

Thousand Oaks High Instrumental Music Department

Parent Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Focus of Instrumental Music Program?

The focus of the Thousand Oaks Instrumental Music Department is to provide an area of musical growth creating teamwork through individual and group excellence. It's where all students can participate as an individual and become a rewarded member of our team.

The Music Department is a collaboration of outstanding students, parents and instructors all striving to achieve program excellence. Lancer Music students join a team, focused on the thrill of performance, self-sacrifice for the good of the group and the fun and success that comes from planning and hard work. We work together in ensembles as we represent the image of our Department, the School and the Community.

Our goal is individual excellence in instrumental music and visual performance.

We have a variety of different ensembles that our students can participate in: marching band, three concert bands, three jazz ensembles, color guard, winter guard, percussion ensemble, percussion techniques and drum line. That's 12 ensembles plus a variety of extra smaller ensembles that the students put together themselves that provide opportunities and excellence in music and visual performance

3 Concert Bands (Full Year)

Wind Ensemble (Honors)
Wind Symphony
Symphonic Band

3 Jazz Bands

AM Jazz (Full Year)
Jazz Combo (Full Year)
PM Jazz 1 (2nd Semester)
PM Jazz 2 (2nd Semester)

3 Percussion Ensembles

Percussion Techniques Class (1st/2nd Semester)
Drum Line (2nd Semester – Optional)
Percussion Ensemble (2nd Semester – Optional)

2 Visual Ensembles

Color Guard (1st/2nd Semester)
Winter Guard (2nd Semester – Optional)

Marching Band P.E. Credit

Nationally Ranked Marching Band
(1st Semester- Optional)

Course Offerings:

Wind Ensemble (H)

The Wind Ensemble is premier performance concert band at Thousand Oaks High School. Members of this exclusive group study and perform the most advanced literature available for band.

Designed for advanced students, band members must audition during late Spring and January (percussion) each year for acceptance into this select ensemble. Instrumentation in this ensemble is usually one per part and students are seated by performance ability. The top chair in each section is the principal player and earns the responsibility to organize the needs of their perspective section. The principle player also is the soloist for any given solo that is required for the ensemble as determined by the director.

Wind Ensemble section members are ranked by audition and may challenge the player in the next chair through the challenge process. During their spring season, the Wind Ensemble participates in the district band festival hosted by TOHS and any other festival scheduled by the director. This elite group has consistently earned "Superior" ratings at the festival.

Non Marching Band Members of this ensemble will participate in the stands at home football games.

Wind Symphony

The Wind Symphony is designated for experienced students musicians who wish to extend their training by studying and performing challenging musical repertoire. As their musical abilities mature through study and practice in the Wind Symphony, many of these student musicians will move on to become members of the Wind Ensemble.

Because of the high level of musical skill required, band members must audition during late spring and January (percussion) each year for acceptance into this select ensemble. Instrumentalists in the Wind Symphony are organized by section, with each group having a section leader called the principal player. Section members are ranked by audition and may challenge the player in the next chair through the challenge process.

During their spring season, the Wind Symphony participates in the district band festival hosted by TOHS and any other festival scheduled by the director. This ensemble has consistently earned "Superior" ratings at the festival.

Non Marching Band Members of this ensemble will participate in the stands at home football games.

Symphonic Band

The Symphonic Band is designed for novice and intermediate student musicians who wish to extend their training by studying and performing an appropriately challenging musical repertoire. As their musical abilities mature through study and practice in the Symphonic Band, many of these student musicians will move on to become members of the Wind Symphony and Wind Ensemble. Band members must audition during late spring and January (percussion) each year for acceptance into this select ensemble. Instrumentalist in the Symphonic Band are organized by section, with each group having a section leader called the principal player. Section members are ranked by audition and may challenge the player in the next chair through the challenge process.

During their spring season, the Symphonic Band participates in the district band festival hosted by TOHS and any other festival scheduled by the director.

Non Marching Band Members of this ensemble will participate in the stands at home football games.

TOHS Jazz

Jazz opens up an entirely new dimension for students in the Thousand Oaks Instrumental Music Department. It gives students an opportunity to experience and experiment with new styles of music. A broad range of jazz styles is explored including examples of: bebop, swing, latin, rock, etc... All members are encouraged to improvise.

Members of the Jazz Ensembles perform with the following instrumentation: Alto, Tenor and Bari Saxes, Trombones, Trumpets, Piano, Guitar, Bass, Trap Set (Drum Set) and Auxiliary Percussion. (Woodwind Doublings may be required).

Thousand Oaks High School currently has Three Jazz Ensembles and a Jazz Combo. Placement into these ensembles is determined by audition (Late Spring for AM Jazz).

The Jazz Ensembles perform for school activities, concerts and in various Jazz Festivals in the spring.

AM Jazz Band

The Am Jazz Ensemble is the top Jazz Band at Thousand Oaks High School. The members of this ensemble are selected through audition held in Late Spring. Most of AM Jazz ensemble members are in other instrumental concert ensemble classes with the exception of Guitar, Bass and Piano. This is yearlong class, which meets at 7:00 AM, Monday through Friday, hence the name AM Jazz.

PM Jazz Bands

The PM Jazz Ensemble is designed for Beginning and Intermediate Jazz Students. Both PM Jazz Ensembles meet during the second semester on Tuesday and Thursday from 3 – 5 PM.

Percussion Techniques (Fall/Spring)

All percussion students enroll in the percussion techniques class where they hone their skill on Mallets, Auxiliary Percussion and a wide variety of drums. In January, percussion addition for spots in one of the three concert bands. Percussion students selected into the concert bands are expected to stay current with percussion techniques needed for participation.

Marching Band – P.E. Credit

The Horns, Color Guard (flags, rifles and visual), Pit (stationary percussion) and Battery (marching percussion) work together to produce a dazzling fall field spectacular. Band members begin their preparations for fall at the two-day June Band camp. During the summer, Band students attend sectionals (mini rehearsals with others who play the same instrument) and practice their music. Weekly clinics may be scheduled and all "in town" members should attend. The Color Guard and Drum Line conduct rehearsal and training clinics at additional times throughout the summer. Dates will be posted on the band calendar (tohsband.org). All of the marching band students and staff come together at August Band Camp. The excitement and hard work of band camp culminates with our Annual Family Night where Boosters get their first chance to see the show that will soon become the stuff of memories. The show is rehearsed and perfected in weekday afternoon practices after school until the season ends in late November. Full participation at all rehearsals and at Friday and Saturday performances is required for the success of the program.

Marching Band – P.E. Credit cont.

Each fall, the Lancer Marching Band membership performs their production at field show competitions at the local, state and national level. Field shows have evolved from the traditional football game halftime performance into a remarkable display of musicianship, marching and artistic movement. We perform our show for appreciative audiences at Friday night football games, and local and regional competitions on select Saturdays.

Drum Line & Concert Percussion - **Optional

After the conclusion of the Marching Band season, many percussion (and some non-percussion) members join the Drum Line and Percussion Ensemble. The Drum Line and Percussion Ensemble creates a show that is performed at local, regional in door competitions. Drum Line / Percussion Ensemble program information is provided to members in October. Additional expenses apply.

What is the difference between the pit, battery, percussion, and drum line?

Members of our Percussion Program perform in a variety of ensembles, including our 3 concert bands, percussion ensemble and marching band. Percussion students take a fall course together to perfect their skills in a percussion only class. In January, our percussion students audition on a snare, timpani and mallets for placement into one of the three concert bands. If we have an abundance of percussion students, we offer a percussion techniques class during the second semester.

Anyone that plays a mallet, drum or auxiliary instrument is part of the percussion department. Pit and Battery happen to be terms that are used to separate stationary percussion instruments from moving percussion instruments. Moving percussion instruments is something a student would wear or carry while moving. So if a student plays anything that is stationary they are part of the Pit section and student that is marching is a member of the battery section.

Drum Line happens to be a term to describe the ensemble that is optional in the second semester (Spring). As a member of the second semester (Spring) Drum Line you can perform in the pit or in the battery.

Color Guard

Students who love to visually perform in the art form of Dance, Flags, Rifles, Sabres and Props can join our Award Winning Color Guard. Both Girls and Boys are well, and no previous experience is needed. A Variety of Positions (novice, intermediate and advance) are available so that all students perform within a range of comfort for their abilities.

After the conclusion of the Marching Band season, Color Guard class continues to develop and refine their skills. Many Color Guard members can join our Optional Winter Guard unit.

Winter Guard - **Optional

After the conclusion of the Marching Band season, Color Guard class continues to develop and refine their skills. Many Color Guard members join our optional Winter Guard unit. The Winter Guard creates a show that is performed at local, regional and National indoor color guard competitions. Winter Guard Information is provided to members in October. Additional expenses apply.

Our Professional Staff

As you can see, we currently offer 12 semester course offerings. That is the equivalent to more than 2 full time certificated teachers. While state or district funding does not provide us with more than one teacher, we are extremely lucky to raise and collect funds to provide additional staff so that we may offer a full comprehensive band program.

Our extremely capable and gifted professional staff lead many distinctive sections and ensembles in our program. Their ability to teach our students new skills helps them grow musically, artistically, and emotionally. The success of our program is, in part, a result of our professional staff's efforts to bring out the very best in each student. They provide the instructional and coaching support necessary to run this very large organization throughout the entire school year. The TOHS Band Instructional Staff are employees of the CVUSD.

Student Leadership

What is the student leadership and when do the students train for leadership.

Leadership classes are scheduled after school. Past history has shown that there are four different sessions. They are open to any student in our department that wants to be a leader and/or who wants to learn how to be a leader. Sometimes we have Freshman that state they are not ready, but want to have the experience to understand what they may be asked to do and how they can fulfill that commitment to the band program. Those four (4) after school sessions are mandatory for anyone that wants to be a leader. Once again, it is mandatory for prospective leaders to attend ALL FOUR sessions in order to be eligible for selection. These spring dates can be found on the calendar on our website.

Can a beginning player in band or someone who has never played before be in band?

This question is answered in many different ways.

Any student that wants to join our color guard can join without experience. A color guard member will be evaluated and given performance responsibility based on the right level of experience and success. Dance students are expected to have some dance experience.

A musician that is coming in having previous musical experience whether through their own middle school band program and/or private lessons is evaluated as any other band member and placed in the correct class for the right level of experience and success.

A beginning student can be accepted, after an evaluation, and may be asked to take private lessons so they can get caught up musically with their class. The reason we do this is we want every student to feel as though they are an integral part and valued member of our program, where they participate and add to the group efforts of the team.

Do the musicians have to be top notch on their instrument?

We are an educational institution and it is our job to provide opportunities for growth for all individuals. If we provide growth for an individual then of course the ensemble that the individual is apart of will grow as well. It's our hope that we have the ability to create an opportunity for growth and for excellence and we want all students to perform at the best of their ability while feeling comfortable about their progress. We take students from all ranges of experience, from novice to advanced, and we have a tiered system for performance within the color guard as well as a tiered system for our three concert bands so that every student can experience success in their area of skill.

Do we have to purchase a musical instrument?

The band has a limited number of specialty instruments to round out the instrumentation of the band. Most students either buy their own instrument while a few students rent instruments from a music store.

Students interested in using district-owned instruments are required to follow the instrument checkout procedures. These procedures include: completion of the designated check-out form with proper adult and student signatures, donation payment and adherence to the guidelines stipulated on the signed contract with regard to maintaining the condition of the instrument and assuring that it is serviced only by a qualified musical instrument repairman approved by Mr. Martone.

How are students (Woodwind and Brass) placed into the appropriate band?

In May/June, we will have placement auditions to appropriately place each musician in a class where he /she will be most successful. Each student will be placed in one of the band classes based on the audition results. The counselors, just prior to the start of the school year, will adjust your schedule to reflect your placement with Mr. Martone's approval. Students will not be promoted up to an advanced level to fix scheduling conflicts.

Can my student be in band while taking a full academic load?

Yes, you definitely can take a full academic load and still be in band. Occasionally scheduling conflicts do occur. Please, call Mr. Martone if you cannot resolve a conflict and he will attempt to help you work out the problem. Highly motivated students use summer school to ease school year academic scheduling demands.

Will my child be able to keep up his/her grades?

The answer is definitely "YES". The important lessons that band students learn (commitment to excellence, preparation, time-management, dedication, and self-discipline) carry over into academic areas. The band's average GPA is above 3.0 and many band members are honor students. Several have a 4.0 GPAs or higher. Band students are definitely above average in academic areas and, with few exceptions, they attend college after graduating from high school.

Is Visual/Performing Credit given for band?

YES, all levels of instrumental music plus AM Jazz band and second Semester Color Guard earn UC and CSU credit for fine arts as well as satisfying the School District graduation requirement for visual and performing arts.

Can my child be in band while participating in a sport?

Being in band and on an athletic team can present a scheduling problem--it depends on the sport season dates and the coach. Participation in fall sports is difficult because, like marching band, most teams also practice during the afternoon. Most winter and spring sports do not present a problem.

Time

What kind of time commitment does the music department involve?

Most activities for Symphonic Band, Wind Symphony, Wind Ensemble and Jazz Band occur during the second semester. These groups participate in the December Holiday Concert. During the second semester, they perform at two or three afternoon or evening concerts and attend one or two musical festivals. In addition, it is expected that students will practice at home every day. Private lessons are strongly encouraged. A list of local private teachers is posted in the band room. All performance requirements are listed on the Band Calendar in advance. All ensembles are graded so attendance is mandatory for rehearsals and performances.

The Marching Band rehearses 8th period (3:00 PM) every school day in the fall and competes somewhere in Southern California 6 Saturdays from early October through the third week of November. One or two overnight trips are planned for the marching season. We also perform at 4-6 home Friday night football games.

Winter Guard and Spring Drum Line are 2nd semester optional activities involving additional time and financial commitments. Meetings for these activities are typically held in Oct/Nov.

How much extra time is involved with the ensembles?

Each band class meets daily for one class period during the school day. Each band class is a year long class. Each band student may also participate in the Marching Band, which meets daily, as a class (period 8). 8th period attendance is taken at 3:00 and the class with different ending times depending on the focus of the day. Sometimes it's 4:30 and/or 5:00. Typically the 8th period class puts in 7-1/2 hours per week of rehearsal Monday through Friday. The 8th period

On average, a marching band student spends 17 more hours of Marching Band P.E. for the 1st semester than a regular P.E. Class, as we do not meet for 1 or 2 weeks in December and the entire month of January. If you do not participate in marching band you are required to fulfill your schools PE requirement with a sport or PE class during the school day.

What and when is Marching Band camp? Must everyone attend?

We host two marching band camps during the summer months. Each camp is held on the TOHS campus. The focus is on learning marching, routines and music for the fall field show. It is here that our Brass/Woodwind Instrumentalists, Color Guard and Drum Line come together as a team, passing down Lancer traditions while working hard and having fun preparing for a successful year. The August Camp is a mandatory camp.

June Camp: Monday and Tuesday, directly after the regular school year ends.
8:30AM - 4:30PM with a 90-minute lunch break.

August Camp: Monday - Friday (Mandatory) Time / Schedule printed on band calendar.

What if my child will not be able to attend marching band camp?

If your child cannot make August Band Camp, you should contact Mr. Martone immediately to work out a possible solution. Typically this is a situation where any new incoming ninth grade student is not aware of our summer schedule because of late registration. It would be odd for a returning member to miss any part of band camp.

We have a 2-day mini camp at the conclusion of the school year where it's the first Monday and Tuesday of summer and we try to get the new material out and the group of students together under new student leadership. We will play through the music and have an understanding of fundamentals and what we expect the students to work on throughout the summer. Then when we return in August we like to have all the students there so we can move the program forward with all the instructors and help to put our best foot forward for a great successful band season.

We have a mandatory marching band camp in August. It is mandatory because we do the majority of our teaching of our competitive field show. We try to get as much in as possible before the student's responsibility to other classes begins. This is typically 2-full weeks prior to the start of school. Schedule may vary and will be announced and posted on Band Calendar.

Booster Volunteers and staff are on hand FULL TIME to work on the completion of the competitive show. This includes the fitting of uniforms, building of props and individualized attention to sections of the band.

What kind of time commitment is a Friday Football Night?

The students come to a normal school day including 8th period marching band rehearsal and then go right into dinner. The boosters feed the students dinner, (that is part of the expenses that you pay). We get approximately an hour dinner break; change into uniform in designated changing areas. Kids go to specific areas to warm up, and then line up to go to the stadium. We participate in pre-game performance activities and in the stands during the 1st and 2nd quarter. We then perform our competitive show for half-time. We wrap up with comments to the students during the third quarter, and return to the stands to play for the 4th quarter until the end of the game. We march back to the Quad for dismissal. All equipment is put away, we change out of uniform and we are done for the night. Typically students are dismissed between 9:30-10:00 p.m.

This schedule takes place usually for (4) four football games. We do have a 5th game which is Homecoming, we sometimes perform for that game but typically we perform for (4) four regular season home games.

Concert Band Students not involved in Marching Band are expected to play in the stands during the home football games with the marching band students. The Concert Band Students meet in the quad at 6pm wearing their alternate uniform for the game.

What is the typical time commitment for Saturday Marching Band Competition?

We compete on (6) six Saturdays in the fall in the month of October and November. We ask that those days be kept completely open for band because we don't get notification on our performance times until a week prior to the date.

If there is a prelim and finals performance in the same day, we will meet in the morning and travel to our competition site, perform at prelims and participate in finals typically after dinner.

Our performance time for a one-performance contest is usually late in the evening because we compete in the highest classification. Sometimes we are home by 11 p.m. and sometimes its 1 a.m. in the morning. The times are all subject to the competition schedule and distance traveled for that particular event.

What is Pennies for Piccolos? What is the Caroling Fundraiser?

We have two major fundraisers for the music department where all students participate. Pennies for Piccolos is one and Caroling is the other.

Pennies for Piccolos is a collection drive that takes place over the summer months and ends on our last day of August Marching Band Camp. It's a successful fundraiser for the department. All the money collected is housed in the Band ASB Account. Sections of the band compete with each other to see who can raise the most money.

On two consecutive Fridays in December, all students participate in a performance fundraiser/collection drive, which we call our Caroling fundraiser. Our students perform door to door, receiving funds for entertaining during this two-day event. Parent drivers are needed for both fundraisers, please fill out your CVUSD Driver Form (Orientation Meeting) as our success is based on having approved drivers on hand to drive our students.

How to Stay Informed!

How will I find out information during the year?

Information is given at the annual orientation meeting. We try to keep parents in touch with what is going on during monthly booster meetings, email notifications that are sent out and our band website: www.tohsband.org. Band event updates can be found on our calendar housed at the band website.

The majority of the performance calendar is set by May before the Academic Year begins.

Which board member do we contact first with booster questions?

We want you to contact the board member that has the best connection with your wants and your needs. You can go to your class representative (Freshman/Sophomore/Junior/Senior). If you are new to the band you want to ask the Membership Chairperson. If you are a member of the Color Guard section you can go to the Color Guard VP. If you are a Percussionist, please go to the Percussion VP, Jazz Band Members, please go to the Jazz Band VP and if you are a Wind Musician in Band (Brass or Woodwind), you would go to the Band VP, and/or the Band President. All executive board members listed on the website are ready and willing to help.

What is the best way to know/keep up with what is going on in band?

As parent and booster you want to stay active by:

1. Keeping in touch checking the website
2. Referencing the band calendar regularly
3. Attend Booster monthly meetings and any activity.

You're more than welcome to join and help out in any activity whether it be watching from the stands or participating behind the scenes to get the group ready. There is always something that a parent can be involved in.

As a parent, what can I do to help enhance my child's experience in the Music Department?

The best way you can do this is come to the performances and watch your child perform. Give them a pat on the back, and praise. So they feel their participation is important to you and your family. You can also enhance your child's experience by giving them the opportunity to take lessons with a professional. They get one-on-one tutoring where a child can work on independent learning and can grow as an individual musician. The better each individual student gets, the better the band or ensemble will be. That in turn, makes for a more pleasant experience for all.

What is my time obligation to the band as an adult?

Every adult family member of a music department member is also considered to be a booster. It would be great if we could have an abundance of boosters to be able to fulfill all the wants and needs and activities and support activities of our band program. The more boosters involved will lighten the load for the few who hold chair positions and/or board positions.

We ask every parent to fill out an availability form and talent form so we can have it on record and when the time arises, we can call upon you to volunteer something of your expertise for the betterment of your child's ensemble and our program. This survey will be available on our website in April 2012.

Attire

Alternate uniforms are for all students

The Alternate Uniform is a specific set of clothing that the students put on so we look uniform if we are not in our Performance Attire, i.e., Marching Band Uniform, Formal Concert Attire, Winter Guard Uniform, or Drum Line Uniform. It is important that we are able to be recognizable and look professional at all times.

The alternate uniform consists of a green collared "band" polo shirt, black dickie pants or black shorts, and sneakers and the black dickie embroidered jacket. Baseball caps are also given to all performers, which are worn during football games. Alternate Uniforms are used when we are traveling or when we are going back into the stands for awards. Alternate Uniforms are also used for middle school performances or public performances within the City of Thousand Oaks and surrounding areas.

Concert attire

Our concert attire consists of a long black dress for female students. It's the same dress for all female students and is ordered through our booster organization. The dresses are ordered and delivered through our department once sizing is completed.

The male students wear tuxedos. We have a shop in town that takes care of sizing and ordering the students tuxedos or you can purchase on your own.

Marching Band Attire

Marching Band Uniforms are provided to all members, both Instrumentalists and Color Guard Members for use during the school year. More information TBA in the beginning of the fall semester.

What and Where is Band Land?

Band land is an area outside the main double doors of our band room. It's a small courtyard with a couple of picnic tables; there is also a second set of lockers for any student that is in the band program. It happens to be a meeting area; it's also an area for social gatherings for any of the band members. During the two weeks of band camp before school starts, new band members find that band land is an area where they feel safe and secure, a place of comfort with their friends. Whether it be social activities or band activities, it's a great place to have a "sense of home".

What and Where is the White Box?

The white box is a secure collection box located in the band room adjacent to the band office door. This is where all documents and payments are deposited.