

# 2024-2025 West Seneca Marching Band Student / Parent Handbook



## Mission Statement

The West Seneca Marching Band (WSMB) is the marching representative of the West Seneca CSD music program. Using music and visual performance as the educational means, the band strives for excellence by promoting the values of enthusiasm and pride through team spirit.

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## 2024-2025 Instructional Staff

John Blickwedehl  
John Monell  
Alane Monell  
Meaghen Venitelli  
Alec Miller  
Vince Venitelli  
TBD

Band Director  
Assistant Director  
Color Guard Director  
Woodwind/Visual Instructor  
Winds Instructor  
Brass/Visual Instructor  
Percussion Instructor

## Current Booster Officers

President: Amy Zatlukal (term ends 6/24)  
Vice-President: Christina Young (term ends 6/25)  
Treasurer: Julie Clark (term ends 6/25)  
Recording Secretary: Anita Robillard (term ends 6/24)  
Student Accounts: Terri Sledz (term ends 6/26)  
Corresponding Secretary: Karen Fish (term ends 6/25)

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kfishmusic@gmail.com, (716) 479-2577

**Incoming Officers:** Julie Clark, President (term ends 6/26); Jennifer Chatham, Recording Secretary (term ends 6/26); TBD, Treasurer (appointed term ends 6/25)

If at any time you have any questions or concerns, please contact Mr. Blickwedehl by school phone: (716) 677-3389 or email: [jblickwedehl@wscschools.org](mailto:jblickwedehl@wscschools.org)

## School District Policies

- **Marching Band is School - Whenever you are at marching band you are "IN SCHOOL". Rehearsals, bus rides, trips, overnights, competitions are all SCHOOL functions and all school rules apply.**
- **Grades and Academic Eligibility** The West Seneca Marching Band is an activity and privilege, which is subject to the Academic Eligibility Requirements of the WSCSD. This is very important!! If you are failing a class, even at the 5 week mark of the 1st quarter, your ability to continue in marching band will be in jeopardy!!
- **Substance Abuse Policy:** According to school district policy, a first offense results in a 4-week suspension from all extra-curricular activities. (2 weeks with proof of attendance at a substance abuse prevention program). A second offense results in suspension for the rest of the season and the next season (eg. rest of fall & all of winter season)

## Attendance

- **Attendance at all rehearsals and performances is mandatory.** We need everyone here to rehearse like we perform...together. Commitment, dedication, and attendance are the key ingredients of a successful marching band. No member of the West Seneca Marching Band sits on the bench. *If you're not there, we can't help you learn!*
- **Weekday Evening rehearsals drop off students before 6:00 and students will be dismissed at 8:45.** Plan to arrive so you have enough time to check the rehearsal schedule, assemble your instrument and equipment, get to your rehearsal area, **and** talk to your friends. You are expected to be on the field at the rehearsal start time. Members arriving late without prior approval will not receive attendance credit for rehearsal.
- **Rehearsals before competitions on Saturdays** will have varied start times (most start approx. 11am) and will depend on the departure time, which depends on the distance to the competition site and the performance time. Students should bring a bag lunch to eat at school and money for food to purchase at competitions. Parents - please attend our shows and bring lots of friends and relatives! Addresses and directions will be posted online and in the weekly handout.
- **If you cannot make it to a rehearsal**, have **a parent** give a *WRITTEN OR EMAILED* (email is preferred) notice to Mr. B (jblickwedehl@wscschools.org) with your name, the date you will be missing, and the reason why. Students cannot simply say "oh by the way... I won't be there next time". Communication in advance is required.
- **Participation in and at Band Booster Fundraisers** The WSMB benefits greatly from the help of the Boosters. We ask that all WSMB member families participate in large group fundraisers throughout the year.
- **Participation in a fall sport** while participating in marching band has proven to be possible, but very demanding on a member. Both activities require tremendous amounts of time and energy in addition to maintaining good grades (see academic eligibility). You must be prepared to give of your time and energy equally to both commitments for the **entirety of both** their seasons.

## Conflicts, Consequences and How to Avoid Them Both

- **Avoid and Eliminate Conflicts with Organization and Communication.** Those who participate in the marching band are traditionally excellent students and very busy people. Many have jobs, participate in cheerleading, sports, help around the house, and are involved in church and community activities. They are able to "do everything" by **going over the rehearsal schedule carefully and eliminating conflicts before they happen.** After school job schedules must not conflict with the scheduled activities of this group. If you have a job, make a copy of the calendar and provide it to your employer as soon as possible. Employers are generally very supportive of our music program and willing to work with our schedule during the fall marching season. Conflicts with jobs usually can be avoided if you give your employer ample notice. Don't wait!
- **Scheduling conflicts must be worked out in advance** with the Band Director and submitted in writing or email from the parent at least one week prior to the scheduled event. Please try to schedule appointments (dentist/doctor & other things that are flexible) at other times. Tests such as SAT's, ACT's, PSAT's and their review classes should be scheduled around planned trips/performances.
- **If you are late or absent for 2 or more rehearsals in a week** you may not be allowed to perform at the next performance. The decision to not allow a student to perform will be made by the band director and assistant director only.
- **Communication is the Key.** When we know about conflicts in advance, it is much easier to be flexible and arrive at an equitable solution for everyone. If you are absent from a rehearsal, it is your responsibility to take a bit of extra time to make sure you are prepared with music, flag work, dance material, drill, etc.
- **Special Events -** We perform at various events including college football games, parades, rallies, announcements, and special events. We are often offered these opportunities to perform on relatively short notice. If it is decided that the

WSMB will play at one of these events, it is expected that every member make the effort to be there for extra rehearsals and the performance.

- **Dental and Orthodontic Work** - It is common for teenage students to experience the need for work to be done on their teeth - braces, wisdom teeth out, etc. Please consider the band performance schedule to the extent possible when scheduling dental work that may affect your child's ability to perform on their wind instrument. Thank you. If you have questions, please contact Mr. Blickwedehl.

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## Rehearsal Attire

- **You must wear sneakers and socks for all practices.** Any other type of shoe is unacceptable as it does not allow proper control and support which opens the possibility for injuries to occur. Cross training and walking shoes are best as they allow the foot to flex. **Canvas shoes do not provide adequate support.**
- **Shorts, track pants, and sweatpants are all acceptable attire,** depending on the weather. You need to be free to move, and we need to see your feet and legs move to teach you!
- **No Jeans...No baggy pants/shorts...**No pants with hems that drape over the shoes or drag on the ground. If you wear jeans, they will restrict your ability to perform your show. All members, including winds and percussion, do more than just "march." We move in ways that jeans/baggy pants do not allow.
- **Dress appropriately for the weather:** Sunglasses, hats, and plenty of sunscreen are recommended for sunny, hot days. In cold weather, dress warmly in layers. The temperature will drop during evening rehearsals in the fall. Bring appropriate rain gear for days that may be inclement. Stay warm and dry so you can stay focused.

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## Trip and Transportation Policies

- **Members get on the bus at school and they get off the bus at school.** The school provides transportation to and from all events. Members are not permitted to drive. Parents are not allowed to take students home from performances. Extenuating circumstances should be addressed with the Band Director prior to the event - all situations will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- Band Parents serving as chaperones are volunteering their time to help keep band students safe and organized. Their directions are to be followed and respected the same as any band staff member.
- **You are an active representative of the band.** Your attitude, conversations, and actions at all marching band events will reflect directly on the entire organization.

### Points to Remember:

- **Be professional in everything you do both on and off the field.**
- Always be courteous to fans, the public, and other marching band members.
- You never know whom you might be talking to.
- Remember that please, thank you, and smiles are always a wonderful gesture.
- Vulgar or abusive languages are never appropriate in any circumstances.
- Parents and family members: please remember that spectator self-discipline and sportsmanship are as important to us as the band's performances. It is a good policy to be silent during performances and give each band a big round of applause, as each member/organization is giving their best effort.

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## Payments and Expenses

- **SEASON FEE** includes your daily meal plus snacks and activities as part of Band Camp, a section shirt and a show shirt, banquet fee, and additional costs of travel in the fall season.
- **UNIFORM:** Although the competitive uniform is loaned free of charge, members are responsible for purchasing gloves and marching/guard shoes, and to provide their own long black socks. Show shirts are worn under the uniform on competition days, and for parades.
- **APPAREL ITEMS** will be sold through the Band Booster organization for members, parents, and family members. The more West Seneca in the stands, the better the band performs. Order forms will be made available if you would like to buy these items.
- **ADVANCE SALE COMPETITION TICKETS** for all shows will be available after Thursday rehearsals and before Saturday rehearsals from the Boosters. There is usually a savings of \$1-2 per ticket by buying in advance.

## Student Accounts

- Throughout the year there are many fundraisers offered to students/families to help defray the cost of participating in marching band. You are not required to participate in every fundraising event, however many families find this a great way to keep fees manageable. Profits from fundraising are kept in a student account, which is maintained by the Student Accounts Chairperson. Whenever forms are sent home which require a payment of some kind i.e., season fees, merchandise, banquet tickets, etc., there is always an option to have money deducted from your student account. Balances are available by contacting the Student Accounts Chairperson, Terri Sledz.
  - Accounts are maintained until the student graduates from high school. Upon graduation if a student has younger sibling(s) in his/her immediate family (dependent children living with the family), the account balance remains in the student account until that child graduates from high school and can be used for any music department related expenses. If there are no remaining siblings, the remaining balance is used for the band scholarship program.
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## Banquet and Awards

An end-of-the-season banquet is organized by the Boosters. It will take place on Saturday, November 16<sup>th</sup>. More information will be forthcoming. At this time, we celebrate all the accomplishments of the group, as well as outstanding individuals.

- **Varsity Letters** - awarded after completing 3 seasons, which must include State Championships in Syracuse.
  - **Individual Section Awards** - Woodwinds, Brass, Percussion, and Colorguard
  - **WSMB Outstanding Section** - presented to the section that most exemplifies the band's philosophy of "striving for excellence by promoting the values of enthusiasm, pride, and commitment through a team spirit."
  - **WSMB Member of the Year** - presented to the individual who most exemplifies the band's philosophy of "striving for excellence by promoting the values of enthusiasm, pride, and commitment through a team spirit."
  - **Band Booster Scholarship(s)** -- is awarded at the June Scholarship Nights. The monetary amount and the number of scholarships is to be determined based on budget. Deadlines and applications can be obtained from the Band Director or scholarship chairperson in the spring. A committee selected by the Band Booster E-Board, consisting of alumni booster parents and Marching Band staff, will score the applicants based on various criteria and an essay submitted by each student. All senior marching band members should apply.
  - **NYSFBC Scholarship** -- monetary award given to student(s) from NYSFBC chosen by the Band Director, presented at the June Scholarship Night.
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## Uniforms

- Our uniforms are custom designed by Michael J. Cesario of Fred J. Miller, Inc. The appearance of the WSMB uniform is extremely important. Even one member in a soiled or wrinkled uniform detracts from the general effect of the whole band, just as much as marching out of step or playing the wrong notes.
- The cooperation of each band member is needed to keep the band looking its best. Parents will be on hand to help you when you need it, and we will have a uniform crew to help with storage and transportation of uniforms, but **it is your ultimate responsibility to keep your uniform looking its best.** The uniforms are on "loan" to you. They must last for many years and for many future band members. Please use common sense!
  - Fold Pants matching along creases and hang evenly on the hanger.
  - **Uniform bags are for Jacket, Pants, and Gauntlets only.** No shoes, T-shirts, gloves, socks, etc. These are your responsibility and can cause unpleasant odors and dirt on uniforms and gauntlets.
  - Take soiled and/or dirty items you wear under your uniforms home for laundering and be sure they return for your next performance. Keep dirty shoes away from your uniform.
  - **Do not wash your uniforms at home.** The Boosters will take care of washing all uniforms.
  - Wash gloves regularly to keep them white.
  - Inspect your uniform regularly and let a uniform crew member know if there is something that needs attention.
  - Shoes must be kept clean and shiny for every performance. Use a damp cloth to clean and a dry one to polish. Kiwi and other brand shoe polishes work well. "Kiwi Wipes" in the little packages work VERY well on our marching shoes as a final touch.

- **Uniform Supplies** - The following are items that each band member must supply. Items to be ordered through the Band Boosters (noted with \*) and must be ordered together. Fittings for shoes and gloves will be done at uniform fittings. The WSMB will always appear in full uniform.
  - **Winds And Percussion:**
    - One pair of **BLACK MARCHING BAND SHOES\***
    - **Label each shoe** inside with your name in permanent marker.
    - One pair of **WHITE UNIFORM GLOVES\*** (Winds and Drum Majors only), it is recommended to purchase two pairs, and set aside one pair just for Championship weekend.
    - At least two pairs of **PLAIN LONG BLACK SOCKS** (not no-show or ankle socks –no skin can be showing)
    - **2024 BLACK SHOW SHIRT** for under the uniform jacket - **THIS SHOULD BE UNIFORM AS WELL!**
    - **LONG UNDERWEAR/ THERMAL SHIRT** - **will be allowed as needed and announced**
  - **Colorguard:**
    - One pair of **GUARD SHOES\*** **Label each shoe** inside with your name in permanent marker.
    - **COLORGUARD GLOVES\***
    - Makeup, hair spray, etc. – at the discretion of the guard instructor. **All guard members must have their hair done before arriving to Saturday rehearsals before shows. Make-up must be done BEFORE arriving to a show site.**

## Band Camp

**What is band camp?** The purpose of band camp is not just to practice (although there is plenty!). It provides the opportunity for band members to get to know one another and to form a supportive and cohesive unit. **Band camp is mandatory for all members.** Meals and snacks are provided for all band members and staff. Meals are not allowed to be brought to camp for members. If you have a special dietary need, please let the band director know ASAP. You must attend all meals in the dining area and be on time. These are meetings as well. Clean your tables following every meal.

### Daily Band Camp Packing List:

- **Music, Instrument & Mouthpiece, Flags, or drumsticks**
- Instrument supplies - Extra Reeds (at least 3-4), Valve Oil, Cork Grease
- **Device for UDB app** - phone or tablet with drill downloaded
- **Sneakers and socks**
- **Hat - everyone** must wear a hat during the day! Sunglasses & **Sunscreen**
- Rain gear (we are on the field rain or shine)
- **LARGE WATER COOLER (at least ½ gallon)- This was provided to all past WSMB members and will only be provided to new members this year. This water cooler, filled, will also be required at all rehearsals and competitions.** Students should label their water coolers with their name. **NEVER** share a water cooler.

## Communication

- We aim to distribute information primarily through the website and WSMB Google Group. Both students and parents should sign up for email to be sent from the Google Group. Please add [jblickwedehl@wscschools.org](mailto:jblickwedehl@wscschools.org) and [wsenecabandboosters@gmail.com](mailto:wsenecabandboosters@gmail.com) to your safe senders list to ensure that you receive all emails. School email addresses may block the Google Group emails, so students are encouraged to use a non-school email. Please check it often.
- **Remind** will be utilized by Mr. Blickwedehl for very important information including last minute reminders or schedule changes. It is important that not only parents sign up for these text messages, but students with cell phones as well. Remind is a one-way text messaging service that allows text messages from the teacher to be sent to those people who sign up and cannot be replied to. To join, send a text to **81010** with the message **@wsmb2024**
- You can also follow WSMB on Twitter, Facebook & Instagram - **@WSMarchingBand**.
- During the fall, handouts including that weekend's schedule, merchandise, and fundraising information will be distributed at the end of every Tuesday night rehearsal. Ask your child(ren) if they received any handouts.
- Please keep personal information (address, phone number, e-mail address) current with the band director and the corresponding secretary.
- Coming to booster meetings is also a great way to keep in touch.
- Be sure to check for updates on the booster website: <https://sites.google.com/view/westsenecabandboosters/>

## Crews, Committees, and Chaperone Opportunities

We have many ways for parents to be involved with the WSMB. Every job and committee is important to the success of the band. Please review the areas below where your help is needed. If there is a volunteer job that interests you, please sign up with the Boosters or contact the chairperson. **MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK!**

Crew/ Committee	Chairperson	Approx. # of volunteers	Description
Band Camp <b>(8/19-8/23)</b>	Karen Fish & Julie Clark	Varies day to day	Prepare, set-up, clean-up, etc. Coordinate meals, snacks and activities.
Pit Crew	Jeff Adey	8+	Parents to set-up, tear down, load, and unload equipment at rehearsals and competitions. Primarily takes place Tues-Thurs-Sat. You do not need to be available all of these days. If interested, contact Jeff Adey (716) 235-6962
Weekly Uniform Crew	Jeni Daunce & Laura Sokol-Scott	1-2 per show	Help students weekly when they are getting into half uniform on show days and also to help collect and organize uniforms after performances.
Uniform Laundering Crew	Jeni Daunce & Laura Sokol-Scott	8	Divide up soiled uniforms keeping track of assigned numbers of jackets and pants from the master list. Launder uniforms using specific guidelines. Reorganize uniforms back into garment bags.
Home Show <b>(9/7/24)</b>	Karen Fish & TBD	ALL BAND PARENTS & ALUMNI	Various Coordinators needed, in addition to various jobs - programs, ticket booth, food prep and sales, band liaisons (ambassadors), baked goods, candy grams, merchandise, raffles, 50/50, parking, etc.
Chaperones (Competitions, Trips, Parades, etc.)	Mr. Blickwedehl	Varies by event	Appointed by band director. Ride buses with members to & from competitions & parades, set-up & pass out gatorade & granola, take attendance on buses, make sure changing rooms are clean, carry water bottles, etc. On Saturdays it takes the whole day, but it is fun & rewarding watching the band perform and being a part of it! If interested see/email Mr. B!
Parade Water Crew	OPEN	6+	Provide water to the band members during parades. (Must be able to walk the parade route).
Weekly Gatorade & Granola	OPEN	1-2	Purchase the weekly granola and gatorade (for reimbursement). Make sure the gatorade is cold and bring in a cooler to departure school on Saturdays at loading time.
Merchandise	OPEN	3	Organize and sell WSMB merchandise.
Tickets	Karen Fish	2	Sell NYSFBC tickets at rehearsals on Thursdays and Saturdays.
Band Photographers	Melanie Adey	Unlimited!	Take photos of the band and share them on Shutterfly. Assist with organizing senior photo books.
WSMB Banquet <b>(11/16/24)</b>	TBD	6	Help organize the event. Committee consists of one parent from each grade.
<b>FUNDRAISING</b>			
Individual Fundraising	Varies by fundraiser	varies	Coordinating the set-up and running of fundraisers for members to earn money for their individual accounts. Collect & distribute orders and money from members.
Group Fundraising	Varies by fundraiser	All Band Families	Including the Fall Lotto Fundraiser, Brewfest Fundraiser, Football Squares, Car Wash, and any other whole group ideas.
Spring Meat Raffle Fundraiser <b>(TBD)</b>	Terri Sledz	ALL BAND PARENTS	Help to solicit donations for raffles, help with set-up and clean-up, sell tickets at event, and generally promote the event
Bottle Drive <b>(7/6/24: 9am-1pm)</b>	Kelli Regan	25-30 parents & band members	Help on day of event. Sorting bottles & cans, unloading cars, transporting filled bags to the trailer and loading trailer, supervising kids.

# West Seneca Marching Band Past Accomplishments

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October 2023	<i>Out of the Woods</i>	NYSFBC Championships, 6 <sup>th</sup> place, LSD 2
October 2022	<i>Lux Solaris</i>	NYSFBC Championships, 3 <sup>rd</sup> place, LSD 2
October 2021	<i>Equinoxium</i>	NYSFBC Championships, 2 <sup>nd</sup> place, LSD 2
October 2020	<i>Reflections of Us...We Go On</i>	
November 2019		USBands National Championships, 7th Place, Group III Open
October 2019	<i>Along Came a Spider</i>	NYSFBC Championships, 7 <sup>th</sup> place, LSD 2
October 2018	<i>Thrill Ride</i>	NYSFBC Championships, 7 <sup>th</sup> place, LSD 2
December 2017		Camping World Bowl Halftime Performance
October 2017	<i>Seeing Red</i>	NYSFBC Championships, 6 <sup>th</sup> place, LSD 2
October 2016	<i>Ice</i>	NYSFBC Championships, Champions, LSD3
October 2015	<i>Metallic</i>	NYSFBC Championships, Champions, LSD3
September 2015		Bands of America Regional Finalists, 9th place in Finals
October 2014	<i>Currents</i>	NYSFBC Championships, 3 <sup>rd</sup> place, LSD 3
January 2014		Gator Bowl Halftime Performance
October 2013	<i>Xscape</i>	NYSFBC Championships, Champions, LSD 3
October 2012	<i>Medieval Kingdom</i>	NYSFBC Championships, 6 <sup>th</sup> place, LSD 2
October 2011	<i>Gods of Mount Olympus</i>	NYSFBC Championships, Champions, LSD 3
October 2010	<i>Waterways</i>	NYSFBC Championships, Champions, LSD 3
January 2010		Liberty Bowl, Field Show Champions
October 2009	<i>Fire</i>	NYSFBC Championships, Champions, LSD 3
		LMBA Championships, 2nd place, AAA
October 2008	<i>Into the Clouds!</i>	NYSFBC Championships, 2nd place, LSD 3
		LMBA Championships, Champions AA
October 2007	<i>Different Pictures</i>	NYSFBC Championships, 3rd place, LSD 3
		LMBA Championships, 3rd place, AAA
February 2007		World Showcase Parade, Walt Disney World
October 2006	<i>The Planets</i>	NYSFBC Championships, 6th place, LSD 3
October 2005	<i>Moving West</i>	NYSFBC Championships, 6th place, LSD 3
October 2004	<i>A Hero's Life</i>	NYSFBC Championships, 4th place, LSD 3
February 2004		Buffalo Sabres Performance
October 2003	<i>Machines</i>	NYSFBC Championships, 3rd place, LSD 3
December 2002		Two Halftime Shows at Buffalo Bills Games
October 2002	<i>The Elements</i>	NYSFBC Championships, 2nd place, LSD 3
April 2002		Drew Bledsoe Rally - Ralph Wilson Stadium
October 2001	<i>The Land of the Free</i>	NYSFBC Championships, 11th place, LSD 3
October 2000	<i>Box Office Blockbusters</i>	NYSFBC Championships, 7th place, LSD 3
October 1999	<i>Les Miserables</i>	NYSFBC Championships, 5th place, LSD 3
June 1999	<i>Electric Light Parade</i>	Walt Disney World
October 1998	<i>Latin Sensation</i>	NYSFBC Championships, 6th place, Class A
April 1998		Dixie Classics, Virginia
October 1997	<i>Phantom of the Opera</i>	NYSFBC Championships, 3rd place, Class A