



TJ Bands



Placement and Program Information

Good evening and congratulations on your admission into Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology! This school has a lot of wonderful things to offer you throughout your high school career, and I wish you all the best of luck as you transition into our community next year. If I can say anything to you right off the bat it is *please* e-mail me with any questions instead of asking others. Sometimes a lot of misinformation goes out from people who are not involved in my program and I'd like to talk to you personally about any of the questions you have. If you would like to talk to a current TJ Band student please e-mail any of the students below who have volunteered to field your questions –

Class of 2019 Senior Rep: Sriram Amirneni – sriramamirneni@gmail.com

Class of 2020 Junior Rep: Sophie Uy – scuy7777@gmail.com

Class of 2021 Sophomore Rep: Kamal Amirneni – kalamamirneni3@gmail.com

If your parents would like to talk to another parent of a current band student they can feel free to contact –

Carol Small (Booster President, Senior Parent) – President@tjbands.org

Dana Cibulski (Booster President, Junior Parent) – vpwaysmeans@tjbands.org

I want to start you off with what I think are the best recruitment tools I have to offer – the current students! Below is a link to the recruitment video that our historians put together for this year which highlights what the band program has to offer and what the students think of the experience. (Link available at www.tjbands.org also)

<https://youtu.be/7e-gJ9JUqCQ> - TJ Bands Recruitment Video (2018 Version – all things still apply!)

One of the things that I truly enjoy about TJ is that the school offers a fully comprehensive high school experience along with the additional science and tech courses. It is very rare that a school with this academic reputation would also boast one of the best fine arts departments in the country. While you enjoy taking accelerated STEM classes you also can take up to four years of band in one of the premiere programs in the US. In the TJ band program there are many opportunities for you to perform and enjoy making music with your peers. The first step towards this process however is signing up for band as a freshman. The other performing groups (Marching Colonials, Indoor Drumline, Indoor Colorguard, Jazz II) are all dependent on that first step. There are certain situations later on down the road where you may take a year off from curricular band and still do the co-curricular groups, but as a freshman we do ask that you sign up for the class. I'm well aware that the instant gut reaction is that "I have to take computer science!" however that is simply one of your options and not required as a freshman. Most of my students take band as a freshman and then take computer science the summer after their freshman year. That way they are just as caught up as those who took it as a class, and they have the added benefit of enjoying a year of band as well!

When you sign up for band through registration it will place you in a holding class where I will then sort you into the ensemble that works best for you and the group. The potential ensembles that meet as a class are:

Percussion Ensemble (Upper Level Percussion Group)

Symphonic Percussion (Second Level Percussion Group – We Accept Beginners Here!)

Symphonic Band (Second Level Winds Group)

Wind Ensemble (Upper Level Winds Group)

Jazz Band (after school ensemble, audition only once the year starts)

Please sign up a placement session on May 11th here at TJ when you attend the Freshman Preview Night on April 4th. If that day does not work for you simply let me know and we will work out an alternate date. If you did not sign up for an audition at Freshman Preview night then please e-mail me to set up a time.

9:00am – Block 1 11:00am – Block 3 2:00pm – Block 5
10:00am – Block 2 1:00pm – Block 4 3:00pm – Block 6

The placement session will consist of:

All 12 Major Scales

If you don't know them all that's ok, I will hear some that you know. All 12 required for upper level groups.

Chromatic Scale

At least one octave, whatever range or articulation pattern you currently learned is fine.

Prepared Piece

If auditioning for the Percussion Ensemble or Wind Ensemble you must pick up the prepared piece at Freshman Preview Night, e-mail me to get the link, or find the link on our website www.tjbands.org

If not auditioning for the Percussion Ensemble or Wind Ensemble - anything you currently have prepared (solo music, band music, whatever you think showcases you best) 1-2 minutes.

Sight Reading

Provided by me, you will have 2 minutes to look it over and can play through it, I will leave the room for that portion and you will play when I get back. Not the same as the silent 30 seconds you get at districts.

A couple of commonly asked questions about placements –

What are my chances of making one of the higher ensembles? – depends on way too many factors to list. The short answer is that I typically only accept a few freshmen in the higher level groups a year, but that's not a number I hold to as a standard. I fill the groups up with the most qualified candidates for the positions. In the end all students end up being enrolled in Advanced Band, so your transcript will look the same either way (if that worries you). Have confidence that I do what is best for the program and for you as a player (but I don't put the needs of an individual ahead of the group). I am very fortunate to get many talented players to join – remember that you are auditioning for spots against upperclassmen who were just as talented as you when they first came in the program!

I don't think I have as much experience on my instrument as others, should I still join band even if I think I may be a little behind? – Absolutely! There is a place for all ability levels in our program. Band is a class where you can enjoy playing your instrument and improving. It doesn't matter to me what your ability level is when you enter the program, my focus is simply on having you continue to get better each year no matter where you start or finish.

When will I know the results? – Please allow 1-2 weeks for results to come out. There are a lot of auditions to get through for both incoming students and returning students – and there are lots of considerations when placing students into the appropriate ensembles.

Please e-mail me for an audition slot or with any further questions. Information about the Thomas Jefferson Marching Colonials will be sent in a separate e-mail in a couple of weeks. Thanks!

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www.tjbands.org