

Growing band adds concert group, color guard group

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This spring, the Clinton band program is adding a fourth competitive ensemble.

Immense growth in the program allowed the band to expand its spring concert efforts to include wind ensemble, symphonic band, concert band and freshman band. Traditionally, the band has only had three competitive ensembles in the spring season.

These groups perform at local and state festivals, playing highly rated pieces. The students who participate train in class on instrument specifics as well as participate in afterschool ensembles.

“When I started here in 2009, we had 96 students total in the high school program,” said band director Kevin Welborn. “In ten years, it’s grown to approximately 220 students. That’s pretty amazing and a testament to the hard work and tenacity of the program.”

In the Clinton Public School District, band begins in sixth grade and continues through high school. There are 580 total students in band, including 160 in the beginner band (sixth grade), 120 in intermediate band (seventh grade), 82 in advanced band (eighth grade) and 218 in high school band (9-12 grades).

Another section that has seen amazing growth for the upcoming season is the Clinton Guard, which will have three indoor competition sections instead of two. The guard is known for its modern style that includes intriguing designs, uniforms and show themes. The Clinton guard has done well through the years, with two Mississippi circuit championships and numerous awards at Winter Guard International compe-



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Clinton High School Symphonic Band members prepare for competition season in the spring. The Symphonic Band is one of four competitive ensembles offered at CHS.

titions.

Spring band also includes Clinton Percussion and the Brass and Woodwind choirs. Clinton Percussion previously brought home several titles and in 2017 was a finalist in Open Class at the WGI World Championships. Brass and Woodwind choirs both began in spring 2016. The groups practice once a week.

Because of the immense growth, Welborn has faced scheduling and logistic challenges. Some students are bused to Clinton Junior High to rehearse and practice in the band hall, and some practice at Sumner Hill. With funds from the recent bond is-

sue, the high school band hall will soon be expanded.

“Words cannot express my appreciation and gratitude for more space for the band,” Welborn said. “We are very fortunate. A huge thanks to the community of Clinton and the administration for making this possible.”

The added space will allow for the entire band to rehearse at one time, something the current band hall does not allow, and also will allow for more storage of band equipment.

The students who participate in band take on rigorous and demanding practice schedules in marching season and concert season. The push for excel-

lence by band directors is answered by the students with enthusiasm.

Welborn said his short- and long-term goals for the band program and the students are consistently being met and exceeded. Clinton band students have been recognized in competitions all around the state and Southeast, showing great aptitude and performances and proving that they are on the right track.

“We are very proud of the students and are fortunate that we are able to do what we can,” Welborn said. “We are grateful for all the support we receive from the district and community.”

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