

D.J. Smith

705 Nebraska Street Ponca, Nebraska 68770 | (712) 389-8703 | dsmith@allenschools.org

Emerson Hubbard Community Schools

109 West 3rd Street

Emerson, NE 68733

To Superintendent Dale Martin, Board President Joani Franzluebbbers, Board Members Kip Ahlers, Tricia Belt, Scott Albrecht, Ryan Beacom, and Ashley Fuchser

My name is D.J. Smith and I am the K-12 Music Teacher at Allen Consolidated Schools. The past 5 years, I have worked closely with the Emerson Hubbard High School Music Teachers to combine our pep bands for our Tri County Northeast Athletic Programs, help navigate new teachers and substitutes through the difficulties of honor bands, choirs, and contest submissions, and helped with any questions or problems.

When I heard how the end of the year went for your music department, I felt horrible for your students. When I found out that no one had applied for the open position, I started to look at my schedule to see if there was a way to help or how we could possibly combine if needed.

Before to long, Allen Superintendent Mike Pattee reached out to me about the possibility of helping. After conversations with Mike Pattee, Sandy Ahlers, Chris Blohm, and Dale Martin, I felt that we have come up with a solid plan for the 2025-2026 school year to ensure that the students of Emerson Hubbard receive a music education that they deserve.

Though this is not the ideal situation for your school, I do believe that this option is probably the best option for now. There will be learning curves along the way but one of my strongest assets is problem solving. I will do what is best for both Allen and Emerson – Hubbard. My goal is to help your students become better musicians but most importantly, I want to provide a fun learning environment and experience for your students this year that will create lifelong memories.

Attached is an overview of the year that I hope will provide more information. Please know that this is an overview and things will change throughout the year. This is a baseline for me to get started until I get to know the students better.

Sincerely,



D.J. Smith

Overview

About D.J. Smith

D.J. Smith is a graduate from Ponca Public Schools and Wayne State College with a Bachelor of Science in Music Education. D.J. taught in the South Sioux City Community School District for 6 years. He was the youngest recipient of the SSC Chamber of Commerce "Golden Apple Award" which recognizes the Teacher of the Year for the SSC Community Schools in 2018. He also started one of Nebraska's first High School Mariachi Programs. Since 2019, he has been the 5-12 Music Director at Allen Consolidated Schools where he directs the Pep Band, Marching Band, Concert Band, Concert Choir, and General Music. In 2025, he took over as the K-12 Music Teacher, adding elementary to his title. As a director, his groups have received consistent superior and excellent ratings at District Music Contests and festivals. He has been an active clinician and adjudicator in Northeast Nebraska for Honor Bands and Festivals.

Schedule

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday

3rd Period (9:55 – 10:43): 7th – 12th Band

4th Period (10:45 – 11:33): HS Choir

5th Period (Time TBD): 5th Band, 6th Band, 5th/6th Band, Lessons

Will start everyday in Allen as 7th-12th band meets 1st period.

Travel time will be during 2nd period and 5th period/lunch

Tuesday and Thursday

Willa Saltzman will be running Tuesday/Thursday Schedule

I will have lesson plans ready for Willa every Tuesday/Thursday

Will need to meet with Dale and Willa about what we want to do with JH Choir and 5th/6th Band

- We could have a JH Choir but they meet only on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the days that I will not be at School.
- Instead of JH Choir, we could have a music appreciation class, music theory class, etc.

Mrs. Saltzman being at school on Tuesday and Thursdays helps tremendously. The students like her, she taught the year before, so she has an idea of what is going on, but most importantly she cares about the kids and wants to provide an opportunity for them, which is very important. I believe Willa and I will work very well together to provide a great learning experience for these students.

Events

Events are subject to change. I have an idea of what I would like to do but it is hard to set in stone before getting to know how this schedule works, the capabilities of the musicians, and the traveling factor. This is just a rough idea I have going into the 2025-2026 school year.

Pep Band

Pep Band has always been a difficult part to plan between two schools. I have tried in the past to combine both schools to play one home event at each school. Some have worked better than others. The most difficult part is knowing how many students that participate in your music program also participate in that sport. I do not believe it is beneficial to show up to a football or basketball game with 8 kids and those 8 kids being 7th graders.

My goal will be to perform at one home football game and one home basketball game in Allen and in Emerson

Concerts

1. Veterans Day Program
 - a. Depending on Time and Date, this might be a difficult program to perform at. Will work with elementary music teachers and administration to ensure that there is some form of music
2. Holiday Concert
 - a. Will work with elementary music teacher(s) to find a date and program to have a K-12 Holiday Concert at Emerson.
3. Spring Concert – Monday, April 20th at Allen Gymnasium
 - a. Would like to have the first “Tri County Spring Concert” in Allen for the 7th – 12th Music Department. I would like to have this in Allen because I would have my elementary concert before and will have more time to set up the gym, sound system, etc.
 - b. My vision is to have each school perform their pieces that they will be performing at District Music Contest which would be the upcoming Friday. Then, I would like both bands/choirs to perform together for a piece. This would be a great way to get the kids together and slowly bring them together if this were to happen in the future.
 - c. This concert would be earlier than normal for Emerson, but I use this concert as practice for DMC and it is before the craziness of spring sports, especially since I coach golf for Tri County.
4. Elementary Spring Concert
 - a. Will work with elementary music teacher(s) to find a date and program to have an elementary Spring Concert at Emerson
5. District Music Contest – April 24th
 - a. Will work with South Sioux City so that they are aware that I will be running two music programs and the time of events between the two schools will be spaced out
6. Graduation – May 9th

Honor Bands/Choirs

1. Lewis and Clark Vocal Clinic – November 3rd in Randolph
 - a. All students in Choir will perform at this event
 - b. Students can audition if they would like to be in the Honor Choir
2. Lewis and Clark Honor Band – January 17th at Wayne State College
 - a. Emerson – Hubbard is in charge of the Honor Band this year. I have hosted in the past and will do so for Emerson – Hubbard this year.
 - b. Open to any kid 7th – 12th students who are willing to attend
3. Wayne State College Honor Band – January 31st
 - a. Students may audition to get in
4. Wayne State College Honor Choir – February 13th
 - a. Students may audition to get in
5. Stanton Middle School Music Festival – February 14th
 - a. Open to 7th and 8th grade students
 - b. May choose band or choir
 - c. Not all who sign up will be chosen to perform
6. WSC Middle School Music Festival – Tuesday March 10th/Wednesday March 11th
 - a. Open to those who would like to perform a solo, duet, or small ensemble
7. Class D Honor Band – March 21st in Kearney, Nebraska
 - a. Students may audition to get in
8. Laurel-Concord-Coleridge Elementary Honor Band - TBD
 - a. Open to all 5th/6th grade students willing to perform