Board Recognition
November 10, 2026

Cheek Middle School and Braswell High School Music Programs Earn National Mark of Excellence Awards

Two Denton ISD music programs have earned top national honors from The Foundation for Music Education. The Cheek Middle School Honors Band and the Braswell High School Legacy One Jazz Orchestra were each named 2026 Mark of Excellence National Winners. The Foundation for Music Education is a nonprofit dedicated to supporting and advancing music education. Each year it hosts the Mark of Excellence competition to honor outstanding performances by middle school and high school bands, choirs and orchestras.

The Cheek Middle School Honors Band won in the National Wind Band Honors (Band Class A) category. Only 16 other middle school band programs in the country received the award. Braswell's Legacy One Jazz Orchestra won in the National Jazz Honors (High School Jazz Ensemble) category, and only three other high school jazz ensembles in the country were chosen. Being ranked among the best ensembles in the nation reflects the students' artistry and hard work. It also reflects the dedication of the directors who lead them.

Denton ISD proudly recognizes the members of the Cheek Middle School Honors Band, led by director Dr. Gregory Denson and assistant director Eithan Moreno:

- Tiffany Kangorati – *Flute*
- Apollo Moore – *Flute*
- Andrew Martinez – *Flute*
- Taylor Brown – *Flute*
- Lucianna Torrealba – *Flute*
- Kaitlynn Hebert – *Flute*
- Audrey Puga – *Oboe*
- Nyla Rodriguez – *Oboe*
- Nathan Kana – *Bassoon*
- Gabby Fuentes – *Bassoon*
- Gavin Metrolis – *Clarinet*
- Quiwu Yeke – *Clarinet*
- Tito Barrios – *Clarinet*
- Aiyanna Burgess – *Clarinet*
- Raven George – *Clarinet*
- Darsh Upadhyay – *Clarinet*
- Ayaan Gupta – *Clarinet*
- Jenson Holt – *Clarinet*
- Malani Thomas – *Clarinet*
- Sebastian Ferrer – *Bass Clarinet*
- Amari Jordan – *Bass Clarinet*
- Christian Piotrowski – *Saxophone*

- Brylee Baldock – *Saxophone*
- Tailen Guthrie – *Saxophone*
- Hayato Sawyer – *Saxophone*
- Cort Kellett – *Saxophone*
- Jacein Matthews – *Saxophone*
- Ed Conner – *Saxophone*
- Jose Lamas – *Horn*
- Zachary Rolfe – *Horn*
- Jaxon Foster – *Horn*
- Drew Fuller – *Horn*
- Ace Devlin – *Horn*
- Mya Casey – *Horn*
- Ryan Ruffle – *Trumpet*
- Colin Thigpen – *Trumpet*
- Ava Wooley – *Trumpet*
- TeShuan Bledsoe – *Trumpet*
- Bentley Montelongo – *Trumpet*
- Philip Gonzalez – *Trumpet*
- Mason Augustine – *Trumpet*
- Brettly Lowery – *Trumpet*
- Nico Tirado Picornell – *Trombone*
- Jenesys Bush – *Trombone*
- Alex Lowery – *Trombone*
- Christian Reese – *Trombone*
- Ace Dent – *Trombone*
- Michael Rhue – *Trombone*
- Karin Aoki – *Euphonium*
- Joey Priest – *Euphonium*
- Cadelaria Saydee – *Euphonium*
- Nicholas Ramirez – *Tuba*
- Joselyn De La Rosa – *Tuba*
- Tasimba Lawrence – *Tuba*
- Jaxson Catron – *Tuba*
- Deji Afolabi – *Percussion*
- Jacob Blake – *Percussion*
- Caleb Caesar – *Percussion*
- Eujae Comendador – *Percussion*
- CJ Gentry – *Percussion*
- Nathan Nimley – *Percussion*
- Elijah Webb – *Percussion*
- Vishwa Chintakrindi – *Percussion*
- Dmytro Koksiuk – *Percussion*

Denton ISD also recognizes the members of the Braswell High School Legacy One Jazz Orchestra, led by director Matt Sawyer and assistant directors Aaron Snipes, Taylor Sitzman and Jesus Martinez:

- Brody Woodley – *Alto Saxophone, 2026 graduate*
- Kevin Karanja – *Alto Saxophone*
- Sawyer Bell – *Tenor Saxophone*
- Austin Pardue – *Tenor Saxophone*
- Geo Hernandez – *Baritone Saxophone*
- Ethan Zang – *Trumpet*
- Arthur Davis-Villalobos – *Trumpet*
- Lawrence Thomas – *Trumpet*
- Noah Walls – *Trumpet, 2026 graduate*
- Dasheng Xuan – *Trumpet, 2026 graduate*
- Keagan Hutchins – *Trombone*
- Blake Larsen – *Trombone, 2026 graduate*
- Tyson Zaloudik – *Trombone*
- Nick Schiller – *Bass Trombone*
- Zaiyic Bickel – *Guitar*
- Jackson Forrest – *Piano*
- Ian Wingert – *Bass, 2026 graduate*
- Zane Decker – *Drums, 2026 graduate*
- Caelob Scott – *Drums*

This recognition reflects Denton ISD's commitment to music programs that challenge students to perform at the highest level.

Denton ISD Recognizes Its Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps Instructors

As the nation gets ready to observe Veterans Day, Denton ISD recognizes the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) instructors at its high schools. JROTC teaches students leadership, citizenship, character and teamwork. JROTC instructors are retired members of the military. They bring the discipline, experience and values of their service into Denton ISD classrooms.

Every day, these instructors mentor cadets as they build confidence, learn to lead their peers and give back to their schools and communities. Their influence often lasts well beyond graduation. It helps students prepare for college, careers and public service of all kinds.

Denton ISD proudly recognizes its JROTC instructors:

- Mark Lee – *Braswell High School*
- Leon Calloway – *Denton High School*
- Jeffrey Gross – *Denton High School*
- Jody Addison – *Guyer High School*
- Bryan King – *Guyer High School*
- Michael Deal – *Ryan High School*

- Daniel Warren – *Ryan High School*

This recognition reflects Denton ISD's gratitude for educators who prepare students to lead with integrity and serve others.