



2024 EXEMPLARY HIGH SCHOOL BAND



McCallum High School



Carol Nelson
Director

McCallum High School is located in Austin, Texas and is one of thirteen high schools that make up the Austin ISD. Built in 1953, the school serves 1860 students and is located in north central Austin. It is also the home

of the McCallum Fine Arts Academy which was founded in 1994 through a community effort to develop a centralized home for advanced Fine Arts education in Austin ISD. While students from across Austin ISD can transfer into McCallum High School through the Fine Arts Academy, the McCallum vertical team includes Kealing Middle School, Lamar Middle School (Fine Arts Academy) and ten elementary schools.

The band program of McCallum High School offers three performing concert bands, a jazz ensemble, two steel drum ensembles, a samba band, a full percussion program, an indoor winterguard, and a marching band. In addition, select wind and percussion musicians participate in Varsity and Non-Varsity Full Orchestra. Directors of the MAC Band program are Carol Nelson, Dillon Junkin, Ryan Pride, Jeff Rudy, and the Color Guard director is Wilbert Toruno.

For many years, the McCallum HS bands have been consistent UIL “Sweepstakes Trophy,” “Best in Class Award,” and “Grand Champion” recipients. The McCallum Wind

Ensemble has advanced to the TMEA Honor Band State Finals five times—2004, 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2024. The marching band has advanced to the UIL State Marching Band Championships six times—1979, 1980, 2005, 2017, 2019, and 2021. The Wind Ensemble has also been named a National Winner in the National Wind Band Contest. In addition, the McCallum Band has performed at Carnegie Hall six times!

The McCallum Percussion program is active throughout the school year. In addition to marching band during the Summer and Fall, the percussion studio also rehearses and performs intermediate and advanced percussion ensembles throughout the Spring semester. In 2015, they were recognized as the Percussive Arts Society International Ensemble Winner and also performed at the 2019 Midwest International Band and Orchestra Conference. The Steel Drum program, featuring the acclaimed “Knights of Steel”, has performed two times at the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Conference, in 2007 and 2012. In 2024, the “Knights of Steel” performed at the 2024 Texas Music Educators Association annual convention in San Antonio. This past year, they also hosted and performed at the 2024 National Society for Steel Band Educators Conference.

Band students at McCallum HS are strongly encouraged to participate in a wide variety of individual events including TMEA-related band, jazz, and orchestra auditions, UIL solo/ensemble, school musicals,

and Masterworks (a combined choir, full orchestra performance). Many members of the MAC Band program are members of the McCallum Fine Arts Academy. The McCallum Fine Arts Academy is an integral part of the music program at McCallum. Students are admitted to this program through an audition or portfolio presentation. This fine arts intensive high school program provides an exemplary arts education program which includes band, orchestra, choir, guitar, collaborative piano, dance, theatre, technical theatre, film, and visual arts. Students who graduate from the McCallum Fine Arts Academy pursue a myriad of career paths, but many attend college to study their art with the goal of becoming a professional artist, performer, or teacher. The McCallum Band program has helped develop many music educators and many professional musicians throughout the country, including top tier orchestras such as the Chicago Symphony and the National Symphony Orchestra.

Along with the many recognitions at the local, state, and national levels, McCallum High School was named the 2015 GRAMMY Foundation National Signature School, the lone recipient out of thousands of high schools in the U.S. This Gold Award, presented by the GRAMMY Foundation recognized McCallum High School as the top music education high school in the U.S. In addition, McCallum High School was recognized as a GRAMMY Signature School Finalist in 2005.

