Iroquois High School Band Handbook

2026-2027

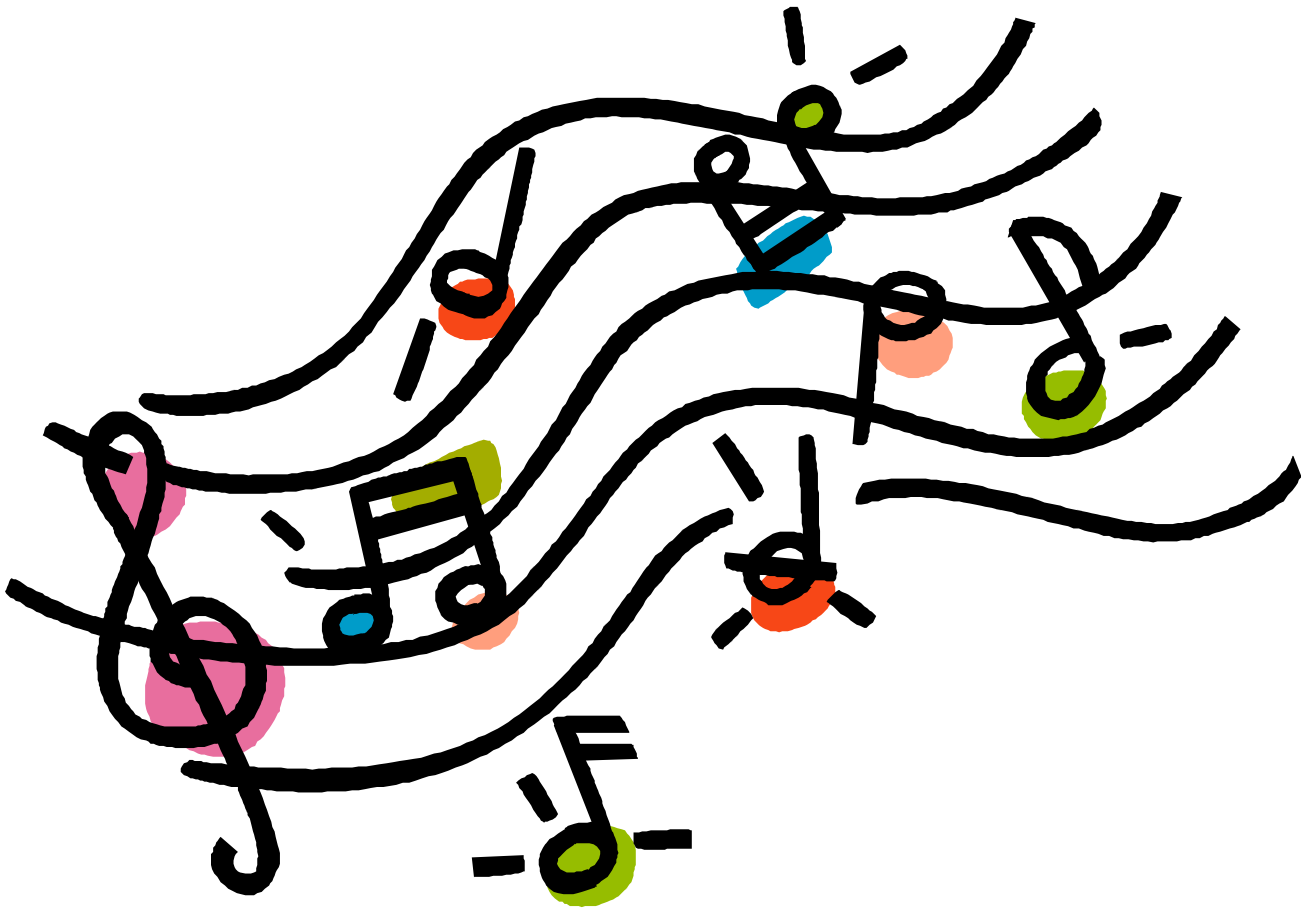

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Table of Contents

- Welcome from the Director 2
- Expectations/Rules of Conduct.....3
- Concert Attire.....4
- Field Trips.....5
- Grading Policy.....5
- Seating Auditions.....9
- Fundraisers.....9
- Awards.....9
- Calendar.....10
- Student and Parent Signature Form.....11

a note from Mr. Iocco.....

I'm excited to welcome you back to another year of band! We have a number of musical activities lined up for us, and this handbook contains the pertinent information needed for a successful year. Feel free to come to me at any time with questions, concerns, etc.

Please review the enclosed calendar of events very carefully. Here you will find a mixture of mandatory and optional events. Concert dates listed as mandatory attendance are required for all students, so please make note of each concert date on your own calendars.

I am looking forward to a great year in band!

Mr. Iocco

Expectations and Rules of Conduct

The desire and ability of each student to follow these rules willingly is vital to our program. Students and parents should be aware of these expectations. **Failure to adequately follow any of these rules will affect the student's marking period average.**

1. Regular and punctual attendance at all rehearsals and weekly lessons is required. Punctuality includes being seated and ready to begin at the sound of the bell. Excessive tardiness will affect the student's marking period average.
   a. Students in select ensembles will only be permitted up to **5 total absences** per quarter from scheduled rehearsals for any and all reasons. These include doctor/dentist appointments. Absences in excess of 5 will result in review of your membership status in the ensemble.
   b**. **IMPORTANT NOTE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS- Please try to avoid scheduling appointments that would affect ensemble attendance during the two weeks prior to any concert performance. This time period is crucial in the process of preparing for a concert. The 3-4 school days prior to a concert in particular are vital, as these are considered dress rehearsals. In the instance of an unavoidable conflict, please communicate with me ASAP. Thank you for your help with this!**

2. Students must have an instrument at each rehearsal and weekly lesson that is in good working condition, and includes all necessary accessories (proper mouthpiece, more than one good reed, valve oil, tuning slide grease, mutes, etc.). Instruments that are of low quality or are regularly in a state of disrepair should be replaced. Clarinet and saxophone students must use approved reeds. Vandoren is my recommended brand. Mitchell Lurie and LaVoz may also be acceptable, but please check with Mr. Iocco before purchasing.

3. Students must have their own assigned copy of the music being prepared for each rehearsal and weekly lesson. Students will be held financially responsible for school owned music lost or damaged.

4. Students must have a pencil at each rehearsal and weekly lesson in order to mark music neatly according to the teacher's instructions. Mark parts neatly as other students may use school owned music in the future. Extraneous marks not relating to the music are not acceptable.

5. Students are expected to spend time outside of weekly lessons and daily rehearsals practicing and preparing their assignments. Practicing is the homework required for this class.

6. It is expected that conflicts with weekly lessons will be minimal and a sincere attempt will be made to attend the scheduled lesson. Make up lessons by nature not as productive as scheduled lessons, so it is in the student's best interest to attend their scheduled weekly lesson. Students will only be considered excused from a lesson if they are absent from school, or if Mr. Iocco receives an email from a teacher explaining the absence.

7. Students may only leave a class for a regularly scheduled weekly lesson. Study hall students may obtain a pass from Mr. Iocco to practice, attend a different lesson time, or complete a makeup lesson with prior approval. Taking advantage of the weekly lesson system for the purpose of leaving classes without approval may result in disciplinary action.

8. Students are responsible for work assigned at each weekly lesson regardless of whether or not they were in attendance. A list of weekly lesson assignments will be posted electronically in the Band Class Notebook.

9. Students must approach each rehearsal and weekly lesson with a positive attitude by participating, concentrating, and being quiet and attentive at all times.

10. Any student continually misbehaving during rehearsals and/or weekly lessons will be dismissed from the rehearsal and/or lesson, and will be reinstated only after communication has occurred between the director and parent(s).

11. Instruments must be put in their case and placed in the proper location after each rehearsal and weekly lesson. Students who have been assigned a band locker may only use it for the storage of an instrument. Please do not hang anything or write on the inside of the lockers.

12. Students are financially responsible for school owned instruments. Normal wear and tear on a borrowed instrument will be covered by the school instrument maintenance fee. Any other damage or loss caused by malicious or blatantly careless actions must be repaired or replaced at the student's expense.

13. No one is to play an instrument other than the one they have been assigned. Percussion instruments are to be played by percussionists only. Pianos may be played only with the permission of a teacher.

14. All instruments are to go home as often as possible. It is understood that there are reasons why students may not be able to take instruments home every day, so at the very least instruments should go home with everyone on Fridays for weekend practicing.

15. Private lessons with a qualified instructor are highly recommended. These lessons are geared to the individual and their level of achievement. Private lessons are the best way to achieve maximum musical growth, and students who study with a private teacher will receive extra credit. If interested, please see Mr. Iocco for the names of recommended teachers.

Concert Attire

It is important as members of a performing ensemble to dress in a professional manner. Therefore the director will strictly enforce the concert attire. Any student with inappropriate attire will have points deducted from their marking period grade, and may not be allowed to perform at the discretion of the director. Any request to deviate from the guidelines below must be communicated to the director at the beginning of the school year.

SYMPHONIC BAND:

Gentlemen are expected to wear black pants with a white button down dress shirt, black socks, and black dress shoes. A red vest and bowtie will be provided to you, which must then be returned at the end of the school year. Jackets will NOT be worn with the vest and bowtie. A tuxedo shirt is recommended, but not required. Sneakers, white socks, and jeans are not acceptable.

Ladies are expected to wear black dress pants (no skirts or dresses) with a formal white blouse. The blouse should have sleeves (long or short sleeves, but not sleeveless), and be long enough to meet the top of the pants at all times (standing and sitting). Ladies should wear black flat dress shoes. Black nylons or black socks may be worn, but are not required. No distracting jewelry should be worn. Skirts, dresses, sleeveless blouses, and blouses that do not meet the top of the pants are not acceptable.

WIND SYMPHONY:

Gentlemen are expected to wear black pants with a white button down dress shirt, black socks, and black dress shoes. A tuxedo jacket, red vest and bowtie will also be provided to you, which must then be returned at the end of the school year. A tuxedo shirt is recommended, but not required. Sneakers, white socks, and jeans are not acceptable.

Ladies are expected to wear black dress pants (no skirts or dresses) with a formal **black** blouse. The blouse should have sleeves (long or short sleeves, but not sleeveless), and be long enough to meet the top of the pants at all times (standing and sitting). Ladies should wear black flat dress shoes. Black nylons or black socks may be worn, but are not required. No distracting jewelry should be worn. Skirts, dresses, sleeveless blouses, and blouses that do not meet the top of the pants are not acceptable.

MARCHING BAND:

Students participating in the Marching Band for Memorial Day will be given a band shirt which must be worn for Memorial Day parades. The student will be responsible for properly caring for these shirts as only one shirt will be given out per student. If a student outgrows a shirt, a clean shirt in excellent condition may be traded for a larger size. Shirts that are lost or damaged will be the responsibility of the student, and a replacement will need to be purchased. In addition to the band shirt, students should wear "dressy" shorts (navy blue or other dark colors preferred), and lace-up sneakers.

Field Trips

1. Any trip is an official school function, and consequently all school rules and regulations are in effect. Students are expected to maintain the highest musical standards as a member of the Iroquois High School Bands, and the highest standard of behavior as a member of Iroquois High School. Field trips are a privilege of membership in this organization and any violation of these rules can jeopardize trips in the future.

2. Students must use school provided transportation to and from all events unless there are special circumstances, and prior approval is obtained.

3. Specific rules/details for overnight trips will be provided as part of the registration process for these experiences.

Grading Policy

Student grades for each marking period will be based on two main categories: Ensemble and Lessons.

A. ENSEMBLE GRADE will constitute 1/2 of the marking period average. The following are requirements for this portion of the marking period average:

1. **PERFORMANCES** - Perfect attendance at all required events is **MANDATORY**. Please refer to the band calendar at the end of this handbook for required dates. Please plan accordingly! Band is a performance oriented class, so students must treat all performances as an exam. A performance is the student's chance to exhibit progress on all material covered in the course by meeting performance standards, and contributing to the performance level of the group. These performance opportunities are impossible to make up. Failure to participate in these performances will severely affect a student's grade. Extreme cases that prevent a student from participating in a performance will be considered on an individual basis, and determination of whether the absence is excused will be solely at the discretion of Mr. Iocco. Any student who misses a performance, regardless of whether it is excused or unexcused, may not receive full credit for the performance portion of the marking period average. Some examples of <u>unexcused</u> absences include, but are not limited to: work, transportation issues, recitals/dress rehearsals for other groups, athletic events.

    a. Excused absences - In order for an absence from a performance to be considered excused, advance notice must be given to Mr. Iocco <u>at least 6 weeks in advance</u> so that parts may be assigned accordingly (i.e.- solo or other important parts cannot be assigned to a student who will not be attending the performance). Students will need to provide written documentation from a parent/guardian explaining the details of the conflict at the beginning of the marking period. Students who are granted an excused absence from a performance will be required to complete a written research assignment, and may also be required to complete a performance test on the ensemble music from the missed performance. A written assignment and performance test can <u>never</u> match the experience of a performance, and <u>will only be assigned to students who have been granted an excused absence **prior** to the performance</u>.

    b. Emergency absences - It is understood that in an emergency, acceptable advance notice may not be possible. In these instances, please contact Mr. Iocco at the earliest opportunity so that the

necessary arrangements and adjustments may be made. Students will need to provide written documentation from a parent/guardian explaining the details of the conflict at the earliest opportunity. Students who are granted an excused absence from a performance due to an emergency will also be required to complete a written research assignment, and may also be required to complete a performance test on the ensemble music from the missed performance. Once again, a written assignment and performance test can never match the experience of a performance, and will only be assigned to students who have been granted an excused absence due to an emergency.

c. Athletics - The Iroquois Music and Athletic Departments sometimes have events scheduled at the same time. Students must check the band calendar as soon as they receive their team schedule, and deal with conflicts at the beginning of the team's season. If there is a conflict (or possible conflict such as playoffs), the student is personally responsible for informing their coach of the conflict, and explaining that they must attend the performance. This must be done at the beginning of the team's season, no later! Mr. Iocco will work with the Athletic Director to minimize such conflicts, but be aware that a performance is a graded mandatory event. Any student who does not address an athletic conflict at the beginning of their team's season, and misses a performance, will be considered absent unexcused.

d. Unexcused absences - Any non-emergency absence from a performance for which acceptable advance notice (beginning of marking period) has not been given will be considered unexcused. A student who is absent unexcused from a performance will receive a grade of zero for the entire ensemble portion of the marking period average, which will result in an automatic failing grade for the marking period. There are no exceptions for unexcused absences.

2. **PERFORMANCE TESTS** - Each marking period, students may be required to complete a performance test based on the ensemble music being prepared for an upcoming concert. These tests will be given to assess the level of proficiency a student achieves on their ensemble music. These tests may also act as seating auditions when necessary. Students who are focused during ensemble rehearsals, and who consistently practice their ensemble music outside of school, will find the most success in this portion of the grade.

   a. Students should ideally inform Mr. Iocco at least one day prior to the scheduled test of any conflict in order to schedule a make-up time. **The student must then ask their teacher to email Mr. Iocco to verify the excused absence. Make-up lessons may only be scheduled after Mr. Iocco has received an email from a teacher verifying the excused absence.** Excused absences may include class tests, quizzes, projects and field trips. A student who is absent from school on the day of their lesson is automatically considered excused and may schedule a make-up test after returning to school.

   b. **Make-up tests must be completed on the same day as the missed test to receive full credit**. Excused absences may be made up with no penalty if completed on the same day as the missed test, or in the case of absence from school, on the first day the student returns.

   c. Unexcused absences, or excused absences that are not completed on the same day as the missed test, may also be made up at the teacher's discretion. However, an automatic 10 point penalty will be assessed to any such makeup test. Consideration will be given for extreme circumstances out of the student's control. If such an instance arises, please communicate directly with Mr. Iocco to work out an acceptable solution.

   d. A test "redo" will not be allowed for an ensemble music performance test.

3. **REHEARSALS** - Each student will receive a mark of 0-100 based on the quality of performance and participation in daily rehearsals. This portion of the grade will be adjusted for chronic absence or tardiness from daily rehearsals. A large portion of the required course work is done during daily rehearsals, therefore

absence or tardiness indicates that a student is not fulfilling course requirements. This portion of the grade will also be adjusted for behavior and/or discipline issues. Please refer to the expectations and rules of conduct section of this handbook for further details on course expectations.

4. **WRITTEN PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS** - Following most performances, students will complete a written evaluation of the ensemble's performance. These evaluations will be completed during class time, and will be based on the recording of the performance. Evaluations must be well-written with few spelling and/or grammatical errors. Students must use musical terms when evaluating the ensemble, and demonstrate critical listening skills. Evaluations will be graded as Pass/Fail. Any student that receives a failing grade will be given one opportunity to redo an evaluation.

5. **WRITTEN QUIZZES** - There may occasionally be written quizzes given to assess the understanding of certain concepts discussed during rehearsals. These quizzes will be brief, and will be graded as Pass/Fail. Any student that receives a failing grade will be given the opportunity to redo a quiz.

B. LESSON GRADE will constitute 1/2 of the marking period average. The following are requirements for this portion of the marking period average:

1. **LESSONS** - Weekly lessons are a student's chance to obtain individualized instruction that cannot be afforded during the daily ensemble rehearsal. Lessons are scheduled throughout each day, and every effort is made to minimize the amount of classroom instruction time lost as a result of attending a lesson. Lessons take place once a week, and rotate each week to a different period. All students, including those who study privately outside of school, are required to take part in the weekly lessons to ensure proper instrumental development. Certain concepts of ensemble playing are emphasized during the weekly group lesson, which directly influence the performance quality of each ensemble. These concepts can only be taught and replicated by the weekly group lesson experience.

    a. Lesson attendance is one of the most important factors in determining a student's rate of success in this class. Therefore, lesson attendance and lesson preparation are what determine this portion of the grade. A student will receive full credit for each lesson they attend, and no credit for each lesson missed. Additionally, no credit will be given for a lesson attended if a student is determined to be unprepared. The amount of time spent practicing weekly assignments is considered in determining the level of preparedness, so regular practice is an expectation for success in this class.

    b. Students should ideally inform Mr. Iocco at least one day prior to the scheduled lesson of any conflict in order to schedule a make-up lesson. **The student must then ask their teacher to email Mr. Iocco to verify the excused absence. Make-up lessons may only be scheduled after Mr. Iocco has received an email from a teacher verifying the excused absence.** Excused absences may include class tests, quizzes, projects and field trips. A student who is absent from school on the day of their lesson is automatically considered excused and may schedule a make-up lesson after returning to school.

    c. Make-up lessons must be completed before the next week's lesson in order to maintain educational continuity. No credit will be given for lessons that are not made up within this time period.

    d. To allow for the occasional instance where a student may forget to come to a lesson, the band grading formula allows a student to receive no credit for one lesson per marking period without seeing their overall marking period average penalized.

    e. Students who attend and receive full credit for every scheduled lesson in a marking period will receive Extra Credit added to their Ensemble Grade.

    f. If Mr. Iocco's schedule allows, it may be possible to make-up an unexcused absence for partial or full credit. This requires communicating directly with Mr. Iocco, and a variety of factors will be considered when determining if a make-up lesson will be granted. These factors may include the

record of lesson attendance throughout the year, quality of practice/preparation for rehearsals/lessons, and overall contributions to the band.

2. **PERFORMANCE TESTS** - Each marking period, students will be required to complete one or more performance tests based on the assignments being prepared during the weekly lessons. These tests are given to assess the level of proficiency a student achieves on the weekly lesson assignments. Students who regularly attend lessons, and consistently practice weekly lesson assignments outside of school, will find the most success in this portion of the grade.

   a. Tests are generally given during a scheduled lesson time, but may sometimes be individually scheduled outside of lessons. Mr. Iocco will clearly outline when the test will take place well in advance.

   b. The attendance policy for Performance Tests is the same as for Lessons explained in Section B-1 above.

   c. **Make-up tests must be completed on the same day as the missed test to receive full credit**. Excused absences may be made up with no penalty if completed on the same day as the missed test, or in the case of absence from school, on the first day the student returns.

   d. Unexcused absences, or excused absences that are not completed on the same day as the missed test, must still be made up. However, an automatic 10-point penalty will be assessed to any such make-up test. Consideration will be given for extreme circumstances out of the student's control. If such an instance arises, please communicate directly with Mr. Iocco to work out an acceptable solution.

   f. Performance test "redo" - Students who wish to improve their grade on a performance test may, at the teacher's discretion, and as time and scheduling allows, complete one "redo" of a performance test per marking period. A test "redo" will not be granted to students who are blatantly and consistently unprepared for weekly lessons and performance tests. Rather, a "redo" is for the student who is consistently well-prepared for weekly lessons and performance tests, but has difficulty meeting the expectations for a given test. Feedback regarding the original test will be given to the student prior to completing a "redo", and a "redo" must be completed prior to the next weekly lesson. Once again, a "redo" will only be granted at the teacher's discretion, and as time and scheduling allows. Otherwise, the original grade will stand. Please be advised that if a "redo" is granted, the grade of the "redo" will stand, even if it is lower than the original grade. Also, the expectations for proficiency will be higher for a "redo" than it may have been for the original test due to the extra time allowed to prepare. Students should carefully consider these stipulations before deciding to take advantage of this opportunity.

C. EXTRA CREDIT will be added into the formula used to derive the marking period grade. Extra Credit can only be earned up to a pre-determined limit, and can be earned in the following ways:

1. Marching Band/Pep Band participation
2. Solo Performances (Erie County, NYSSMA)
3. Private lessons (Must submit proof of being a current student of an approved private teacher)
4. Jazz Ensemble participation
5. Selected to participate in: All County, Area All State, NYSBDA Honor Band, Conf. All State
6. Attending a pre-approved music performance and submitting a program or ticket stub
   a. Check with Mr. Iocco first to find out if a performance is considered approved for Extra Credit

Seating Auditions

When needed, seating auditions for admission into the Wind Symphony typically take place at the end of each school year, and auditions for admission into the extra-curricular Jazz Ensemble typically take place at the beginning of each school year. Lists for both auditions will be posted with a variety of audition times, and it is the responsibility of any interested students to sign up on one of the lists for a time to audition. Auditions for both select ensembles must be completed by the end of the final day of posted times. See Mr. Iocco prior to this deadline if alternate arrangements are needed. Seating within these select ensembles may be changed at any time, and the final seating arrangement is at the discretion of the director as leadership, maturity level and reliability are important considerations.

Fundraisers

Fundraising activities may be offered at various times throughout the school year. The purpose of these fundraisers is to raise funds for the Iroquois High School Band, and the money raised is the sole property of the Iroquois High School Band. Individual student profit is calculated following the completion of each fundraiser, and students may use that profit towards the cost of Iroquois High School Band activities only (ex.- Band Trips, Music Banquet tickets for Seniors, etc.). Band fundraising profit is not a personal bank account, may not be withdrawn, and may not be used for other school activities. Any remaining profit leftover after a student graduates or otherwise withdraws from band remains the property of the Iroquois High School Band. For families with multiple children participating in the band program, any leftover profit from an older sibling will remain available for a younger sibling who is enrolled in the High School Band. This leftover profit from an older sibling may still only be used towards the cost of Iroquois High School Band related activities.

Awards

A. Band Varsity Letter: Student must be enrolled in a credit-bearing Band for three years. Student also must have a perfect attendance record for all concerts, which have been regularly scheduled by the major credit-bearing ensemble to which the student belongs.

B. John Phillip Sousa Award: Is awarded to a senior who demonstrates: leadership, reliability and outstanding musicianship. In short, all the qualities that a band director finds in an outstanding student.

C. Louis Armstrong Jazz Award: This award is given to a senior who demonstrates a solid knowledge of the jazz medium and is able to demonstrate their knowledge through performance.

2026-2027 Iroquois High School Band Calendar

Dates highlighted in **bold** print are considered to be **MANDATORY** attendance. Participation in other events, although not necessarily mandatory, is strongly encouraged. Any adjustments/additions to this schedule will be communicated as soon as possible.

October 16	Homecoming Football Game (6:30 PM arrival) - Pep Band
November 1	Deadline to sign up for All County Solo
November 6-7	Jr. High Area All State Festival at Akron Central (9th grade students)
November 10 (Mandatory)	**Fall Concert (7:30 PM) - Wind Symphony, Symphonic Band, Jazz Ensemble**
November 20-21	Sr. High Area All State Festival at SUNY Fredonia (10th - 12th grade students)
***December 22 (Mandatory)**	***ONLY IF NEEDED - Concert Weather Cancellation Make-up Date (7:30 PM)***
January 9	Erie County Jazz Solo Festival at Depew H.S. / M.S. (9th-12th Grade)
January 16	Erie County Junior High Solo Festival at Orchard Park H.S. (9th Grade)
January 23	Erie County Senior High Solo Festival at Kenmore West H.S. (10th-12th Grade)
January 30	All-County "Reserve" Audition Date in case of Cancellation of an Audition
February 9 (Mandatory)	**Districtwide Band Concert (7:00 PM) - Wind Symphony, Symphonic Band**
March 5-6	Erie County Jazz Festival – Cleveland Hill H.S. (9th-12th Grade)
March 12-13	Erie County Junior High Festival – East Aurora H.S. (9th Grade)
March 19-20	Erie County Senior High Festival –Location TBD (10th-12th Grade)
April 13 (Mandatory)	**Spring Concert (7:30 PM) - Wind Symphony, Symphonic Band, Jazz Ensemble**
April 15-18	*TENTATIVE* - H.S. Music Dept. NYC Trip (10th-12th Grade)
April 23	NYSSMA All-State & Jazz Solo Festival (Kenmore East H.S.) (9th-11th Grade)
May 31	Memorial Day Parades (8:00 AM) - Marching Band
June 3 (Mandatory)	**Pops Concert (7:00 PM) - Wind Symphony, Symphonic Band, Jazz Ensemble**
June 4	NYSSMA Non-All-State Solo Festival – Orchard Park M.S. (9th-11th Grade)
June 8	High School Music Department Banquet - Ilio DiPaolo's (6:00 P.M.)

Please Make Note Of All Mandatory Dates

****IMPORTANT NOTE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS- Please try to avoid scheduling appointments that would affect ensemble attendance during the two weeks prior to any concert performance. This time period is crucial in the process of preparing for a concert. The 3-4 school days prior to a concert in particular are vital, as these are considered dress rehearsals. In the instance of an unavoidable conflict, please communicate with me ASAP. Thank you for your help with this!**

Student and Parent/Guardian Signature Form

Please return only this page, filled out completely, by Wednesday September 16

Students: Please read the handbook posted in the "Files" section of Teams. Please review all Iroquois High School Band policies, rules, & regulations before signing below.

I affirm that I have read the Band Handbook and understand the obligations and commitments involved in the course requirements. I agree to fulfill my obligation as a member of this performing organization, including following all rules and regulations as listed in the Band Handbook. I also understand that dates highlighted in bold on the Band Calendar are considered mandatory attendance for all students, and it is my responsibility to attend these events.

Student Name (Please print clearly) _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

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Parents/Guardians: Please read the handbook posted on my website.

Use the QR code to the right, or type the following address into your browser:
https://ihs.iroquoiscsd.org/teachers/mr-iocco/band-handbook

Please review all Iroquois High School Band policies, rules, & regulations before signing below.

I affirm that I have read the Band Handbook and understand the obligations and commitments involved in the course requirements. I also understand that dates highlighted in bold on the Band Calendar are considered mandatory attendance for all students, and will ensure my student's attendance at these events.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

PLEASE RETURN BY WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 16. THANKS!!!