**Join the UP Marching Band!**

Dear Parents,

Thanks for taking a moment to read this letter outlining the band program at Union Pines High School. The Union Pines Marching Vikings are now in the organizational stages for the 2023-2024 school years. The first step is to find out who will continue playing a musical instrument at the high school or who may also be interested in the color guard, the visual aspect of the marching band. All parents of band students or potential color guard students, who are interested in the Union Pines Marching Band, are invited to an ***informational meeting*** in the Union Pines band room on ***Tuesday, February 21st at 6 pm.*** This is an informative meeting to discuss joining the UP band. We would like you to be able to make an informed decision on your child’s behalf about continuing with band in High School. Often, students are unsure about joining the band in high school because of the time commitment, level of music, etc. We want to ensure that all students have the opportunity to participate in the high school band if they are interested and willing. Below are the facts about the band program at Union Pines High School.

The Union Pines Band program consists of 130 + band students, which is a very large percentage of the entire student body, the largest program in the school. The band is very competitive, coming off a multiple grand championship year, and consistently competes across the state in the largest divisions (4A/5A), even though Union Pines High School is classified as a 3A school. <https://www.unionpinesband.org/past-video-performances>

The fact that so many students choose to participate in the UP Band program every year is impressive and a point of pride for our school.

In the fall semester, the marching band competes regularly and has brought much prestige to the school through their superior quality of performance. Also, during the fall semester, the jazz band performs in many professional venues with famous artists and acts as a public relations group, performing at high profile events. During the spring semester, the marching band and jazz band break into three concert bands: The Wind Ensemble, the Symphonic Band, and the Concert Band. These groups also compete in state and national music competitions and travel to many exciting destinations. Union Pines band members contribute to the community by performing in the Carthage Fourth of July parade, the Carthage and Southern Pines holiday parades, the Southern Pines Veterans Day Parade, the Carthage Buggy Festival, Military Child Appreciation Day, and many other town events. Our mission is to bring joy to their audiences through their talent in music. The band also travels and performs out of state. For their latest venture, the band performed in Toronto, Canada...and of course they had time to enjoy the city, theme parks, and were able to enjoy cultural and educational experiences along the way. It is part of the nature of being involved in the band. This coming year, we hope to venture out to Nashville to perform, take in the sights and learn much about the music industry.

Each year a new group of middle school students eagerly await the opportunity to join the award-winning Marching Vikings. It is a fact that the study of music increases brain activity and leads to better performance in other subject areas. Joining the band could be one of the most important steps in your child’s education. Some of the benefits your child receives from this experience are discipline, responsibility, self-esteem, teamwork, as well as enjoyment and lifelong appreciation of music. Any student willing to put in a reasonable amount of effort and practice can succeed.

Reasons to stay in BAND

1. Flexibility – marching band students (and parents) learn to be flexible. Things change – it’s a reality and we learn to embrace those changes.

2. Discipline – long rehearsals; memorize drills; memorize music; early is ON TIME; on time is LATE. The discipline learned in the marching band is something the students will take throughout life.

3. Teamwork – is about self-improvement at the individual and group levels.

4. Respect – marching band students learn and show respect for each other, for their competition, and for the adults. The Marching Vikings have a reputation of being very respectful on and off the field.

5. Sportsmanship – yes, the marching band is a SPORT! A sport is defined as “physical activity engaged in for pleasure.” Marching is very physical and builds strength and endurance.

6. Academics – there is much research linking music and academic achievement. A 2014 study from KU (University of Kansas) showed students engaged in music programs outperformed their peers on **EVERY INDICATOR**! GPA, graduation rate, ACT scores, attendance, and discipline referrals.

7. Camaraderie – marching band students share camaraderie and sense of purpose.

8. Friends – as an incoming freshman only marching band students have 130+ friends on the first day of school! Life-long friendships are built – even when students only have one marching season together. We are a big family and we take care of each other.

Research has shown that band students…

* Are more engaged in their school and community
* Think ‘outside-the-box’ much more than non-musical students
* Score higher in English and Mathematics
* Score higher on their SAT
* Have higher positive social interaction
* Have an extremely low rate of drop-out
* Have a stronger desire to achieve general success and greatness in all they do.
* Acquire a larger percentage of scholarships

The band provides an opportunity for your child to explore the world through the instruction and performance of an instrument. Several events and performance opportunities will be presented throughout their high school years and beyond. These include concerts, trips to performance festivals in and out of state, theme parks, parades, and numerous other opportunities!

During the school year, the band meets during the school day as an elective just like any other class, and after school once a week for sectional work and evening marching practice. **This means your child can join band and still play sports and participate in many other extra-curricular activities!** Some parents/students feel that band interferes with other opportunities throughout school, but this is a complete myth. During the marching season, there is very little conflict with sports because the Marching Vikings compete on Saturdays. Most athletic events take place during the weekdays, and we work hard to communicate effectively with the coaches so that all students have the opportunity to participate in their chosen activities and succeed. Contrary to popular belief, students do **NOT** practice each day throughout the summer. During the summer, we do have three required weeks of camp: 1 week of rookie camp (the week after graduation) and 2 weeks of band camp (July 25-28 and Aug. 1-4). During the season, we have Tuesday evening rehearsals (5:30 to 7:30) in August, September, and October. Other sectional practices that are held throughout the summer are simply available to students who need extra help or who want to practice…a majority of the band typically attends because of the pride they possess in being prepared for the outstanding performance to come. We also require rookie marchers to participate in the hometown Carthage 4th of July Parade to give them their first marching and playing experience as a Marching Viking and to help prepare them for camp.

We believe every student should have the chance to learn and participate in music. You can make this a reality by signing your child up for the UPHS Marching Band. You won’t know what it’s about if you don’t give it a try, so that’s why I encourage all to do it for a year and then make an educated decision. The retention rate of a band student at Union Pines is in the upper 90th percentile after joining and that is for all 4 years of high school band, another impressive statistic. Also, if you have any questions, feel free to contact me at any time. The address to our website is listed below. Please feel free to browse the site so that you can learn more about our program and what it may have to offer to your child. We hope to see all of you at the meeting on **Tuesday, February 15th at 6 PM** in the band room at Union Pines to sign up! It’s all good!

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http://www.unionpinesband.org