



Springs Valley Blackhawk Brigade

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Springs Valley Blackhawk Brigade Understudy Program

Brigade Parents:

Congratulations! Your child has decided to participate in one of the most successful programs at Springs Valley. The Blackhawk Brigade is a twenty time state finalist, former state champion, and a three time state runner-up. In 2009, the band was a national semi-finalist and placed 3rd in the nation in Class A at the Bands of America Grand National Championship. More importantly however, your child will make memories to last a lifetime and will encounter numerous learning opportunities through their participation in this activity.

Due to our increased band size and high level of competition, we have developed a marching band understudy program for incoming 7th & 8th grade members and first year marchers. This program is designed to maximize training for beginning members and gauge their interest and dedication. New members will be classified as understudies during their first year. During that time, students will participate in all practices, performances, and activities with the Blackhawk Brigade.

Understudy students are full members of the Brigade. Students will share a spot with a student mentor and learn the basic skills during their first season. Understudies will first be assigned to spots where they will share with students that participate in fall athletics. This allows the band to continue to practice without open spots when students are absent for athletic practices or events. For example, understudy students will share spots with varsity football players. When the football players miss for evening practice, understudies will fill in for those spots. In addition, it is our intention for understudies to march at home football games. If a student athlete is injured, their marching band spot would be covered by the understudy.

When understudies are not being used, they will practice basic music methods, the marching band music, and basic marching technique with a designated staff member. We have secured a music education college student to specifically work with understudy members during the summer. Understudies will receive a great deal of individual attention in private group lessons.

In some rare occasions, a few understudies may qualify for full time spots. It is our goal to begin every student as an understudy. However, due to attrition and the needs of the band, a few understudies may be needed for full spots. For example, on occasion, we have students move or quit during the summer. This leaves a hole in the marching drill on the field. Trying to fill the hole before the end of the season is very difficult. Utilizing the understudy program, this situation will no longer be an issue. We will have trained students ready to fill the open spot. Open holes in the marching drill cause a distraction to the visual performance. Again, by using understudies, we can write less spots in the drill and have insurance that all spots will be filled by motivated and trained students.

Understudy students will dress into uniform at every contest and will perform a role in Saturday performances; however, this may not be in a role of a field performer. Students are expected to attend every practice and performance. They are members of the Brigade. Understudy students will qualify for the Spring 2011 Disney Band Trip to Florida.

Again, it is our belief that students will benefit from the understudy program. Beginning students will be allowed additional time to train and qualify for a full marching spot. This will cause less stress on veteran and beginning marchers. In addition, imagine what some of our bands will look and sound like in a few years when we have all veteran marchers performing on Saturdays. This system allows us to push the envelope in regards to performance execution. At the same time, it still allows for every student that wants to be in the Brigade to have the opportunity.

Understudy Info Sheet

Reasoning

- The SV Brigade has grown to a very high level of competition
- Open marching holes are hard to fill
- Beginning students will benefit from a less stressful first year of training and experience
- In the future, this will lead to a full band of veteran marchers on the field

Who will be an Understudy?

- All incoming 7th grade members
- Possibly other first year marchers or move-in students
- Older students with attendance problems

What do Understudies do?

- Practice with the Brigade
- Perform at football games and the parade
- Perform adjusted role on contest day
- Share spots with older mentoring students

When not marching at practice, what do understudies do?

- When students are not practicing with the band, they will practice basic music and marching skills with the Understudy Staff Member. We have secured a college music education student for the summer months and intend on securing a person for the fall.

Why do some 7th grade students receive full spots and some do not?

- In order to maintain our instrumentation, we may need to march a few 7th graders in full spots