

Mary Persons High School Band Program



300 Montpelier Avenue
Mr. Jim Finch
Principal

Forsyth, Ga. 31029
Mr. Eric Thompson
Director of Bands

Phone (478)994-2812
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Assistant Band Director



2.4.14

NOTES from the Director *Preparing for the Black and Gold Bulldog Brigade*

WHAT IS "BAND?"

The Mary Persons High School Band Program is a co-curricular and extra-curricular program designed to engage students in instrumental performing arts. Concert and marching bands provide opportunities for students to participate during the school day as well as be a part of an exciting extra-curricular program. This edition of "NOTES from the Director" will hopefully answer frequently asked questions regarding participation in the Mary Person High School Band Program.

WHO ARE THE DIRECTORS?



Mr. Eric Thompson is in his fourth year in education and first year as Director of Bands at Mary Persons High School. Mr. Thompson began teaching at Treutlen Middle & High School in 2010. As director of the Treutlen's bands, he increased student participation by 25%. While at TMHS, Mr. Thompson's bands scored superior ratings, received best in class at the Jeff Davis Yellow Jacket Marching Band Invitational, and 30% of his band made and attended district honor band. The TMHS Band travelled and performed at Universal Studios, Six Flags over Georgia, and Wild Adventures Theme Park. Mr. Thompson is an active member of the Georgia Music Educators Association (GMEA), National Band Association (NBA), International Trumpet Guild, PAGE, and a member of Phi Mu Alpha, the men's national music fraternity.

Before becoming the Director of Bands in Treutlen County, Mr. Thompson attended and received his Bachelors of Music Education degree from the University of Georgia. While at UGA his most notable accomplishments were being principal trumpet of the Symphonic Band, principal trumpet of the Wind Symphony, trumpet soloist with the Redcoat Marching Band, being the featured trumpet soloist at Midfest, traveling abroad to China for a 15 day performance tour, and studying under the world renown trumpet player, Fred Mills.

Mr. Thompson is originally from Macon, Georgia and is excited to be back in Central Georgia to be a part of Monroe County Schools and Mary Persons High School as he leads the Black and Gold Bulldog Brigade.



Mr. Kyle Sargent is finishing up his second year of teaching band, and has been proud to stay his career in Monroe County. Under his direction, the Monroe County Middle School Band has seen explosive growth in participation and achievement. Enrollment in 6th grade band nearly doubled this past year, and an even larger class is expected in the '13-'14 school year. The 7th and 8th grade Bulldog Band achieved Excellent and Superior marks at Festivals this year, and could be found performing anywhere from C Team football games to downtown Atlanta to the University of Georgia. More students are participating in regional honor bands, UGA Midfest, pep band, and taking private lessons than ever before. Mr. Sargent is extremely excited to work next year with his friend and colleague from UGA, Mr. Eric Thompson.

HOW WILL DIRECTORS MAKE DECISIONS?

The goal of all decisions made by either the director or assistant director will be to meet the needs of Monroe County Schools' students in an effort to ensure a high quality music program. Each decision must be made with the understanding that individual issues have a potential impact on the entire band during a performance. As decisions are made, know each decision must be made with the understanding that each student's issue may be individual but the decision must be able to be applied to any other student who has a similar situation arise.

CAN I PARTICIPATE IN BAND AS A CLASS AND SPORTS?

Yes. Students can participate in both athletics and band with careful planning and coordination of practice schedules. Specifically, playing a sport and being in band as a CLASS during the school day should never be a conflict. Most conflicts arise between required after-school rehearsals for marching band and sports. In the spring, both concert and symphonic bands rehearse in sectional and full band formats. Students and parents should provide at minimum a 48 hour notice of a conflict so a resolution/compromise can be sought.

CAN I DO MARCHING BAND AND SPORTS?

Yes. If there is a conflict between a particular fall sport and marching band, parents and the student musician should contact the director to arrange a time to discuss the situation and possible solutions. As students prepare for life after high school, having a high quality academic resume mixed with fine arts and sports is the perfect trifecta for college acceptance. If you will work with us, we will work with you!

IS MARCHING BAND MANDATORY?

No. Marching band is not mandatory but is one of the most exciting extra-curricular programs you can be a part of while in high school and even college. The marching band is the most visual aspect of the Mary Persons High School Band Program in the community. The marching band is a performing extension of MPHS. Members of the marching band demonstrate pride in their high school just as student athletes who participate in sporting events. *In addition to supporting the football team the marching band also competes at competitions, marches in parades, and performs at various other events as requested.* Marching band teaches skills that are essential for success in not only band, but life. Time-management, commitment, hard work, team-building and determination are skills taught daily.

Note: Students will not be allowed to “come in and out” of the band program as a result of not wishing to participate in marching or concert band. Dropping band fall or spring semester for non-academic or resolvable class schedule conflict reasons will result in the student being out of the band program for the remainder of the year, and most likely permanently.

I WANT TO BE IN MARCHING BAND...DO I HAVE TO GO TO BAND CAMP?

Yes. Missing band camp is like missing 4 weeks of after school marching band rehearsal! How so? In one day of band camp, students will accomplish the same amount of work practicing the half-time and competition show as in a full week of marching band rehearsal once school has started. The band does not have extra instrumentalist/marchers sitting in the stands waiting or prepared to take the place of a student who misses practice or a performance. If a student is missing, sound quality is compromised and there is a hole in the marching formation. Students are expected to be present for practice in order to perfect marching and playing skills. Fellow band members need you present because you are an integral part of the production

Is Band camp hard? If you mean, will it be tiring? Absolutely! If you mean, will you be lost or unable to do what everyone else is doing? NO! Last year there were 8th graders just like you who thought they'd be lost or unable to march, march and play an instrument, or march, play an instrument, and memorize the music. Now, they're “pros” at it!

Band camp is not just marching all day. A great deal of our time is spent becoming a “family”. Yes, a significant part of our time will be spent practicing the music and marching but there is also time for you socialize with your friends. Indoor musical rehearsals are held to minimize our time out in the extreme heat. We will have theme days, water games, and other fun activities to break up long practice days. You will work hard during band camp but you will also have a great time creating memories of your time in high school that will be priceless.

WHAT IS THE TIME COMMITMENT FOR MARCHING BAND?

There are basically two divisions of time for rehearsal for the marching band: Summertime (various camps as listed below) and after-school rehearsals once school starts in mid-August. You **are** required to attend **all** days of band camp in order to participate. Below is a chart that explains the summertime commitment. Once school resumes in August, the practice schedule is consistent. The after school schedule is also listed on the next page in the second chart.

MARCHING BAND (MB) PRACTICE SCHEDULE FOR SPRING/SUMMER 2014

Date	Event	Who is involved
June 16, 2014	Drumline, Pit, and Trumpets Spring Training 1:00-5:00PM	Drumline, Pit, Trumpets
June 17, 2013	Drumline, Pit, Alto Saxophone, Mellophone Spring Training 1:00-5:00PM	Drumline, Pit, Alto Saxophone, Mellophone
June 18, 2014	Drumline, Pit, Low Brass and Low Woodwind Spring Training 1:00-5:00PM	Drumline, Pit, Low Brass and Low Woodwind
June 19, 2014	Drumline, Pit, and Flute Spring Training 1:00-5:00PM	Drumline, Pit, and Flute
June 20, 2014	Drumline, Pit, and Clarinet Spring Training 1:00-5:00PM	Drumline, Pit, and Clarinet
July 17 th -18 th , 2014	Rookie Camp at Mary Persons High School 8:00AM-12:00PM	New Members
July 21 st -25 th , 2014	Show Music and Marching Technique Camp 9:00AM-5:00PM @ M.P.	Entire MB
July 28 th –August 1 st , 2014	Band Camp 8:00AM-6:00PM	Entire MB
July 21 st	Music Audition	

MARCHING BAND SCHEDULE ONCE SCHOOL STARTS

Day of week/time	Event	Who is involved
Monday, 3:45-6pm	<i>Marching band rehearsal</i>	Entire MB
Tuesday, 3:45-6pm	<i>Marching band rehearsal</i>	Entire MB
Thursday, 3:45-6pm	<i>Marching band rehearsal</i>	Entire MB

The marching band's "peak event" is the last marching contest we attend held in late October. After this event, marching band is reduced to one rehearsal per week, for approximately a one hour rehearsal. ***The busy part of the season is actually from the first week of August to October, a period of only 11-12 weeks.***

Marching Band Trip Spring 2015

The Marching Band will be going on a trip in the spring of 2015 to **Universal Studios** in Orlando Florida. You must be in marching band in order to participate in this trip. Costs and details of the trip will be announced in the fall. There will be plenty of fundraising opportunities to help ensure every student has the ability to participate.



HOW DO I GET IN MARCHING BAND?



Easy! Turn in your commitment form and make your marching band payments for band dues and you are good to go.

DURING CLASS REGISTRATION, BE SURE TO SIGN UP FOR BAND! YOU MUST SIGN UP FOR BAND IN THE FALL AND SPRING!

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Unfortunately, marching band is not free. The cost to march in the Mary Persons High School **Black and Gold Bulldog Brigade** is \$225 or \$200 if you pay by July 25, 2014. The fee to participate in marching band may sound expensive but in comparison to many other bands, \$225 is inexpensive. Many programs charge participants more than \$500 to participate in marching band. The \$225 fee covers additional staff brought in to assist with band camp, music, arrangements, drill, and supplies specifically related to the marching band. Money should NEVER be the reason not to march. If you need to make arrangements or have special circumstances, you and your parents should discuss them with the director. There will be fundraisers to assist in offsetting costs. The Band is not in a position to scholarship students. Below is a payment schedule for those that would like to pay throughout the year.

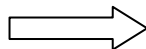
Payment Schedule	
July	\$50.00
August	\$35.00
September	\$35.00
October	\$35.00
January	\$35.00
February	\$35.00
TOTAL	\$225.00

Students who marched the previous year must make sure that all debts to the Band Booster be paid by  June 1st or will automatically forfeit a year of eligibility to participate in Marching Band 

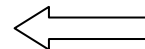
Start Fundraising in March!

The Black and Gold Bulldog Brigade will be starting its doughnut sale this March. Doughnut coupon sale dates are from 3.10.14-3.24.14. All proceeds \$3.00 per coupon will go to your students band account. Please let your director know if you are interesting in participating by email or handwritten note.

THERE WILL BE NO REFUNDS OF BAND DUES



. Mary Persons Band Boosters
P.O. Box 126
Forsyth GA 31029



We hope these pages have served to answer the most frequently asked questions we encounter from new and aspiring **Black and Gold Bulldog Brigade** members. It is hoped that additionally, you can see that the scope of activity that is possible in an active and superior band program such as ours is quite different from the middle school experience, both for the band student and their parents.

Often, we describe high school band like this: "It's called band, just like in middle school, but therein the similarities end." High school band/Marching Band at Mary Persons is truly an opportunity for many wonderful memories, rich musical experience, and life-changing events that successful young adults need in the "real world," regardless of their occupational or educational choice upon graduating. During my time as a director, I have had many former students come back to tell me of how their experience in band was a major factor in their success in college, business, etc. **DON'T** miss this chance- the chance to be a part of memories and music that are SUPERIOR!

EIGHTH GRADE EXCUSE LIST FOR NOT WANTING TO PARTICIPATE IN MARCHING BAND

"I can't memorize music."

TRUTH: All MB members now in the band once said the same thing. They were able to memorize the music and you will too. We teach you how to memorize your music. The music selected will be in within your ability to perform. It will be work but you can do it.

"I heard band camp for new members is awful!"

TRUTH: It is work. It is challenging but the survival rate for band camp is very high. In fact, out of last year's 2014-2015 "rookie" class, all participants survived and are doing well! ☺

"I don't know how to march."

TRUTH: Walking is a skill that took you roughly 12-18 months to learn. You will learn to march like a pro in 6 hours! The more difficult skill is playing your instrument and marching at the same time. You will be able to do both before the end of Band Camp!

"I don't like getting sweaty/cold."

TRUTH: Yes, MB is an outdoor activity. During the hot weather, we take lots of water breaks. We will take every reasonable precaution to keep you safe.

"I can't afford it."

TRUTH: Money will never be a reason that someone cannot participate. In cases where a legitimate financial situation exists that warrants it, we will work out payment plans, extend deadlines, etc. to make participation financially feasible. We have a history of making this happen for people who need it. Every student can participate in fund raising. Efforts will be made based on school and band booster guidelines to allow funds raised by students to be used to offset expenses when possible. **Note: When "extra" trips are planned through a travel company, we cannot alter the trip payment plans at all.**

"It takes too much time."

TRUTH: The marching season is "intense" for an 11 to 12 week period, roughly from the 1st week of August through the last week of October. After marching contests end, we cut the MB rehearsal schedule back to about an hour a week, just enough to make sure Friday night games rock! MB is the place where you'll make memories that last a lifetime....a small sacrifice for such an awesome experience.

"It isn't fun."

Ask a **Black and Gold Bulldog Brigade** member! They can tell you better than anyone how much you will enjoy being a part of the MB.

Black and Gold Bulldog Brigade Commitment Form

YES- I am committing to being in the Black and Gold Bulldog Brigade for 2014-2015. I understand the cost of marching band is \$225 or \$200 if paid by July 25th 2014

YES- I am participating in band as a CLASS, but not committing to marching band due to another conflicting fall school sponsored extra-curricular program deemed excusable by Mr. Thompson. I understand the other consequences of not being in marching band as explained in the accompanying material (i.e. exclusion of some awards, lettering in band, Universal Studios etc.)

NO- I am not participating in band at all and will be removed from any band roster.

***Checks or money orders for Marching Band (Grades 8-12) should be written to the Mary Persons Band Boosters and mailed to.

Mary Persons Band Boosters
P.O. Box 126
Forsyth, GA 31029

Signature of parent/guardian

Signature of student

Printed name of parent/guardian

Printed name of student



**COMMITMENT FORMS FOR ALL CURRENT BAND STUDENTS ARE
DUE BACK NO LATER THAN Tuesday, May 2, 2014**

