

Polar Bear Marching Band

2025 Drum Major Auditions



Eligibility: Any Junior or Senior band member who has successfully completed at least two years of membership in marching band. Candidates should possess a high level of musicianship, as well as an outstanding record of past service to the band, including attendance, participation, dedication, character, and leadership.

Criteria: The Drum Major audition will be conducted on Friday, May 23rd starting at 2:30 pm. The judging panel will consist of Mr. Schneider and at two other independent judges. Each candidate will complete a one-page essay on “Why I want to be the Polar Bear Band Drum Major”, speaking to their leadership strengths and characteristics which would qualify them best for the position of Drum Major. The essay must be turned in by Thursday, May 22nd.

The Drum Major audition will consist of four sections:

1. **Marching Technique** – Each candidate will demonstrate proper marching technique for Parade Rest, Attention, Mark Time, Forward March, Backward March, To the Rear March, Right Flank and Left Flank, About Face, Left Face and Right Face. Both “straight ahead” and “lateral slide” moves will be demonstrated. The candidate should show consistent step style (i.e. proper glide step for FM, on toes for BM), accurate and consistent 8-to-5 step size, and precision in executing all commands, including proper upper body carriage. All marching commands will be given by one of the judges. In addition to regular “basic block” marching, each candidate will be asked to perform a mini parade sequence, consisting of: forward march, turning in mid-stride to backwards march, horns up at proper time in simulated roll-off, then conducting 8 measures, horns down after 4 counts of drum “check pattern”, then return to forward march until given a halt by the judge.
2. **Vocal Commands** – Each candidate will take a turn in command of a small group of band volunteers, who will execute commands given by the candidate. Each candidate will have 3 minutes to take the group through the following marching commands, without the aid of any amplification device. Clapping is permitted to keep the marchers on beat during this exercise. Candidates will be required to call the commands the way they are notated on page 2, and all commands must be executed at least once during the exercise. Commands can be given in any logical order – candidates should have their plan worked out ahead of time, and everything must be done from memory. No prompting will be given by the judges.

Command presence, logical decision making, and the ability to deal with unexpected results will be evaluated.

Commands to be included:

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Parade Rest | Left Flank / Right Flank |
| Attention | Left Face / Right Face |
| Mark Time | About Face |
| Forward March / Backward March | Horns Up / Horns Down |
| To the Rear March | |

3. **Conducting** – Each candidate will prepare a conducting routine for “Granada” arranged by Jay Bocook. A recording of the piece can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kur3IZm8oVQ>

During the conducting performance with the recording, the candidate will be evaluated on the following:

- Proper conducting patterns
- Solid Tempo
- Clarity of Communication
- Confidence
- Variations of conducting styles to reflect changes in the music
- Appropriate cues
- Dynamic contrast
- Creativity and interest

4. **Interview** – Each candidate will have a brief interview with the judges. Questions during the interview will attempt to determine the candidate’s philosophy about the role of the drum major, their dedication to the success of the band, and how they would handle unique situations that may arise if they are selected for the position. Strengths and/or weakness in the candidate’s prior band career may also be addressed during the interview. Candidates should communicate their vision of how they would best fulfill the role of drum major during the interview.