

How to make a HS schedule and still take music...

This document is provided as a help guide to parents of 8th grade band parents and is produced by the ER band program.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The purpose of this document is provide parents and students with some information they may find useful when trying to plan their students' high school schedule while also keeping students involved in music classes.

Some things to keep in mind:

- “Band” is a year long course that is comprised of both marching and concert bands.
- The high school class schedules are based on trimesters, which are different than the semester schedule used at the Middle School. Each class in a trimester is equivalent to ½ course credit. For example: a student earns 1 science credit after completing 2 trimesters of biology.
- Freshmen Connections is NOT a graduation requirement. See later in this handout for more information.
- At this time, foreign language is NOT a graduation requirement though students are highly encouraged to take at least two credits as many colleges will look for that on applications. Foreign language will be a graduation requirement beginning with the class of 2016.
- Students interested in career prep courses (“voc-ed”) for their junior or senior year will have almost entirely different schedule all together. You should contact the guidance office for more information regarding graduation requirements and voc-ed.
- The state requirement for PE/Health is 1 credit (2 trimesters) of PE/Health. Most ERHS students take this during their freshmen year.
- All students must complete a computer class to fulfill graduation requirements. *Any computer course could be used here.* This class could be taken at any time.
- Students who wish to take two music classes (i.e. band and choir or band a jazz band) every year CAN but will need to be very dedicated and may have to make choices in other areas (test out of classes, not take foreign language, summer school, etc.)
- Many music students may choose to take AP classes during their senior year—most of which will run all year.

TESTING OUT

As students enter high school, the scheduling process can be very confusing. With all of the graduation requirements students now have, planning a 4 year high school schedule that includes 4 full years of at least one music class can very extremely frustrating.

This is why students have the option to test out of any class—yes—ANY class.

What is “testing out” of a class?

“Testing out” of a class basically involves taking the final exam for a class you have not taken and, if you pass, you receive credit for the class.

Under Michigan guidelines, any student can request from a high school the ability to “test

out” and receive credit for a class. The process would be as follows:

- Contact building administrators **BEFORE THE END OF THE PREVIOUS SCHOOL YEAR** and express desire to test out of a specific class. So—if you have a current 8th grade student who wants to test out of a class for their 9th grade year, you should contact the HS administration in the spring of your child’s 8th grade year.
- The student will be given a text book and any other materials deemed necessary by the administration/teacher from which they can study.
- At a time designated by the school, your child will take the exam.
- If the student passes the exam with a C+ or better, they will receive credit for the class. Please note—they will not receive a **GRADE**—just credit. On their transcript, it will list a “CR” for whatever class they test out of meaning they have fulfilled the graduation requirement. The grade on the exam is irrelevant so long as they pass. Since there is no class grade here, the exam grade will neither hurt or help their over-all grade point average.

Why would I want to test out?

The benefit to testing out is it can open up a students schedule to take more electives or just classes they would prefer to have that they otherwise would not be able to take because of scheduling difficulties.

What classes are available for testing out?

Any class is eligible. However, what classes would be good for YOUR child to test out of will depend on your student. Some classes are just about the text book—if your child is the kind of person who reads and retains well, this would be a good class to try. If your child learns more from listening and “hands-on” learning, this class may not work out so well.

You should talk to the building administrator (who may, in turn, direct you to a specific teacher or the guidance office) about the specifics of each class.

OK...I want to test out of a class—when should I contact the school?

When you begin the scheduling process for the following school year. Personally—I would recommend that if you’re going to test out of any classes, do it in the summer before your freshmen or sophomore years since that is when most students will have the heaviest load of requirements.

How does this benefit me as a band student/parent?

With the mandated state curriculum and following the sequence of classes advised by the guidance office, there is not a lot of room for electives in your high school schedule. Taking specialty classes (classes only offered once a day) can make things even more complicated. If you do fail a class and need to repeat, this adds another layer of complication to making your schedule work and still have room for at least one music class. Testing out of classes early makes your schedule potentially easier to manipulate if you fall into any of these categories.

FRESHMEN CONNECTIONS

All freshmen are scheduled for freshmen connections. This one term class is designed as a bridging class from MS to HS to help students handle the change. Topics covered in this class include study skills, character building, and career focusing.

Though all students are scheduled for this class—IT IS NOT A REQUIREMENT. As a parent, if you feel your child already possesses some of these positive qualities and may not need the course and would rather use the term to schedule other classes you feel would be more beneficial—you can choose to not take the class. We have had students in the past NOT take freshmen connections by speaking with the guidance office.

It is worth noting that some of the things covered in freshmen connections will be learned while your student is in band. Being part of the band may not teach directly how to study for a math test—but it does teach your child the value of practice and what can be accomplished when they apply themselves. It will also give your incoming freshmen a large student family who have gone through the very things they're going through and they can talk to and ask for help when they have questions about a class. Character building will be learned throughout the year as every student learns the importance of being prepared every day and how other people depend on them to always do their very best.

SUMMER SCHOOL *(this section written by a previous band parent)*

Some of you may have children who would be OK with taking a course during the summer not as a “make-up” for a class they may have failed the previous year, but in an effort to get ahead for the following year. You should know right away that this option almost always has some cost associated with it and is not always offered through ERHS so you will have to look elsewhere for options. If you're interested, here are some places you can look to try and get ahead on high school credit:

- **Virtual High School** (see www.mivhs.org). They have classes called Flex 90, which means you have 90 days to complete them on-line. Each class costs about \$325, and no, the school can't pay for them. But it will allow your student to fit in those music classes. Keep in mind your student must WANT to do this (fitting in that 2nd music class is a big motivator). And YOU have to stay on top of your student. They are kids, after all, and in order to succeed they will need regular reminders to work on their virtual class.
- **Nova Net**: This is a new option to take on-line classes at the high school. It's similar to Virtual High School above. Ask the guidance counselors for more information as they get it going.
- **LCC**: As I understand it, after they've taken the PSAT (10th grade), they can dual-enroll at LCC. This is usually for students who've taken every class ERHS offers in a subject (for instance, they've taken math all the way through AP Calculus) and still want more. But perhaps we can use this option to take summer classes at LCC that we can't fit into our regular schedules. So you might be able to take World History or Spanish 1 (or whatever) at LCC. Keep in mind it would be a college-level course and therefore more demanding than the ERHS version of the same class.
- **MSU**: Check out <http://spartanyouth.msu.edu>. There's information about dual-enrollment and the High Achievers program.

Sample Schedule w/Full Year Music 4-years
(Based on *Minimum Requirement* for class of 2011)

Shaded spaces on the schedule are spaces a student could have open for electives. Open spaces have been left when they could be filled with any elective. The sample schedule includes ONLY graduation requirements, music classes, and foreign language (which is—technically—an elective as of now).

Freshman Year

	Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
1	Music	Music	Music
2	Math	Fresh. Conn.	Math
3	English	English	Web Design
4	PE/Health	Sci. (Biology)	Sci. (Biology)
5	(SS) Civics	PE/Health	(SS) Economics

Sophomore Year

	Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
1	Music	Music	Music
2	Foreign Lang	Math	Math
3	English	English	
4	Sci. (Chemistry)	Foreign Lang	Sci. (Chemistry)
5	SS (US History)	SS (US History)	

Junior Year

	Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
1	Music	Music	Music
2	Math	Math	
3	Foreign Lang	English	English
4	Sci. (Physics)	Foreign Lang	Sci. (Physics)
5	SS (World Hist.)	SS (World Hist.)	

Senior Year

	Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
1	Music	Music	Music
2	Math	Math	
3	English	English	
4			
5			

AP (Advanced Placement) courses offer students the opportunity to earn college credit by taking a test in May. These classes are year-long courses. Currently, ERHS offers AP classes in calculus, psychology, English, Spanish, world history, biology, and chemistry.

Though many are offered all the time, not all of these AP classes will be offered every year—they will only be offered in years when there is sufficient enrollment and the master schedule allows.