

# Penn High School Bands

## New Student & Parent Information and Frequently Asked Questions

Dear 8th Grade Band Members and Parents:

As you are making decisions about classes for your Freshman year, we hope that you will consider continuing with band at Penn High School.

### **Opportunities for band members at Penn include:**

- Concert Band assignment based on ability level
  - To challenge ourselves without frustration of boredom
- Specific Class for Percussionists
  - To help our percussionists grow more quickly in a unique environment
  - Addresses specific percussion related techniques
  - Addresses specific percussion ensemble literature
- Three Jazz Ensembles
  - Anyone can participate
  - Even if you have never played jazz before
- Marching Band
  - Not a requirement, but lots of fun!
  - Will be traveling to California in November 2021
- Pep Band
  - Performs at numerous basketball games
  - Lots of fun!
  - Really fun music!
- Solo and Ensemble Contest
- Honor Band Opportunities
- Private Lesson Opportunities

## **Some Frequently Asked Questions with our Responses**

### ***What class do I sign up for?***

Freshmen woodwind, and brass players should sign up for Freshman Concert Band (Course number #0817). Percussionists should sign up for the Percussion Studies (Course number #0823).

### ***What are my options to play in a Jazz Ensemble?***

Freshmen may sign up for Intermediate Jazz Ensemble (course number #0827), however, all woodwind, brass, and percussionists in jazz ensemble must also be signed up for a concert band (or percussion studies) class, which will take both of the available electives for the freshman year. If a student does not have the available electives to play in Intermediate Jazz Ensemble, they could join the after school jazz ensemble which meets after school and evenings twice weekly from November through February.

*Students who play guitar, bass guitar or piano may be in Intermediate Jazz Ensemble without enrolling in Freshmen Band. An audition is required for these instruments. Contact Mr. Griesser ([agriesser@phm.k12.in.us](mailto:agriesser@phm.k12.in.us)) for audition information.*

***What if I want to be in the Marching Band?***

Marching Band does not require an additional band class. Woodwind and Brass players should be enrolled in Freshman Band (Course Number #0817) and Percussionists should be enrolled in Percussion Studies (Course Number #0823). Students who are interested in marching band should talk to their middle school directors to let them know of their interest. Mr. Northern will be visiting 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes to talk to students about all of the band opportunities that they have at Penn, including marching band.

***Does Marching Band conflict with Summer School?***

No. During the last week of summer school, marching band practice will start, but the schedules will not conflict because summer school will end at 12:30 each afternoon, and marching band will start at 2:00pm.

***I have heard that if I am taking Honors Courses at Penn, I should not be in the Marching Band. Is that true?***

No, that is not true. Most of the members of the Penn Marching Band participate in at least one honors level course, and many are among the top students in their respective grades. The marching band average GPA is very high. These students do a great job of balancing their academic responsibilities with the schedule demands of a group such as the marching band. The bottom line is this: If your child has done well in their middle school classes, they can be very successful academically at Penn while participating in the band program.

***If I elect to be in the Freshman Band, do I need an alternate schedule choice?***

For all elective classes, the counselors will ask you to choose an alternate in case the first class fills up. However, because band classes have no maximum enrollment number, Freshman Band has never been closed to students.

***What opportunities are available to me in the Penn Bands?***

- Concert Band (3 concerts + ISSMA Band Contest)
- Intermediate Jazz Ensemble (3 Concerts + other performance opportunities)
- ASJO (After School Jazz Orchestra) – Meets twice per week from Nov. to Feb.
- Pep Band – 15 rehearsals and performances from Nov. to Feb.
- Solo and Ensemble Contest – Similar in format to the Middle School experience.
- Marching Band – Mid July to Early November (many travel opportunities)
- Color Guard – Functions as part of the Marching Band
- Winter Guard – Indoor Color Guard. Meets weekly from Nov. To March.

***Can I be in band and play a school sport?***

Yes! The Penn Band includes athletes from all across the school. We currently have band members who are on the following teams at Penn; football, volleyball, cross-country, soccer, golf, swimming, basketball, track, softball, baseball, tennis, hockey and rugby. A student's athletic schedule might keep them from being in a particular band activity (for example, some fall sports would conflict with marching band), but it would never keep a student from participating in band completely.

***What is the Color Guard, and how do I join?***

The Color Guard is the auxiliary unit of the marching band. They use dance movement, flags, sabers, rifles, and other equipment to visually enhance the marching band show. Auditions for the Color Guard will be in April. If you are interested in this activity, contact Mr. Northern at [gnorthern@phm.k12.in.us](mailto:gnorthern@phm.k12.in.us).

**Contact information for the Penn Band Staff:**

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***Recently, two of the four National Merit Finalists from Penn High School were both four-year members of the marching band! Students should not be afraid to challenge themselves academically while committing to a worth-while activity such as the marching band.***