



# 2017-18 Golden Eagle Band

**By Susan Reynolds  
GCISD Band**

As with most high school bands, there are certain expectations put upon the Golden Eagle Band by their audience, their parents, the school administration, the teachers, their band director, and each other. They are expected to play the Fight Song repeatedly, the School Song clearly, entertain football crowds and team with fun tunes during the game, and dazzle the audiences of both home and visiting fans at half-time. That is a LOT of accountability for 14-18 year olds, but the young musicians at Goldthwaite High School consistently do it year after year.

There's always a big buzz about what kind of a show the band is preparing for this season since it changes yearly. Last year, the numbers in the band were down significantly, not in small part due to the twelve seniors that graduated the year before. It was a substantial loss of talent and leadership, so last year was a down year. The quality and scores that the band earned were on par with the last 15 years, but the numbers and big sound were just nearly gone, but like a Phoenix rises from its own ashes, the Golden Eagle Band is surging forward this year with their

new show, "Rise of the Phoenix" by Luke McMillan, featuring music inspired by Stravinsky's "Firebird Suite" and "Fawke's Theme" from the Harry Potter film series.

The parent group that supports these efforts is the Goldthwaite Band Boosters. Membership requirements consist of having a child in the band program in Goldthwaite CISD, and anyone else interested in helping out. The boosters raise money for travel expenses, meals on trips, entry fees, scholarships and a whole list of other enhancing projects through the concession stand at the home football games. There is always a need for volunteers. Contact Susan Reynolds (information below) to sign up.

All of the bands, beginners through GEB, put on two concerts per year: Christmas and Spring Pops. These are held at GES and are very well attended, so parking is at a premium. There's always something interesting at these concerts. Sometimes it's the Jazz Band, special guest artists or even a flashmob!

Most people unfamiliar with band have some pretty wrong-headed ideas about it, so I would like to clear up a few things. Let's talk academic achievement and lifetime benefits. Musicians are found to have superior working memory

compared to non-musicians (Berti, et al., 2006; Pallesen et al., "Cognitive Control in Auditory Working Memory Is Enhanced in Musicians," PLOS One, June 15, 2010). The College Entrance Examination Board found that students involved in public school music programs scored 107 points higher on the SAT's than students with no participation (Profiles of SAT and Achievement Test Takers, The College Board, compiled by the Music Educators National Conference, 2002). Adults who receive formal music instruction as children have more robust brainstem responses to sound than peers who never participate in music lessons, and that the magnitude of the response correlates with how recently training ceased. These results suggest that neural changes accompanying musical training during childhood are retained in adulthood (Skoe, E. & Kraus, N. 2012. A Little Goes a Long Way: How the Adult Brain Is Shaped by Musical Training in Childhood, Journal of Neuroscience, 32, 34, 11510. DOI: 10.1523/JNEUROSCI.1949-12.2012). According to the American Psychological Assoc., the results (of The relation between instrumental musical activity and cognitive aging) "suggest a strong predictive effect of high musical activity throughout the life span on pre-

served cognitive functioning in advanced age." There is so much more research going on and, even now, early studies are showing the growth of new gray matter in the brain related strongly to learning to play an instrument!

All of this new information proves the necessity of instrumental music education, and the correlation between long-term study and the deepening of benefits. No other activity can claim all of these things. One or two of them, maybe, but not all. Perhaps that's why 60% of music majors who apply get into medical school while only about 30% of biology major or pre-med majors do.

Scholarships are another thing. The NCAA does not regulate music scholarships, so there are a lot more of them, and they're a lot more generous. So far, three GEB members have gone to college with full scholarships (don't count on this for ANY other activity) and countless others on partial ones. Full scholarships. As in no fee for tuition, class fees, a dorm room, or a food plan. Just pay for gas to get there. If parents need some help getting their child's college paid for, get them in and keep them in the band.