Band Handbook 2020–2021
Rogers Middle School

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Directors
# Introduction

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Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to outline the policies, procedures, and expectations of our organization. Please take the time to read and familiarize yourself with its contents. While we have done our best to provide the most comprehensive overview of our program and our expectations, please know that it is impossible to address every single detail. If you have questions that are not addressed in the handbook, please email us and we would be happy to answer them.

*Please note that due to Covid-19, some aspects of our program will be different this year. Due to public health concerns, we will not be hosting live concerts until it becomes safe to do so. Rather, we will be exploring possibilities for virtual performances.*

Click here to see a list of answers to frequently asked questions concerning how band will work this year.

About Us

With over 150 students, the Rogers Middle School Band is the largest student organization on campus. The band program is highly successful, having earned “Best in Class” at the 2019 Shadow Creek Showcase of Sound and earning consistent superior ratings at contests and festivals. More than 150 band students have earned a “First Division” at our annual beginner solo contest, while more than 30 students have earned an “Outstanding Soloist Award.” The Rogers Middle School Band is the direct feeder program for the Berry Miller Junior High Band which is also highly successful, **having earned numerous local, state, and national honors.**

Philosophy

Our goal as music educators is to help our students develop a life-long love and appreciation of music. We accomplish this mainly through performance—teaching students to perform at their highest possible level. We know that not every student will pursue music as a career; however, it is our hope that by holding themselves to a high standard in music our students will develop other valuable life-skills such as self-discipline, time management, collaboration, accountability, perseverance, and much more.

Click on this link to read more about the benefits of arts education.

Parental Support

Parental support is a fundamental component of student success inside and outside the classroom. Furthermore, it is also a vital part of any successful school organization. We rely on parents not only to reinforce good habits in our students but also to help out with the band program directly. There will be several opportunities throughout the year for parents to volunteer, chaperone, help out at concerts, etc. If you are interested in being a chaperone on a trip, please make sure to register as a volunteer with Pearland ISD.

Click on this link to access the district’s volunteer page.

Communication

*Email is the best way to contact us!*

Since we work at more than one campus, we will not always be available by phone. Furthermore, when we are at school, we are **almost always actively teaching.** If needed, you may email us arrange a time to speak by phone. Our emails are listed below.
Charms

We do our best to get importation information out as quickly as possible. We primarily do this through mass emails—sent out through Charms. Skyward does not give us enough flexibility when sending out class emails. For example, we may need to communicate information that is only relevant to one particular instrument or section such as Symphonic Band oboes.

Because we use Charms as our primary means of disseminating information, it is absolutely imperative that we have the most accurate contact information for you on file. Please make sure to log into Charms and update your contact information—most importantly your email—so that you receive the most accurate and up to date information.

[Click here for instructions on how to log into Charms.]

Student Email

Pearland ISD provides a district email account to all students through Office 365. We highly recommend that students utilize this if they need to contact a director—especially if they need to ask music-related questions that might get lost in translation if communicated by a parent. Furthermore, we believe that teachers and parents have a responsibility to help students develop their professional communication skills so that they can become effective communicators as adults. Email is often the default method for student/instructor communication at the university level.

When emailing a director, we ask that students to carbon copy (CC) their parents on the email so they are aware of the communication. Alternatively, parents may wish to add their child’s email to their own devices so they can monitor any communication with a teacher or peers. Directors will not respond to student emails unless they come from Pearland ISD email accounts. Directors will always CC a parent when emailing a student.

[Instructions for accessing district email can be found here.]

Braces for Wind Players

Any routine orthondontal work such as braces can pose some challenges in learning a brass or woodwind instrument. Students can get braces and still be successful on their instruments; however, we ask that you be mindful of the timing. For students who started learning an instrument without braces, it usually takes a few weeks to get adjusted to playing with braces. Likewise when braces are removed, time is required to adapt to “a new face.”
For this reason, we ask that you consider NOT getting braces nor removing them prior to important performances, contests, or auditions.

Please keep us informed of your plans concerning any orthodontal work. For band students, there is never a “good” time to get braces. Your band director can help you plan around important events to help your child be as successful as they can be.

Governing Bodies
The policies and procedures of the Rogers Middle School Band program are subject to the following governing bodies:

1. Pearland Independent School District (Pearland ISD)
2. Texas Education Agency (TEA)
3. University Interscholastic League (UIL)
4. Texas Music Educators Association

Curricular vs. Extracurricular
The fine arts are defined as part of the “required curriculum” in state law. The law distinguishes between “foundation curriculum” and “enrichment curriculum.” Foundation curriculum includes English language arts, math, science, and social studies. Enrichment curriculum includes physical education, the fine arts, and others. As part of the required curriculum, we must cover 100% of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for music. As such, band is a curricular course. However, band students do participate in extracurricular activities that are associated with the course. Here is a brief summary of which activities are considered curricular and which ones are extracurricular.

Curricular
All students are required to participate in the following activities even if they may be ineligible. Furthermore, a lack of participation in band will adversely affect their band grade and could jeopardize their eligibility for extracurricular opportunities associated with band and other activities.

1. Daily Band Classes
2. Any course work associated with band class
3. Before or After–School Rehearsals
4. Band Concerts
5. Solo Contest

Extracurricular
The following activities are considered extracurricular. As such, all students must be eligible as defined by the TEA & UIL Side-by-Side in order to participate in the following activities.

1. Band festivals such as Shadow Creek Showcase of Sound

Academic Eligibility (No Pass No Play)
The TEA & UIL Side-by-Side states:
A student who receives, at the end of any grading period (after the first six weeks of the school year), a grade below 70 in any class (other than an identified class eligible for exemption) or a student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) may not participate in extracurricular activities for three school weeks. An ineligible student may practice or rehearse, however. The student regains eligibility after the seven calendar day waiting period has ended following a grading period or the three school week evaluation period when the principal and teachers determine that he or she has earned a passing grade (70 or above) in all classes, other than those that are exempted. (p. 3)

Special Note: This only applies to band festivals. Concerts and Solo Contest are an extension of the band classroom and are considered curricular.

About the Course

Description of Band Classes

The band classes at Rogers are structured to maximize students’ musical growth. Students begin their first year of band in a homogeneous class setting—that is, all students in one band class play the same instrument. Homogenous beginner classes are necessary in order to give students a solid foundation on their instrument and enable them to become independent players. We offer the following instrument classes at Rogers.

- Flute
- Oboe
- Bassoon
- Clarinet
- Saxophone
- Trumpet
- Horn
- Trombone
- Euphonium
- Tuba
- Percussion

After their first year, students continue their band experience at Berry Miller Junior High in mixed-instrument classes based on ability level. This allows us to differentiate instruction and maximize each student’s musical growth.

At the end of their 6th grade year, students will audition for placement into one of the four performing bands at Berry Miller Junior High. Audition music will be made available to students on a certain date (usually the beginning of May). Students will have a designated amount of time to prepare for their audition.

Band Placement

Band placement is determined not only by audition results but also work ethic, reliability, attendance, citizenship, and other factors. Once posted, band placements are considered final. Students may not re-audition.
Students keep their band placement for the entire year. On occasion, it becomes apparent during the school year that another band class is more suitable for the student. In this situation, the band directors will communicate with the counselors to discuss a schedule change. Please keep in mind that factors outside the band program may also influence the possibility of a schedule change.

Required Supplies

Band Binder
Band members receive a large amount of sheet music throughout the year. Being organized is crucial to success in band class; therefore, all band students are required to have a band binder whose components are:

1. A black 1.5 inch three-ring binder with pockets
2. Pencil bag with three rings
3. 5 sharpened pencils
4. Highlighter
5. Blank notebook paper, at least 10 sheets
6. Blank staff paper (click here to download and print), at least 10 sheets
7. One set of 5-tab dividers

Students will be given more details on how to organize their binder in band class. Students are expected to keep their binder organized at all times. We will conduct binder checks every few weeks.

Tuner/Metronome
All students must have a tuner/metronome. We highly recommend the Tonal Energy App! The app costs $3.99 (most mechanical tuner/metronome combos can cost up to $40) and is available for iOS, Android, and Amazon Apps. Not only is the app a less expensive option, but it also has features and capabilities that no other tuner/metronome has—such as sound generation and waveform analysis.

Click here to learn more about the app and its features.

Personal Instrument
Students who play flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, or trombone must provide their own instrument. These can be rented from a local vendor such as Music & Arts. We highly recommend renting instead of purchasing as instruments are covered under a Liability Damage Waiver (LDW) during the rental term.

Clarinet and saxophone players are expected to buy their own reeds and have a set of three working reeds at their disposal at any given time.

Pearland ISD does not provide insurance for personal property. See your homeowner’s insurance policy for possible coverage. Students are assigned individual band lockers for use during the school day. It is the student’s responsibility to keep their instrument in their assigned locker. We recommended labeling the instrument case with your student’s name. (Luggage tags work great for this!) The band hall is always locked when directors are not present.

All personal instruments must go home every day! This is to ensure the safety of your personal property.
School-owned Instrument

Pearland ISD provides instruments for students who play oboe, bassoon, horn, euphonium, or tuba for an annual rental fee of $100 payable by semester. This fee covers the cost of routine maintenance and cleaning. Students are responsible for any maintenance costs incurred due to misuse.

Oboe and bassoon players are expected to buy their own reeds (you should purchase these from your private lessons teacher) and have a set of three working reeds at their disposal at any time.

Brass players must furnish their own mouthpiece.

Important note. Per district policy, students who play school-owned instruments are required to be enrolled in private lessons.

Percussion

Percussion students must provide their own sticks, mallets, and practice pad and rent a practice marimba. Since percussionists also utilize school equipment, a $50 rental fee is assessed in the spring semester.

Instrument Maintenance

Students are expected to perform minor routine maintenance to keep their instruments in working condition as appropriate for their instrument. For brass players, this includes oiling valves and applying slide grease. For woodwinds, this includes (as appropriate) swabbing and applying cork grease.

Personal Instruments

If an instrument appears to malfunction, contact a band director immediately. Do not attempt to fix the instrument on your own. If a director cannot solve the problem, then we will recommend a local instrument repair shop. (This is usually the same place that you are renting the instrument from. Your rental contract should cover the repair at no charge to you.) Our local vendors usually visit our school once a week. We can have them take the instrument with them and they will call you before making any repairs. If the repair is urgent—for example, your child has a performance or audition in the next few days—we recommend taking the instrument directly to the repair shop on your own.

School-owned Instruments

As stated above, if an instrument appears to malfunction, do not attempt to fix on your own. Notify a band director immediately and we will handle the repair process for school-owned instruments.

Local Music Stores/Repair Shops

Below are a few local music stores/repair shops that we recommend.

Music & Arts—Alvin
2101 SH-35 S
Unit 103
Alvin, TX  77511
(281) 585-6731
Required Fees

*Band Fee.* All band students must pay $20 course fee. This fee is set by Pearland ISD and covers expenses such as clinicians, music, supplies, and band shirts. This fee must be paid via Skyward.

*Instrument Rental Fee.* As mentioned above, students who play school-owned instruments must pay an annual fee of $100. This fee must be paid via Charms. More detailed instructions will be sent out via email to those students.

Uniform

All band students are required to have a formal uniform for concerts/performances and an informal uniform for band trips and other less formal events.

*Formal Concert Uniform*

The formal concert uniform is what one might wear to a wedding, funeral, or other important events where you would dress more formally.

**Boys**

- Dress pants
- Belt
- Dress shoes
- Dress socks
- Button-down collared shirt with full length sleeves
- *Plain* white undershirt

**Girls**

- A skirt of appropriate length or…
- Dress pants with a blouse
- Closed-toed shoes

*Informal Uniform*
The informal uniform is the Rogers Middle School Band shirt. Every year, we purchase new shirts for the students. The band cost of the band shirt is covered by your band course fee.

Course Requirements

Practice Records
Learning an instrument requires daily and consistent practice. For this reason, students will be submitting daily and weekly practice records via Canvas. Detailed rubrics will be made available and posted in Canvas. Students will be notified when they must begin logging and submitting practice minutes.

Recorded Assignments
Assessment is an important part of any academic class. It allows teachers to monitor students’ growth and adjust instruction as necessary. In addition to live playing tests, band students will have weekly recording assignments submitted through Canvas and Smartmusic.

Canvas
Canvas is the learning management system (LMS) provided by the district. We will use Canvas to submit weekly practice records, post instructional videos, and submit video recordings of playing tests. Every student in Pearland ISD should automatically have access to Canvas.

Smartmusic
Smartmusic is a music practice and assessment software that has been purchased by the Fine Arts department. Smartmusic is unique in that it automatically grades student submissions and provides practice tools that are designed specifically for music. Students will have to set up their own Smartmusic accounts and join the correct “class” using a class code. Directors will send out class codes via email.

Instructions for creating Smartmusic accounts can be found here.

Concerts
According to the Music TEKS, students are expected to “demonstrate appropriate concert and stage etiquette as an informed, actively involved listener and performer during live and recorded performances in a variety of settings.” Concerts represent the culmination of our students’ hard work—the goal that we’ve all been working toward in a grading period. In many ways, this is analogous to a major exam on a particular unit in a math course. As such, concert attendance is required for all band students and comprises a major portion of their grade.

Special Note: Until social distancing guidelines are relaxed, we will have an alternative form of performances. More information will be made available at a later date.

Before or After-School Rehearsals
In preparation for our two combined band concerts, it is necessary to rehearse as an ensemble. This also gives students a preview of what band will be like in junior high. Rehearsals are considered an extension of the classroom and will be graded as such. Parents will be given sufficient notice for any required rehearsals.
**Special Note:** Until social distancing guidelines are relaxed, we will not have combined band rehearsals. More information will be made available at a later date.

**Solo Contest**

Part of the Music TEKS require that students perform alone and independently. To meet these requirements, we host an annual Solo Contest for all Rogers Band students. Students are required to pay an accompanist fee of $25 directly to their pianist. More information about this event can be found here.

**Special Note: Solo Contest will be hosted virtually this year.**

**Daily Grades**

Daily grades comprise 60% of the student’s final grade. These include, but are not limited to, the following.

1. Practice records
2. Rehearsal etiquette
3. Binder checks
4. Locker checks
5. Supply checks
6. Recorded assignments submitted via Canvas or SmartMusic
7. Written assignments
8. Other assignments as assigned by director

**Major Grades**

Major grades comprise 40% of the student’s final grade. These include, but are not limited to:

1. Playing tests
2. Written tests
3. Before of After–School rehearsals
4. Listenings
5. Concerts
6. Solo contest
7. Recorded tests submitted via Canvas or SmartMusic
8. Other tests or projects as assigned by director

Students should expect to have at least one major grade (playing test, etc.) each week once we begin instruction.

**Attendance Policy**

The success of any ensemble is directly dependent on the contributions and efforts of its members. Band is a collaborative effort; therefore, any student’s absence negatively affects their peers. As such, the following guidelines are put in place regarding activities outside the classroom where attendance is required.
Excused Absences

In the event that a student must miss a scheduled rehearsal, parents should notify a band director immediately via email. Absences may be excused at the discretion of the band directors under the following circumstances.

1. Personal illness (student must have been absent from school that day)
2. Family emergency
3. Death in the family
4. Other reasons of a serious nature deemed appropriate by the band director

Documentation for the absence is required in order to be excused. (This can be a parent email.) Excused absences must be made up prior to the next scheduled rehearsal in order to receive full credit.

In the rare circumstance that a student must miss a scheduled performance, band directors should be notified immediately via email. Students will be given an alternative assignment.

Unexcused Absence

An absence will be considered unexcused unless a student obtains prior approval from a band director. Additionally, the following reasons are not valid excuses for missing a scheduled sectional, listening, or rehearsal.

1. Any appointments without documentation
2. Academic tutorials
3. Club meetings
4. Extracurricular activities

Unexcused absences may be made up for partial credit (70) and must be made up prior to the next scheduled rehearsal.

Private Lessons

We are very fortunate to have an outstanding private lesson program at Rogers Middle School. Many of our teachers hold advanced degrees in music performance and are experts on their instruments. Some of our teachers even perform with professional orchestras such as the Houston Symphony! Private lessons are highly encouraged for all students regardless of their band placement. As mentioned above, students who play school-owned instruments are required to take private lessons per district policy.

Click here for information about our private lesson staff and how to enroll.

Student Expectations

Above all, a Rogers Middle School band student should exhibit the highest standards of character, honesty, and integrity in everything that they do. Students are expected to follow all rules, policies, and procedures in the Pearland ISD Student Handbook, the Pearland ISD Student Code of Conduct, the Rogers Middle School Handbook, and those set forth here in the Band Handbook.
Rules
1. Be polite and respectful to all students, staff, and visitors.
2. Follow any instructions or directives the first time they are given.
3. Only touch/handle equipment you are authorized to use. (Treat all equipment with the utmost care.)
4. Only band students are allowed in the band hall. (This is to keep you and our equipment safe.)
5. Only percussion students are allowed in the percussion room.
6. Obtain permission before entering a director's office.
7. Do not use the external doors, nor open them for anyone.
8. No food, drink, or gum in the band hall.

Facilities and Equipment
We are very fortunate to have outstanding facilities and equipment. We want to keep everything in the best condition possible; therefore...

1. Band halls and instrument lockers are to be kept clean at all times.
2. Band lockers are for instruments only!
3. Keep instruments in cases with latches closed and locked in assigned lockers when not in use.
4. All instruments must go home everyday! (Except for students who have a school-owned instrument assigned for home use.)
5. For those who do not rent a school-owned instrument, it is recommended that you keep a record of the serial number, make, and model at home.
6. Do not leave any instrument unattended outside of its locker.

Classroom Procedures
The following procedures will help you understand how class runs on a daily basis. Except for very infrequent/special occasions, we will be playing/rehearsing every day.

Entering the Room/Before Rehearsal
1. Enter the classroom in a silent and orderly fashion and then silently go to your locker.
2. Remove your instrument from its case and put the case back in your locker when you have finished assembling your instrument. (Exceptions include flute, oboes, and clarinets—who may take their cases with them to their seats and put them under their chairs.) This is extremely important because leaving cases on the floor is a safety hazard in emergency situations.
3. Place your case back in your locker and close and latch the locker door.
4. Quickly and silently find your seat using the aisles of the set up.

During Rehearsal

Perform the music to the best of your ability.
1. Sit with correct posture (on the edge of the chair, feet flat on the floor, neutral spine, sloped shoulders, head high).

2. Hold your instrument properly.

Demonstrate proper rehearsal etiquette.

1. Bring all required supplies to rehearsal daily including: band binder, instrument, maintenance supplies, mutes (brass, if required), or any other items deemed necessary by a director.

2. Follow all instructions given by any director without hesitation including—marking music, getting instrument ready, and playing when asked.

3. Be ready to play when the director is prepared to start the class. (This means that your instrument should be in playing position with your embouchure set.)

4. Students are not permitted to talk during rehearsal unless given permission by a director.

5. Raise your hand and wait for permission to speak if you have a question. (Only ask questions that related to the music that the ensemble is currently working. Other questions can wait until the end of class).

6. Minimize any extraneous noise. (Our medium is sound; therefore, any extra noise is a distraction from our hard work. Eliminate any unnecessary movement not needed for performing your instrument).

7. Transition efficiently. (Get out new music as quickly and silently as possible.)

After Rehearsal/Exiting the Room

1. Perform the necessary preventative maintenance for your particular instrument.

2. Woodwinds: Swab your instrument to remove condensation that has built up during rehearsal.

3. Reed players: Always remove your reed from your mouthpiece and put it back in your reed guard. It is unsanitary to leave it attached to the mouthpiece.

4. Place your instrument back in its case correctly and return it to your locker quietly.

5. Exit the room in an orderly fashion. Do not run.

Before/After School

1. Do not disturb the classroom while you drop off or pick your instrument from your locker.

2. Do not touch anything besides your instrument and your locker.

3. Drop off or pick up your instrument quickly.

4. Do not loiter in the band hall.

Events Outside School

For any event associated with school, students are held to the same expectations outlined in the Pearland ISD Student Handbook, the Pearland ISD Student Code of Conduct, the Rogers Middle School Handbook, and the Band Handbook. Students are subject to disciplinary action for any offense committed during an event associated with the school. Students are representing Rogers Middle School and Pearland ISD; therefore, we expect them to take this representation seriously and be the best representatives of our school and district. Students have additional expectations while traveling and during concert performances.
Travel
1. Demonstrate respect for bus driver and chaperones.
2. Follow any instructions given by bus driver or chaperones immediately.
3. Keep noise at reasonable level while traveling.
4. Leave your seat/area cleaner than you found it.
5. Thank the bus driver and chaperones when exiting the bus.

Performances
As a performer.
1. Follow all rules and procedures as you normally would during band class.
2. Show up to the warm up room early in designated uniform with instrument and music.
3. Transition from warm up room to stage silently.
4. Follow any directions given to you by a director.

As an audience member.
1. Be an attentive audience member.
2. Do not talk at all during a performance. (This includes whispering.)
3. Silence cell phone or any other devices.
4. Do not text during a performance.
5. Only clap when appropriate.
6. Do not shout or whistle.

Other Events
It is impossible to outline every conceivable situation. As such, students are expected to use their
judgement to make safe, respectful, and responsible decisions knowing that they are representing more
than themselves at any event outside of school.

Tardy Policy
Band students are to get to band class on time and move with purpose at the start of class. Students
coming to band after the rest of their class must have a note from their core teacher.

Students will have one minute after entering the classroom to be in their seat with all materials prepared
for class. Failure to do this will result in necessary disciplinary action concerning classroom procedures.

Consequences for Breaking Expectations
For minor offenses, the following system will be used.
1. Warning
2. Alternate In-Class Assignment
3. Lunch detention and parent contact via email or phone call
4. Office Referral
5. Permanent Removal from Band Program

Major offenses may result in an immediate office referral or permanent removal from the band program as appropriate.

Trip & Performance Privileges

Participation on any band sponsored trip or in a performance is a privilege reserved for students who exhibit good behavior, citizenship, and teamwork. It is at the director’s discretion to remove a student from any band sponsored trip or performance who the directors believe could negatively impact the ensemble or detract from the overall experience of the trip or performance. This includes, but is not limited to:

- excessive and/or continuous disruptions of band class
- excessive and/or continuous detentions (band and school-wide)
- excessive and/or continuous office referrals (band and school-wide)
- ISS during the time of the trip or performance (UIL policy)
- OSS during the time of the trip or performance (UIL policy)
- or if a campus administrator requests a student not attend the trip or performance.

In the event that a student is removed from a trip due to disciplinary reasons, the family will receive a full refund for the cost of the trip via Skyward or the Charms Web Store. If a student is removed from a graded performance for disciplinary reasons, the student will receive an alternate assignment to earn full credit for the performance.

Description of Events

Band students participate in a variety of events throughout the year. Descriptions of these events can be found below. A calendar of required events will be sent out via email.

*Special Note: Due to the current situation of Covid-19, the nature of some of these events are likely to change. The band directors will do their best to communicate any required activities in advance.*

Winter Concert

Every December we present our annual Winter Concert. This is the first major performance of the year for all Rogers Band students. *This performance is required for all band students* and comprises a major portion of the student’s grade.

Dawson Cluster Percussion Concert

Every spring the Dawson Cluster Percussion program hosts a percussion ensemble concert. This concert showcases the entire percussion program from beginner band students to high school seniors.
Rogers Solo Contest

Performing music independently is one of the most important skills that we can develop in our students. It is also one of the TEKS for music. For this reason, we host an annual Solo Contest for all middle school band students. Students independently perform a piece of music alone—usually accompanied by piano—for a judge who gives them a rating based on the quality of their performance/preparation. All band students are required to perform a solo. Students must also pay a $25 fee to their accompanist for rehearsals and performance.

Local Festivals

Every spring the Rogers Band participates in a local band festival such as the Shadow Creek Showcase of Sound. In addition to receiving a rating for their performance like at UIL, bands at the festival also compete against each other for “Best in Class” in their division. The Rogers Band and all of the Berry Miller bands have earned this distinction at least once—often multiple times—in both schools’ history. Information about performance dates and times will be made at a later date.

Spring Concert

Our annual Spring Concert is usually the last major performance of the year for the Rogers Band. This performance is required for all band students and comprises a major portion of their grade.

Extra Fun Activities

We expect our band students to develop not only their musical skills, but also their social skills. For this reason, we organize several fun short trips and activities every year. One of our most frequented locations is ITZ Pizza. In order to participate in these trips, students must be in good standing academically, behaviorally, and otherwise in all of their classes—not just band.

Rogers Band Spring Trip

As a reward for their hard work and commitment all year long, we usually take one big trip every Spring. More information about this trip will be made available later including the destination, date, and trip fee.