

# Music Opportunities for High School: FAQs

## BAND AND CHOIR:

- YOU CAN TAKE BAND and/or CHOIR in high school, even if you have never done them before. All students are welcome! Band and Choir both meet during zero hour and 1<sup>st</sup> hour. If you are joining band or choir in high school, you would need to make arrangements to be sure you are at school by 7:30 am. If transportation is a problem, let us know! We can help connect you with someone you can carpool with to school.
- You can take Band, Choir or Both!
- If you take both, you go to band half the days and choir the other half. A typical schedule is Choir Monday and Wednesday, Band Tuesday and Thursday then you switch off on Friday.
- Band and Choir typically have 3 concerts per year. (Winter, Early Spring and Late Spring) The Band and Choir perform on the same night.
- Fun Fact: If you continue with Band and Choir in High School, you can opt out of some of the PE classes

## Marching Band

Q: What is Marching Band?

A. The Marching Rockets are a group of students who play instruments while marching, typically at the High School Varsity football games and at Marching Band competitions.

Q: Can I do Marching Band and other sports/clubs/activities?

A. YES! We have many students that do multiple activities in high school and marching band. Since marching band is a class, you won't miss any practices. You will need to be present for the competitions and Marching Band camp.

Q. Does the Marching Band compete? What can I expect at a competition?

A. YES! The Marching Rockets typically compete three times per season, between the months of September and October. Competitions are typically on a Saturday and last most of the day. Last year, they competed at Eastern Illinois University (Charleston, IL); Newton, IL; and, Effingham, IL.

Q. What is Marching Band camp? When is it?

A. Marching Band camp is held for one week every summer before school begins. Marching band students are required to attend this camp. This year's dates are August 5-9, 2019. At this camp, students learn the competition show for the school year. It is imperative that all marching band students attend this camp, as it can make it very difficult for the entire marching band show if one person is missing. Plus, this is great way to meet other band students before school starts and its lots of fun!

Q. Besides competitions, when does the marching band perform?

A. The marching band performs at every home Varsity football game. Members will perform a pre-game show, which usually includes one song, the national anthem and the school fight song. Members also perform during half time, which will usually be a paired down version of our competition show, due to time constraints. The marching band also marches in the Homecoming parade. If the football team makes the playoffs and plays at home, the marching band will also perform. In past years, this has included performing at the half time of the IHSA Football Finals at Memorial Stadium in Champaign or at Huskie Stadium at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, IL.

Q. Can I see a video of the marching band?

A. YES! Check out our YouTube page with videos of Unity High School music opportunities. <http://bit.ly/UHSMusic>.

Q. What do my parents have to do?

A. We need parents to help set up equipment and flags for competitions and the home football games. The jobs are not difficult and you can catch on quickly what needs to be done. The best way to learn is to sign up for a job and ask questions of other parents while you are volunteering. Your parents can get free admission to the varsity football games on nights that the sign up to volunteer.

Q. What is a drum major? What kind of commitment does it take?

A. Drum majors are the leaders of the marching band. It is an auditioned role. Auditions are typically held in late spring, for the next school year. The director typically selects two drum majors. The Music Boosters pays for the selected students to attend a summer camp specifically for drum majors. A drum major works with the director on building the best show.

Q. What is Color Guard? Do I have to be in band to be in Color Guard?

A. Color Guard is an auditioned group who performs with the marching band with different brightly colored flags and uniforms. They add to the visual contrast of the show. Auditions are held in late May for color guard. You do not have to play an instrument to be in color guard, but you will need to take band first semester as a class. Color Guard does have some rehearsals outside of class, which are typically every other day.

Q. Is there a cost to be in Marching Band?

A. There are some limited costs associated with being in marching band. All students must have marching band shoes. Orders will be placed during marching band camp. Students will also need to have black socks. The marching band uniform is provided to each student.

## **Pep Band:**

Q. What is Pep Band? What are the time commitments?

A. Pep Band is a group of students who play at all home varsity basketball games, with the purpose of entertaining and creating enthusiasm in the crowd. Students rehearse during their regular band time during the school day. Games usually begin in early December and go through February. Games are usually on Tuesday and Friday nights. Students play a pre-game set, throughout the first half during time outs and during half time. After half time concludes, students are allowed to leave.

## **Jazz Band:**

Q. What is Jazz Band?

A. Jazz band is an extracurricular activity and is a group of students that perform specific jazz pieces to enhance their musical experience. Jazz Band typically does not begin until after marching band season has completed.

Q. When does Jazz Band rehearse?

A. The director sets the rehearsal schedule, but they are typically during zero hour on days when the full band is not rehearsing.

Q. When are the performances?

A. Jazz Band performs at one high school concert, the Fine Arts Festival and Jazz and Java.

## **Jazz Rock:**

Q. What is Jazz Rock? How is it different than Jazz Band?

A. Jazz Rock is offered as a class at Unity High School. You do not have to audition to be in the class. This class is offered for students that are interested in rock band type of performances. Singers and musical instruments are blended together in performances.

Q. When do you perform?

A. Jazz Rock performs at one high school concert, the Fine Arts Festival and Jazz and Java.

## **Show Choir:**

Q: What is High School Show Choir?

A: A daily class of students that sing and dance. It's really fun! The High School group is called Vocal Rush. There are some rehearsals that are held on Friday and Saturdays to prepare for our competition show.

Q: Can I do Show Choir and other sports / clubs / activities?

A: YES! We have many students that do multiple activities in high school and show choir. You will need to be present for the competitions and for the majority of the Friday/Saturday rehearsals.

Q: Does Vocal Rush compete?

A: YES! Competitions are in the spring, and we typically attend 3-4 competitions. Last year, we competed at Danville, IL; Sullivan, IL; Brownsburg, IN; and Lebanon, IN. We placed at all of these competitions!

Q. What can I expect at a competition?

A. Competitions are usually on Saturdays and are all day long. Usually, we will compete one time and then the host school will hold preliminary results/awards of all the groups in our category. At these preliminary awards, we are sometimes announced as a finalist and will perform again in the evening. These can be very long days but are very rewarding and fun!

Q: Are there any other performances for Vocal Rush?

A: Yes! We host a fall showcase, typically in October, which is a fundraiser for show choir. Parent and student involvement is essential. Vocal Rush also performs at the Fine Arts Festival in March and Jazz and Java at the end of the school year.

Q: Do you have to be in choir to be in show choir?

A: No! You don't have to be in Choir to be in Show Choir. They are two separate classes. You can take either or both!

Q: Should I attend Ms. Kensek's in house Show Choir Camp this summer?

A: YES! This is a GREAT way to decide if you like Show Choir. It is a low cost camp that introduces you to Show Choir and will give you confidence. Also, we will be using some of these songs for the fall showcase. Going to the camp is not mandatory, just fun and a confidence builder. Dates for camp this year are: July 29 - Aug 2.

Q: What if I am not good at dancing?

A. You can learn! A choreographer is hired and comes to show the whole group all the dances for the competition show. We also have dance captains (typically upperclassman students)

who are selected by the director. These dance captains insure that everyone is learning the choreography correctly and will sometimes make changes as needed for the good of the show. We have multiple rehearsals and you will learn the dancing. Pretty soon you will be doing it in your sleep!

Q: What do my parents have to do?

A.: There are times that we will ask for help from parents for fundraisers. Fundraisers are used to pay for the music for show choir. The fundraisers also pay for things like new risers to perform on, costumes, new microphones, sound systems, etc. We also need parents to help as stage crew at our competitions. This includes moving set pieces and lights and transporting the items from the high school to the competitions.

Q: What kind of music do we sing to?

A: It depends on the performance. Musical tracks are usually played for fall showcase and jazz and java. For our competition season, we have a Show Choir Band (made up of high school students) that travels and plays with us. See below for more information about Show Choir Band.

Q: What am I getting into? Can I see a video?

A: YES! We are fortunate to have videos from our competitions this year. We had a GREAT set and have placed very well at competitions. You can also see them on the Music Booster Website: [unitymusicboosters.org](http://unitymusicboosters.org) > Music Groups > Show Choir > Look down the page at the Competition Season Results and you will see links to videos. You can also check out our YouTube page with videos of Unity High School music opportunities. <http://bit.ly/UHSMusic>.

Q: Is there a cost to be in Vocal Rush?

A: Students are typically asked to help contribute to the cost of the costumes that are purchased for competitions. We are fortunate that Ms. Kensek has done her best to keep this cost as minimal as possible. This past year it was \$300 per student, which included two costumes. There is a payment plan that parents can utilize to pay for the costumes. First year students will have some additional costs (character shoes, tights, etc). There will be a Show Choir parent meeting before school begins to discuss the costs in detail for the 2019/20 school year.

## **Show Choir Band:**

Q. What is Show Choir Band? Do you have to audition?

A. The show choir band plays the music that the show choir, Vocal Rush, performs to at their competitions. Students do not need to audition for show band, but they are selected by the directors depending on what instrumentation is needed.

Q. What are the time commitments? When do they rehearse?

A. Show Choir band will rehearse outside of school to learn the songs and eventually will practice a few times with the Show Choir to put the whole show together, this may include some of the Friday or Saturday show choir rehearsals.. The show choir band is also required to attend ALL show choir competitions (see Show Choir for more information). Last year, the show choir band won an individual award at Lebanon for best show band!

## **Acapella Group:**

Q. What is the acapella group?

A. The high school A Capella group is a small auditioned group of students who sing songs without the aid of instruments (think of the group Pentatonix). The High school group is Surreal Sound.

Q. When are auditions?

A. Auditions are typically held in late May for the following school year.

Q. When do you rehearse? What are the time commitments?

A. Rehearsals begin in the summer and students review their music during activity period during the school year for different events. Sometimes, there are additional after school rehearsals for extra preparation before events.

Q. When do you perform?

A. Surreal Sound performs at several community events throughout the school year. They have been invited to perform as a guest at many conventions, nursing homes, and church events. They typically also perform at the UMB Barnes and Noble Fundraiser in December. Additionally, they perform at the UMB All out A Capella fundraiser event, typically held in late January or February.

## **All out A Capella:**

Q. What is All out A Capella? Who performs at this event?

A. All out A Capella is the annual fundraiser for Unity Music Boosters. This fundraiser provides funding for ALL music programs in Unit 7. We have used funds raised from this event to pay for music trips, scholarships, risers, costumes, instrument repair and many other music benefits to you the student. Surreal Sound performs at this event, as well as several college acapella groups. We have had groups from the University of Illinois, Illinois State University, Elmhurst College, and Millikan University. We typically have two shows on a Saturday in late January or February. More detailed information on All Out A Capella can be found on our website. <http://www.unitymusicboosters.org/all-out-a-cappella.html>

Q. What can we do to help?

A. VOLUNTEER! This is our largest fundraising event of the year, and we are always needing people to help in some fashion. Since the event benefits ALL music students, it is imperative that we get volunteers from all music programs. The All out A Capella Planning Committee will begin meeting for this event in the fall, so watch for information and attend a meeting.

## **Banner Singers:**

Q. What are the Banner Singers?

A. The Banner singers are a group of students who sing the National Anthem at all home Varsity Football and Basketball games and other high school functions as needed.

Q. Do you have to audition?

A. No, banner singers are selected by the director. Each choir student learns the banner and the top singers will be selected to perform at the Football and Basketball Games. Those selected need to be able to commit to most games. They only need to stay for the beginning, but being a banner signer does qualify you for free entrance to those sporting events. Banner

singers also have been asked to sing outside of school events and travel multiple times throughout the year.

## **Musical:**

Q: When is the High School Musical?

A: The performance dates are usually in early to mid-April.

Q: What grades can participate in the musical?

A: Any high school student

Q: When are auditions? Rehearsals?

A: Auditions are in early February. There is an audition day and then a call back day if needed. Rehearsals start immediately following the cast list being posted and are held in the choir room starting at 3:00 and going until 5:00 or 6:00. Not everyone goes to every rehearsal. In the beginning, there will be an all cast read/sing through. After that, certain scenes / groups will rehearse on a given afternoon. There will be a schedule provided soon after auditions. The two weeks before the performance will be All Cast rehearsals as we put everything together with the stage crew and microphones and practice transitions.

Q: Can I do the musical and other sports, clubs, etc?

A: You need to be at rehearsal for your designated scene rehearsal times. You might need to miss some of your sports/club practice, but as long as there is communication between the director and coach all should be fine. If you are worried, please talk to Ms. Kensek and she will be happy to discuss with your coach.

Q: Do I have to be a good singer to audition? Do I have to have acting experience?

A: NO! If you just want to see if you like it, please audition! You don't have to be a great singer or actor. This is a learning experience and everyone has fun whether you are a lead or in the ensemble.

Q: I'm not a front and center kind of person, will you need people to help back stage?

A: YES! We are always looking for stage crew to help backstage. You would start attending rehearsals the last two weeks before the show.

Q: Does everyone get a part?

A: We try our best to find a part for everyone. However, we don't guarantee that everyone will make the cast.

Q: Parent Involvement

A: We ask that every parent assist in some way for the musicals. There will be help needed for costumes, makeup and hair, props and set. The more people that help, the less there will be to do for everyone.

Q: Do I have to buy a costume?

A: Lead roles are expected to help with the purchase and/or finding of their costumes. Ensemble parts may be expected to purchase and/or bring in some portion of their costume. For example, last year most participants provided their own black shoes and black leggings. Other parents were able to donate costume items and find costumes from other schools so ensemble parts didn't have to make large purchases.

Q: What happens before auditions? What do I do?

A: Find a partner or two and sign up for a time slot. Practice any song that you think shows off your voice well. If you aren't sure or are nervous to be on stage, sing Happy Birthday! Practice the dialog that you are given with your partner. If you can't find a partner, PLEASE STILL SIGN UP! We will either pair you with someone or we will have the assistant director read the dialog with you.

Q: What happens AT auditions?

A: When it is time for you and your partner to audition, you will come on stage and sing your individual song. Then, you will read your dialog with your partner or the assistant director. That's it!

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YouTube Playlist for some examples: <http://bit.ly/UHSMusic>.

Also, if you want to stay updated on music events, please follow the Unity Music Booster Facebook page or the Unity Show Choirs Facebook page. You can sign up for General Emails about Music Activities at Unity on the Music Booster Website: [www.unitymusicboosters.org](http://www.unitymusicboosters.org). - look on the right hand side of the homepage for the email signups.

