



CLASS GOT BRASS: A SCHOOL BRASS BAND COMPETITION GUIDELINES

Application Deadline: Friday, February 27, 2026

Competition Date: Saturday, March 28, 2026, at Armstrong Park

Class Got Brass presented by the Gia Maione Prima Foundation is a program of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation to support music education in the Louisiana school system by promoting the New Orleans brass band tradition.

It is a competition open to public and private middle schools and high schools in Louisiana. Schools may enter brass bands of no more than 12 members and must adhere to guidelines that emphasize the brass band tradition.

The deadline to apply is Friday, February 27, 2026- Bands will not be permitted to compete without having completed the registration form prior to the deadline.

The competition will take place on Saturday, March 28, at Louis Armstrong Park (701 N. Rampart Street) during the 2026 Congo Square Rhythms Festival.

- Check in begins at 11:00am and ends at 1:00pm.
- Competition starts promptly at 2:00pm and will end at approximately 4:30pm (*subject to change based on number of competitors*).

All competing groups will earn grants for their school music programs. These grants can be used for instruments, instrument repair, clinicians or other equipment and supplies. **All services must be from Louisiana vendors.**

There are two categories for the competition – advanced and beginner.

For the advanced category, the first prize is \$10,000; second prize is \$7,000; third prize: \$5,000.

For the beginner category, the prizes are: \$5,000 (first), \$4,000 (second), \$3,000 (third).

Performing schools that do not place in either category will earn a stipend of up to \$1,000.

Application Guidelines are available from the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation, by calling (504) 558-6103, and online at www.classgotbrass.com.

The deadline to apply is Friday, February 27, 2026

1. Eligibility – Who May Apply to Compete?

- a. Public and non-public accredited middle schools (5-8) and high schools (grades 9- 12) in the state of Louisiana are eligible to participate.
 - b. In order to participate in the competition, schools must submit a completed application signed by the band director and school principal.
 - c. Travel: The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation does not provide travel or lodging expenses, or reimbursement for any expenses associated with participation in this competition.
2. **Band Size:** Band may have no fewer than five instruments and no more than 12.
 3. **Beginner or Advanced?** Bands may compete as either “advanced” or “beginner.”
 4. **Instrumentation:** Bands may consist of the following:

- a. Bass Drum – 1 only
 - b. Snare Drum – 1 only
 - c. Sousaphone (tuba) – 2 maximum
 - d. Saxophone(s)
 - e. Trumpet(s)
 - f. Trombone(s)
 - g. Clarinet(s)
 - h. Other (must be recognized as a traditional brass band instrument, e.g.: banjo)
- 5. Extra Credit:**
- a. Bands may be accompanied by groups of dancers, or “steppers,” numbering no more than six, and/or a grand marshal.
 - b. Inclusion of solo
- 6. Students Only:**
- a. All performers – whether band members or accompanying dancers or grand marshal – must be students currently enrolled in the school.
 - b. Band directors may accompany the group during the performance but not perform with them.
- 7. Dress Code:**
- a. No school or school band uniforms
 - b. Blue, black or khaki pants (jeans are acceptable)
 - c. White shirt
 - d. Hat optional
 - e. Black neck tie optional
 - f. The Grand Marshal may wear a black suit and/or sash
 - g. Dancers’ outfits must match those of the band
- 8. No Props:**
- a. Bands may not bring any props (for example: a mock coffin) into the performing area. Banners or flags are not allowed.
 - b. The only exceptions are:
 - i. The Grand Marshal may carry a baton or umbrella
 - ii. Dancers may carry umbrellas and/or handkerchiefs
- 9. Required Elements - Repertoire (Song Selection):**
- a. Bands must perform three songs from the Approved Song List.
 - i. Bands must start their performance with a **dirge:** from the [Approved Song List](#).
 - ii. The second section must be a **traditional song:** from the Approved Song List
 - iii. The third selection must be a **contemporary song:** from the [Approved Song List](#).
- 10. Competition Date & Place**
- a. The competition will take place on Saturday, March 28, at Louis Armstrong Park (701 N. Rampart Street) during the Congo Square Rhythms Festival.
 - b. Check in begins at 11:00am and ends at 1:00pm.
 - c. Competition starts at 2:00pm

11. Performance Length:

- a. Bands will be allotted no more than five minutes for their entire performance.

12. Judging Criteria:

1. Judges will rank competing bands according to criteria that will include:
 - a. Adherence to tradition
 - b. Originality
 - c. Group cohesion
 - d. Improvisation, especially collective improvisation
 - e. Energy
 - f. Technical merit
 - g. Artistic merit
 - h. Entertainment value
 - i. Adherence to guidelines
 - i. Repertoire
 - ii. Uniform
 - iii. Presentation
 - j. Extra Credit
 - i. Dancing Group (“Steppers”)
 - ii. Grand Marshal

13. Application:

- a. Applicants must complete the required application form in its entirety. It must be signed by the school’s band director as well as the principal.

Applications must be received no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, February 27, 2026.

To enter, please use the online application form here:

[Class Got Brass Application Form](#)

Questions? Please contact the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Foundation, Inc., by calling (504) 558-6103, or by sending e-mail to: kia@jazzandheritage.org .