Many people assume that music lessons are only *remedial* – that you only take them if you're having a hard time with your instrument. Actually, in music, it's all about enhancing what the student is already capable of doing. It can help a struggling player become a more competent (and confident!) player. It can help turn an average player into a good one, or maybe even turn a region player into a state player! It also makes a HUGE difference in the quality of the full band. Think about how much better the larger band would be if every one of its students were working individually with a professional on their instrument!

Another common misperception is that once you've had lessons for a few months, or even for a couple of years that you are "good to go" Again, that is indeed a misperception. Most of the finest players in the state (i.e.—those who make the All-State Band!) have been studying privately for several years. Even students who go on to major in music in college don't stop taking lessons. In fact, they take MORE! Most music educators agree that individual study "one on one" with a specialist on your instrument is CRUCIAL to a student becoming a better player—especially those wanting to truly excel on their instrument (region band, state band, etc.)

A common question that arises is "aren't you teaching them what they need to know in band class?" The answer is both yes and no. We teach as thoroughly as possible, given the restraints of a large, multi-instrument class. Most of the concepts we teach are common to all instruments. But each instrument is also unique. The chance to sit down one-on-one with a specialist on your instrument for once a week can be invaluable.

### Who teaches the lessons?

We select only highly qualified teachers for each instrument. Most of our private instructors have degrees in music, play professionally around the DFW area, and have been playing and teaching their instrument at a high level for many years. Each prospective teacher must submit a resume, go through an interview with the head band director, have a background check done by the Red Oak ISD police department, and in some cases, perform a playing "audition" for the band directors.

### When are the lessons taught?

To make it easiest on the students, we try to schedule them during band class. Those are often limited, however, by the schedule of the teacher and the length of the classes. For example, the private instructor may be teaching at multiple school districts and several campuses, and an after or before school time slot might be all that we can set up. A concern is sometimes voiced about the kids being out during band class, but rest assured that a.) the instruction they'll be getting goes beyond what we do in class, and b.) we stay in touch with the private instructors to make sure the kids are not missing anything critical in class.

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The students receive 1 lesson per week, with an average of four lessons per month. The lesson lasts for 25-30 minutes. If the student has a lesson on a day when there is no school, there will generally either just be one lesson that month, or the teacher will reschedule that week's lessons to accommodate the change. The teacher will communicate in advance about schedule issues.

## **What is the cost of the lessons? How are they paid for?**

The private lessons only cost \$17.00 per lesson, payable as a monthly amount (generally \$68 based on 4 lessons a month). The student/parent will receive a payment notification from the private teacher before the first of the month, and the lessons are paid for (in advance) on the first lesson of the month.

The cost of the lessons is paid directly to the private teacher (i.e.—checks would be made payable to the private teacher, not to the band).

## **Are there any scholarships available?**

Thanks to our band boosters, individual and business donations, and active participation by students when we do fundraising projects, we do have a LIMITED NUMBER of half-scholarships available to deserving students.

These half-scholarships would be for \$8.50 per lesson. Students would still pay the other \$8.50 per lesson (generally \$34 per month based on 4 lessons) to the private teacher at the beginning of each month.

These scholarships are based both on NEED and MERIT. In addition, the parents/students will need to agree to be active participants in group fundraisers that the band does during the year. This is VERY important as those fundraisers are how we are able to fund the lesson scholarships.

## **Your commitment....**

When you sign up for lessons, we need you to commit to a few things:

- always pay the lesson teacher on time on the 1<sup>st</sup> lesson of the month. For most of them, this is their JOB and their livelihood.
- know and use the private teacher's phone number! Get to know them!  
Communicate about progress, call them in advance if there is a schedule issues, etc.
- take the lessons the FULL year – not just until region is over, or solo contest is over
- help your student BE PREPARED for lessons...ask questions, ask them to play for you, etc.

## **How to sign-up?**

Use the attached form, return it to the school, and we'll see about getting you paired up with a teacher. In some areas that we are still looking for teachers (i.e. clarinet!), be patient while we recruit – it may take some time to find someone, but we are actively looking at resumes! **Even if you are already taking lessons OR are not able to take at this time, we'd like EVERYONE to fill out the attached form so we make sure we are checking with everyone.**

Richard Thomas, *Director of Bands*  
Red Oak ISD

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## *Private Lesson Program Survey / Enrollment*

### **EVERYONE FILLS OUT –return to school**

Student name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Instrument \_\_\_\_\_

(select one)

\_\_\_\_\_ We are ready to enroll in the Red Oak Private Lesson program! Sign us up!

\_\_\_\_\_ We are already involved in the Private Lesson program.

Private teacher's name \_\_\_\_\_

Day/time/place of lessons each week \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ We aren't interested/able to enroll in Private Lessons at this time.

\*\* If cost is a prohibiting factor, and you WOULD be able to take lessons if granted a ½ scholarship, check here \_\_\_\_\_ AND fill out / return the Application for Scholarship / Financial Assistance.

#### **Statement of commitment**

- We understand that the cost of lessons is \$17.00 per lesson, payable to the private teacher on the 1<sup>st</sup> lesson of the month. We understand the importance of paying on time, since in many cases, this income is our teacher's sole livelihood.
- We understand that attendance is crucial. Excused absences (illness, emergency, etc) can be made up if prior notice is given to the teacher. Unexcused absences cannot be made up and no refund can be made.
- We commit to good communication with the private lesson teacher by phone/email regarding scheduling, student progress, concerns, etc.
- We commit to take the lessons throughout the full school year
- We commit to APPLY ourselves to the material being taught, and to BE PREPARED for lessons (in order for you not to waste your money!)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of student