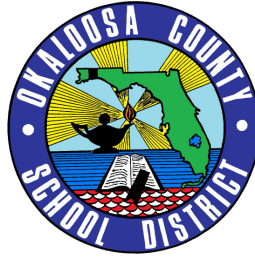


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NEWS RELEASE

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Crestview High School Band Named 2026 Phi Beta Mu Earl D. Irons Program of Distinction

The Crestview High School Band has been selected as a recipient of the prestigious 2026 Earl D. Irons Program of Distinction Award, presented by Phi Beta Mu International in recognition of outstanding achievement in band education and performance. Crestview is one of only two band programs in the nation selected for the 2026 honor and the first band from Florida to receive the Earl D. Irons Program of Distinction Award. The award recognizes band programs that exemplify the ideals established by Phi Beta Mu founder Earl D. Irons, including superior achievement, moral uprightness, and the advancement and development of bands internationally. The selection committee praised the Crestview Band program for its excellence and commitment to students.

“This recognition is a tremendous honor for our students and our entire band program,” said Jody Dunn, Crestview High School Band Director. “This prestigious award represents the total Crestview Band program, including our incredible middle school bands and their outstanding directors. This award also belongs to our alumni band members, former band parents and former directors, including Dave Cadle and Lou Lindsay, as well as the many other directors and assistant directors who have been part of the Crestview Band legacy since its founding in 1938.”

Dunn said the award represents more than a single year of accomplishments. “This award recognizes the Crestview Band’s long history of excellence and achievement,” Dunn said. “The students are the heart of everything we do, and I am incredibly proud of the dedication, hard work, character, and commitment to excellence they demonstrate. We are grateful to the families, educators, administrators, alumni and community members who have helped build and sustain this program for generations.”

Victoria Hayden, Principal of Crestview High School, said the recognition reflects a culture of excellence that has been built over decades. “Crestview High School is incredibly proud of our band students and Mr. Dunn,” Hayden said. “This award is a wonderful reflection of the discipline, perseverance, teamwork, and excellence our students demonstrate both in and out of the classroom. It also honors the tremendous legacy of the Crestview Band and all the students, directors, families, and supporters who have contributed to its success over the years. Our students represent Crestview High School and our community with tremendous pride, and we are honored to celebrate this remarkable achievement.”

Superintendent Marcus Chambers stated, “This is an extraordinary accomplishment and a tremendous honor for the Crestview High School Band. Recognition at this level speaks to the talent and dedication of our students and the leadership of Mr. Dunn and his staff. While we celebrate the students and staff who are part of the program today, this honor also recognizes generations of Crestview Band members, directors, families, and

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community supporters who helped establish a tradition of excellence. We are extremely proud of the Crestview High School Band and the legacy it represents for Okaloosa County.”

The Earl D. Irons Program of Distinction is designed to recognize band programs that demonstrate exceptional achievement while embodying the values of character, leadership, and excellence. Phi Beta Mu International hopes recipient programs will serve as examples for other band programs striving to reach similar levels of accomplishment. The Crestview High School Band will be formally recognized during the Phi Beta Mu Awards Breakfast at the 2026 Midwest Clinic in Chicago. The presentation is scheduled for 8 a.m. Thursday, December 17, 2026, at the Marriott Marquis.

The Midwest Clinic is an internationally recognized music education conference that brings together music educators, performers, students, and industry professionals from around the world. “This honor belongs to our students,” Dunn said. “They have earned the opportunity to stand on that stage and represent Crestview High School, Okaloosa County, and our community. We are looking forward to celebrating this accomplishment with them.”



(Crestview High School Band)

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