

MEMORIAL HS MUSTANG BAND

Suzanne Thompson and David Kastor, Directors

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Dear Incoming Freshmen of 2017-2018:

As you begin the process of selecting classes for your Freshman year at Memorial High School, we'd like to give you some information about the award-winning Mighty Mustang Band. The Mustang Band has a great tradition of excellence in performance and competition. The band has performed for George W. Bush (as Governor of Texas) as well as Cy-Young Award winner Roger Clemens. We consistently earn Superior or Excellent ratings at UIL Marching and Concert and Sight-Reading contests. This Fall, the Mustang Band earned straight Superior ratings at the UIL Marching Contest and advanced to the Area Marching Contest. In the Spring of 2018, we will return to New York City and perform at the National Band & Orchestra Festival in Carnegie Hall.

We hope that you had the opportunity to attend the Marching with the Mustangs event in the Fall. If you did, you were able to perform with us in the stands during the game and on the field at half time. We hope that it was enlightening to see what marching band will be like: the run-through rehearsal at school, the bus ride, marching into the stadium, playing in the stands during the game, and the half time performance.

As you consider your scheduling options for high school, please remember the following. In order to graduate from high school, you will need 1 credit of PE and 1 credit of Fine Arts. Band will help you fulfill **both** of these requirements. For each year that you are in band, you receive 1 credit of Fine Arts. In the Fall semester, 9th and 10th grade band students will receive an additional ½ credit of PE for participation in marching band. Note: Students that are also enrolled in athletics or a PE class will not receive the additional ½ credit of PE.

Please consider the fact that you have already invested three years of time (and your parents' money) into band. You put in many hours practicing and performing. We realize that there are many things that you might want to do in high school. What we would ask of you is this: come to high school and be a part of the band your Freshman year. At the very least, you will earn your Fine Arts credit for graduation. You will be a part of one of the largest organizations on campus. That means that you instantly will have over a hundred other students who can help you here at Memorial (i.e. help you find your way on campus, help you in difficult classes, help look out for you, etc.). The students in band are some of the more involved, bright, and successful students on campus. If, after your Freshman year, you decide that band is not for you, we understand. At least by being in band one year, you can make an informed decision.

We are very excited about this coming year's Freshman class, and we know each of you will have a great impact here at Memorial High School. If you have any questions, please contact one of us using the information below. We look forward to working with you in the future as you finish out your middle school band career and become a member of the 2017-18 Mighty Mustang Band at Memorial High School.

Sincerely,

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FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

How many performing bands are there at Memorial High School?

Currently, there are three concert bands at Memorial HS. The top band is the Symphonic Band, the second band is the Concert I Band, and the third band is the Concert II Band. All three bands combine after school to make the marching band. Students are placed in bands based on ability (there will be an audition in May) and prior years' performance (e.g. grades, attendance at performances, attitude, etc.). There is also a Jazz Band that meets during 5th period lunch and/or after school to prepare for concerts and performances.

What is Summer Band and when does it start?

Summer Band rehearsals start three weeks before school starts. As a District of Innovation, SBISD is petitioning for a possible early start date in August. Summer Band will most likely start on **Monday, July 31, 2017**. We will know more once the 2017-18 calendar is finalized. During Summer Band, we will review our marching fundamentals and work on music to play on the field and in the stands. Toward the end of Summer Band, we will begin working on our contest marching drill. Summer Band hours will be approximately 8:00am – 4:00pm with a break in the middle for lunch. We will practice marching fundamentals outside in the morning for a couple of hours when it is “cooler” and be inside during the afternoon heat. Once Teacher In-service begins, we will meet only in the late afternoon to early evening. You will receive a final schedule near the end of May when we get our entire Fall 2017 calendar. **Note:** Students must attend Summer Band to earn a drill spot in the marching contest show. Please make every effort to plan your family vacations in June and July.

Who is in the marching band?

All students in the band program at Memorial HS make up the marching band. Everyone that has the desire to march will get the opportunity to do so. Students earn a position in the contest drill by passing off (playing by memory) the Fight Song, School Song, and the Marching Show music. Students must also demonstrate an understanding of marching fundamentals.

What do I do for marching band if I play a double reed instrument?

We do not march with double reed instruments (oboe or bassoon). Double reed players can play in the front ensemble if they have some piano experience. The front ensemble is the percussion group that sets up on the front of the field. It includes instruments such as marimba, vibraphone, xylophone, bells, and other auxiliary percussion instruments. Double reed players can also perform in the color guard. Once marching season is over, double reed players will play oboe or bassoon during class as we transition to concert season.

Are there any special events or camps over the summer before Summer Band?

There will be a Marching Band Orientation for all students that will be in the 2017-2018 Mustang Band on June 1 & 2, 2017. Percussion and color guard students should also make plans to attend Percussion Camp and Color Guard Camp during the week of July 24-27, 2017 from approximately 8:00am – 4:00pm. More information will be available later in the spring semester for all of these events.

What kind of credit do I get for being in band?

For each semester that you are in band, you receive ½ credit of Fine Arts. In the Fall semester, 1st and 2nd year band students will receive an additional ½ credit towards PE. Students that are also enrolled in athletics or a PE class will not receive the additional PE credit.

What is color guard and who can join?

Color guard is open to all students at Memorial High School. It is an auxiliary unit which performs with the band using dance, body movement, flags, rifles, sabers, etc. They meet in a separate class and practice with the marching band after school. They attend and perform at all functions where the marching band performs. The color guard class is a year-long class. In the Spring semester, the color guard competes in a series of indoor competitions presented by the Texas Color Guard Circuit.

Can I be in band and athletics?

Yes! Many sports do not conflict with band. In the past, we have had band students on the track, tennis, swim, soccer, basketball, and football teams. It is harder to make some sports work with band than others, but I will work with you so that you can do both. If you will be playing Freshman Football or Volleyball, you will go to those sports' practices after school and all of those games. You will come to band when you can. This may mean that you shadow someone in the contest show or help move props, but you can still attend the varsity football games with the band when possible.

Can I be in band and other extracurricular activities?

Yes! In the past there have been band members that also participated in choir, orchestra, pre-Markettes, and drama (to name a few). Communication and planning are essential to being able to participate in multiple activities. Please call if you have any specific questions.

From the Students:

Top 10 Reasons to Join the MHS Band

- 10) Band Camp: Make new friends and learn your way around school before any of the other freshmen.
- 9) Anytime the football team plays, you have a great seat!
- 8) You will have a junior or senior as your Band Buddy.
- 7) At every halftime, you get to go on the field and rock out.
- 6) There is always someone willing to help you with school work.
- 5) After a home game, the Markettes give you cookies for the ride home.
- 4) You don't have to take a PE class for credit.
- 3) You get a free tan that lasts all winter.
- 2) You get out of class 10 minutes early for pep rallies.
- 1) You get to go on Band Trips to places like Corpus Christi, Disney World, and New York City!

For our society to move forward, for our culture to survive, fine arts education must remain strong. We already know that kids who study music do better in physics and math. Teaching the fine arts is a rounding of the whole development of the student.

Former Representative Rob Eissler, House Public Education Committee Chair

We have encouraged the study of music and the arts in addition to the fundamentals of math, science, reading, and writing, which all have led collectively to tremendous gains in education in Texas over the last decade.

Former Governor Rick Perry

A recent study states that music majors have the highest rate of admittance to medical school, a whopping 66.7%. Biochemistry, the subject area closest to medicine, has a rate of 59.2 %, Rockefeller Foundation

- *An interest in a performing art leads to a high state of motivation that produces the sustained attention necessary to improve performance and the training of attention that leads to improvement in other domains of cognition.*
- *Specific links exist between high levels of music training and the ability to manipulate information in both working and long-term memory; these links extend beyond the domain of music training.*
- *In children, there appear to be specific links between the practice of music and skills in geometrical representation, though not in other forms of numerical representation.*
- *Correlations exist between music training and both reading acquisition and sequence learning. One of the central predictors of early literacy, phonological awareness, is correlated with both music training and the development of a specific brain pathway.*

Arts and Cognition: Findings Hint at Relationships

Michael S. Gazzaniga, Ph.D.

University of California at Santa Barbara

- *At the same time the U.S. schools are encouraged and forced to chase after test scores, China, Singapore, South Korea, and Japan — all named as major competitors — have started education reforms aimed at fostering more creativity and innovative thinking among their citizens.*
- *As the United States moves toward a required curriculum of study for high schools, China works to implement a flexible system with more electives and choices for students. Creativity cannot be taught, but it can be killed.*
- *Involvement in the arts is a part of the multifaceted experience of growing up in the United States.*

“Are we fixing the wrong things?” Educational Leadership, May 2006 — Yong Zhao, Distinguished Professor of Education and Director of the U.S.-China Center for Research on Education Excellence

The U.S. Department of Education ...*recommends the arts to college-bound junior high and high school students asserting, “Many colleges view participation in arts and music as valuable experience that broadens students’ understanding and appreciation of the world around them.”*

Graduation Plans

Under House Bill 5, students now graduate under the Foundation High School Program graduation plan. This plan replaced the state's 4x4 graduation plan with a 22-credit foundation plan that allows students to receive endorsements in specific areas. Here is a quick overview of these requirements.

22 Course Credits Under the FOUNDATION Plan

- 4 English Language Arts
- 3 Mathematics (Algebra I, Geometry, and Advanced Math)
- 3 Social Studies (World Geography or World History, U.S. History, Government & Economics)
- 3 Science (Biology and 2 additional sciences – advanced or IPC)
- 2 Languages Other than English
- **1 Fine Arts***
- **1 Health Fitness***
- 5 Electives

ENDORSEMENT CREDITS

(22 Foundation Credits + 4 Endorsement Credits = 26 Total Credits)

- Additional Advanced Math or CTE Math
- Additional Advanced Science or CTE Science
- 2 Endorsement-specific electives

Distinguished Level of Achievement:

- Successfully complete the requirements for the Foundation Plan and an endorsement
- Successfully complete Algebra II as one of the required advanced math courses

STARR End-of Course (EOC) Exams required for graduation:

- English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History

***No matter which Endorsement you select, Band will help fulfill your Fine Arts and Health Fitness requirements for graduation. It is also possible to be in Band and Athletics all four years of high school. We will work with you to make Band a part of your high school plan.**