



## STATE OF THE BAND ADDRESS

*May 21st, 2025*

Greetings TJMS Band families and students. This year has been one of hard-earned growth and has provided us with a clearer vision for the future of our band programs at TJ and CC. For some students, this year has been an extremely beneficial year, not only for honing their strengths in musicianship, but also for making friends and growing as an individual. For others, this year has tested them greatly and pushed them to do hard things and focus on their weaknesses. Most of our struggles as an organization stem from procrastination and a lack of respect to due dates. Many of our late assignments this year could have been avoided had a student just turned in or played their assessment which is something we will be continuing to focus on this semester. Conversely, most of our successes as an organization have come from students going the extra mile in turning in work early, practicing at home, joining extra after school groups, and bringing their love of music into our band classroom every day.

We've seen a big increase in enthusiasm and enjoyment for Jazz in our schools. Our CCHS Jazz band has grown to a 40+ student ensemble that is traveling to perform in many competitions this year. Our TJ Jazz band, now called the Blue Note Jazz Band, is becoming the lab band we've hoped it would, allowing 7th and 8th graders to experiment with different styles of music, test their creativity with improvisation, and learn to communicate with other musicians through music in a small ensemble setting. With all the good things happening in Jazz, I of course would love to see our TJ Jazz band continue to grow and become a staple program at TJ. Please encourage your children to give it a try and to commit to an after school obligation if they are searching for something to do. I believe Jazz education is one of the most uniquely American art forms we can provide for our students and is crucial to a healthy band program.

Middle school students are given many opportunities to try new things and we will continue to encourage them to explore how they can become well-rounded individuals. We need to keep emphasizing the value of music education in the lives of young people even when they are being pulled in many different directions. Sports sometimes are presented in a way that tells students that it is impossible to do both music and sports at the same time. We have scores of students that work hard to be an athlete and a musician in all of our performing arts programs. As someone who played multiple sports and did band back in the day, I advocate for our students and communicate with coaches so that if a student wishes to do both and put in the hard work, they can do whatever their heart desires. We are stronger when our students in our bands bring a wider variety of skills to the table.

Our newest fundraiser has been sent home with students and excitement is high about raising money for the band. TJ band students have an incredible skill in fundraising and it has allowed our program to fix, replace, and restore crucial instruments to our ensemble. High schoolers travel across the state for performances with a marching band show and season that costs nearly \$60,000 when all is said and done. The ability to raise money for our programs translates to more opportunities for our kids. We've been very successful in fundraising in the past and we have a lot of opportunities to get involved with boosters and fundraising if parents are interested.

Recruitment is coming up very quickly and we are excited to usher in a new group of excited TJMS band students. Last year, the band signed our largest group of incoming students of 6th graders. This year, the fine arts programs at TJ are looking to welcome a record high number of students into our programs. As of now, we have 88 students enrolled for the beginning band program next year. The goal for me, at least, has always been to outgrow our own classroom and we are getting close to that goal. The band is also retaining more students than before. Whether it was a high school band still building traditions or TJMS going through renovations, the band has fought hard to keep building on what we have worked to establish a sense of belonging, a lifelong love for music, and an endeavor to experience the best musical moments together. Traditions will naturally form from our continued focus on what matters most and that is, and will always be, the fine students of our musical arts programs at TJ and CC. The future looks bright for our groups and I am excited to see what they do! If you would ever like to be part of the wonderful things happening here at TJ and CC, consider joining the booster program.

Musically yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryan McFall', written in a cursive style.

Ryan McFall  
TJMS Bands