

BHS Band - Questions Answered

Questions about Band in High School

Is band hard in high school?

We don't think so - we think it is fun! There's opportunities to play numerous concerts with diverse music with your friends each day. There's a weekly sight-reading assignment but, you choose your own difficulty level.

I'm not sure if any of the bands available for my instrument will fit my schedule?

If you want to take band, the counselors will work with you to find classes to fit into your schedule. We have never had a conflict with 9th grade students taking band class.

Is there a big time commitment?

There are no commitments outside of the school day for band class except concerts. There are five concerts a year at BHS. In upperclassmen bands, there are additional time commitments but not as often.

Do we have any kind of lessons?

There are private lessons available on every instrument at BHS that happen either during the school day or after school.

Can I switch instruments?

Yes, though it depends on what you want to switch to. We switch numerous students during 9th grade and it always begins with a conversation.

Will band guarantee to be fun?

We hope so!

Will you have to try out for different band?

No - you do not have to try out for bands. All freshmen are put into Symphonic Band unless they choose to audition for an upperclassmen band.

Is marching band the only type of band you can choose?

No. Marching band meets outside of the school day, like a sports team. All marching band students are enrolled in one of our band classes.

Do I have to do it all year?

Yes.

How do you get into pep band?

You simply show up! Pep Band is optional for all students and students that perform in it have a lot of fun and play lots of great music. Students can show up when they have time.

If I gain enough skill to be at the level of a freshman who plays percussion, could I possibly switch if I work hard?

Yes, if you wanted to. Again, this would begin with a conversation between you and the directors. We can find a way to make it work. We want you to be in music!

Who is the freshman teacher?

Mr. Owen and Mr. Van Kley team teach all of the bands. You will have both of us in band class.

Questions about Marching Band

Is it hard to get in drumline?

It is a challenge, but every year there are ninth graders in the drumline. This particular year, there are a lot of drumline members graduating so there are lots of marching band percussion opportunities.

How much marching band concerts does BHS do each year?

Marching band performs at every football game and at five different competitions throughout the season.

How many marchers are there?

As many as sign-up! We usually have about 100 students in marching band each year, one of the largest organizations at Batavia High School.

How long are the practices?

During the school year, we practice for 2.5-3 hours, twice a week. During band camp, we practice for seven hours a day during the week, with lots of breaks.

When does it start?

Band camp begins in late July and lasts until the beginning of school. Our competition season lasts until around Halloween.

Is it an actual class that counts for a grade?

No. Marching band is a co-curricular activity, meaning it is an optional activity that meets outside the school day. You do NOT have to be in marching band.

Do you always march when playing?

Not always, but very often yes.

How much practice is there during summer?

We are still working on the schedule, however, we usually do 2.5 weeks before the first day of school for seven hours a day. It sounds like a lot but it goes quickly.

When will rehearsals take place - Days of the week and Time

We are still working on the schedule, however, we are looking at rehearsing on Monday and Wednesday nights from 5-8 during the school year.

Why is it such a big commitment?

Great question! In everything we do, we want to be excellent. We need to practice often and hard to achieve our goals. We practice the same amount as most sports teams, however, we consolidate the practice into two days instead of 5-6 days a week.

How much commitment is it?

The time commitment is large. Additionally, students are not able to be in another sport or activity during this time. However, marching band is one of the most rewarding experiences you could have. The bonds and friendships made in this group are strong and last a lifetime.

Is it viable for clarinetists?

Yes! Clarinets are a HUGE part of the marching band experience.

I've heard that Marching Band has a very vigorous practice routine. When do we practice on the weekend? How long?

Most Saturdays we either rehearse, compete, or a combination of both from September through October. Most Saturdays are booked with marching band experiences.

How much dedication does it require?

Lots. We want our students to be committed to the organization and give their best everyday.

Is there a difference between marching band and drumline?

Drumline is a part of the marching band, however, there are some extra performances for the drumline at football games and pep rallies.

How do I sign up? Is it hard to do all of the shapes on the field and play?

We will communicate how to sign up in January. It's not hard to do the formations and play, but it takes some practice. We have trained personnel to get you there.

Why is it so amazing?

Mostly because of the relationships formed between the members. Performing is a great feeling and winning is fun too, but the bonds we make as performers stand the test of time.

If I played the Euphonium in marching band would I receive a marching Euphonium?

Yes. We have school instruments for euphoniums, tubas, and some saxophones.

How can I do cross country and marching band at the same time?

At this time, you can not do both activities at the same time.

Questions about Jazz Band

How long and when are practices?

Our Jazz Bands practice for two days a week for 1.5 hours each day. These practices start in November and last until Spring Break.

Can you do the song "Sing Sing Sing"?

Possibly. We choose music based on the strengths of the group and director/student input. So join the band and suggest the piece and we may play it!

What types of instruments do they accept?

Both groups use a standard big band instrumentation - Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Baritone Sax, Trumpet, Trombone, Guitar, Bass, Piano, and Drum Set.

How hard is it?

There are group for all ability levels. As with all things in BHS music, we strive to be excellent while having fun and playing fun music. There's challenge involved but nothing that's impossible.

How much commitment does it take?

The time commitment is only three hours a week, split into two days. Each group has a slightly different performance schedule, but both groups perform at BHS and outside the building each year.

What do you audition with?

We give you music to practice, you prepare it, and then perform a short audition for the directors.

When do auditions take place?

In late October.

Why can't clarinets play?

All of the music programmed for jazz ensemble comes with a fairly standard instrumentation (you can read the instrumentation above). We encourage clarinet players to try to learn saxophone - students do this EVERY year. Once you get into the ensemble, there is some music that has clarinet in it and we occasionally program a feature for our clarinet players.

Do you have to audition to get in?

Yes, but we never cut anyone that wants to be in jazz band. Everyone makes it!

Do you meet before and after school?

Never before school - at BHS that would be far too early! Rehearsals are always after school.

Can you audition on two different instruments?

Yes. After the audition, we would then give you a choice on which instrument you want to play based on the audition results.

Is the music fun and challenging?

We think jazz is some of the most fun music we get a chance to learn and perform! YES!

Questions about Auditioning for Upperclassmen Bands

What is it?

Upperclassmen band auditions are for students that might want a more significant musical challenge in high school outside of Freshman Band (Symphonic Band). This is optional and LOTS more information can be found here:

<http://www.bataviamusic.org/band-auditions-2018-19.html>

When are the auditions?

Auditions are the last week in January - January 29-February 2.

How long will auditions last?

Each wind audition is about five minutes. Percussion auditions are about seven minutes.

Will it be fun?

Auditions are not usually very fun. However, we try to take the pressure off as much as possible. Remember - we WANT you to do your very best and are rooting for you to do so. The directors have done many auditions in the past personally so we remember what it is like. We're there to help you get through this process so you can achieve your musical goals.

How will it affect my other classes if I make it? How will my schedule be affected?

If you audition into an upperclassmen band, we will contact you and your parents to see if you accept this placement. You will be put into PE and/or Health class that meet opposite band, however, there will be less music freshmen in your class. We have done this process for two years and have not had a conflict yet with scheduling. Students can still take all the classes they want to, with some rare exceptions.

What percentage of people make it?

Usually, a small amount. Last year about five students auditioned into the upperclassmen bands. The need is dependent on how many students audition for those spots based on instrument.

What is the slowest tempo that you can play the etude and scales at? What is the fastest?

Students should play the etudes at the marked tempi - it is the only way to make the audition fair for all students involved. Scales can be taken at different tempi, based on the amount of challenge you wish to undertake.

How many people do you accept?

This depends on the year and ability of all students in high school and middle school. Each year is different.

Is the majority of the band seniors?

Yes and no. In Wind Symphony (top band), there are a lot of seniors. In Wind Ensemble, the majority of the band are sophomores and juniors.

How hard are auditions?

They are challenging, but not impossible. We have to make them challenging because this is an audition to determine what class is best for your musical abilities. This audition process is a big step in that decision.

How exclusive are the Wind bands?

It really depends on the instrument you play. If you play a rare instrument, it might be easier to make the upperclassmen bands.

What is the size of Wind Symphony and Wind Ensemble?

We strive to make each group about 60 students, though the number is an estimate. The groups are balanced so we have about this many per instrument:

Flute - 5-6

Oboe - 2

Bassoon - 2

Clarinet - 7-9

Alto Sax - 2-3

Tenor Sax - 1-2

Bari Sax - 1-2

*Bass Clarinet - 1-2
Contrabass Clarinet - 1
Trumpet - 6-8
Horn - 4-5
Trombone - 3-4
Euphonium - 2-3
Tuba - 2-3
Percussion - 6-8*

Again, these are estimates as the groups are chosen by ability levels of the students each year.

How exactly does the sight-reading portion of the audition work?

Each student is given a code and asked to login to Sight-Reading Factory (sightreadingfactory.com). You create a login and must perform a randomly generated sight-reading exercise at difficulty level 4. As soon as you sign up for an audition time, we will get you the login information so you can begin to practice your sight-reading skills.

Is there upperclassmen band options for percussion?

Yes. Each upperclassmen band will have 6-8 percussionists. They will perform some of the best written percussion parts for band.

Is it considered a honors class?

No. Music classes are not considered honors or AP classes at Batavia High School.

How hard are the pieces and what are they called? what kind of music, how hard?

Wind Symphony is one of the top six high school bands in the state of Illinois. We are performing at the state convention next month. They are currently working on a challenging program:

*Lauds - Ron Nelson
The Promise of Living from "The Tender Land" by Aaron Copland, arr. Jim Hile
Inglesina - Davide Delle Cese
Aurora Awakes - John Mackey*

Wind Ensemble is the best group of that level we've ever had. They are working on challenging repertoire for their level.

*Variations on a Korean Folk Song - John Barnes Chance
Third Suite - Robert Jager
Salvation is Created - Pavel Tchesnokoff*

We will change music in February for the end of the year.

When do we get results back after our audition?

Usually within 1-2 weeks.

Could i pick the band I am in?

If you make either Wind Symphony or Wind Ensemble, we will contact you to see if you accept the position.

If you audition for Wind Symphony but you don't make that but you are good enough for Wind Ensemble, do you get into Wind Ensemble?

Yes.

How hard is the music?

It is challenging, but it is supposed to be challenging. Think about it this way - reading might get boring if you read the same level of book each day or week. We greatly enjoy finding music that students love to play and pushes us to new levels.

When is it out?

*Right now. Check it out here: <http://www.bataviamusic.org/band-auditions-2018-19.html>
Where do I find it?*

<http://www.bataviamusic.org/band-auditions-2018-19.html>

General Questions about BHS Music/Band

Is there a possibility of getting a trigger trombone?

Yes. We would work with you to help choose one that is a good fit for you. Also, a private trombone teacher might help you choose one as well.

Who is the band director? And is he nice? And does he mind someone who likes to have fun?

Mr. Owen and Mr. Van Kley are the freshmen teachers. We both teach all freshmen classes. We like to have fun while learning music. Both are goofy in their own ways.

Are the bands that you get placed in high school based off the grade you are in, or are they based of your skill level?

As a 9th grader, should you not audition for an upperclassmen band, the band is based off your grade in school. As a 10th-12th grader, students are placed in band classes based on skill.

Can I be in Marching band and still do Show Choir?

Yes. Students do this every year.

How large are most high school bands?

It really depends on the size of the school. At Batavia High School, there are about 225 students in all of our band classes. About 12% of the student population is enrolled in band class, which is much higher than the average.