

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to know how to play an instrument before I join?

Students do not have to have prior musical experience in order to join a music class. There are classes of all levels! Do not let the “audition” part of the process scare you; just let us know that you haven’t played an instrument before and we’ll make sure to set you up for success.

Do music classes have **honors credit**?

Yes! As a 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year music student, you will receive honors credit for your concert band class, jazz band class, choir class, or string class.

How can my student fulfill academic requirements (such as language courses, graduation requirements) with music courses in his/her schedule?

SEE SAMPLE 4-YEAR COURSE OUTLINE FOR COLLEGE BOUND MUSICIAN

What if my student has a rigorous academic schedule? Is it possible to participate in music and balance a challenging workload?

Yes! Though academics are the primary focus, Oak Park High School encourages all students to find a passion and participate in extracurricular activities. Most students participate in some form of after-school activity (8th period, sports) and still manage to maintain good grades at all levels. Taking on a time commitment such as music also develops time-management skills and adds to a strong college application!

What are the academic and cognitive benefits of a music curriculum in high school?

Many studies prove that consistent participation in music ensemble classes and music performance at a high level directly correlates to higher GPA’s and standardized test scores. In addition, research indicates that musical training develops cognitive skills in language, reasoning, memory, coordination, emotional development, intellectual curiosity, discipline, spatial intelligence and creative thinking.

What are the social benefits of a music curriculum in high school?

Joining one of our many music classes creates an instant community experience from day one in high school. Music students can form friendships and lasting memories with their peers. During the year, they go to festivals and competitions together, play at the basketball and football games, and go on trips organized by the music department (including Disneyland!). Music students develop a strong sense of camaraderie and make many friends within the department.

Are there opportunities for leadership available in music?

Yes! Our instrumental music department is partially run by our student leadership team called the Instrumental Music Council. Students can apply to join and earn a role as a leader within the department. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn leadership skills and add to a résumé or college application. There is also leadership within choir, marching band, winter drumline, and color guard.

Can I take more than one music class? How many can I take?

Yes! Students can take as many music classes as they can fit in their schedule! Taking a zero period class or summer school to fulfill requirements can free up schedule space and allow students to take more music classes.

How do auditions work? Which concert band class should I sign up for?

Everyone who wants to take a concert band class must sign up for Wind Ensemble (CP) and will be placed into each ensemble by audition. (The student's schedule, received at registration, will have the appropriate band class period and course name on it.) Auditions are held at the end of the school year. Current music students in high school and 8th grade will be given information about auditions in their OPHS/MCMS band classes. Anyone interested in a music class who is not currently enrolled in one in OPUSD should contact Mr. Borquez (zborquez@opusd.org) to set up an audition time. For choir, contact Ms. Cissell (hcissell@opusd.org). We'd love to have you!

Do I have to be in a music class to be in marching band?

Yes. The prerequisite for joining marching band is enrollment in any OPHS music class. This includes concert bands, string orchestra, and choir classes.

Should I take summer school? Should I take a zero period?

Summer school and zero period classes are highly recommended and can be very useful to create schedule space for music classes. These opportunities are especially good for fulfilling graduation requirements such as Health, Geography, P.E. classes, and World History.

Is music fun?

Yes! Talk to anyone involved in the music department and you'll hear about great music, friends, field trips, and performances. If you join the music department, you'll instantly be part of a family!