



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 2020 Senior Rep: Sophie Uy – scuy7777@gmail.com

Class of 2021 Junior Rep: Kamal Amirneni – kamalamirneni3@gmail.com

Class of 2022 Sophomore Rep: Ben Chang – smilishcone6@gmail.com

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

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

Val Kreider (Booster Vice President, Junior Parent) – Vpcommunications@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 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 Ensemble) 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)

All incoming band students are asked to do a placement video. Simply record yourself playing what is asked below and send me a link. Please avoid sending me the actual video file if possible – the FCPS e-mail servers like to block large files. You only need to do the prepared piece and the additional scales if you are auditioning for the Wind Ensemble. I would highly encourage you to send me a video even if you aren't totally sure if you are doing band or not. It's a simply process and would allow me to see where you are as a player before we discuss options. Percussionists – if you would like to audition for the upper level Percussion Ensemble please e-mail me so we can discuss how to best do that.

Major Scales

Placement Audition: Play YOUR Bb, F and Eb scale. Use whatever scale patterns you learned in MS. If you don't know one of them that's ok!

Wind Ensemble Audition: Play YOUR Bb, Db, Gb, E and B scales. Use whatever scale patterns you learned in MS – please play as many complete octaves as possible on each scale.

Chromatic Scale

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

Prepared Piece

Placement Auditions: anything you currently have prepared (solo music, band music, whatever you think showcases you best) 1-2 minutes.

Wind Ensemble Audition: play the prepared piece found in this link:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1TQhYE5XxE4n2br2HrLOXclChZ3s1WuW6>

These were used last year as well – please ignore the 2019-2020 at the top. This is also for 2020-2021 – I did not have access to a scanner to make a new set once we were sent home.

PLEASE SUBMIT VIDEO LINKS TO [AWFOREMAN@FCPS.EDU](mailto:awforeman@fcps.edu) BY APRIL 29TH

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 until May 15th for results. 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.

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