

McLean Highlander Band: An Overview

Those new to the McLean band program can find the new member orientation meeting overwhelming. In an effort to provide some context, below is a brief overview of the MHS Highlander Band program. Don't hesitate to contact any member of the MHS Band Parent Association board or Mr. Weise and Ms. Denson with questions.

The Ensembles

Concert Band, Wind Ensemble & Symphonic Band are structured like the middle school bands.

Time Commitment: Rehearsals take place during the school day. Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band each have an additional after school rehearsal each week. There are additional special events during the year that are part of the band program – like District Band Assessment (See Special Events below). At the start of the year, a schedule detailing all band events is distributed. Though subject to change, it is a reasonably accurate snapshot of the year's events.

Marching Band:

Open to all band students (compulsory for Symphonic band members). The band participates in 4 to 5 competitions each season, routinely earning top awards, and performs at all home football games. Rehearsals begin in early August with Marching Band Camp and continue into the school year with three and the season concludes at the end of October with the final competition. Color Guard is part of Marching Band.

Rehearsals: Marching band rehearsals begin in early August with Marching Band Camp and continue during the school year with after school rehearsals through the end of October. During the month of August, students rehearse 5 days a week. Once school begins, rehearsals are 3 days a week: Tuesday and Thursday after school, Wednesdays starting at 7:00pm.

There are additional events like the McLean WinterFest Parade and the various fundraisers that are part of the Marching Band Program. Families are encouraged to talk to veteran marching band parents to get their take. It is a positive experience well worth the time sacrifice.

Competitions: Marching band participates in 4 - 5 weekend competitions in September and October. Most are one-day events (Saturday), but at least one overnight should be expected.

Home Football Games: Marching band performs at every home football game.

Color Guard:

Open to all students. The color guard is part of the marching band during the fall season. They hold most of their early rehearsals separate from the marching band. Then, as the show comes together, they join the marching band rehearsals. Color Guard also has winter and spring training and competition seasons that are separate from band activities. Color guard participates fully in all band fundraisers.

Pep Band:

Student organized and managed, marching band students voluntarily participate and play at away football games, during pep rallies and for other special school events. They practice in the hours directly before each event. School bus transportation is provided to away football games and participation is encouraged.

Jazz Ensembles:

Students are selected in the fall after the start of the school year through audition for the advanced-level Jazz Ensemble and Jazz Combo groups. Beginning and intermediate level students will participate in the Jazz Workshop and Lab Band. Rehearsals take place entirely after school. The bands perform at school functions, music festivals, competitions and local venues by request. Members are exposed to classic big band era and contemporary pieces. Jazz Ensemble and Jazz Combo participation goes on the student transcript as an 8th period credited class.

Percussion Class:

Students enroll in Percussion as part of their school curriculum. They practice during the school day on special pieces for percussion, and on pieces to be performed in concert as part of the Concert Band, Wind Ensemble, and Symphonic Band.

Special Events

All-District Band Auditions

This event takes place on a Saturday in January at McLean High School. Students will come from all over the district to play individually for judges in the hope of getting the future opportunity to play in the All-District Band and to audition for All-State Band. As well as auditioning, all MHS band students participate as host volunteers for this all-day event.

All-District Band

This is a 3-day weekend event for the students who are selected during the All-District Band Auditions. It starts on a Thursday evening with 2 days of rehearsals and a Saturday performance.

All-State Band Auditions

These auditions take place on a Saturday at James Madison University and are only for the students who are the top performers from the All-District Band and the Senior Regional Orchestra. Top performers from around the state are invited to play in the All-State Band.

All-State Band

This is a 3-day weekend event for the students who are selected during the All-State Band Auditions. It starts on a Thursday evening with 2 days of rehearsals and a Saturday performance. It takes place at a local state university, like George Mason University.

Solo/Ensemble Festival

This opportunity is open to all band students to perform individually with an accompanist, or as a small ensemble. Students choose a piece to play and arrange for their own accompanist if the music requires it. They perform before a judge and receive feedback and a rating on their performance.

District Assessments

This event takes place on a Saturday in the spring at another high school. Symphonic Band and Wind Ensemble both participate in this assessment of the full band and their ability to perform and to sight-read. Parents are welcome to attend the band assessments.

Fundraising Events

The 2 biggest fundraisers are **Tag Day** in September, and **Raffle Day** in March or April. Both events are all-day fundraisers that involve the students from all our band programs. Combined, the funds raised from these two fundraisers provide well over half of the operating budget.

Funds are also raised through:

Fruit Sale

Restaurant Fundraisers,

Shopping on **Amazon** using the band's portal: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/54-1679679>

Cause Network <https://mhsband.causenetwork.com>, an online shopping portal to numerous stores like Target, Lowes, Walmart, Saks Fifth Avenue, Fandango, Kohl's, UnderArmor and so many more! Participating stores donate a percentage of purchases automatically at no additional cost to you.

Volunteer

Our band program would not exist without the generous gift of your time. Parent volunteers are **crucial** to the success of the fundraising events throughout the year AND for a successful marching band season.

Mark your calendars for Tag Day, Raffle Day, and Fruit Sale to ensure you are available to lend a hand. You will also learn more about the parent support required for Marching Band and All-District Band Auditions.

A complete list of MHSBPA members can be found at www.mcleanband.org. Parents are welcome to attend the band board meetings which take place at 7:30 pm on the second Tuesday of each month throughout the school year.