

ELKINS HIGH SCHOOL BAND CONTESTS

A Guide for Families, Friends and Supporters

Being new, or even a veteran, to our band program can be an exciting yet sometimes confusing endeavor as we anticipate our students upcoming demonstrations of all they have learned and worked for, being transformed into amazing completed performances. We hope this guide helps you better navigate each band season and begin to feel more like an integral part of our program. Parents are indeed, a huge part of the Elkins Band's continued success! A large number of parents provide support for these contests by altering uniforms, chaperoning, making meal arrangements, building props, loading and unloading equipment, and of course, waving signs and flags of support from the stands or giving applause from auditorium during concert season. There is always a place for you to participate!

Competitions (also known as “**Contests**”): Each year the band and color guard develops a “show” comprised of musical, marching, and general effect elements. The show is made up of a number of “sets,” or sections of the show. In rehearsals, the students learn and practice a given number of sets, coordinating marching with the music they are playing; first at a slower pace and then up to a final tempo. As the fall progresses, more sets are added until complete. This is how our football half time show “evolves.” Once learned, transitions between sets, alignment, sound, and effects are polished, and the band is ready for competition. It is important for the students to experience more than one competitive situation, building confidence, getting feedback, as well as having an opportunity to display all of their effort and teamwork in a final product. Having fans in the stands means a great deal to the students and directors—once you get hooked you won't want to miss them! Competitions vary from year to year, depending on the football schedule, and the UIL marching schedule. *Anticipation of events and planning ahead with academics is extremely important at this time of year. Keep in mind that all UIL Competitions (marching, concert, and individual competitions) require (by state law) that all participating students must have passing grades in all classes.* Specifics are addressed in the band handbook.

Types of Schools: Based on school enrollment size, the bands have a classification. You'll hear announcements of Class 6A, 5A, 4A, etc. with the largest being 6A. Because of the school's overall enrollment, Elkins HS is considered a Class 6A school, and always competes with other 6A's, both in athletics and fine arts.

FBISD Band Night – Wednesday, Oct 12, at Mercer Stadium. This is an opportunity for us to perform our show and receive feedback and helpful comments from other directors to help us improve our show.

Comal Classic Marching Contest – Saturday, Oct. 1 at Clear Creek ISD Challenger Columbia Stadium. Participation in this contest will be the band's official first competition of its show in preparation for their UIL performance in a few weeks. The students will have come a LONG way from those early days of fundamentals on the parking lot in August. A number of bands of various sizes (classifications) perform and a final ranking and/or rating

is given by a panel of judges. As we get closer to this date, the directors will be given the band's exact performance time, so that a schedule for the day can be made.

Gulf Coast Marching Classic - Our second contest outside of UIL will be on **Saturday, October 22nd at Clear Creek ISD Challenger Columbia Stadium**. This will give our students another performance opportunity in the Area stadium to compete against bands around the Houston area in a Prelims-Finals format.

UIL Regional Marching Contest (University Interscholastic League): This is a required contest. 5A & 6A bands from Region 13 (FBISD & LCISD) perform, and are given a 1st (Superior), 2nd (Excellent), 3rd (Good), 4th, or 5th Division rating, based on an expected standard of performance, usually by a panel of 3 judges. This does not mean 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place. Ex: All schools that earn a 1st Division rating will have performed at that standard regardless of other bands' performances. Every other year (2015, 2017, etc.), earning a First Division, or I, at this regional contest advances a school to the UIL Area Competition, which includes 3 regions. Again, our exact performance time is TBA (to be announced). It is a great way to see performances of our other Fort Bend ISD band programs, so come early! **THIS YEAR: Tuesday, Oct. 18, at Mercer Stadium**

UIL Area Marching Contest: As stated above, Area competition is the next step after the Regional contest (in 2016, 2018, etc), and includes all the schools from three regions that received a 1st Division rating at Region competition. Our Region/Area boundaries have changed over the years—We are Area E. If we qualify for this event, a performance time will be determined by a random drawing. Following all Preliminary, or “Prelim” performances, the bands are given a ranking, based on a complex formula including musicianship, marching, color guard and general effect. The top finishers at Prelims will have the opportunity to perform again for Finals competition in the evening, with a new panel of judges. For every five bands entered in Prelims, one will advance to State competition, held in San Antonio (Ex: 15 bands = 3 bands advancing to State competition). **THIS YEAR: Saturday, Oct. 29, at Clear Creek ISD Challenger Columbia Stadium**

UIL State Marching Contest: Bands qualifying at Area will advance to State competition, held at the Alamodome in San Antonio. Again, exact performance time is determined by random drawing at the end of the Area contest. At this contest, approximately 30 bands perform in Preliminary competition, beginning early morning until late afternoon, with the top ten (based on that complex formula!) qualifying for Finals competition, which begins that evening. Again, a random drawing determines Finals performance time. Those ten bands will have the opportunity to perform again, with a new panel of judges, and a final ranking will be determined, with the top 10 being announced. **THIS YEAR: Monday, Nov. 7-8, at the Alamodome, San Antonio (if we qualify)**

DCI: Drum Corps International is mentioned here just as a definition. These Drum and Bugle Corps competitions are every summer. They are mostly 18-21 year old brass and percussion players. This is highly competitive, but very entertaining. These kids travel all summer across the U.S., sleeping in school gyms, practicing and performing daily, and loving every minute of it. Most high schools try to pattern their marching band and shows after the DCI corps.

Following Marching season, individual students try out for **UIL All -Region Band/Orchestra** and/or **Freshman All-Region Band** (Nov.-Dec.) which may qualify them to try out for Area (in early Jan., usually in Corpus Christi) and, if ranked high there, may be eligible to try out for State, which is a significant accomplishment. Students with this honor attend the TMEA state convention and perform in one of the All-State Bands in February. Many of our students support each other in striving toward this very difficult goal, being named an “All-Stater.” Also, students will be required to participate in **Solo and Ensemble Contest**. Students perform an individual piece in a smaller setting with a judge, and play a set piece with a small group. No matter where your student lies in this continuum from year to year, always know that through this participation he/she is experiencing constant personal growth, whether it is learning to budget time and develop a consistent schedule for accomplishing goals, learning to accept and grow from feedback, developing interpersonal skills with a variety of students and adults, or learning to pick oneself up and try again, perhaps with a different approach-- all important life skills.

UIL Concert Contest: Similar to performances in middle school in FBISD, each concert band participates in UIL performances, receiving a rating, based on a given standard. In these two-part contests, students first play UIL-approved music, before a panel of judges in an auditorium setting. Immediately following, the band moves to the Sight-reading Room, where another panel of judges observes, as the director verbally goes over a brand new piece of music with the band in a limited amount of time. The band then plays the piece straight through, playing the notes from sight, without having heard it before. This clearly demonstrates the high skill level at which students are playing their instruments. The band is given a rating by the sight-reading judges as well as the concert judges. Parents are encouraged to attend both parts of this contest.

Honor Band: As with marching band, every other year (2018, 2020, etc) Honors Band competes with their concert music toward state level by submitting a recording. It is first judged at the region level, and can move through Area and on to State competition, during the summer, where a top 6A “Honor Band” is chosen for the state of Texas at the Texas Bandmasters Association convention. Upon being chosen as Honor Band in July, the next school year’s Honors Band is invited to perform a full concert for Texas music educators across the state at their convention in San Antonio, in February (known as TMEA). This is the same convention where the “All-Staters” perform in All-State band. After a band is selected as Honor Band, it is not eligible to compete in the next Honor Band process the year following its concert, but is eligible for the state competition process in four years from the year selected.

Spring Trip: Each band performs in a concert band festival, in competition with other bands in its classification (Honors and Symphonic). Usually the rating system is similar to UIL Concert season, where the bands receive a Division Rating. Sometimes awards are given for Best in Class, Outstanding soloists, etc. **THIS YEAR: March 10-14, Orlando.**

ARE YOU READY FOR GAME DAY?

When games are on Thursdays/Fridays the students remain on campus after school.

They will have a practice, eat dinner and then change into their uniforms. The students need to have the following for each game:

BAND ATTIRE: Formal marching shoes, long black socks, Blue Dri-Fit shirt, and EHS shorts. (All of this can be put in their garment bag and taken to school.)

HAIR: Students must have ALL their hair up under their hats. They need to bring bobby pins, hair spray, etc..

JEWELRY: Jewelry is not allowed in uniform. If they have recently gotten their ears pierced, then they will need to place band-aids on their ear lobes to cover them.

OTHER HELPFUL HINTS:

Label, label, label everything. When 150+ band kids are wearing the same black shoes and t-shirts they get lost or taken by mistake easily. Place stickers in the bottom of their shoes or using a silver sharpie marker and writing their name on the *inside* of their shoe. Please label their t-shirts on the inside as well. Lunch kits, sweatshirts, backpacks, water bottles and garment and tote bags also need to be labeled. Anything they bring and leave on the band floor needs to be marked.

DINNER: The students need to eat a meal on game days before they leave school; the time is always noted on the schedule. You have three options: pack them something to take to school; deliver fast food or a meal to them at the scheduled time (just come on up outside the band hall to meet them); or have them purchase a tailgate meal. Booster moms who have volunteered for this job will pick up the orders and deliver them to the band hall on Thursday/Friday game days. On Saturday game days, students should either bring food with them or be delivered food at the scheduled time.