



Aliso Niguel High School Instrumental Music

I went to the Parent Orientation. What's next?

Activities and the Year, in Brief

*******Fall *******

When is “Marching Season”?

During the Fall, the students learn and perform a “field” show, which is performed on a football field. The field show is also commonly known as a “halftime” show. Though the Marching Band performs their show during halftime at home football games, the focus is on competitions with other Marching Bands.

How long does it take to learn a show?

Practice begins the week after the prior school year ends, with a one-week practice; followed by a weekly practice throughout most of the summer. These practices give the students an opportunity to begin to work together as one team, learn basic drill work (how to march...yes, there is a certain technique in how the foot is “rolled”). Before school starts, there is a more intense “Band Camp”. After Band Camp, the students continue their rehearsals during their Marching Band class during the school day, one night per week, and some Saturdays.

When are the competitions?

There are generally five competitions, on Saturdays beginning in October, with the Championship competition the weekend before Thanksgiving.

Who teaches the Marching Band their show?

The Band Director is literally the leader of the band. He decides on the theme of the show, and works with the coaches on selecting music and design to make the show a success. As practices continue, the students learn additional formations for the show.

How is the program funded?

Only the Band Director’s salary is paid by the district. Everything else--from the coaches, to the uniforms, to instruments and their repair (for program-owned instruments), to equipment, to the food and water provided to the students during competitions--is paid for through the Instrumental Music Boosters. The Boosters participate in a number of fundraising events, mostly in the Spring and Summer, to put money into the budget pot. The remainder of the budget needs is assessed to the students as program fees.

Besides the Marching Band, what other ensembles are in this program?

Marching Band is in the Fall. In the Spring, the Drumline and ColorGuard participate in separate competition circuits. In addition, there's the Concert Band, Jazz Band and Wind Ensemble, which are all classroom ensembles.

What does the “Marching Band” consist of?

The Marching Band can easily be split into 3 distinct units: the winds, the drumline, and the auxiliary. The Winds are all of the instruments that are blown into, such as the trumpet and clarinet. Further, the Winds have sub-categories of woodwinds and brass. The Drumline also has two distinct groups: the “pit” and “percussion”. The pit is the group of stationary instruments you see at the front of the field. The percussion marches and includes the snare drums and “quads”. Last, but definitely not least, is the Auxiliary, or ColorGuard. This team provides the color, with the backdrop of the music being performed by the Winds and Drumline. The ColorGuard or “Guard” performs with flags, swords and rifles, along with other media, depending on the theme of the show.

What competition circuit is the Marching Band in?

We participate in the Western Band Association (WBA), with schools from the western states. Most of the schools we compete against will be from southern California, and we will also compete against schools from central and northern California at the season Championship. The Western Band Association website is <http://www.westernbands.org/>.

Are there other competition circuits?

Yes. The main one in our area is Southern California Bands of America (SCSBOA). The Marching Band Open Series (MBOS) is another circuit, and is sponsored by the Winter Guard Association of Southern California. The SCSBOA website is <http://www.scsboa.org/>. The MBOS website is <http://www.wgasc.org/mbos.aspx>. Each circuit has similar but subtle differences in scoring.

Do we compete against other schools in our district?

We're the only one in WBA, though we may compete against the other schools.

Who judges the competitions?

In WBA, you will see judges walking on the field while the Band marches. These judges are listening to individuals play their instruments and taking note of close-up details. Additional judges sit in the Press Box at the top of the stadium. If you sit near the judges, please be respectful of the difficult job they are performing.

How are the competitions scored?

A complete scoring manual (for WBA) is available for viewing at http://www.westernbands.org/forms/pdf/2007adjudication_rules.pdf. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place awards are given in each class, along with awards for High Music, High Marching, High Effect, High Percussion, and High Auxiliary. In addition, a Sweepstakes award is given to the top Band in the 1A-2A-3A class, and one to the 4A-5A class. Class A has no more than 60 members; Class 2A has no more than 80 members; Class 3A has no more than 100 members; Class 4A has

no more than 140 members; Class 5A may have any number of members. We are generally in Class 3A.

Where is the Championship competition?

The location rotates between southern, central and northern California.

There are a lot of adults assisting the band. Are these people paid?

The Band Director is salaried by the district. The coaches are paid by the Instrumental Music Boosters. The rest of the people you see hauling equipment, providing water to the band, and preparing and feeding the band are all parent volunteers.

Why are all of these volunteers needed?

The pit equipment is heavy, cumbersome, and cannot be carried to the field by the students alone. The WBA only gives 13 minutes for the Band to get on the field, complete their performance, and clear the field. The more parent volunteers who help, the quicker the Band can get on the field, and have a few moments to run through the show in their minds, and take a deep breath.

During warm-ups, some of the parent volunteers follow the different groups with bottles of water to make sure they stay hydrated.

At some point during a competition day, there is also a group of parent volunteers who prepare a hot meal for the students.

Why go to the trouble of preparing a hot meal? Aren't there snack stands at the competition?

Yes, there are snack stands. However, to ensure that the students (your children) are eating healthy for the competition, a prepared hot meal is optimal. This meal is included in the program fee. The other main reason to feed them together is to continue the philosophy of being together as a team, and what better way to do that than to break bread together.

What's the schedule like on competition days?

The different groups generally do warm ups separately, working on the individual needs of the smaller ensembles. Then they will generally spend some time rehearsing as the Marching Band. They may eat before boarding the buses to the competition. Once at the competition site, they will continue warm ups, which will also include stretching exercises. Following their performance, they will go to the stands to watch the other groups perform. The students are also present during the Awards presentation. After the awards ceremony, the students return to school by bus.

Do the volunteers watch the other groups, too?

Some of the volunteers do. Some volunteers load all of the equipment back into the two rental trucks. The chaperones stay with the students. All of the volunteers try their hardest to make it back to the stadium to cheer for Aliso during the awards ceremony.

What is the “sea of teal”?

The school colors are teal and black. You may have also noticed that the Winds and Drumline uniforms have a teal sequined band. To further show school spirit, the parents wear teal shirts (sold by the Boosters). When the Band looks up into the stands, they see the “sea of teal”, and know that their parents are there for moral support.

I have been receiving calls and emails from various committee chairmen asking me to volunteer. When I talked to my son about this, he said that few parents are involved and that I shouldn't come. From all of the discussions so far, it sounds like there are actually a lot of parents who volunteer. Who's right?

Keep in mind that your son (or daughter) is now a teenager and looking for his or her own “space”. Come and volunteer. You'll be glad you did. Just remember that being in Band is your child's “thing”, so don't interrupt when he's hanging out with his friends. Amazingly, you'll find you're making friends with the other parents, so you and your child will have something in common, without invading each other's space. A former President of the Boosters once had a child tell her that he wished his mom would come and volunteer, and that the President's child was very lucky to have a mom who devoted so much time to helping out. Another student said it best. Band is a family; every band dad is his dad; every band mom is his mom; and every band member is his sibling.

You mentioned two rental trucks. Is there really that much equipment to move?

You bet. We generally rent two 24' trucks. All of the pit equipment and the larger instruments are packed in one truck. The other truck holds the uniforms, water, food (if we will be feeding the students after the competition), the ATV, and whatever else we can think of taking.

Who drives these trucks?

You probably already guessed the answer....parent volunteers. The trucks require a regular (non-commercial) driver's license, so anyone who wants to tackle the job is welcome to try. The trucks are generally manual transmission, so knowledge and experience with this type of engine is helpful. The Boosters also purchase liability insurance to cover the driver.

You mentioned an ATV. Why is this necessary?

We have the ATV and three small trailers for moving pit equipment from where the competition host has asked us to park out to the stadium for the performance. Remember, we have a limited amount of time to get everything on and off the field. If we exceed the time limits, a penalty is assessed on the overall competition score.

Let's go back to the chaperones. What are their responsibilities?

The chaperones are with the students from the time they leave school until they return. This means that the chaperones ride the bus, sit in the stands, and ride the bus home with the students. While at the competition site, the chaperones get a break while the students are warming up, as they are with the coaches.

You also mentioned uniforms. Am I required to buy a uniform?

The Winds and Drumline wear uniforms purchased by the Boosters. You will need to purchase black socks (we recommend buying 2 pairs...one to stay in the garment bag as a backup), shoes (the specific brand and style is selected by the Director), and lightweight shorts, like gym shorts, to wear under the uniform. Students are also provided a t-shirt with the show's theme. The cost of the shirt is included in the program fees, and students are required to wear the t-shirt under their uniform. Periodically, the Uniform Chairperson will put out a call for assistance in cleaning the uniforms. Except for the sequined sash, the uniforms are 100% polyester and are machine washable and dryable, so they are very easy to clean. The Guard is required to purchase their own uniform, specific details on this will be provided by the Director.

Since we're talking about spending money, what about the Championship competition and traveling?

The travel fee is separate from the program fee. A parent volunteer looks for the best rates available for hotels. Forty to fifty rooms are secured to house the students, the Director, the coaches, and parent chaperones. The assessed trip fee will generally cover all of the student's expenses (room, all meals, transportation) for the weekend. Buses are secured through the school district.

Are more parent chaperones needed for overnight travel?

Absolutely! Some will be bus chaperones, while others will be room chaperones. It's a long weekend, and the more hands we have helping out makes the job that much easier for everyone.

This is starting to sound like it's going to cost a lot of money. How much are the program fees?

The amount varies from year to year, depending on how many and how successful our Spring and Summer group fundraisers were during the prior school year. It will also depend on the budget needs. For example, if an instrument needs to be replaced, that cost will be included in the budget. For some of the more expensive instruments, a long-term lease-to-buy contract is taken out, so that we can amortize the budget needs over a number of years. In the past, program fees have been \$500-600, with an additional \$150 for the away trip. Fall program fees are separate from Spring program fees. At the start of each Fall and Spring, the Director will share the estimated costs for the season. ColorGuard Spring program fees will vary each year, depending on travel.

What if I can't afford the fees?

There are a number of ways to handle the fees, as every family situation is different. Some people just want to write a check and be done with it. Others need to spread payments over a couple of months. We also participate in many individual fundraisers. In the past, we have had many parents who were able to pay the entire program fee through individual fundraisers. Credit Card payments are accepted.

What are the individual fundraisers?

The easiest one is e-scrip. If you shop at Von's and register your Von's Club card through e-scrip, Von's will donate money back to the Boosters in your name. That amount is then transferred to your student's account. The other easy one is Ralph's e-scrip. All you have to do is register your club card on Ralph's website, and have the donation directed to the Boosters.

Both of these programs are paid on a quarterly basis. Check out the Individual Fundraisers link for more details on how to sign up.

The e-scrip program also allows you to earn money while you shop at places like Macy's and at many restaurants in our area. Just register your Macy's card, and your debit and credit cards. The program is well-protected, and in almost 10 years of participation in this program, we have never had a problem with a credit card number being stolen or misused.

The beauty of all of these programs is that your friends and family can register their cards, too, and their amount will be credited to your student's account. Just let the Booster Treasurer know who has registered and that it's for your child, so that your child's account will be properly credited.

Another scrip program is what we call "paper" scrip. With this program, you purchase gift cards from participating vendors. The scrip company has made arrangements with the vendors to donate back a certain percentage for each card purchased. The benefit of paper scrip versus e-scrip or Ralph's e-scrip is that your credit is immediately posted to your account. Scrip orders are generally taken every few weeks, and the cards arrive the same week as ordered. This is a great program not only for everyday purchases, but for birthday and holiday gifts, too. This program takes just a little bit of pre-planning, as you decide what gift cards you want to buy.

Other individual fundraisers are also offered throughout the year, so watch for announcements. As mentioned earlier, many students have had their program fee completely covered through participation in the individual fundraisers. These fundraisers are also year-round, so you can build your account for the next year.

You mentioned group fundraisers. How are those different from individual fundraisers?

Individual fundraisers go back to the student's account and help pay down any assessed fees. Even after marching season, you can continue to fundraise the rest of the year, in order to have a nice big credit when the Marching Band program fees are added to your child's account in the Fall. Group fundraisers benefit the Booster general account. Ultimately, the more we raise in group fundraisers, the lower the individual assessed program fees will be.

What kind of group fundraisers are there?

The major ones are the competitions we host during the Spring. We put our name in for a Drumline competition and for a Guard competition. Though these competitions are not for the whole Marching Band, all parents are needed to help work them. Remember, the money earned makes a sizeable chunk in the overall budget.

We also generally operate our Tailgate at a number of different venues, not related to Marching, Guard, or Drumline. In the past, we have operated our food concession stand at Destination Imagination, the Aliso Viejo Community Association 4th of July celebration, Aliso Viejo Middle School Open House, and the Wood Canyon Open House. We are always looking for venues to add! And remember, your volunteer hours at these Tailgates help us help you.

It sounds like a lot of my child's time is involved in rehearsals. When will he find time to do homework?

One of the great things about a program like this is that it teaches students how to manage their time. Yes, attending rehearsals and practicing instruments takes time. All rehearsals are scheduled. So, if your child receives a homework assignment on Wednesday which is due on Friday, and he knows that he has rehearsal on Thursday night, he should complete the homework on Wednesday night. Some students will even take their textbooks with them on the bus, to squeeze in a little extra study time.

Receiving good grades and maintaining a high GPA is not impossible when involved in a program such as this. We can boast of many students who graduated as Valedictorians and who have gone on to the country's top universities.

What *is* the benefit....beyond high school?

Students learn discipline and teamwork, and will often include this extracurricular activity on college and job applications. Students also may qualify for scholarships related specifically to music, percussion or ColorGuard. The camaraderie of a team, where a Freshman is equal to a Senior, is a great life lesson when they enter the workplace. Leadership roles earned in the different ensembles are also invaluable.

I've heard that something special happens at the Tuesday night rehearsals. What is that?

Towards the end of the Tuesday night rehearsals, the Boosters offer "Soup Night". This was actually started a few years back by a Booster who liked to cook, and would bring soup out to the stands to help the parents stay warm. The Soup Night became sort of a tradition, and when the scholarship program began the next year, we began taking donations for the bowl of soup. That donation goes directly to the Booster Alumni scholarship fund.

***** Spring *****

What activities occur during the Spring?

It definitely isn't all about Marching Band! In the Spring, two ensembles hit the competition circuit...ColorGuard and Drumline. These shows are performed in a gym, and often take on the appearance of a stage show. The ColorGuard performs to programmed music, again with flags, rifles, swords, and other apparatus fitting the theme of the show in a gymnasium. For Drumline, you will still see a "pit" and "percussion" sections of the Drumline show, and they provide their own music with a routine to fit the theme of their show.

Are parent volunteers needed for these shows?

Absolutely! Both shows are performed on a movable "floor", which is a tarp literally large enough to fill a gymnasium floor. As you can imagine, the "floor" weighs a lot, and volunteers are needed to move the "floor" into the gym. Equipment and stage props are need to be moved into the gym. And as with Marching Band, the team is given a limited amount of time to get set up....and to exit. If the time allotment is exceeded, the team is assessed penalty points.

Are trucks utilized for ColorGuard and Drumline?

A rented truck is used for the Drumline show, as the instruments are so large. Parents, who can help with driving the truck, and with loading and unloading it, are always needed. Generally, ColorGuard equipment and props can be carried to the show in parents' vehicles.

What other things do parent volunteers do at the shows?

Actually, volunteers are needed as we prep for the shows. While the ColorGuard uniforms are sewn by a professional seamstress, we may make the flags ourselves. For both shows, props need to be built. Chaperones are also needed. And of course, help is always needed for moving equipment.

You mentioned earlier that we also host a couple of shows in the Spring. What's that about?

It is a great honor to be given a show to host. Think about all of the functions that need to be covered...set up, parking lot, food concession, ticket sales, door check-in, team check-in, hospitality room for the coaches and judges. It literally takes parent and student volunteers from the entire program. Don't think of these as a ColorGuard or Drumline show...they are venues that help bring funds into the entire program! We have an established reputation of well-run shows, and believe it or not, our food concession is one that the Drumline teams look forward to partaking of!

Are there other music programs in the Spring?

Yes! All of the band ensembles learn new music and participate in a number of festivals and concerts. In the past, the Wind Ensemble has earned "Unanimous Superior" scores at the Tesoro Festival. All of the ensembles have earned high marks and continue the tradition of a high level of excellence. The District Honor Band is also formed. Students must audition for spots in the Honor Band, and Aliso students often take the "first chair" position in their section.

Sounds like Spring is just as busy as Fall. What else is going on?

The Boosters continue to hire out the "Tailgate", or our food concession, to organizations and other schools' functions. Again, these are important group fundraising events that add money to the budget, and help to keep individual assessed program fees as low as possible. When you receive the call for volunteers, please consider helping out.

I've heard there's a big banquet at the end of the year. Are parents invited?

Yes! The Booster family is an integral part of the music program. Because you've been helping out at the various competitions and fundraisers, you get to know the students, as well as the other parents. Awards are given to a number of students, and you find yourself cheering for all of the students, because they all feel like they're your child. A slide and video show is also presented, recapping the year.

At the banquet, a Booster Alumni group also presents scholarships to Seniors. The number of scholarships and the amount of the awards depends on how much was earned through a separate scholarship fundraising program. The Booster Alumni are proud to recognize the hard work and dedication of these young men and women as they move onto the next big phase in their lives.

And Graduation....?

The Band is asked to play the music for the graduation ceremony. This is a little bit sad, as the Seniors do not participate with the musicians, so it's really the first time we see how the Band

looks without the Seniors. However, we leave knowing that the remaining three classes will welcome and teach the new members, and in no time, we are all one big family again.