



Hyattsville Middle School

CPA Band Updates 24-25

1. PGCPs MS Honor Band is this week! So many of our students passed the audition that I'm just going to email everyone. The mandatory rehearsals are on Tuesday and Thursday, and Saturday's concert, are all at Fairmont Heights HS. You should have received an email with the music to learn (before the first rehearsal), and they just sent out directions for parking and logistics. Please let me know if you didn't receive one or the other.
2. Rehearsal on Thursday will now be for the HAWK BAND, not brass. I will send a couple of notes to Remind you (get it?).
3. At the end of that rehearsal, we will have a special session of African drumming, led by a professional African drummer (who is also one of our talented parents). The cost for this experience will be \$10, payable in cash only that morning. There are only 20 slots available for this experience, so the first 20 to pay their fee will be who we go with. The fee goes toward the renting of all those instruments and their related instruction. Disclaimer: Mr Martin is going to grab one of those 20 spots; he wants to drum too!
4. The final payment for Hersheypark is past due. Please remit your payment any morning this week, or your seat may be given away, because we have to have a full bus to be able to afford the cost of the bus. Please be reminded that students are expected to have the CPA t-shirt that we are wearing for the trip. I'm

collecting the payments and forms, and Ms. Carter is coordinating the actual order. (She will have the receipts.)

4/28

Here are some quick notes for you!

3/31

- 1. Hawk Band at PG Performance Assessments**
- 2. Spring Calendar Update**
- 3. MS Honor Band Auditions**
- 4. MD State Solo & Ensemble Festival**
- 5. Solo & Ensemble Makeup**
- 6. Spring Trip Update**

1. As you know, the Hawk Band performed at the PG Band and Orchestra Performance Assessments at Northwestern HS on March 17. The students worked hard, and earned an overall Superior (I) rating. We were able to earn “straight” superiors, which means we earned superior ratings from all three floor adjudicators, as well as the sightreading one. I appreciate the sacrifice of our performing students and their families to make this honor possible.
2. We have released the calendar for the rest of the season (through June). Two things were omitted: the MS Honor Band Auditions on Thursday, 4/3, and the Hawk Band performance at one of the 8th grade promotion ceremonies in mid June (dates not confirmed yet). Also, I am playing a show this Thursday, so that rehearsal will now be canceled.
3. All CPA students were required to register for an audition, which will be on Thursday evening at Thomas Pullen Arts Focus School in Landover. Students are required to audition as a part of our CPA program, but not necessarily required to accept their earned position if they pass the audition (several should pass). The rehearsals and concert will be held at Fairmont Heights HS. I will be at the audition on Thursday, but not at the actual performance, as I have a scheduling conflict.
4. Students who earned a superior at the district (PGCPS) Solo and Ensemble Festival are permitted to participate in the MD State Solo and Ensemble Festival at Towson on May 9. Students needing an accompanist will need to secure an accompanist for their solo, if needed. There will likely be an additional fee incurred for that, payable directly to the accompanist. Students will need to let me know on Tuesday if they wish to participate, and if they need me to find an accompanist for them or not. Lastly, I will not be able to attend this year, as my elder son is graduating from Hampton University that weekend, and I will be out of town celebrating that great milestone with the family.

5. Students who didn't participate at the MS Solo & Ensemble Festival will need to make up their performance at the PG Elementary Solo and Ensemble Festival, which will be held on the evening of May 9. Again, I will not be in town, but students can prepare and participate, and show me their certificate to have their Q2 grade adjusted.
6. We are still receiving funds for our spring trip to Hersheypark. We are only receiving funds on Friday mornings, and we are hoping that a few more students will be able to participate, because there are not quite enough paid students to secure the bus at the moment. Please remit your deposit/payment so that we can get this done! Chaperones' fee is \$120, and of course, they will need to get their background check and watch the Safeschool videos before attending.

3/5

- I will receive deposits/payments for Hersheypark on Thursday and Friday 13 and 14, in the morning (only).

3/4

1. Thursday and Friday will be our rescheduled CPA Black History Month Concerts. They will be held from 10-11, and students will need to report to the band room by 915 on both days. We will be wearing all black (please no t-shirts if at all possible), and students can wear an appropriate accessory related to Black History Month, if they like. Band parents are invited to attend the Friday morning performance, as each discipline has assigned days. We are only playing two songs, and if there is a conflict with Friday, please let me know.
2. Our 3Q Hawk Band Chair Test is currently posted on Canvas. Students will need to record themselves from home, or using a school chromebook (they have one assigned to them here in the band room). Percussion majors should play Los Banditos on whatever instrument they are assigned to, so they will have to use our equipment at school to record themselves during ACE hour or at some other time during the day. We will not be using class time for these tests, because we have too much material to rehearse for the Black History Month concert and for our performance assessments at Northwestern on 3/17. The exam is due ON FRIDAY, and we will also have a rehearsal during Friday's afternoon activity. Students can opt out to go to the Fun Friday activity, but I may need to reposition their

chair position because we are going to cover a LOT in that rehearsal. Students not submitting the test will receive a zero score, and will not be permitted to participate with the Hawk Band.

3. Parents, you should always hear your child practicing at home, with a metronome (click track on their phone or computer). If you don't, you can bet that they are likely way behind in class, and they also likely have a poor grade in their major (CPA band) class. Please remember that CPA Band students must maintain a B average in their major course in order to remain enrolled in the program.
4. We will schedule the Makeup Solo & Ensemble Recital soon. Email or Remind if you have any questions.

Presto Notes 2/25

1. Registration is now open for Terrapin Music Camp. The camp will run from July 13-18. See the link for more details: [Terrapin Music Camp](#)
2. Our CPA Black History Month Concert will be postponed, and we are currently working on a new date and time.
3. Since the PGCPs calendar has changed, we will need to adjust our rehearsal calendar until our performance assessment festival, which has now been set for March 17. We would love to have our parents come see the kids perform (or also chaperone if they are cleared via fingerprint and Safeschools videos). Please let me know at emartin@pgcps.org or via Remind if you will be interested in attending, and in what role. The updated calendar has already been edited in the Google Calendar, and I will have hard copies available in the room on Wednesday morning. Following below is the updated calendar leading up to our performance assessments.
4. There are text groups for parents and for each student class. There is important (and sometimes very last moment) information shared there, and all families should be enrolled in both to be fully aware of everything that is happening with the program. Please let me know if you need the link for the parent group, and students have the codes in their Cavas - About this Class module: Classroom Resources.

5. I had forgotten that the public library has chromebooks available for loan. They are only in the Laurel branch, and you can [reach out to them](#) to confirm availability. An adult must do the request - student accounts are not permitted for the loan, but can likely be used during the loan period (6 weeks, renewable once if no one is waiting).

Band Notes 2/19

Here are the current Band Notes.

1. Congratulations to all our musicians who performed at the PG Solo & Ensemble Festival last week! A few students earned superior ratings (All soloists - Amy, Kwame, Grayson), many students played well, and some students didn't prepare nearly enough. Hopefully, it was a learning experience for everyone that when we PREPARE well, we PERFORM well. Congrats to those who prepared and performed, and stay tuned for the makeup recital.
2. Students have been given another practice assignment for this week. 6th and 7th grade have 4.20 "America" (or rather "God Save the Queen/King"), and 8th grade has Articulation Study #1. These are due on Friday. Many in the sixth grade have been quite lackadaisical about their home practice, and it is showing in their daily performance. Poor practice habits and skipped morning rehearsals always show up as poor playing test grades. Parents, please ensure that your child is diligently practicing for 100% accuracy in their method books on a DAILY basis. If you don't hear the improvement at home, they are likely not making it, and we won't be able to use them on stage this concert season. 8th grade hasn't been playing in their method books as much, but they should know what they need to be working on. If your child is very behind, it is likely worth a conversation with me about whether they should stay enrolled in our specialty program, or find another program that they have a more committed interest in.

3. I have some conflicts with next Tuesday, so we will have to cancel our woodwind sectional that morning. Students should still bring their instruments to school, so they can hopefully practice for Thursday...
4. Thursday 2/27 is the CPA Black History Month concert! We have two pieces that we are working on, and we will have students play on Friday to see if they will be able to perform our two selections next Thursday. Anyone who is not practicing and attending morning rehearsals will find themselves in that number. Most of those students were also sent emails and letters home last month, and I will be following up with those parents, as I have already spoken to all the students who are not progressing. Parents are asked to do a VISUAL check of children's CPA Uniforms, and replace any missing parts before next Thursday (bowties, pearls, etc). Scarves, head wraps, and variations on our jewelry are not permitted, except for religious reasons. Please communicate any concerns about this policy with [Mrs. Carter](#), CPA Coordinator.
5. Great news, the PG Middle School Honor Band is BACK! CPA Students at HMS are required to register and audition. The audition will be held on April 3, and the Honors Concert will be held on May 3. The link/registration was sent on Canvas as an Independent Assignment, and the actual audition will be a 50 point performance grade. For posterity, I am posting the link here, as well. [Middle School Honor Band Registration](#)

1/27/25

The [early spring calendar](#) is finally updated! Generally, woodwinds will meet on Tuesdays, brass on Wednesdays, and Hawk Band on Thursdays. These rehearsals will be very important because we have lost (and will continue to lose) so much instructional time. I don't believe we'll have class this week because of benchmark testing. Here

is the [Google Calendar link](#), please import it if you use Google Calendar.

1/13/25

Good day, please receive the current Band Notes.

- 1. VPA/CPA Auditions**
- 2. Solo and Ensemble Festival**
- 3. Sectionals Resume Next Week (1/21)**
- 4. UMD Double Reed Day**
- 5. Chair Test/Hawk Band**
- 6. Spring Trip**

1. The VPA Auditions that we scheduled for Saturday were postponed until February 1. All registered 8th grade students should have gotten a couple of emails from PGCPs about it, in addition to my Remind note. Our current 6th and 7th grade students do NOT need to re-audition for CPA here at HMS.
2. All HMS CPA Students are required to prepare and participate in the PGCPs Solo & Ensemble Festival on February 7 after school at Thomas Pullen Arts Focus School. Students were recommended to find ensembles to play in, mainly duets and trios. A few students indicated that they wanted to learn a solo for the performance, and they are permitted to do that, but (wind playing) soloists will need to coordinate their solo performance with our piano accompanist, Mr. J Martin (piano teacher) within the next couple of weeks. I may need some parental assistance regarding S&E. I will share that info in the next week or so. There may also be an accompanist fee, but I will let you know about that.
3. Sectionals will resume next Tuesday morning (1/21). I will release the schedule by the end of the week, via paper, [Google Calendar](#), and the [CPA Band Updates](#) page.
4. UMD has its [Double Reed Day](#) on Sunday, 1/19. I hope all three of our oboe and bassoon players will consider attending, as these sessions will improve your playing greatly! Bring your instruments,

music, and plenty of double reed questions! I will even give extra credit if any double reed players need it.

5. We will have our next chair/playing test in a couple of weeks. This test will determine the personnel for the Hawk Band, which is our top band here at HMS. Some students who barely squeaked into the Concert Band will not be able to slide into the Hawk Band. There are also a few students who are not making adequate daily progress on their instruments, and we will work to find a placement that better fits those students than in the CPA Band. There are over 60 students who registered to audition for the projected 18 available spots (plus a few extra spots for 6th graders who have not shown adequate progress to stay enrolled). Parents should hear students practicing at home on a consistent basis each day/week. Only students who made the Hawk Band will be permitted to attend our spring trip.
6. The packet has been submitted for our spring trip. The date will be May 23, and will be all day. The projected cost will be \$160 for students (chaperone tickets are cheaper), and I will share more details once we have approval.

11/1/24

- 1. Q1 Playing Quiz**
- 2. Independent (Practice) Assignment and Adequate Progress**
- 3. Uniform Orders**
- 4. School Owned Instruments**
- 5. Remind Signup**
- 6. Winter Concert Change(?)**

1. I have graded all the Q1 Quizzes, and some students performed great! Others either refused to submit the quiz, or performed very poorly on their exercise. This will cause students to see a subpar grade on their 1st quarter report card grade for band. Assessments

are 30% of students' grades, so this isn't ok, because a zero quiz grade can result in a grade that places the student below the 80% requirement to remain in our CPA specialty program. I will be contacting parents next week about those students' band performance thus far, but parents should be using the Parent Vue app to monitor students' grades. Students should be using the Student Vue app.

2. We had a Makemusic Cloud assignment due last week, and I actually gave away both band classes this week, to ensure that all students had extra time to submit their Independent Assignment, yet some students refused to submit. I gave all students an extra week, including two class periods, to submit this assignment, along with their quiz, and I do not have the bandwidth to continue chasing students for weeks after an assignment is due. Parents, your child's best insurance for their success is that you stay engaged, and constantly hear your child practicing their 1) warm ups, 2) scales, 3) etudes (book studies), and 4) literature, and also ensure that they are making it to our morning rehearsals. If you do not hear your child practicing at home for 90 minutes per week, they are likely getting behind, and their grades will almost always indicate that after an independent assignment, and especially an assessment, are graded. Please let me know if you would like more information about what their home practice should look/sound like. Percussion assessments always include xylophone/bells technique, and will hereafter include snare technique/rudiments. All percussion students should have mallets/sticks and a bell kit at home to practice on, and should be focused on snare rudiments for at least 10 minutes daily to build wrist strength and dexterity. This appears to only be a big issue in 6th grade at the moment. I have offered many times to assist students with finding instruments for these purposes.
3. We have processed our orders for the uniforms! Mrs. Carter has gotten some emails back that the sizes were out of order, but they have now been ordered, and all pants and skirts come unfinished, so remember that they will have to be hemmed upon arrival.

4. All school-owned instruments must be tagged with a scannable luggage tag and blue tape to identify the PGCPs instrument and the student to whom the instrument is checked out. No student should be playing PGCPs equipment without a loan form on file.
5. Each student has a Remind messaging group for their class, and the parents have a group, as well. Students are not permitted in the parent group, and I have had to remove several students who tried to make their way in that group. The student links are found in the Classroom Resources Module on Canvas. This has mostly been an issue with 6th and 7th graders, and I believe only one 8th grader. ALL students need to be enrolled in their Remind group, even if they don't have a phone. Parents, please permit students to add the app and receive those messages on their device, and you can also monitor those Remind messages. Let me know if you would like an assist with this important item.
6. I just got a call indicating that there has been a basketball game added on the night of our Winter Concert 12/4, so our date is likely to change. I will look at my personal calendar(s) and align with the school calendar to see if we can find a new date. This is not ideal, but this type of thing happens when there is no dedicated stage/performance area in a school, even one with a Creative and Performing Arts Specialty program like ours. Please stay tuned about that.

10/30/24

CPA uniform payments are past due, and uniforms will be ordered tomorrow. As a reminder, all gowns and trousers will need to be hemmed before students can wear them at our winter concert on 12/4.

[10/12 Band Fall 24 Calendar](#)

Jazz band rehearsals have been added every other *Wednesday before school.

Band Notes 10/8/24

1. Next week, we will begin our morning sectional rehearsals. They will generally rotate every couple of weeks until we get closer to the concert. A hard copy will be sent home tomorrow, and it will also be updated on our [Google Calendar](#) and the online CPA Band Updates website. Generally speaking, students who can play closer to the end of book 1 (Opus 4 or so) will be in group 2 (Concert Band), and our much less experienced musicians (especially those on new instruments) will come with group 1 (6th Grade Band) on their assigned day. I will talk with students on Wednesday about their current group (for now). Remember that all rehearsals and performances for the CPA Band are required, and are graded. Families/Parents are expected to make arrangements for their child to attend, per our communication before accepting a position in the CPA program, and your signed CPA contracts.
2. All CPA Band students must have the required uniform - whether tuxedo or gown. I am currently accepting your \$85 uniform (cash or money order only) on B (band) days before school only. Students who already have a uniform will be given a uniform checklist, and parents will need to initial, indicating that they have physically seen every part of the uniform, to include bow ties and pearls. Mrs. Carter, CPA Coordinator, will be placing the order around the end of the month. If there is an issue with parents securing the uniform, please let me know right away, and students will not be permitted to perform without the proper uniform. Check out [our Instagram page](#) to see us (and our uniforms!) in action.
3. We will begin our independent practice assignments next week. Students will need access to a chromebook or computer with a microphone (not a phone) to record their weekly mastery of concepts that are covered in class. We will have chromebooks available in the band room for this purpose, but it's really ideal for students to have a

device available for this purpose at home. Students will use the [MakeMusic Cloud](#) online platform to record their progress on their assigned studies, and we will use that tool to measure students' individual progress leading up to our quarterly playing exams. Students will be given instruction on how to signup and use the MMC platform tomorrow during class. Students' success on these recordings will constitute their quarterly Independent Assignment (home practice) grade (10% of the total). Families can purchase a chromebook for fairly cheap - I have seen them for a little over \$50 on Amazon, and it is well worth the investment. You may also be able to check one out from the library, please call your local branch for more info in this regard.

4. The fall calendar has been completed, and will be uploaded today. A hard copy (paper) will be sent home, it will be posted on [our Google Calendar](#) and online CPA Band Updates page (please bookmark this page for your reference!), and the current and upcoming week are always on the board in the band room.
5. Brass players who are going to play in the brass choir on Friday for Hispanic Heritage Month should come before school to rehearse on Thursday, if at all possible. We will start at 7:45, so students should begin arriving and warming up around 7:30. This is not for all brass, only those who are able to play most of Poco Loco - it was passed out last week. For the informal performance on Friday, students can wear whatever they are wearing to school that day.
6. We have uploaded a few selections from last year's Hawk Band to [our Youtube channel](#). Please check it out when you get a chance!

9/26/24

- [CPA Contracts](#) are now due!
- All students who are using a PGCPs owned instrument MUST have a signed loan form on file.
- We are now playing in class each day, and students are expected to participate daily with their instrument, music, and needed supplies

while in class, and at our before-school rehearsals when they begin in mid-October.

- We are currently working on securing instruments for those who have expressed a need. We expect those instruments to be in our possession the first week of October. Those students who have made arrangements with the director will not be penalized.
- Check back here for the CPA Band [performance and rehearsal calendar](#) for the remainder of '24. It will also be shared via Remind and hard copy once it has been completed.
- Here is the [PGCPS Calendar](#) for the year.