

2026 PMEA All-State Modern Band Audition Information

Due to the nature of the ensemble, all students are required to demonstrate facility on a variety of styles. These styles can include Pop, Rock, Hip Hop, R&B, Country, Metal, or other genres.

While singing is not mandatory for instrument auditionees, preparation of a short excerpt demonstrating singing ability is recommended.

Vocals/Rap

Prepare two songs of contrasting style performed with an instrumental track (no-sing-alongs) or live ensemble:

- Be sure that at least one piece demonstrates background vocals or ability to sing harmonies
- Be sure that one piece includes improvisation (melodic and/or lyrical). Some ideas for soloists to emulate: Aretha Franklin, Freddie Mercury, James Brown, Esperanza Spalding, Stevie Wonder, Dolly Parton
- One of the pieces can be original; at least one of the pieces must be a cover
- Rapping highly encouraged, either as a cover or original

Guitar

Prepare two songs of contrasting style:

- The audition selections should demonstrate diversity of both rhythmic and melodic playing
- At least one piece must include a lead guitar solo. Some ideas of soloists to emulate are: Jimi Hendrix, Annie Clark, Carlos Santana, David Gilmour, Nancy Wilson, Stevie Ray Vaughn, Prince, etc.
- Both pieces should demonstrate variety of chordal usage: open chords, barre chords, power chords, triads, etc.

Bass

Prepare four bass grooves:

- The audition selections should demonstrate a variety of styles that show versatility and ability to play in the pocket.
- Some ideas for bassists to emulate for cover grooves: James Jamerson, Carol Kaye, Flea, Paul McCartney, John Entwistle, Gail Ann Dorsey, etc.
- One can be an original composition; three must be covers

Drums

Prepare two songs and two-four additional grooves:

- The audition selections/additional grooves should demonstrate a variety of groove styles: aka Rock, Hip Hop, Latin, etc.
- The pieces must demonstrate ability to play along with recording to demonstrate ability to switch between drum grooves in sections of the song
- Additional grooves should be recorded with a drum-less jam track or a metronome

Keyboard

Prepare two songs of contrasting style:

- Should demonstrate diversity in both rhythmic and melodic playing
- One piece must include an improvised keyboard solo. Some ideas of soloists to emulate are: Keith Emmerson, Fiona Apple, Ray Manzarek, Stevie Wonder, etc.

Other Instruments (ukulele, brass, strings, winds, etc.)

Prepare two songs:

- The audition selections should demonstrate style and versatility as lead or accompanist
- The pieces should include an improvisatory section
- For brass, strings and winds: an original, simple arrangement of you playing backgrounds over a chord progression is strongly encouraged. This can be recorded multi-track or with live section players

When selecting audition materials, students should select songs that are roughly three minutes in length and record the piece in its entirety.

When recording the audition materials, please note the following:

- No identifying clothing may be worn (i.e. no school t-shirts, no name identification, no PMEA, NAFME, etc. shirts).
- The student must be visible in the video (especially hands and faces). It is strongly recommended that students and directors preview all videos before submitting to ensure the auditioning student is visible and the audio quality is acceptable.
- No auto tuning/pitch fix is permitted.