

THE EWG-CLEF

Jr High Band | Jr High Jazz Band | Sr High Concert Band | Sr High Jazz Band

Get TEXT reminders

Parents - Get text message reminders about upcoming concerts, fundraisers, deadlines, after school cancellations and classroom activities!

Send a Text message to the number **81010** with the following code in the body of the text:

Jr Concert Band: **@jrbandpar**

Jr. Jazz Band: **@jrhighja**

Sr. Concert Band: **@shbandpar**

Sr. Jazz Band: **@srhighj**

Parent Email List

Band Parents are automatically subscribed to the EWG Band Listserv. You should please add the email address EWGBands@EWGBands.com to your contacts so the emails don't get sent to your spam folder. This is the most efficient way for Mr. Charest to email parents on such a large scale.



The view, in rehearsal, from the Percussion section as Maestro Livingston conducts through the Finale of Shostakovitch 8

What I Did This Summer!!!

I am supremely happy and excited to return to the 2017-2018 school year. Many of you may remember that I just began work on my Master's in Conducting at the American Band College in Ashland, OR. It was an honor and a privilege to perform there with Doc Severinson (Bandleader from the "Tonight Show" with Johnny Carson), and to study and perform under the baton of Maestro Larry Livingston (USC), Maestro Robert Ponto (UO), and Maestro Tomas Leslie (UNLV). It was a particular honor to have also performed under Colonel Arnald Gabriel (ret) of the United States Air Force Band, who holds the French



Who is Mr. Charest?

Mr. Gregg Charest has been the Director of Bands in Exeter-West Greenwich for the past 16 years. In that time, the Band program has increased in both size and quality, and includes over 200 Junior and Senior High School students who participate in Concert Band, Jazz Band, and Piano and Electronic Music Classes.

Mr. Charest is a passionate educator and has been recognized as an EWG District Teacher of the Year (2011), as a Finalist for the RI State Teacher of the Year (2012), and was named to School Band and Orchestra Magazine's "50 Directors Who Make a Difference" feature (2012). Mr. Charest regularly leads professional development for future music educators in Music Technology. As a performer, he can be seen playing Steel Drums in the Island Time Steel Band, and Drum set in the Coastline Swing Band.

Mr. Charest lives in Jamestown with his wife Elizabeth, and 2 children, Jack (8) and Juliette (4).

Legion of Honor, and is a veteran of the Battle of Normandy, and the Battle of the Bulge. When I returned to RI, I was tasked with writing my first-year thesis, which was a textbook for beginning Bassoonists. I'm proud to say that of all 205 students, my book was selected as the model project!

I spent most of my Summer playing Steel Drums in and around Rhode Island. Lots of weddings, cocktail parties, and yacht club events!

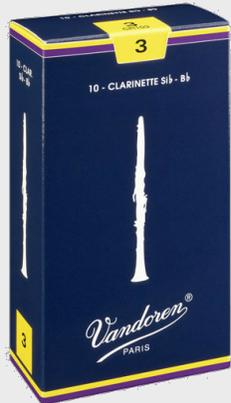
The Band program is in excellent shape leading into this school year! With the financial support of our Superintendent and School Committee, we were able to purchase badly needed instruments and equipment - nearly **\$90,000** worth! Goals for this year include the continuation of fundraising for the purchase of a proper **Baby Grand Piano** for the school. We do not currently own a performance-quality piano, and need to raise another ten to twenty thousand dollars to make this long term goal a reality.

Last year I was able to secure the donation of a **Steel Drum** instrument to start a program at EWG (a "Double Guitar Pan"). We need at least two more steel instruments to make a band possible, but I've been in contact with an instrument maker about starting our collection! Hopefully, we'll be placing an order soon, and potentially having a small group of students try them out before June.

Calendar, Handbook, More!

Our performance calendar for the year is posted! Please visit <http://www.EWGBands.com> for the list of performances for the entire year. In addition to the calendar link on the left, you will also see a link to **"Important Documents,"** which will lead you to the attendance and uniform policies for concerts/performances. Please see the **Band Handbook(s)** for specific guidance on required concert attendance, and concert uniforms.

A Note for Reed Instruments:



One of the big adjustments of being in the more advanced bands of the Junior and Senior High School means using better quality reeds, ligatures, and mouthpieces. Students should start (as soon as practical) using **Van Doren** Brand Reeds (size **2.5** to start). These reeds are a **major** upgrade to the quality of sound a student can make on their instrument, and help the entire band blend more cohesively. I also strongly endorse getting a reed case to store the “in-use” reeds. I advocate for the students to rotate reeds on a daily basis to make them last longer.

Another significant upgrade in playability is a more advanced ligature, which is the piece of the clarinet or saxophone that holds the reed onto the mouthpiece. The ligatures that come with the instruments, sadly, are not very good. A decent quality ligature like the **Rovner Dark** costs around \$25, and gives the reed significantly more stability than the student ligatures. These are available at your local music store, and from Online retailers.



Upgraded mouthpieces are the final frontier when it comes to upgrading a student instrument. Again, the mouthpiece that comes standard with your student-model instrument is typically not very nice. These plastic mouthpieces break easily - but a broken mouthpiece could mean an *opportunity* to “move up.” An upgraded mouthpiece is an easy way to improve your sound quality.

This is not something your should rush out to purchase today (and by the way, upgraded mouthpieces make excellent Holiday or Birthday gifts, so consider holding off on this purchase for a practical gift at the right time). My personal experience has been that a hard rubber mouthpiece sounds amazing, but requires specialized care. A couple tips: **1.** Mouthpieces come in all shapes or sizes, so having the instrument present for a fitting can be helpful (unless you know the exact model of instrument). **2.** Ask the Pro-Player/Teacher at the Music store for their recommendation. **3.** When you purchase a new mouthpiece, you need to expect to purchase a new ligature as well. Ligatures are not “universal fit” equipment, so consider that this may add to the cost. Expect to spend \$50-150, but mouthpieces can cost several hundred dollars for advanced models (not something any but the most advanced players require, so fear not!).

