

3/14/09

**To: Parents and Marching Band members**

**From: Todd Blaser and Greg DeGier – Marching Band Directors**

**Re: Summer Marching Band Schedule and other information**

[www.jhsmarchingband.org](http://www.jhsmarchingband.org) -- Band's website. Please bookmark this site for current updates.

**Dear Marching Band students and Parents/and /or Guardians:**

Welcome to the Alexandria Marching Band Program!! As a band parent, you are well aware of the positive life benefits our young artists gain from their participation in band. It is imperative we continue to offer these opportunities to every student who chooses to explore his/her creative mind and in doing so, establish habits of excellence that will transfer to every aspect of their life. A major part of the band experience for students is performing with their peers and being part of a team that will create life – long memories.

For over two and a half decades, the Alexandria Marching Band program has been a prominent fixture in our community, across the state of Minnesota, and nationally. Hundreds of students have benefitted in numerous ways from participation in the group. Through the marching band students gain valuable leadership skills, develop a great work ethic, have an opportunity to travel, refine their musicianship, and develop pride from performing in the group. Each year the band entertains thousands of spectators in the state through their parade performances. Every second year the band offers an opportunity for students to travel and march in a prestigious national – caliber parade. This summer, the band will be traveling to Colorado to march in two parades at Estes Park and Greeley. The strides and momentum we make this summer will be a great foundation for the trip this summer and the future of the program.

It is with great pride and excitement we announce plans for the upcoming summer marching season. This summer, the Alexandria Marching Band will be presenting 'HAIR', music based on the rock opera/musical of the same name. Others musical plans are to perform 'Purple Haze' as a non-judged portion of parade performances. Plans are underway to make the 2009 Alexandria Marching Band bigger and better than ever before!! The HAIR production is sure to be entertaining and will be a crowd favorite throughout the summer season! The arrangements are written very well and we are excited to get started. The colorguard and drumline will sure have plenty of general effect integration with the show theme! We are fortunate to have a wonderful staff to instruct the marching band. Our percussion instruction is headed by JHS alumni Brent Fassett and assisted by Jordan Franzwa. Instructors for the colorguard include Susan Snorek and Rhonda Blaser. Both the percussion and colorguard units are top – notch level, award – winning groups and this summer each group looks to be very strong again! A few JHS Marching Band Alumni will be assisting this summer also with the honor guard and other sections.

Please find enclosed with this letter all information pertaining to the summer marching season. Please read all information as there are forms due by a certain date, and other financial obligations. The parade/rehearsal schedule (salmon colored sheet) should be kept in a place where you can refer to it when needed. This schedule of parades and practices has been scheduled early enough this year so hopefully everyone can plan ahead for an exciting summer. Please schedule in dates and times, as it is important that all band members are on time to rehearsals and parades. Also enclosed is a health questionnaire (white colored paper) that needs to be filled out accurately so students can be taken care of safely when traveling out of town. We want all parents to have the same information that we have directly related to band members, so that is why we are asking parents and students to sign the last page of this letter (blue colored sheet) stating that all information has been read and understood. Parents and teachers working together on the behalf of the kids spells SUCCESS!!

## **Marching Band – General Information – Policies/Procedures**

### **I. Music Preparation – “Aquarius/Let The Sunshine In” and “Purple Haze”**

All band members must have their music learned and memorized at a performance level by the end of school (June 5th). The music will take time to memorize and most students will have it for memory quickly, while others may take a little more time. Time will be spent in class (at JHS and DMS) to rehearse the music so students will have an opportunity to have it ‘sink in’. Plan ahead and schedule your practice times. Mr. Blaser and Mr. DeGier will be coming over to DMS to help the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders with the music after their spring concerts. ***To get a head start*** on the marching and to prepare for the Memorial Day Parade two rehearsals have been planned and scheduled. Steering around DMS/JHS schedules is tricky in May, so we weren’t left with many options for rehearsals. The first rehearsal will be for all the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders with their section leaders on Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. at JHS. All colorguard and drumline members should attend this rehearsal also. The next rehearsal on Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. will involve everyone (all sections, all members). These rehearsals will be very important because it will focus primarily on getting ready for the Memorial Day Parade on Monday, May 25<sup>th</sup>. ***Everyone that is in marching band this summer will march in the Memorial Day Parade on May 25<sup>th</sup> (new this year).*** Music for the Memorial Day Parade (Battle Hymn and Star Spangled Banner) will be handed out in late April and rehearsed in band classes at JHS and DMS.

### **II. Attendance Guidelines**

Even though the marching band includes over 125 individuals, we are a team that must make considerable progress at every rehearsal. Since we made the shift to an all volunteer group 3 years ago, the dependability of the students has been excellent. Our entire band can only be as good as we are INDIVIDUALLY! Attendance is expected of every member.

#### **Bad Weather Guidelines for Rehearsals/Parade Days**

**Rainy Weather:** Everyone should report at the scheduled time at JHS. Meet in the large gym for instructions/announcements.

**Tornado Watch/Warning:** Everyone should report at scheduled time. Tornado watches are a common occurrence in Minnesota. Instructors are aware of weather reports and parent chaperones will keep an eye out for bad weather conditions as the band is rehearsing.

**Absences:** We have always appreciated the efforts by students and parents when scheduling summer family activities. With the exception of emergency related absences, Mr. Blaser must be notified of all other absences *prior* to being gone. Absence forms are available from the band directors and should be signed by both the parent and the student. Please plan ahead and notify us in writing at least three (3) weeks in advance when you know there will be a conflict. Please plan ahead as last minute changes cause headaches for everyone in the group.

**Illness:** If a student is ill please call 762-7758 (JHS music office) to report the absence.

### **III. Performance standards**

As you will notice from the schedule, there are only a few rehearsals to get ready for our first competitive parade on June 14<sup>th</sup> in Albertville. Minnesota is the summer parade capital of the United States! Typically every competitive Minnesota parade hosts some of the best bands in the state. All the parades on the schedule will have a competitive field. Each rehearsal is carefully planned with pre-established goals that will prepare our band to be 'performance ready'. Each student will have a 'spot' in the band's overall set up. That spot will stay the same the entire summer. We will do our best to provide extra help sessions during band camp once we know who needs additional assistance and encouragement. We have a great system of drum majors/wind section captains/section leaders that will help any student needing more time to get ready. One of our most important goals as teachers will be to have every student ready for the first competitive parade on June 14<sup>th</sup>, and the May 25<sup>th</sup> Memorial Day Parade.

### **IV. Medical Staff**

We are fortunate every year to have marching band parents who help out with the medical well - being of the students. Along with the Band Boosters parents, we will have an EMT and/or doctor with us on each trip. In this packet there is a health questionnaire (white sheet) that needs to be filled out so your child can be taken care of safely. Marching Band is a physical activity and the well being of each student is important.

### **V. Uniform Information**

We are fortunate to have Connie Boraas and Beth Telander in charge of uniforms this year for the summer season. Each student will be assigned a uniform, shako and other equipment for performances. It is the responsibility of each student to make sure the uniform is taken care of properly. At JHS students will start the uniform fitting process on Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup> during their band hours. Please remember to bring all necessary forms and fees with you to your fitting.

***Classes of 2012 and 2013:*** Please call Beth Telander at 320-808-4002 to schedule your time to be fit. All uniform fittings will take place at JHS in the dungeon (room behind small gym). Below is a schedule of the uniforms fittings for the classes of 2012 and 2013:

Monday, March 30	3 – 8 p.m.
Tuesday, March 31	3 – 8 p.m.
Monday, April 6	3 – 8 p.m.
Tuesday, April 7	3 – 8 p.m.

***Dinkles (black marching shoes):*** all drumline, winds and honor guard members will need to wear the proper marching shoes (Dinkles). A list of used Dinkles will be posted at JHS during fittings. If you need new Dinkles, those will be ordered the second week of May. The cost of a new pair of Dinkles is \$32.00. Orders for new Dinkles can be placed during uniform fitting times by filling out the enclosed 2009 Marching Band Cost Calculation sheet.

**Uniform cleaning:** The uniforms are dry-cleaned and ready to go! Visual presentation is a big part of the marching band performances and we ask that your assigned uniform be kept clean 'year-round'. If your uniform becomes soiled we ask you to have it dry cleaned on your own. Be sure all uniform buttons and snaps are secure. If any repairs are needed that you cannot do, please let Connie or Beth know as soon as possible.

## **VI. Fees/paper work/due dates**

*Below are the due dates for all paper work and fees for each section of the band. All forms are enclosed in this letter.*

**Winds, Drumline, Honor Guard** - At uniform fitting, turn in:

\*Health Questionnaire (white sheet)

\*Financial Obligations (enclosed Marching Band Cost Sheet) with all necessary fees

\*signature page (blue sheet) signed by student and parent stating all this information has been read and understood pertaining to the summer marching band program.

**Colorguard** – on Friday April 17th, turn in:

\*Health Questionnaire (white sheet)

\*Financial Obligations (enclosed Marching Band Cost Sheet) with all necessary fees

\*signature page (blue sheet) signed by student and parent stating all this information has been read and understood pertaining to the summer marching band program.

**Student scholarship fund:** Recently a student scholarship fund has been established to help students that want to be in marching band, but can't afford to do so. Students that need help should contact Mr. Blaser at 762-7758 as soon as possible for more information. We do not want financial concerns to prohibit anyone from participating in the marching band.

## **VII. Parent Meeting on June 8<sup>th</sup>**

There will be a parent meeting on Monday, June 8th at 6:00 p.m. in the small gym at JHS. This parent meeting is held annually before the summer season starts. Please make plans to attend this meeting as information for the rest of the summer will be presented that evening.

## **VIII. Parent Parade Information**

Representing the community of Alexandria through the marching band is an awesome experience! Hopefully our parade performances this summer will provide families with many enjoyable outings together. Not only do band members feel good about mom, dad and other relatives cheering them on, but the overwhelming support staff members have received is also appreciated. We will do our best to provide parade information for you ahead of time. Unfortunately, we do not always receive parade information with maps until the last minute. Any information that we are able to copy and send home with your son or daughter will be relayed to them verbally at rehearsals. Please remember to ask if there are questions. We are looking forward to seeing all of you this summer and on June 8<sup>th</sup> at the parent meeting!

Sincerely,

Todd Blaser & Greg DeGier – JHS Band Director  
JHS Music Office 762-7758 ext. # 3

**Signature page**

**Student** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instrument/Section** \_\_\_\_\_

**I have read and understood all the information in this letter pertaining to the summer marching band season.**

**Student Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Signature** \_\_\_\_\_