

L. D. Bell Blue Raider Band

www.ldbellband.org



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WELCOME

Welcome to the L. D. Bell Band program. And congratulations! You have made a great decision for your family and your student(s). Strap in for what I promise will be a thrilling, exhaustive, and nothing short of life-changing three years for your entire family!

My name is Scott Woods and I am a band dad. In the interest of giving you an eyes wide open look at what no doubt will be an unforgettable, rewarding experience, I have compiled a list of both unexpected benefits of the program, as well as some suggestions for how to navigate and get the most out of the band experience. Lastly, I have included a personal story that I think best summarizes the journey, thus far. This is just one parent's opinion, but I hope you will find it useful.

Unexpected Benefits of Marching Band – As a sophomore parent, I had no idea of all the non-music benefits of band. Please understand, all the accomplishments are great for the band, the school and the community. They are listed later in the booklet and they are impressive. They are tangible proof that it's worth it and an indicator of the sheer excellence, quality, hard work, competence and dedication of the program. However, for me, the real results were all the things I saw my kids bringing home as a result of band. For me personally, these are the real accomplishments and benefits of marching band:

- *Community* – Imagine your kid, first day coming to the high school and already knowing the layout, as well as having 300 friends day one. That changes the intimidation factor of high school dramatically.
- *Responsibility* – These kids get up early...IN THE SUMMER! Yes, they are up and at 'em every morning, without needing wake-up calls?!?!
- *Discipline* – When my kids started marching, they got really focused. They slept better. They managed their time better and yes, teenagers became more organized.
- *Self-esteem* – Being part of a team helped, but it was more than that. Daily dedication to a cause like band increased their self-worth. Period.
- *Confidence* – Let your kid struggle with something, put in three-a-day practices, slay some dragons like schlepping an instrument, learning new music, new faces, a new skill like marching and watch their confidence blossom.
- *Achievement* – Again, awards are great, but the real rewards come when your kid learns a new piece of music, forges a new friendship or learns how to overcome adversity.
- *Human Relations* – I cannot explain, but something about working with all these personalities and egos in this environment and all the challenges empowers these kids to learn to communicate and show empathy.
- *Fitness* – Again, marching almost six days a week in the summer...pretty self-explanatory.
- *Something Bigger than Themselves* – Shhhh. Don't tell your kids about this one. My kids may not get this yet but at some point in life, their experiences in band will galvanize their need to belong and contribute.

Suggestions – Disclaimer: Do as much of this as you can. Every situation is different. We all have schedules and commitments that will limit our involvement. And please take all of these with a grain of salt, as more of a "lessons learned" as I recall coming into band as a sophomore parent:

- Show Up –Go to games. Chaperone. Volunteer. Be visible. No matter what they say, they want you there. They want friends and family there. If they discourage, just show up and keep a low profile. Ask any graduating senior parent or student. It matters!
- Say “YES” – Clarinet section party? YES. At our house? YES. Social band thing? YES. Band members sleep-over? YES. Bring kids home from practice? Yes. New band friend social thing? YES!!! This community thing is big and it has helped our kids immensely.
- Clap – Clap for everyone. Everywhere. When I see other school parents clap for every band consistently, I think “class act”.
- Feed –This is as much about nutrition as it is about their need for music. Give them healthy eating choices, encourage them to think of food as marching fuel. These kids need lots of healthy protein, fat and yes, salt (otherwise, all that hydration is moot). If they want to practice, let them...no matter what. If they want private lessons and you can afford it, do it! Feed it!!!
- Ask for Help – Talk to other band parents. This program is a well-run machine that can be a bit intimidating and yes, frustrating, at times. Talk to others. Don’t be shy. Ask for help. This is a strong community... a family... and everyone wants to help. It’s ok to say “I don’t know”.

This Book

It can be overwhelming for parents at the beginning of the year and this handbook has been compiled to help orient you to the many different aspects of the band. Many parents have contributed to this information—each sending a thought or idea from their experiences as a sophomore band parent. This information is not intended to replace your attendance at band parent meetings. You will receive a calendar that you need to keep close at hand. Sophomore band members have a tendency to “forget” to relate information to their parents. Feel free to email any officer or director for help and remember to come to the meetings to get the latest information about each event.

- Scott and Deana Woods
L.D. Bell Band parents, 2015-2018

A Word from the Directors...

Thank you, parents! This band would not exist without the tremendous support and generous time given by our wonderful band parents. The directors thank every parent for understanding and embracing what is necessary in order for us all to experience success.

WEBSITE

The L.D. Bell Band has its own website! Keep up to date with the most recent information by looking up www.ldbellband.org Bookmark and check it every day.

CALENDAR AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE - THE “ALL-IMPORTANT” PAPER

You will receive a brightly colored paper with the year’s calendar in June. On one side of the page there will be a general yearly calendar and the payment schedule on the reverse. This is meant for a general guide for dates throughout the school year. To keep current with the most accurate dates, please visit the online Google Calendar available on the band website. You can also sync it to your electronic calendar (iPhone, Android, Outlook Calendar, etc.) and always receive updated events, times and events.

JUNE TRAINING CAMP

Although the main purpose of Training Camp is to introduce incoming sophomores to marching techniques, the full band is required to attend. The older members are a tremendous help with the teaching process while building camaraderie with the new band members. The camp is held in the days immediately following school dismissal to prevent any disruptions in vacation plans.

SUMMER BAND

The last week of July going into first weeks of August begin our busy marching season. Attendance at this camp is mandatory so schedule vacations accordingly: The band will learn almost half of the show during this crucial time! Speak to the directors with any concerns, but plan to plan around these dates.

UIL rules dictate that a high school program cannot begin marching drill until August 1. As you can imagine, this puts important emphasis on this camp. The times vary, but get ready for 3 rehearsals a day (8+ hour days). Comfortable tennis shoes, light colored clothes, and a cap are the best type of attire. It also will be helpful to have a water jug, sunscreen, and sunglasses.

Some of the things happening during this camp include:

1. Marching tryouts
2. Learning show music and drill
3. Turning in fundraiser money
4. Purchasing gloves/shoes/uniform parts and uniform distribution
5. Photo in uniform for football program
6. Registration for school (the band members will have a pre-arranged time)
7. Learning “stand tunes” (music for football games and pep rallies)
8. Lots & lots of bonding between old and new band members.

WEEKLY MARCHING PRACTICES

Once school starts the practice schedule during marching season can be rather hectic. Early morning practices are held four mornings a week, split between the high school and Pennington Field – **check the website every day!** Parents, it will greatly aid your child to mark **your** calendar accordingly. Attendance is crucial. It is your responsibility to get your student to the correct location, however, buses are provided for those requiring a ride from Pennington back to Bell. Again, check the website for exact times and location. There is typically an afternoon sectional for each performance group scheduled per week.

SPIRITWEAR

Spirit wear is available for parents and other family members. We have many different shirts, sweatshirts, caps, etc. available throughout the fall season. You will have opportunities to view the products for sale at band parent meetings, Pizza Feast and at some football games. It is a great way to show your support for the band.

PEP RALLIES

Pep rallies are held each Friday during the football season. Parents are invited to attend and have a special seating area on the gym floor. You can call the school office for the exact start time, but plan to arrive early especially if you are videotaping. Parking is available in the back parking lot.

UNIFORM CARE

Please read the "uniform care and cleaning" handout your student will receive (it will also be on the website). You are responsible for the upkeep of your student's marching uniform. In order to preserve the uniforms properly, they are to be washed in accordance with the instructions **each** week prior to the game.

You are also responsible for cleaning concert uniforms. The girls' uniforms may be gently machine washed according to the directions inside the uniform. The concert tuxes must be dry cleaned before returning them to the band OR returned with \$5 to cover the cost of dry cleaning. You are responsible for making sure the hems of skirts and pants are adjusted for your student.

Do not cut any portion of the school owned uniform. Proper care will help keep a good-looking band and not wear out uniforms too quickly.

COLOR GUARD

All students selected to the color guard are members of the L.D. Bell High School Band program. This part of the band program is responsible for the enhancement and visual portrayal of our fall season productions. Selection is based on an audition in the spring with highly trained instructors providing choreography and equipment skill instruction specifically for this section of the band.

Auditions are open **first** to wind players who play instruments such as oboe and bassoon in concert season that are not used in marching band. Next, the unit is open to a limited number of wind players who play woodwind instruments of large sections (flute, clarinet). On a case-by-case basis, wind and percussionists playing other instruments will be allowed to audition. All members of the color guard are encouraged and expected to continue advancement on their primary instrument through such pursuits as private lessons, director listenings, and the All Region/State Band audition process. Finally, students from outside the band program, having demonstrated proper participation through attitude, technical achievement, and attendance during the guard audition process will, on a case-by-case basis, be permitted to join.

FRIDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL GAMES

Fridays in the fall trimester are pretty fast paced for the Bell Band. The students will be given a scheduled meeting time to be at the band hall - which may be VERY SOON after school ends (consider bringing items to school and staying there until call time). Warm-ups and inspections take place prior to boarding the buses for the game.

The buses leave the stadium as soon as possible after each game. Students need to have rides or a parent waiting. If you need to pick up your non-driving band member, you can wait in the band hall parking lot, but beware, there are many cars doing just the same thing. The football team, cheerleaders and the drill team all use this parking lot. Carpooling with other parents/students might be a good alternative to this problem.

BANDS OF AMERICA

Bands of America--BOA--is a premier national organization for high school music students. Based in Indiana, BOA hosts many excellent contests and symposiums. BOA is probably best known for marching contests held each fall. There are twenty-plus regional contests held around the US with several held in Texas. Houston, DFW and San-Antonio have all been winning locations for the Bell Band. Each year the directors choose locations to fit our busy fall schedule - most have been in Texas, but some may be in other states! You will know in advance so that you can plan accordingly. Some parents choose to follow the buses to these contests, while some parents make reservations and stay at a nearby hotel.

In some instances the band goes to the contest and returns in the same day. Each year the schedule varies due to performance times. There is a preliminary performance and, hopefully, inclusion in the finals. There's plenty of time to purchase T-shirts, patches, videos, etc. We usually get home very late but it's well worth the opportunity to see other high-caliber bands. These contests require lots of parental involvement. The band is fed various snacks and meals during the day. Donations of snack items/beverages will be needed as well as help to serve and clean up.

BOA sells patches at all of these events that can be purchased and sewn on to students' letter jackets. This is a good way to commemorate the event and many parents purchase these patches for their students. The BOA web site, www.musicforall.org, is full of information and will keep you logging on all year. You will be able to keep up-to-date on scores, news, etc.

THE HEB MARCHING CONTEST

We host our very own marching contest at Pennington Field! We are responsible for hiring judges and providing dozens of volunteers for many duties throughout the day. We need the help of every parent available at this crucial event. This contest raises funds for band operations. We hope to continue to attract many area high school bands to compete. Both the LD Bell and Trinity High School Marching bands perform in "exhibition" to entertain the attending bands - not for a score. This contest is based on operational systems used by BOA (described above) and UIL (described below).

THE HEB DRUMLINE CLINIC & CONTEST

We also host our very own drumline contest, also at Pennington Field! We are similarly responsible for hiring clinicians and judges, and providing dozens of volunteers for many duties throughout the day. We like to ask for the support of percussion band parents as well as any other band parents who would just like to support our percussion section! This contest raises funds for percussion and band operations. We hope to continue to attract many area high school drumlines to compete. Both the L.D. Bell and Trinity High School drumlines perform in exhibition at this contest – not for a score. This contest is based on a clinic format where each drumline receives immediate feedback following their performance from our panel of clinicians. Each group is also ranked against other groups in their division and trophies are awarded at the end of the night.

UIL—REGIONAL CONTEST IN ODD YEARS (2015, 2017 etc.)

THE ROAD TO STATE MARCHING CONTEST IN EVEN YEARS (2016, 2018 etc)

The University Interscholastic League--UIL--governs the state marching contests. The UIL has strict rules concerning the conduct and procedures necessary for advancement to the state competitions. You are probably aware of the fact that schools in the state of Texas are divided into classes based on student population. Bell High is “class 6A”, the class for the largest schools. In order to make the state competition more manageable, class 4A and 6A schools have their marching competitions in even numbered years, i.e., 2016, and 2018. The 3A and 5A schools hold their marching competitions in odd numbered years.

The road to the state contest begins with the regional marching competition. This is usually held on a weekday and we are fortunate to have these contests in our home field at Pennington or at nearby stadiums. The bands are given a rating of Division I, II, III, or IV. There are not 1st, 2nd, 3rd places, etc. All bands receiving a Division I then proceed to the Area competition.

Division I bands from 2 –3 regions will gather at the area competition. The location of the area contest can vary based on the geographical makeup of the bands. It is during this competition that the bands advancing to state will be decided. All bands perform one time and a select number of bands will perform again in finals. A predetermined number of bands (based on the number of bands receiving Division I ratings) will get to make the coveted trip to State.

You can already see that just a trip to state is very exciting and just to get to make the trip is an honor. We have always considered it a great accomplishment to get to board the buses. Any placement or championship is “icing on the cake”. You can get lots of information and see pictures and ratings on the UIL web site. The address is www.uil.utexas.edu

There are also patches available at UIL to commemorate contests. You may purchase the patches at the events or they may be found at online stores after the event. Although you usually have to pay for shipping with the online stores you could save money if you are buying several patches. So just be aware that there are options.

BUS TRIPS

The band takes several bus trips through the year. Charter buses are used for “big” trips while school buses are used for Friday night football games and local contests. These bus trips are great fun for the band. Bus assignments are made by the directors, or may be done on a “first-come, first-serve” basis.

Band members are usually permitted to bring small coolers, snacks, videos, CD’s, blankets, and pillows on the longer bus trips. Quite often band parents donate snacks and drinks for the trips in addition to items that students bring. You will be notified if spending money is needed for additional meals for longer trips. You will receive itineraries with times, locations, and phone numbers for longer bus trips.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL ETIQUETTE

There are an abundance of social media outlets (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat, etc...) frequented by band students and parents. These outlets are a great way to hear about what bands are doing around the country. Though entertaining, these places are littered with posts that reflect poorly on individuals and organizations. It’s obvious that many people either don’t realize or don’t care that their personal thoughts, when subjective or inflammatory, reflect on their entire group.

Occasionally we’ve had incidents where someone from Bell posted something they thought innocent, but it upset others when taken a certain way and it drew criticism. Even when not intended, this is embarrassing. If something is posted that is critical of another group or reflects negatively on our band it must be addressed by the directors. The safest way to avoid criticism or scrutiny is NOT to post. However, if you choose to post comments remember that you are speaking on behalf of the whole Bell Band and we want to continue our first-class reputation. This goes for students and parents.

MARCH-A-THON

The march-a-thon has been one of the most successful fundraisers the band has ever undertaken. Each fall the band—and the parents—take to the streets in a daylong “parade.” The route varies each year but is generally six miles in length. During the march we stop at designated areas and perform. (We’ll even take special requests—for a fee!) The band is given rest stops and has a nice lunch break.

Each band member will be asked to solicit pledges. All money raised by the student can be turned in to cover his/her band fees. We strongly urge band members to actively solicit pledges for this reason. Many students have raised the entire cost of their band fees by using this fundraiser.

Many parents are needed to make this fundraiser successful. Some of the jobs include making and serving hot dogs or sandwiches, having water and snacks available at each rest stop and walking behind the band with our donation buckets. It sounds like a lot of work, but you will find that this is a wonderful opportunity to meet other parents while getting your exercise for the weekend.

PIZZA FEAST / SILENT AUCTION

This event is our second major fundraiser. You have probably already attended as the parent of a junior high band member, and enjoyed the food and music. However, as a high school band parent your help will be invaluable.

This dinner is completely planned and served by band parents. Careful planning through the years has made the event extremely efficient, but many people are needed to set up, serve, bake goods, tear down, etc. A portion of the income goes back to the junior high band programs based on the number of tickets they sell.

The work on the silent auction begins in the summer. Donations are crucial to this event and the support of **everyone** in securing them is greatly needed. There are several committees that need a lot of parent volunteers. The total income from the silent auction benefits the Bell Band program.

CONCERT SEASON

Concert season is a time when significant musical training takes place. Each band's performance rating during the UIL Concert and Sight-Reading Contest serves as an assessment tool for evaluating the entire band program's development from year to year. This spring project is of the highest significance as it relates to the musical development of our students and the design of our curriculum.

Wind and Percussion members will audition for placement in one of four bands. Each of the four band's curriculum is designed to further develop our student's musical skill and participation expectations. Auditions are held in late spring and band selections are announced in May to facilitate the construction of the students' class schedule for the next school year. Sectional participation held before and/or after school is a necessary and required curricular activity to ensure the success for each ensemble that participates in the UIL Concert & Sightreading Contest.

Three concerts are presented at the high school and are open to the public. A winter concert is presented in December, a Pre-UIL concert in March and a spring concert held in April or May. These are wonderful, well-attended concerts and you will hear challenging music. This is a great time to invite the grandparents, aunts and uncles and let them hear "what else the Bell Bands can do".

PRIVATE LESSONS

Private lessons are offered for every instrument, pending instructor availability. Our instructors are professional players or advanced-level university students who are contracted through the HEB ISD. The rate for all private lessons is set by the school district and is \$18 per session. Students with the benefits of private lessons have a history of becoming top players in the program, and sometimes become private lesson instructors themselves while in college.

ALL-REGION, AREA & STATE TRYOUTS

Individual band members are strongly encouraged to tryout. Pre-selected tryout music is available to all students during summer band. Region Concert Band tryouts are held in early December in two phases. The students passing the first round (consisting of two phases) of tryouts will perform with the all-region band. If a student passes the second round they attain area status and therefore are eligible to compete for the all-state band. This competition is usually held in early January.

Band members who become All-State musicians are highly praised and honored. These students assemble in San Antonio in February to perform at the Texas Music Educators Association convention. The bands and orchestras made up of these wonderful musicians represent the top 1% of the high school band members in the state of Texas. Advancing to All-State is the highest individual honor a high school musician can achieve.

ENSEMBLE CONTEST AND SOLO CONTEST

These contests are sponsored by the HEB school district. These contests give the band student and director a good idea of how each student is progressing musically. Ensemble contest is usually held in February. Solo contest is held in March for wind players and May for percussionists. Your child will be given plenty of time to prepare a solo or ensemble performance. All band members are strongly encouraged to participate.

JAZZ BAND

Jazz Band meets during the second trimester. Admission to this fun group is based on tryout performances and/or needed instrumentation. A concert is held in February. Be sure to mark your calendar for this extraordinary performance. Additional concerts may be added as appropriate. Participation in this ensemble provides an introduction to the style of Jazz performance.

“NIGHT OF DRUMMING” PERCUSSION SHOW

A special “Night of Drumming” is held each spring featuring percussionists from the entire L.D. Bell Cluster. This is a fun and entertaining evening where the students perform music that they have learned for Solo & Ensemble Contest and new pieces that they put together for the show. Some students write and perform their own work.

L.D. BLUE RAIDER BAND CLASSIC GOLF TOURNAMENT

The golf tournament, which began in 2011 is another of our major fundraisers. The event is held on a Saturday at Texas Star in Euless.

Families can assist by recruiting sponsors, recruiting players, donating items for auctioning, and volunteering time on the day of the tournament. Students will receive credit in their individual fee accounts for sponsors and players they recruit for the tournament. It takes participation from all to make the event a success!

UIL CONCERT & SIGHTREADING CONTEST

The UIL Concert and Sight-Reading Contest is held in April. The concert bands travel to local high schools where they perform and are critiqued and graded by UIL judges. Each band performs their concert music followed by the sight-reading portion of the contest. If you have never been to the contest, you will stand in amazement during sight-reading. The band is given music they (or the directors) have never seen or heard and have approximately 8 – 10 minutes to talk their way through the piece. They then receive a “one-time-shot” at their performance. Many do not understand that UIL concert contests are open to the public. Even though performance times are sometimes inconvenient, it will be worth your time to hear and applaud for our bands.

BAND BANQUET

A band banquet is held each spring near the end of the school year. This special evening brings the band together one last time to review the year and wish the seniors a fond farewell. A DJ provides music for dancing.

The location varies from year to year but it is usually held at a nearby hotel banquet facility or convention center and is considered a formal evening. Have your band member visit with older students on dress attire if you are uncertain on such details. Some students bring dates, but many prefer to come with their group of friends. All band fees must be current in order to participate and the price is included in the band fees. Any guest not in band will have to pay for a ticket (usually around \$40).

BAND YEARBOOK

A band yearbook is compiled each year by parent volunteers to capture the band's activities in much greater detail than allowed in the high school yearbook. The cost of the publication is included in student fees for the year.

GRADUATION

Sophomores and juniors will be expected to perform for this ceremony. It is the L.D. Bell Band Department's responsibility to provide musical service for not only our graduating seniors but also our school and community. Transportation will be provided. It is not necessary for parents to attend unless they desire.

SPRING TRYOUTS

Late April and early May are very busy times for all band members. Auditions for concert bands, drum major positions, color guard membership, and battery and pit assignments are all held during this time. Selection of the brass and woodwind captains, student instructors, and band officers also take place. Your band member will be able to get information from the directors if they choose to audition for any of these positions.