

# Norwalk High School Marching Band Season Recap

by Adam Hoffmann, NHS Band Director

The Norwalk Warrior Marching Band's show this season was entitled, Earth, Wind, and Firebird - blending the music of Earth, Wind, and Fire (September, In the Stone, Fantasy) with classical pieces from Mussorgsky (Night on Bald Mountain), Bach (Air), and Stravinsky (Firebird). The result was an exciting and powerful musical book with many crowd-pleasing moments. The process started in the early spring as Mr. Menke found music and a theme for the season. Mr. Menke and Mr. Hoffmann spent time looking over the music, making edits, and coming up with a plan for the season. Drum Line and Color Guard started learning skills for the show in July, and all band students arrived August 1st to start working on the music and marching skills. Throughout the season, students worked to learn and memorize the show music while also learning where to go on the field and how to march in uniform. Besides playing at our home football games, the Warrior Marching Band participated in four competitive events this fall.

Our first competition was at Cedar Rapids Prairie High School on October 5th. This turned out to be a very wet, rainy, and miserable day for a marching competition, but the band handled it like champions. About 20 minutes before our performance time we were alerted they were moving the contest indoors, so with a very short turn-around the band got ready for an indoor stand-still performance. At that even we received comments from adjudicators regarding our music, since we were performing in the band room and unable to do our marching. Judges were impressed with the performance and the sheer volume and power in the impacts of our show.

Our second competition was at Valley Fest on October 12. Despite a cold and wet week of preparation, the band was very excited and ready for a field performance since our first one was rained out. The weather was only slightly more cooperative for this day, with the band facing a 35mph wind whipping across the field and less than ideal temperatures. Despite the wind and cooler temps, the band powered through and placed 6th in class 4A and 7th overall out of 22 groups on the day. The directors received feedback from judges as well and spent time analyzing the performance video to optimize our instruction for our final week and two last performances.

Our final competition weekend was for the IHSMA State Marching Festival and Waukee Marching Invitational on October 19. The band finally got some great weather in which to perform and despite a soggy morning of rehearsal, section pictures, and a group lunch together, the sun came out right as the band started warm-up for performance. With ideal conditions and a great week of improvements in rehearsals, the band took the field and had their best performance of the year. The Warrior Marching Band received a Division I (Superior) rating - the highest possible - at the IHSMA State Marching Festival. After the performance, the band returned to school for a couple hours for the students to rest up for the evening performance. Later that evening, back on buses, the band returned to Waukee stadium for the Waukee Marching Invitational. After getting the opportunity to watch a few great marching bands

perform, they band headed to warm-up and got down to business. The Warrior Marching Band performed their second show of the day at 8:50pm for a packed Waukee Stadium and played a very exciting and emotionally charged show. The seniors last marching performance! At awards that evening at 10:45pm, the Warrior Marching Band earned 5th place in class 4A. The evening concluded with a senior retreat and fireworks at the stadium! A very cool event for our group.

The marching band had a great year! Despite the highest scores and finishes they have had in recent history, students learned to work together in effort and cause for the success of the group, learned to be flexible and adaptive, and made some cultivated and great friendships!