



## Welcome to the TJ Bands!

Hello, and congratulations on your admission into Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology! This school offers many wonderful opportunities for you, and we are excited to introduce you to the band program, one of the most visible and successful of those programs.

One of the truly enjoyable things about TJ is that the school offers a fully comprehensive high school experience along with the additional science and tech courses. It is 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 toward this process is signing up for band as a freshman. Participation in the marching band is also dependent on that first step. There are certain situations later on where you may take a year off from curricular band and still participate in marching band, but as a freshman we do ask that you sign up for the class.

When you sign up for “advanced band” or “Percussion Ensemble” through course registration, it will place you in a generic “band” holding class. So it doesn’t matter which one you choose. You will then be sorted into the specific ensemble that works best for you and the group. The ensembles that meet as a class are:

*Symphonic Band (Second Level Winds Group)*

*Wind Ensemble [SWE] (Upper Level Winds Group)*

*Symphonic Percussion (Second Level Percussion Group – performs with Symphonic Band)*

*Percussion Ensemble (Upper Level Percussion Group – performs with SWE)*

*8th Period Jazz Band Club (this is a non-performing club except once at the end of the year - a separate, extracurricular Jazz Ensemble rehearses after school and handles most of the performing the rest of the year)*

All of the above, except Jazz Band, count as the same “Advanced Band” credit on your transcript. We also have some other extracurricular programs like winter drum line and color guard, which you will learn more about later, all optional (but a lot of fun!). But the rest of this packet pertains to the curricular band classes only.

We know it can be daunting to consider all the options and requirements ahead of you, but there are many ways students have to make the scheduling work the way they want it to in order to manage their course options the way they need to. This includes summer school options like Computer Science or PE (among many others), but the best way to learn what might work best for you is to talk with those students and parents listed above who have experience with it. And there’s no better advice we can offer you than to seek information straight from the source! Please [email the band director, Mr. Ballard](#), with any questions instead of asking others in the broader community. You’re much more likely to get accurate answers from us. Even well-intentioned people outside the band program often end up being the source of misinformation.

## Introductions, info, and contacts

There's a form on the next page where you can provide introductory info about yourself along with performance samples if you so choose. But first, you can get to know us a little bit! If you would like to talk to current TJ Band students, please email any of those listed below who have volunteered to field your questions, particularly about how to include band as an annual part of your 4 year journey at TJ:

Band Council President: Addison Greenfeld [addisongreenfeld@gmail.com](mailto:addisongreenfeld@gmail.com)

Addy is a euphonium player in the TJ Wind Ensemble, baritone section leader in the marching band, trombone player in the TJ Jazz Ensemble, and he even performs in the TJ Winter Drum Line as a cymbal player. He is one of the leaders of the TJ Band program and a miracle-worker with figuring out how to schedule band all 4 years at TJ.

Class of 2022 Senior Rep: James Mallek [jams.blond.000@gmail.com](mailto:jams.blond.000@gmail.com)

James is also a euphonium player in the Wind Ensemble, and a color guard captain in the marching band and winter color guard.

Class of 2023 Junior Rep: Mira Kim [mirakim2023@gmail.com](mailto:mirakim2023@gmail.com)

Mira is a clarinet player in the Wind Ensemble and the President of the TJ chapter of the Tri-M Music Honor Society.

Class of 2024 Sophomore Rep: Dante Huaman [dante4840@outlook.com](mailto:dante4840@outlook.com)

Dante is a clarinet player in the Symphonic Band and the Marching Band and an alto saxophone player in the after-school Jazz Ensemble.

If your parents would like to talk to parents of current band students, they can feel free to contact our Band Booster Co-Presidents and Senior Parents: Susan Essman and Lisa Barker at [President@tjbands.org](mailto:President@tjbands.org)

Want to know more about TJ Bands? See our website: [www.tjbands.org](http://www.tjbands.org)  
Calendars, financial information, and contacts are all posted there.  
And here are some general [Facts and FAQs about the TJ Bands](#) program.

And here's a video made by our marching band alumni speaking to why they believe involvement in this program was one of the best decisions they made during their time at TJ:

[Why TJMC? Alumni Perspective](#)

**Scroll further to see how we format our evaluations and determine which group you go into.**

## Introduce yourself!

# All incoming and current TJ band students should Complete this Google Form

This form is also where you can submit videos of performance samples, so current TJ students should use this same form please.

### Info about submitting an evaluation or audition recording:

Please make sure you include your full name in the file name so I know who you are in the video.  
Name files like this example (or similar): Steve\_Ballard\_TJBand\_MajorScales.filetype

**Every part of this is optional but *highly recommended*.** These are only used to get to know you a little bit and to get a small sample of your current playing skills, which helps us plan for next year. If you only submit some of the more basic material listed below but demonstrate potential readiness for placement in the Symphonic Wind Ensemble (SWE), you may be asked to play a little more later on but that isn't necessarily needed all the time. If you want to make sure you are considered more seriously for the Wind Ensemble, then please play as much of this as possible.

A single recording with all elements performed in succession is recommended but not required. If you prefer, you may submit each element below as an individual recording, just remember to label *every* video you send with your name in the file name. Limit editing to captioning (recommended) and cuts while *not* playing. Test your audio and video recording *before* you make your final recording to ensure proper quality. But when you start recording for real, very often the first take is the best take, so go for it and don't let little mistakes stop you!

All submissions must be ***video with audio***, with full view of your face, playing technique, and instrument. Contact me asap if you are unable to make that happen for some reason. For percussion, this includes your hands, wrists, and arms, as well as the playing surfaces of your instrument. A slightly elevated camera angled downward at the instrument works well, but keep your face in view as well for identification. Whatever instrument you have available to you is fine, even if it's not a concert snare or full-sized keyboard.

If you prefer to do a live, in-person performance instead, great! Contact me at [swballard@fcps.edu](mailto:swballard@fcps.edu) and we'll let you know when that can happen.

Remember: Submitting videos is optional, but strongly recommended. If no video is submitted, students who enroll in a band class will be automatically placed into Symphonic Band/Percussion.

**Scroll further for details for what to include on your video, and answers to some FAQ's.**

## Evaluation and Audition Music

Videos should be of you performing solo (with accompanist is ok if it's that kind of solo). No concert videos or ensembles please, these are less likely to showcase you as an individual.

### Major Scales

**Play YOUR Bb, F, and Eb Major Scales - or as many of them as you are familiar with.**

Use whatever ranges, rhythm patterns, and tempos you are comfortable with and used to.

**For Wind/Percussion Ensemble Consideration, add YOUR Db, Gb, E and B Scales, and:**

use All-State/District Audition ranges and patterns.

Click here for [Wind scale ranges, rhythm, and tempos](#) (ignore info about prepared piece and sight-reading)

For percussion scale ranges, play 2 octaves in the relative mid-range of your instrument. Same rhythm as indicated on the "Wind scale ranges" above, but set your tempo up to 160.

### Chromatic Scale

**Play your chromatic scale, at least one octave if you can.** Whatever range or articulation pattern you currently learned is fine.

**For Wind/Percussion Ensemble Consideration,** perform according to All-State/District ranges and patterns linked above. Percussion, play a minimum of 2 octaves at the fastest tempo *you can control*.

### Prepared Pieces/Excerpts

**You can play anything you currently have prepared** (solo music, band music, **whatever you think showcases you best**) 1-2 minutes *maximum*. A recent video of some other solo performance may suffice. For percussionists, snare and/or mallets are fine. You may include other percussion instruments if you choose, but they're not required.

**For Wind/Percussion Ensemble Consideration**

Brass/Woodwinds perform [2022 TJHSST Wind Ensemble Audition Excerpts](#)

**Play the excerpts listed for your instrument.**

Percussionists perform [2022 TJHSST Percussion Ensemble Audition Pieces](#)

Ignore where it says 2021, we're using this for 2022 as well.

### Percussion Rudiments (Percussion only of course)

If you are familiar with snare drum rudiments, **play 2 you are most comfortable with** such as:

**Multiple Bounce Roll** (soft to loud and back to soft over about 15-20 seconds), or

**Paradiddles, Flams, or Drags** (slow to fast and back to slow over about 15-20 seconds).

It's ok if you aren't familiar with rudiments! If so, just skip this part.

**For Wind/Percussion Ensemble Consideration,**

**Play each of the following rudiments**

(15-20 seconds or less on each):

**Multiple Bounce Roll** (soft-loud-soft)

**17-stroke roll** (slow-fast-slow)

**Pataflafla OR Double Ratamacue** (slow-fast-slow)

**Keep scrolling for evaluation/audition/placement FAQ's**

## FAQs about evaluations, auditions, and placements:

### **What are my chances of making one of the higher ensembles?**

It depends on far too many factors to list. The short answer is that we typically only accept a few freshmen in the higher level groups a year, but it can fluctuate, especially in a year like this year when we have just had a rather large senior class graduate leaving a few extra open positions to fill. We fill the groups up with the most qualified candidates for those 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 we do what is best for the program and for you as a player (but we don't put the needs of an individual ahead of the group). We are 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! But it's also worth noting, of our many All-District and All-Virginia Band honorees, most began their journey at TJ in the Symphonic Band; in fact some of our Symphonic Band members are included among those honorees this year! You will get a high level, quality experience no matter which ensemble you step into.

### **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? Or if I have no experience at all?**

Absolutely! There is a place for all ability levels in our program, including beginners. Band is a class where you can enjoy playing your instrument and improving. It doesn't matter what your ability level is when you enter the program. Our focus is simply on having you continue to get better each year, in competition with *no one* but yourself and your own personal annual goals.

### **When will I know my class placement?**

Please allow some time for those results, possibly several weeks or more. Usually we can give a fairly specific date (typically in mid-May), but with the unusual admission processes over the last year or two, there have been some delays in the process. Just know we will post them as soon as we can. In any case, 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. If possible, I will communicate soon. But if it's not until summer, know that we haven't forgotten about you!

### **Can I be in the marching band too / is it required?**

At your base high school, chances are that marching band would be a requirement for participation in at least the higher level band classes. At TJ, we understand this can present unique challenges so while the vast majority of band class members do participate in the marching band, and we do consider it a co-curricular activity that comes *highly* recommended, it is not required. However, being in a curricular band class is required if you want to perform as a wind or percussion instrumentalist in the marching band. After your first year, you can take up to one year off from curricular while continuing in the marching band (though we do encourage involvement all 4 years). Exceptions are made for color guard members since there is no curricular color guard offered at TJ, and a handful of other specialty positions on an as-needed basis - they can be in marching band without being in a band class, and we can discuss that with individuals when the need arises.

Again, congratulations and welcome to the TJ Band! Please reach out to me any time with any questions you may have about this process, or the program in general.

### **Steve Ballard**

Director of Bands, TJHSST

[swballard@fcps.edu](mailto:swballard@fcps.edu)

Office: 703-750-8384

[www.tjbands.org](http://www.tjbands.org)