

# L. D. Bell Blue Raider Band

## “Everything You Need to Know”

Updated for 2009-2010

# [www.ldbellband.org](http://www.ldbellband.org)

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**OTHER IMPORTANT NUMBERS AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE.**

# CONTENTS

WELCOME.....	3
WEBSITE.....	4
CALENDAR AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE .....	4
JUNE TRAINING CAMP .....	4
SUMMER BAND (BEGINNING OF AUGUST).....	4
WEEKLY MARCHING PRACTICES .....	5
DEMERITS.....	5
SPIRITWEAR.....	5
PEP RALLIES .....	5
UNIFORM CARE .....	5
COLOR GUARD .....	6
FRIDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL GAMES .....	6
BANDS OF AMERICA .....	7
HEB MARCHING CONTEST .....	8
HEB DRUMLINE CLINIC & CONTEST .....	8
UIL - THE ROAD TO THE STATE MARCHING CONTEST.....	8
BUS TRIPS .....	9
PARENT BUSES and TICKETS FOR EVENTS.....	9
INTERNET ETIQUETTE.....	10
MARCH-A-THON.....	10
PIZZA DINNER/SILENT AUCTION.....	10
CONCERT SEASON .....	11
PRIVATE LESSONS.....	11
ALL-REGION, AREA & STATE TRYOUTS.....	11
ENSEMBLE AND SOLO CONTESTS.....	12
JAZZ BAND.....	12
“NIGHT OF DRUMMING” PERCUSSION SHOW.....	12
UIL CONCERT & SIGHTREADING CONTEST .....	12
SPRING TRIP .....	13
BAND BANQUET.....	13
BAND YEARBOOK .....	13
BACCALAUREATE AND GRADUATION .....	14
SPRING TRYOUTS .....	14

## WELCOME

Welcome to the L. D. Bell Band program. You and your student are about to begin a very exciting three years. It's hard to explain the mystique of this organization but as you start coming to events you'll find parents and students from past years with the same excitement that you will be experiencing.

There is a great history of success with this wonderful band. Repeat Texas State Champions in 2000 & 2004, the Silver Medal in 2002, 2006, and 2008, numerous regional BOA championships, placement in the Top 5 nationally ranked marching bands in 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006, and 2008, the prestigious Sudler Shield in 2005, and 2007 BOA Grand National Champions—how can these achievements ever be topped? Yes, winning is fun, but let's not forget what is truly important—hard work, discipline, endurance, being gracious no matter what the placement, developing musical appreciation and skills, and forging new friendships. These are far more important than any championship. You'll find that these are the qualities our directors continue to stress every day while demanding the high standards necessary to enable our students to reach their fullest potential. It is our job as parents to reinforce these ideals to our children. Please remember it's just as important for parents to show great sportsmanship and character as it is for our band to do so. Let's continue to be a part of this "first class operation" as we have been known to be in the past.

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 relay information to their parents. Feel free to call any officer or director for help and remember to come to the meetings to get the latest information about each event.

So come and join the fun. You will see changes in your child that you only dreamed would happen some day. At first your band member may act like they don't want you any place near them, but trust all of us "old parents"—they will begin to look for you and cherish your attendance. Bring your family and friends to contests and concerts and just see if your child doesn't get a sense of pride in all of the hard work they have done. Then you can really begin to sit back and enjoy

..."The music and the motion of the L. D. Bell Blue Raider Band".

- Melinda & Ralph Manoushagian  
L.D. Bell Band parents, 1991-2003

## [www.ldbellband.org](http://www.ldbellband.org)

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

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

Additional Co-Curricular events in High School Band include Pep Rallies, Football Games, Homecoming Parade, March-a-thon, Pizza Pheast & Graduation. Extra-Curricular events are organized by the Band Directors and Band Boosters and paid for by Band Fees including trips to Bands of America Regional Contests & Bands of America Grand Nationals. Band fees also subsidize Co-Curricular events by providing individual uniform items such as show shirts, marching shoes, and gloves as well as guard uniform requirements. Fees also allow the band members to perform at their highest potential with additional training of clinicians, technical staff, and the purchase of appropriate music and drill design. Past these Extra events, students who are current on Band Fees are eligible to purchase their Band Yearbook and Band Banquet Ticket. The Band Boosters provide a number of fundraising opportunities to assist with Seniors and members of the First Band who are current on Band Fees are eligible to make payments on the Band One/Senior Spring Trip. As in Cheerleading, Drill Team & Choir, Extra-Curricular trips are Extra & Optional.

### **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 (BEGINNING OF AUGUST)**

The 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 small 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 “stands 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 normally an afternoon practice on Wednesday for full band and an afternoon sectional one other day by section.

## **DEMERITS**

A demerit may be issued for a tardy, missing equipment or unfinished assignments. “Marching off” the demerit occurs 45 minutes before rehearsal starts. Don’t let your student acquire multiple demerits, as it will affect his/her position in the band.

## **SPIRITWEAR**

Spiritwear 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 Pheast 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 football season. In recent years the pep rallies have started at 10 am. 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.

Remove the cords and mirror prior to washing. The gauntlets must also be washed weekly. Do not wash the uniform with other dark clothing since the dyes may bleed onto the white portions of the uniform.

You are also responsible for cleaning concert uniforms. The girls’ concert 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. 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. Please **do not wash the cords**. If they are dirty please return them. Proper care will help keep a good-looking band and not wear out uniforms too quickly.

## **COLOR GUARD**

The color guard is an integral group that enhances the visual performance of the marching band (much like the “twirlers” of yesteryear). Selection is based on tryouts in the spring. The group is under the direction of the head band director. Specially trained instructors are provided specifically for this group. The guard may work on dance, rifles, sabers, as well as flags.

The color guard is an auxiliary component of the band. Members of the guard are band members first, as with any other marching section. Auditions are open **first** to band members 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 band members who play woodwind instruments of large sections (flute, clarinet). On a case-by-case basis, band members playing other instruments will be allowed to audition. Members are 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.

It has become a tradition to attend a pizza party at CiCi's after selected **home** games. The CiCi's is the one nearest Target on Airport Freeway. The management has agreed to stay open late for the Bell Band **only**. Parents are invited to come and watch videos of the night's performance. We sit at the back of the restaurant and believe it or not, your child may even acknowledge your presence, even if it's only for money!

## **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 three held in Texas. Houston, Dallas (held at UTA) 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.

On some years we may attend the **Grand National** Marching Contest at the Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. It is not necessary to win a regional contest to attend Grand Nationals. The Bell Band has now placed in the top five every time that we have attended this contest (out of 90+ bands from across the nation!), has earned Outstanding Musical and Visual Performance awards and is the 2007 Grand National Champions. This is a tremendous honor. We hope to go back in future years.

BOA also hosts a National Concert Band Festival in the spring. Entire concert bands come to perform. Individual band members may try out for inclusion in the Honor Band of America, which is comprised of high school students across the US. There is

expense involved, but if you wish your band member to try out, please contact one of the directors. Auditions tapes are due by late September for the following spring. The BOA web site, [www.musicforall.org](http://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.

BOA sells patches at all of these events that can be purchased and sewn on to student's letter jackets. This is a good way to commemorate the event and many parents purchase these patches for their students.

## **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, and a local university band, 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** (2005, 2007 etc)

**THE ROAD TO STATE MARCHING CONTEST IN EVEN YEARS** (2006, 2008 etc)

The University Interscholastic League--UIL--governs the state marching contests. The UIL has strict rules concerning the conduct and procedures to advance 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 5A", the class for the largest schools. In order to make the state competition more manageable, class 3A and 5A schools have their marching competitions in even numbered years, i.e., 2004,

2006, and 2008. The 2A and 4A 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 on 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 find lots of information and view pictures and ratings on the UIL web site. The address is [www.uil.utexas.edu](http://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 “yellow dogs” (school buses) are used for Friday night football games. 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.

## **PARENT BUSES and TICKETS FOR EVENTS**

Parents are encouraged to attend competitions whenever possible. We have large groups of parents even at out-of-town events. Frequently, a parent will organize a

charter bus (or two) to take parents to one-day competitions such as BOA San Antonio. The competitions end around 11pm and some parents prefer to ride on a bus rather than drive home late at night or spend the night in a hotel. These buses are not booked by the Directors or by the Boosters. They are dependent on parent participation and having someone to book the charter bus.

There are a couple of events which sell reserved seating to the finals portion of the competition. BOA San Antonio and BOA Grand Nationals both offer reserved seating for the final performances. Similarly to the buses, a parent may organize a “group purchase” of tickets for these performances so that parents can sit together as a group. Information is usually announced at the parent meeting as well as sent out in emails. Of course participation in parent buses or group ticket buys is strictly optional.

## **INTERNET ETIQUETTE**

There are an abundance of newsgroups and bulletin boards frequented by band students and parents. These sites are a great way to hear about what bands are doing around the country. One of the most popular is the BOA website. 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. Money turned in will be put in the student’s individual account. The money collected in each individual’s account will be used to offset the fees for that student. We strongly urge band members to actively solicit pledges for this reason. Many students have raised the entire cost of the trips by using this fundraiser. Please remember that donations made to a particular student’s account are not tax-deductible for Federal Income Tax purposes. Of course all donations to the band as a whole are deductible as a charitable donation.

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 DINNER / SILENT AUCTION**

This event, usually held in October, 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 the time when most musical training takes place and each band's performance rating during the UIL concert contest is the basis for evaluating the entire band program.

Band members will be placed in three or four bands based on the number of students and their playing abilities. Tryouts are held in late spring and band selections are announced in May to facilitate the students' class schedules.

Concerts are presented at the high school and are open to the public. There may be a winter concert 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 on every instrument, pending instructor availability. Our instructors are professional players or advanced-level university students who are contracted through HEB ISD. The lessons are under \$20 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 Jazz Band tryouts are held in September. 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 April or May. 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 audition. The jazz band performs at various events in the area and may compete in contests. A concert is held in February. Be sure to mark your calendar for this extraordinary performance. Additional concerts will be added as appropriate.

## **“NIGHT OF DRUMMING” PERCUSSION SHOW**

A special “Night of Drumming” is held each spring featuring the award-winning Bell Drumline. Percussionists from Central, Hurst, and Bedford Junior Highs are included and made to feel a part of this fun, entertaining evening. 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. This show is usually well attended so buy your tickets early.

## UIL CONCERT & SIGHTREADING CONTEST

The UIL concert contests are 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.

## SPRING TRIP

For the 2009-10 school year there will be a spring trip in conjunction with a concert/festival for Band One. All Band One members will be eligible to go on this trip. Senior band members who have spent 6 years in the band program, but who are not a member of Band One, will also be eligible to attend as a member of the stage crew. The cost for this trip is in addition to regular band fees. **A student’s regular band fees must be paid before any funds will be applied toward the spring trip and any eligibility for that student will be considered.**

As with all Bell Band trips, plenty of adult supervision is available. Student conduct rules are strictly enforced and those not complying will be sent home at their parents’ expense. You will receive complete details that include cost, locations, times, and phone numbers prior to departure.

## 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 room 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. **A student’s band fees must be paid before any funds will be applied toward the Band Banquet and any attendance for that student will be considered.**

## 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. **A student's regular band fees must be paid before any funds will be applied toward the Band Yearbook.**

## **BACCALAUREATE AND GRADUATION**

Sophomores and juniors will be expected to perform for these ceremonies. Transportation is provided if they are not held on the Bell campus. 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. Tryouts for concert bands, drum majors, color guard and drumline are all held during this time. Selection of the brass and woodwind captains, quartermasters, and band officers also takes place. Your band member will be able to get information from the directors if they choose to tryout for any of these positions.

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## **THANKS**

(From the directors)

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.

Special thanks to Melinda Manoushagian (Band Parent 1991-2003) for conceiving of and putting this document together. Additional thanks to Sherrie Cyrier for her help with subsequent updates (Band Parent 2003-2009).