

**Ralston Valley High School**  
**Instrumental Music Department**



**Student / Parent Handbook**

(Insert "Welcome Letter" from Ken on this page)

# Table of Contents

Introduction.....	5
RVHS Instrumental Music Department Profile.....	5
Faculty and Staff:.....	5
Prerequisites for Participation.....	6
In General.....	6
Paperwork and Forms .....	6
Fees .....	7
Member in Good Standing .....	7
Equipment.....	7
Individual Classes and Related Details.....	8
Marching Band .....	8
Overview of Marching Band Season .....	8
Physical Fitness.....	9
Uniforms .....	9
The “Books” .....	12
Attendance Policy.....	12
Marching Band Camp .....	13
Practices and Rehearsals .....	13
Summer Rehearsals.....	14
Regular Weekday Rehearsals .....	14
Saturday Rehearsals .....	14
Instrument Storage .....	14
Performances .....	15
Football Games .....	15
Competitions .....	16
Parades.....	17
Bus Rules .....	17

## Table of Contents (Continued)

Music Boosters.....	18
Parent Volunteer Opportunities with the Boosters .....	18
Financial Stuff – Show Me the Money!.....	19
“Fair Share Assessment” .....	20
Payment Options.....	20
Fundraising Opportunities and your Student Account.....	20
Orchestra .....	22
Chamber Orchestra .....	23
Symphonic Band.....	24
Jazz Ensemble .....	25
References .....	26

## ***Introduction***

Welcome to the Ralston Valley High School Instrumental Music Department! You are soon to be a part of one of the finest groups of students, faculty, and parents on campus. The purpose of this Handbook is to serve as a general reference of information about the various programs, activities, policies, and procedures of the Instrumental Music Department. The faculty, staff, and Music Boosters all hope that this information will serve to make your music experience at Ralston Valley the best it can be.

## ***RVHS Instrumental Music Department Profile***

### ***Faculty and Staff:***

**Director** – Ken Sawyer

Email: [ksawyer@jeffco.k12.co.us](mailto:ksawyer@jeffco.k12.co.us)

**Assistant Director** – Darcy Myers

Email: [dzmyers@jeffco.k12.co.us](mailto:dzmyers@jeffco.k12.co.us)

**Music and Marching Arranger** – Mike Alcorn

Email: [malcorn@jeffco.k12.co.us](mailto:malcorn@jeffco.k12.co.us)

**Pit Master / Percussion** – Keith Ewer

**Drill** – John Crouch

**Battery** – Karim Joseph

**Visual & Music Technicians** – Ben Kempzell, Andrew Ellis, Kari Petitt

**Color Guard** –

**Size of Program:**

150+ Faculty and Students, all instrumental programs included

**Class Offerings:**

Marching Band (includes Color Guard)

Concert Orchestra

Symphonic Band

Concert Band

Jazz Band

Winter Ensemble

Chamber Orchestra...

**Prerequisites for Participation****In General**

All musicians must be enrolled as full-time students of Ralston Valley High School in order to participate in any of the instrumental music programs. Students attending schools that do not have music programs may also be members in accordance with CHSAA rules.

**Paperwork and Forms**

All students who wish to participate in IMD classes must have the following paperwork completed and on file in the Directors office:

1. Form 1
2. Form 2
3. Form 3
4. Form 4

## **Fees**

There are many different factors that determine the financial costs of participating in IMD classes. In general, whatever the fees may be, we expect the students to be responsible for knowing what they are, when they are due, and communicating that information to parents and family as needed. Please refer to the Financials and Fundraisers section for complete details on fee schedules for each IMD class, and options for meeting those obligations.

## **Member in Good Standing**

All participants in Marching Band must be in Good Standing, relative to:

1. Academic Standing – Students who carry an “F” letter grade in more than one class are considered ineligible to participate in IMD classes and activities
2. Behavioral Standing – Students are required to maintain behavior that upholds the ideals of RVHS and the IMD (not sure of the wording of this one)
3. Financial Standing – Students must be current with any applicable financial obligations required by the IMD class they are part of. See the Financials and Fundraisers section on pg. 45 for details of those obligations.

## **Equipment**

Instruments and related equipment needed by participants will depend on which IMD classes the student is taking. Details of this will be provided by the Director to each student as needed. Such equipment may be owned by the student themselves or be the property of RVHS and rented for a fee. See the Director with any questions about equipment. All equipment and instruments must be kept in good condition, and in working order, per the following guidelines:

- Whether you own your instrument, or are renting one from RVHS, instruments must be maintained in top playing condition at all times. Periodically check for loose screws, corks, pads, springs, straps, etc. Check with the Director or other staff with questions or if you need help. Never play instruments that belong to or are being rented by someone else without their permission.
- Consumables, such as reeds, strings, lubricants, cleaning solutions, etc are the responsibility of the student and will provided by the student as needed. For details see the Director.

- Repair costs will depend on who owns the instrument, and also will depend on whether the required repair is from normal use and wear, misuse, or intentional damage by the student. Students are responsible for repair costs to RVHS owned instruments when caused by neglect, misuse, or carelessness.

## **Individual Classes and Related Details**

### ***Marching Band***

The Ralston Valley Marching Mustangs marching band is one of the most exciting programs within the Instrumental Music Department. Being a member of the Marching Band requires a great deal of hard work and commitment, not only by the students, but by faculty, staff, and parents. The Marching Band represents Ralston Valley High School to the community at events such as parades and sporting events, participates annually at the Colorado Band Masters Association competitions, and often travels across the country and even around the world, showcasing the students' dedication and skill. Marching Band students learn a sense of pride in the traditions and past success of the band, while learning new skills and moving forward to new levels of performance.

### **Overview of Marching Band Season**

The Director will provide a calendar outlining a complete detailed schedule for the Marching Band season, including date(s) and time(s). Generally speaking, an overview of Marching Band season would look like this:

- The First Marching Practice for the season is in May with Summer practices beginning in June
- Freshman orientation / parent introduction / BBQ in August
- Football season begins, perform at home games (interspersed with other items below)
- Arvada Harvest Festival Parade
- Marching Band Camp
- Various regional band competitions
- Colorado State Bandmasters Association competition(s) (known as "State")
- Parade of Lights (participation TBA each year)
- Marching Band trip (usually every other year, details TBA)

## **Physical Fitness**

Marching Band is a very physical activity. Marching Band is as physical as any athletic team sport, with the mental discipline of learning music and marching cadence/choreography thrown in for good measure. Students will work very hard throughout the course of the season. Ask any student that has done it in the past - they will testify to the sweat equity required to compete and be successful at the level Ralston Valley is used to. Please make every effort to keep fit, eat healthy, and get plenty of rest. High school students find these things difficult to do under normal circumstances, but they are important to the success of this exhilarating form of music performance.

## **Uniforms**

Each student will be sized for, and fit to, a Marching Band uniform. These uniforms are not just part of the performance; they represent a great deal of dedication, work, and investment on the part of Directors, faculty, parents and students. The uniform identifies each student as a member of the RVHS Marching Band, representing our band, school, and community. Each student is expected to treat his/her uniform with utmost care and respect always, keeping it clean and neat at all times.

In addition:

- In order for the band to achieve a professional appearance, and meet performance standards, each student must adhere to all instructions given regarding proper uniform wear. These instructions may come not only from Directors and faculty, but from other parent volunteers involved.
- Band members will be financially responsible for replacing any part of a uniform, or the whole uniform, that is lost, rendered unserviceable, or destroyed due to neglect, improper care, or other mistreatment.
- The Director and/or staff reserve the right to postpone the performance of any student with a uniform in poor performance condition, including incomplete uniforms.
- As a matter of pride, while in public each student will be either fully in or fully out of uniform, unless otherwise instructed by the Director or staff.
- Color Guard uniforms are usually different each year, but will also be worn in the manner prescribed for that year's program.

Each uniform will be issued on a hangar with a garment bag, the bag having the same ID number as the uniform. The student will be required to keep the uniform stored on its hangar, in its matching garment bag. NOTE: Cleaning instructions for uniforms will be provided by Music Boosters, or by Directors or staff – please do not attempt to clean the uniforms outside of these instructions. The uniforms are DRY CLEAN ONLY, and the student must follow cleaning instructions given. This is important – your care of your uniform will determine its condition for many years in the future.

The individual parts of the uniform are:

**Trousers** – Bib-overall style pants, called “Bibbers”, with attached suspenders

**Jacket** – Worn over the Bibbers

**Gauntlet** – Worn over the ends of the jacket sleeves

**Gloves** – Specific color gloves as part of the uniform

**Shako (Hat)** – All students wear the same Shako, with some exceptions. The exceptions will know who they are.

**Plume** – Attaches to the Shako.

**Shoes** – “Drillmaster” marching shoes. Specific color/style specified. The student is responsible for purchasing these, cost is usually \$XX per pair.

Refer to Fig.1 below for more description of the above uniform parts.

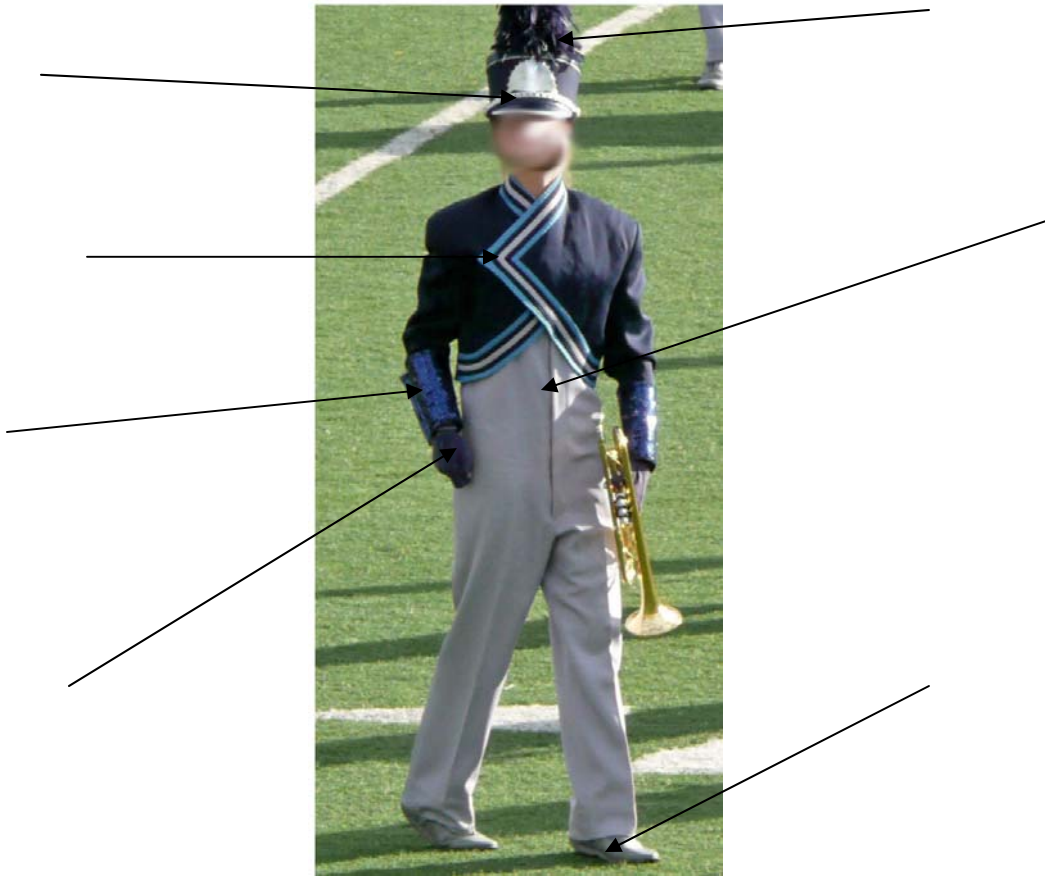


Fig 1 - Diagram of Marching Band Uniform

In addition to the uniform components, each student will need to provide the following accessories on their own to wear with the uniform:

- Gym shorts / athletic shorts to wear under the Bibbers in the summer, and thermal bottoms to wear in the winter (“long johns”)
- Specific color T-shirt to wear under the Jacket in the summer, and other top layers to wear in the winter. This undershirt is color-specific, as it may be seen even with the Jacket on.
- Socks of a specified color. Must be the color specified, no exceptions, as they will be visible while marching and must make the uniform look consistent.

Again, the Color Guard will have their own uniform style and design each year, determined by the “look” desired for each years show. They will be individually responsible for all items that are part of their uniform for that years show.

## **The “Books”**

Each student will need to provide two types of “books” to be used throughout the Marching Band season:

- “Set Book” – This needs to be a 1-inch 3-ring binder, plain, with around 30-40 clear sheet protectors inside. The binder must be clearly marked with the students name and instrument. The Set Book will be needed and ready from the very first day of summer practice to the end of the season. This binder will hold all of the printed music and drill sheets issued to each student, keep the sheets in order, and keep them dry and useable.
- “Dot Book” – The Dot Book needs to be a small, spiral bound notebook that can be worn their neck on a lanyard. This book will be used to record their own unique “dot”, or position, on the marching program “map”. As the student marches through the program, this Dot Book will be their way of knowing where they are to be at all times, during each movement of the program. The Dot Book will be clearly marked with the students name and instrument.

These Books are critical to the success of the students learning the music, marching, and overall program, and to the eventual success of the whole Marching Band, The student **MUST** be responsible for keeping both the Set Book and the Dot Book during EACH rehearsal, throughout the season. Failure to do so not only affects their own progress, but slows down everyone else too.

## ***Attendance Policy***

Attendance at all Marching Band rehearsals is **MANDATORY** and critical to the success of each years show performance. As the Marching Band puts drill on the field and works to develop the show, building towards competitions and State, it is **ESSENTIAL** that all band members be present at all rehearsals. Regular attendance at rehearsals, solid ability to play the show music (practice!!), and solid march drill will insure success for everyone in the Marching Band. If you are missing, you not only affect yourself, but the whole band as even one missing person can substantially reduce performance.

- Attendance is mandatory.
- See above

- The only excused absences are:
  - Illness (absent from school too)
  - Important Religious observance
  - Serious family emergency
  - Some other circumstances may be excused, but must be approved, in advance, by Director / staff
  - Personal conflicts like jobs, homework, tutoring, shopping, etc are NOT excused absences

Again, ATTENDANCE IS CRITICAL to making each Marching Band season as successful as possible. It is an indication of commitment to the program and to fellow student band members.

### ***Marching Band Camp***

Once each year, all of the students, faculty, and staff of the Marching Band travel to YMCA of the Rockies outside of Granby, CO and participate in a 3-day long Marching Band Camp session. The purpose of this event is to eliminate everyday distractions, and allow everyone to completely focus on the Marching Band program being fielded that year, improve technique and discipline, and take the biggest single step of the season towards bringing all the elements of the program together in one cohesive show. This is a major event of the whole season, and is part of the overall commitment required of each band member.

More details about Band Camp, such as date(s), expenses, travel arrangements, what to pack, and other information will be provided under separate cover by the Director once the Camp details have been arranged for the season. If there are any questions, please contact the Director.

### ***Practices and Rehearsals***

The Director will publish a detailed calendar, showing all event date(s) and time(s) during the Marching Band season. Other IMD class events may show on the same calendar as well. Students are to come to rehearsal prepared, with Set and Dot Books, along with any other needed equipment, ON TIME. On time means early – if rehearsal is scheduled to start at 3:30, then arriving at 3:30 is LATE. The student should allow at least 15 minutes (some musicians will require more prep time) to arrive, prepare instrument(s) as needed, gather materials, be ready to play, and be in the right location, by the scheduled start time. Rehearsals will be scheduled according to the following general categories:

## **Summer Rehearsals**

The beginning of Marching Band season really begins during the summer, before the first day of school, as practices are held every during the week, starting the month of June.

## **Regular Weekday Rehearsals**

During the “Marching Season”, August thru October, rehearsals are conducted on multiple days throughout the week. The rehearsal schedule will be posted in the music room, contained in the Director’s calendar handout, and on the website (RVMB.org).

## **Saturday Rehearsals**

In addition to the regular weekday rehearsals, Saturday rehearsals will be scheduled throughout the Marching Band season. Again, details will be provided on the Directors calendar handout, posted in the music room, and on the website (RVMB.org). Note that lunches are the responsibility of the student.

Again, remember – ARRIVING AT the scheduled rehearsal or show event start time is considered LATE; arriving at least 15 minutes (or more) prior to start time is considered ON TIME.

## ***Instrument Storage***

It is the direct responsibility of each individual student renting/playing any given school instrument to keep it safe and secure. Appropriate designated storage rooms and lockers are provided in the Band Room area at the school, further details will be provided by the Director as needed. All school-owned instruments are to be stored at the school, in the proper location, unless it has been taken home for practice, or some other use authorized by the Director. Appropriate carry cases, covers, boxes, etc will be used for each instrument as provided.

## *Performances*

### **Football Games**

The Marching Band will be performing during half-time of each regular season home football game, and also performs from the stands as a Pep Band during the rest of each game. Here is an overview of a typical game day schedule:

- Most football games start at 7:00 PM, so students are expected to arrive at the band room at RV by 5:00 PM. Students will prepare and pack instruments as needed, and change into uniform.
- All instruments and related equipment, and any other needed props etc required for the show will be staged and prepared by the students for loading onto the two RVHS Band trailers. Students will help load everything onto the trailers as directed. There will also be parent volunteers (Pit Crew and Pit Crew Chief) working to help organize the loading process and manage the transportation of the trailers. The trailers are to be loaded and ready to roll by 45 minutes prior to the game, so that everything arrives 15 minutes prior to kickoff. This will insure enough time for the students to unload, prep, and get seated in the stands in advance of kickoff and be ready to play.
- The Marching Band will be seated in a designated section only. Friends, family, band alumni, and others are not allowed to sit with the band, but are welcome to attend, have fun, and support the band and the team. Students are to be attentive and ready for cues to play. Band members are not allowed to visit the concessions during the first half of the game, or at half-time. They are to present an image of discipline and pride during the game. The band plays only as a group, according to CHSAA rules, with the percussion section allowed to play cadences separately. Individual and indiscriminate playing is distracting and unacceptable.
- Approximately 15 minutes before the end of the first half the entire band will leave the stands to a practice area to prepare for the half-time performance. The band will then perform during half-time, and return to the staging area after.

- Students are usually given a break during the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the game, which is the only time they are allowed to visit the concession stand. However, students are asked to finish all food and drinks prior to returning to the stands, and are to be ready to play prior to the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.
- After the game is over, the students are responsible for cleaning up the area where they were seated, and bringing all instruments, uniforms, etc back to the where the trailers are, repacking instrument cases, and helping to load the trailers for the return trip to RV.
- Once back at RV, students are expected to help unload the trailers, working with the parent Pit Crew, and return all instruments and equipment to the proper storage area at school. They are to remove uniforms and store them properly in the correct place at school as well.
- Student transportation to and from the football games will be provided by Jefferson County Schools school buses.

Additional details about football game performances will be provided as needed, under separate cover.

## **Competitions**

There are several qualifying and non-qualifying Marching Band Competitions that the band will participate in during the season. Scheduling details of each will be included in either the Directors calendar handout, or separately as needed. Generally, students will follow similar equipment / uniform packing and loading procedures as for the football games, with some differences or exceptions, depending on the performance requirements. Student transportation will again be via school buses. Parent volunteers, Music Booster volunteers, and Pit Crew parents will all be participating at various levels, usually in a support role providing food, drink, snacks, and other support as needed. The same rules for uniforms, behavior, discipline, etc apply to band competitions. Additional rules of engagement, behavior, and performance will be provided separately by the Director and staff as needed. The Marching Band typically participates in the following competitions:

- Arapahoe – date – Centennial CO. All day event
- Pomona – date – NAAC Stadium, Arvada CO. All day event
- Regional State Qualifier – Littleton High School, Littleton, CO. evening
- Douglas County Marching Festival – date – Douglas County HS, Castle Rock CO. All day event.

- Colorado State Marching Band Championships – (October)
  - QuarterFinals - date & location TBD
  - SemiFinals - date & location TBD
  - Finals – date & location TBD

## **Parades**

The Marching Band usually participates in several parade events throughout the season, including the Arvada Harvest Festival Parade in September and the Parade of Lights in Denver in December (depends on qualifying, TBA).

## ***Bus Rules***

The Marching Band will be expected to travel with respect for property and people. Some of the rules the students will follow when riding to and from events in buses are:

- Keep unnecessary noise to a minimum. MP3 players etc will be used with earbuds/headphones
- No playing of musical instruments on the bus.
- No talking during roll call. Answer roll call loud and clear. We need to know you are accounted for.
- This is a band event, not a date. If “couples” are having repeated problems following the rules of behavior, they will be separated
- Keep the buses clean
- Be courteous and respectful
- Remain seated while the bus is moving. No kneeling, standing, or sitting backwards
- All other Jefferson County school bus rules apply – always
- Have a great time with your friends, but travel to and from events in a way that you will not regret later.

## Music Boosters

The Ralston Valley Marching Band would never be complete without the active and dedicated support of the Music Boosters organization, including the Pit Parents. They provide valuable support to the Marching Band in many ways, including fund raising activities, equipment loading, transportation support, providing food and refreshments at several levels, chaperoning events as needed, helping with uniform adjustments and cleaning, helping with show props, and attending to the thousands of other small details needed to make a successful Marching Band program at RV. The RV Music Boosters is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, all donations made to the RV Music Boosters is tax-deductible. More information is available on their website at [www.rvmb.org](http://www.rvmb.org).

### ***Parent Volunteer Opportunities with the Boosters***

There are many ways that parents of Marching Band students can get involved in the programs, and watch it all from the inside! It's like having a back-stage pass to a great show. It is never a dull moment, the hardest job you'll ever love. There are several events throughout the Marching Band season where you will be informed about the various volunteer opportunities available to you as parents of a Marching Band student. Feel free to talk with any member of the Music Boosters board or current volunteer – they will help you find a great place to help out. There are regular email communications from the Boosters as well, so make sure you sign up for the mailing list.

In any case, there are several ways parents can play a vital role in the success of the Marching Band program, even if you don't directly volunteer:

- Be supportive of your child's participation by enthusiastically attending as many events and performances you can. You are still your child's most important audience, whether they tell you so or not.
- Help your child be prepared and on time as needed.
- Notify the Director if your child is to be absent or late, in advance, unless it is a last-minute emergency.
- Encourage practice at home!
- Arrange for private lessons if needed, and encourage the student's participation in all aspects of the program.

## Financial Stuff – Show Me the Money!

Marching Band at Ralston Valley is supported entirely through the “Fair Share Assessment” paid by students/families and fundraisers that go to the RVMB General Fund. There is no financial support provided by Jefferson County Schools. The Music Boosters establishes and manages an annual operating budget that covers the whole RVHS Instrumental Music Department. Some of the items that are paid each year are:

- Show production and music composition – Fees enable us to hire the most talented music and drill writers around
- Marching Season Staff
- Transportation Costs – We pay for the use of Jeffco school buses, and pay to purchase and maintain the equipment trailers
- Uniforms – Repairs/maintenance
- Guard Uniforms
- Food and Drink – Marching Bands consume an amazing amount of food!
- Props and other show supplies
- Gifts/Marching Staff Awards
- Orchestra Camp Instruction
- Parade of Lights
- Trailer repair, maintenance and insurance
- Performance Fees
- Office Expenses
- Website Fees
- Music
- Instrument Repair
- Corporate Filing
- Other related expenses, supplies and equipment

The RVMB Budget is available to anyone who wants to review it.

### ***“Fair Share Assessment”***

The “Fair Share Assessment” is determined in June of each year by the Board of Directors after the budget and projected membership in the band has been determined. As an example, the band has 85 members and the budgeted marching expenses are \$32,000. The per student expenses would be then be approximately \$376. The difference between the “Fair Share” and the true costs are made up by fundraisers that go directly to the General Fund and are required for the students to letter in music. These fundraisers generate approximately \$7,000 and this value is subtracted from the total budget amount with the resulting \$25,000 divided by the number of members to reach the “Fair Share Assessment” for each student. The “Fair Share” in this case would then be \$295.

Remember that these are just to break even and to keep the program at its current level.

### **Payment Options**

The “Fair Share Assessment” payment options available are:

- Lump Sum payment by either cash or check
- Monthly installments by either cash or check
- Fundraising

### ***Fundraising Opportunities and your Student Account***

Each student member of the Ralston Valley Instrumental Music Department has a student account. The money in your students account can be used for almost any musically related expense (i.e. music lessons, instrument purchase, instrument repair, reeds, strings, trips, etc). The only restriction placed on the student accounts is that the “Fair Share Assessment” must be met before funds can start to accumulate in the account for the other purposes listed above. After the assessment is paid, the money from fundraisers is split between the student account and general fund on an 80/20 basis (80% to student account/20% to general fund).

RVMB conducts fundraisers throughout the year to provide opportunities to generate money to pay the “Fair Share Assessment” meet the requirements for lettering and generate funds for the student accounts. The typical years fundraisers are listed below:

- Taste of Colorado
- King Soopers Scrip Cards
- Great Lakes Scrip Cards Program
- E-Books
- Butterbraids
- Chomp Cards
- Barnes & Nobles

# Orchestra

# Chamber Orchestra

# **Symphonic Band**

# Jazz Ensemble

## **References**

Ralston Valley Music Boosters – [RVMB.org](http://RVMB.org)

Colorado Bandmasters Association – [coloradobandmasters.org](http://coloradobandmasters.org)