

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NCHS BAND PROGRAM

## 1. **What are the high school band program options?**

### A. **Marching band:**

The Marching Ironmen is a competitive band that combines music with precise choreographed formations. During the spring semester, students are asked to commit to being a part of the marching band. The music is given to the students (in late spring) so that they may begin practicing and memorizing the music. During the month of June (after the school year has ended), rehearsals will be held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. During those rehearsals, students learn marching skills, practice within their sections and rehearse with the full band. In late July/early August, two camps are held - one week for Drumline and Sideline percussion (Pit) sections and the Color Guard, and the following week these two groups merge with the wind sections of the band for Band Camp. When school begins, the marching band will rehearse during class and each Monday evening from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Color guard and percussion will also practice on Thursday evenings from 6:00-9:00. The band competes on Saturdays, beginning in late September and ending in early November. The number of competitions varies from year to year. The band also performs this show during half-time of all home football game. The pep band, which includes all band, color guard, and percussion students, will perform in the stands for the entire game.

After the competitive marching season is over, students audition and are placed into one of two bands for the remainder of the semester.

### B. **Concert Winds:**

Concert Winds is a concert performance group for any students who do not participate in the primary marching band program. This group meets during the school day. The Concert Winds perform in concerts in late October and December (mandatory) and perform music that is appropriate for the instrumentation of the group. Students choosing to be in the Concert Winds will remain in this band for the entire first semester but will audition for placement in second semester concert bands.

(See below.)

**Second semester options—after auditions, students will be placed in one of the following bands, based on their musical skill level:**

**C. Wind Ensemble - students with highest level of music skill**

**D. Symphonic Band - second level of music skill**

**E. Concert Band - third level of music skill**

## **2. With the time commitment required, can my student be in marching band and also in sports?**

Yes, most of the time. Students can do both with desire and determination. There should be no need for anyone to have to make a choice. Days when marching competitions are held - generally Saturday evenings - parents may need to help pick up students from a sporting event and drive them to an out of town competition to meet up with the rest of the band by performance time. If there are issues with teachers/coaches, advise the band directors as soon as possible and request a discussion between the faculty involved.

## **3. Is there a cost to be involved in band?**

There is generally no cost to students participating in the indoor band programs. However, there may be requests for specific items for performance attire: white shirts/blouses, black pants/skirts/dresses/shoes, etc. Marching band does require additional fees. Marching band students will be required to purchase marching shoes, gloves, white boxer shorts along with a marching band fee which covers a polo shirt, camp expenses for music, drill, staff, lunches, etc. There is also an activity fee that is charged by the school that is separate from the marching band fee.

## **4. Are any costs covered by school funds or is there any other method to offset expenses in this program?**

Obviously, money is always a concern, and we don't want it to be a deterrent to any students and force the issue of participating or not participating. With the budget cuts that schools face each year, direct school budgets do not allow for any type of reimbursements. However, students will have several opportunities to earn money for their personal band accounts through various fundraisers.

## **5. How can I - as a parent - be involved?**

There are numerous ways for parents to be involved, especially during marching season. The most important is to be supportive and encourage your student to participate and be dedicated. Marching band is a group effort that becomes better as the group learns to mesh together, each bringing their strengths, talents and willingness to the program. Do not let your student push you away or discourage you from becoming involved.

**Without parental help, the marching band program could not exist.** Parents can be involved in various areas. During the summer rehearsals, help is needed with sewing, planning the construction of any props that may be needed for the show, building those props, painting, uniform preparation, fitting and maintaining an issuance log

of uniform pieces. Assistance is also needed to organize and load the trailer used to transport equipment, props, instruments, etc. to competitions and chaperones are needed for bus trips. There is also a formal Band Parents Board that assists the directors with their needs throughout the year including fund raisers and dinners, to name a few. Everyone's schedules are full but your attendance at football games, competitions and support to the entire band and directors is greatly needed and appreciated. You can devote any time that your schedule allows for whatever process you want to help with. However, there are some duties that only get better with consistent participation. Parent help is greatly needed for setting up the football field with show props in a timeline with tight timing constraints during competitions. A consistent group that has assigned areas and is well versed into what is needed only helps the band vs. earning penalties.

## **6. What is the Band Parents Board?**

The board consists of parent volunteers that graciously serve in various capacities which focus on specific functions that assist the directors and the band program during the year. Meetings are generally held in the band room and are open to any parents.

## **7. I've heard about the band taking major trips. Where do they go and how often?**

Major trips occur every other year and have been during the Christmas break. The Marching Ironmen have participated in bowl parades such as Citrus, Fiesta, Orange, Cotton and Tournament of Roses, some numerous times. Some of these destinations also include a field competition. Available fundraisers are a highly recommended for students during the two planning years to offset these expenses but are well worth it.

### **Additional notes:**

\* Band students are generally a close-knit group of students that must rely on each other to make the program successful. Sometimes a competition doesn't end as well as anticipated but your support - by just being there and cheering them on or your direct, verbal support - can make all the difference in their outlook. Encourage your student to hold their head high and take pride in being a member of a marching band that has a national reputation as a quality program.

\* Not only do the students become a close-knit group, you also become a group of people with the same goal in mind - to help out this program and watch your student grow in a new and unique way. You also develop a new group of friends.

\* Many parents are reluctant to become involved - especially parents

of Freshman - because they don't know what to do or how to get involved. The best suggestion is to fill out the Parent Volunteer form (coming later this semester) or come when you hear about the first parent meeting and jump in with both feet! The best time to get involved is when your student is a Freshman and learn about the program from veteran parents.

As parents "graduate" or "age out", the knowledge and experience that the newer parents gain continues to carry the program from year to year.