



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 Band through course registration, it will place you in a generic “Band” holding class. 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) will be listed as “Advanced Band” on your schedule, and **they are all Honors-level classes, earning you a 0.5 GPA boost every year of participation.**

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 older students and parents 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.

[Here are some recent 4-year-schedules](#) you can browse that worked for members of the 2022 TJ Senior class.

Introductions, info, and contacts

Please [introduce yourself to me on this form](#) if you're new to TJ next year (even if you're still waiting on admission results).

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: Mira Kim

Mira is a clarinet player in the wind ensemble and the President of the TJ chapter of the Tri-M Music Honor Society, and a 4-year member of the curricular band class. She holds the distinction of being the principal clarinet in the All-Virginia Festival this year, and is highly involved in local Youth Orchestras, and the National Symphony Youth Fellowship.

Class of 2023 Senior Rep: Elisabeth Everhart

Elisabeth is a flute and piccolo player in the wind ensemble and aside from sitting first chair in her section, she is also a highly involved athlete at TJ. She can give you a great idea of how to find the time and resources to layer together many different interests on top of the science and tech, including but not limited to Band.

Class of 2024 Junior Rep: Dora Bowen-Glazeroff

Dora is in her 3rd consecutive year as a TJ curricular band member, where she started as a tenor saxophone player and later switched to bari sax. She has been a member of the TJ marching band all 3 years and recently joined the winter drum line for her first year as a marching cymbal line member. She plays in the TJ saxophone quartet and has participated with the jazz ensemble too. On top of all of that, she is a goalie for the highly successful TJ women's soccer team.

Class of 2025 Sophomore Rep: Hudson Keeler

Hudson is a clarinet player and has participated in the TJ wind ensemble each year. He was section leader of the marching band clarinet section even as a sophomore this year. He has participated in the winter drum line both years as well, learning multiple percussion instruments even while being such a successful clarinetist.

Class of 2026 Freshman Rep: Diana Prudius

Diana is an alto saxophone player in the symphonic band, a member of the TJ marching band, and she also joined the winter drum line this year, learning to play percussion for the first time.

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: Geeta Thapa and Claire Chu

Want to know more about TJ Bands? See our website: www.tjbands.org
And here are some general [Facts and FAQs about the TJ Bands](#) program.

Still deciding about marching band? See what our wonderful alumni have to say about it:
[Why TJMC? Alumni Perspective!](#)

How do we determine which group you go into? See next page for evaluation info:

Preparing and submitting an evaluation or audition recording:

All incoming and current TJ band students can submit a playing sample or sign-up for an in-person performance time at TJ [using this Google Form](#).

Please make sure you include your full name in the file name so I know who you are in the video.

Name files this way (or similar): Steve_Ballard_TJBand.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! Use the Google Form above to select one of the offered times in early/mid-May.

Remember: Submitting videos/performances of any kind is optional, but strongly recommended (and *very* helpful!). Without it, students will be automatically placed into Symphonic Band/Percussion.

Details for what to play are on the next page, and playing-evaluation FAQ's are beyond that.

Evaluation and Audition Music

Major Scales

Play as many of them as you are familiar with.

Use whatever ranges, rhythm patterns, and tempos you are comfortable with and used to. Faster is only better to the extent that you can play with quality, consistency, and accuracy. Choose your tempos accordingly.

For Wind/Percussion Ensemble consideration, it is best if you play at least 6+ major scales, minimum 2 octaves.

Chromatic Scale

Play your chromatic scale, at least one octave if you can. Whatever range, tempo, rhythm, and articulation pattern you have currently learned is fine.

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*.

For percussion, 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 [2023 TJHSST Wind Ensemble Audition Excerpts](#)

Play the excerpts listed for your instrument.

Percussionists perform [2023 TJHSST Percussion Ensemble Audition Pieces](#)

Ignore where it says 2021, we're using this for 2023 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 years when larger senior classes 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 and YOU WILL GET HONORS CREDIT in any ensemble. Have confidence that we do what is best for the program and for you as a player (but we don't put the needs or wishes 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 into 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. In the 2022-23 school year, our program included 7 pure beginners with no prior band experience!

When will I know the results?

Please allow some time for results, possibly several weeks or more. Usually, we can give a specific date (typically in mid-late May), but with the unusual admission processes over the last year or two, there have been some delays that linger. The best bet is to 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!

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

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