



EDISON H.S. BANDS

Band Parent Informational Guide:

“So You Want to Be a Band Parent”

A resource for new and returning band
parent volunteers

Welcome to the Edison High School Band Family!

This packet is designed to help inform parents of students involved with the Edison High School Band Program as to how they can help their child, the band program, and the band parent organization (BPO) throughout the school year. An active and involved BPO is VITAL to the success of your child and the program as a whole! While the directors and staff teach your children, our pool of parent volunteers and BPO members are our “boots on the ground” helping make sure things run smoothly, children are taken care of, and ALL students in the Edison High School Band Program are set up for success.

One of the most confusing aspects of being a new parent to our program is understanding both how to be involved as a busy adult with full-time family, work, and other responsibilities and *why* we need the help we need. In this packet you will find descriptions and examples of the most common (and some special) volunteering opportunities we request, how they work, and just why we need you so much! This isn't meant to answer *every* question, but instead to provide clarity and insight into what each volunteer role entails so you can see there is something for everyone!

We hope this packet provides you with a deeper understanding as to why parent involvement in the BPO is so important to not just your child, but to all the current students, alumni, and staff involved with the Edison High School Band Program. Our successful history as a band comes down to two pillars of strength: the hard work and dedication of our students, and the high level of parent involvement we have been so fortunate to have over the years. Once you've had the opportunity to read about what being a parent volunteer is all about, we hope to see you at one of our future events. If you ever have any questions, you can always reach out to a Band Parent Board Member or a band director!

Thank you!

Marc Denicuolo
Director of Bands

Derek Dillman
Assistant Director of Bands

Band Lingo Dictionary

As band parents, there are a lot of words and phrases used that you may have never heard before!

It can feel like a lot to keep track of and it can get confusing, so below are some of the most common terms you will hear when discussing volunteering.

Show Site: The venue where the performance takes place. This is either most typically a high school or college.

Warm-up Site: The location at the show site where the band warms up before a show. Sometimes everyone is all together and sometimes the group is split into smaller groups (most typically: winds, cologuard, percussion).

Directors: Mr. Dillman or Mr. Denicuolo.

Staff: Paid instructors who are NOT Mr. Dillman or Mr. Denicuolo (there are a lot of them).

Stage/Staged/Staging: Where on the field something is placed.

Bus Lot: Where the buses are kept at a show site.

Equipment Lot: Where the equipment trucks are kept at a show site (always different from Bus Lot).

Badge: A piece of identification provided by the show site. This lets you on the field to help.

Retreat: When selected student leadership go to accept awards.

Year-Long Volunteer Opportunities

These opportunities exist throughout the year no matter what the band is doing. They are overarching responsibilities that help the band mostly in recruitment, fundraising, and record keeping.

What: Fundraising Assistance

How You Help: We are looking to expand the amount of smaller scale, student fundraising we do each year in addition to the couple of large fundraising opportunities we do as a program. We need volunteers who can help in the following ways:

- Assist in seeking donations from outside businesses and organizations to the band program
- Help distribute fundraised goods when applicable (pies, mums, etc.)
- Help plan effective fundraising opportunities for our students throughout the year

Why do we need you: Fundraising in particular is an area that the directors would like to put a strong emphasis on in the coming years so students have plenty of fundraising opportunities for large trips and general band account funds. To do this successfully, we really need people who have good ideas about fundraising! Distributing fundraised goods is also something that we are typically short handed on and having more people help distribute helps things go much faster.

What: Photographer/Videographer

How You Help: This is the most straightforward job there is! We need people who love capturing the moments our students create. These photos and videos get used in band promotional/recruitment materials, submissions for parades/trips/higher profile opportunities, the yearbook, and more. We need people who:

- Travel with the band to games and competitions to take photos and videos
- Comply with site specific photography/videography rules and regulations
- Follow directions from directors relating to copyright

Why do we need you: We don't want those special moments to go by! Having photos and videos helps us recruit better as well as have an archive for the directors to look back on for particular planning situations. It also allows us to have a stock of materials to submit to panels for higher profile competitions or parades that require a pre-screen.

What: Social Media Assistant

How You Help: We need people who are fluent enough in social media apps (facebook and instagram mainly) to help run our band accounts. In-depth knowledge is not necessarily what we are looking for and a willingness to learn is just as helpful! We need people who:

- Can relay band information (dates, times, performances, important information, etc) to social media posts
- Create fun and engaging material (videos, senior spotlights, sky's the limit!) to post to our socials
- Collaborate with photographers/videographers for material to post

Why do we need you: Like it or not, social media is here to stay and it is an important part of engaging with our community! For a lot of people (especially our alumni) our social media accounts are how they stay informed of important events so they can come and support the home team! Making sure our socials are being run efficiently will help us engage our community and help reach a wider audience of support.

What: Webmaster

How You Help: The band website is the hub for all EHS Band materials. We host our calendar there, post fundraising information, band camp information, and so much more. It is an invaluable resource to students and especially their parents. We are seeking people who:

- Keep the google calendar up to date with information from directors
- Post fundraising information, tricky tray information, etc.
- Collaborate with photographers/videographers for up to date pictures of the band
- Help maintain our website
- Have ideas for how to improve our website and can help implement them

Why do we need you: Our website is THE PLACE for information for current members and their parents/families no matter what group they are a part of. We often direct people both in the band and people who *want* to be in the band to our website for information and if that information is incorrect or not up to date, it leads to confusion and misunderstandings. It is important that everyone can find what they need there as well as easily navigate the website.

Typical Volunteer Roles

The marching band competes just about every Saturday from September - Mid November and has football games on most Friday evenings in that time span. The indoor drumline and indoor guard compete just about every Saturday from February - March.

What: Show Day Chaperone

How You Help: Chaperones are the most straightforward role as a volunteer and function just how you expect them to- oversee our students. Chaperone responsibilities at their core have the same responsibilities no matter where we are or what we are doing:

- Ride the bus with the band to and from show sites and away football games.
- Follow the band throughout the show site.
- Help keep students hydrated on hot show/parade days (we provide the water).
- Provide snacks to students after performances (we provide the snacks).
- Supervise students at warmup sites (parents at wind, percussion, and guard sites respectively).
- Supervise students during breaks at football games or shows.

Why do we need you: Chaperones are the most vital volunteer position on a show day because without the correct ratio of chaperones to students, we are not allowed to travel! Chaperones are also the people who help make sure our students are staying safe and responsible- the more eyes, ears, and hands we have, the better! The directors and staff cannot be around at all times on show days because of a variety of reasons from attending judging critiques, tracking down show day staff, and any emergencies that pop up to name a few.

What: Donations

How You Help: While the band provides snacks, water, and a variety of other items for our students, we are only able to do that because of the generous donations we receive from the community and parents. One of the biggest ways you can help is by donating the following items for use throughout the marching season and school year:

- Water, soda, gatorade, and other liquids
- Snacks
- Paper plates/napkins/plastic-wear
- Other donations on request from BPO Board Members

Why we need you: Without proper donations, the BPO needs to supplement by spending BPO funds. This is not ideal because those funds are used to help us register for shows, buy props, replace broken equipment, obtain upgraded equipment, and other things throughout the year. More money spent = less available money as an organization to use on things our district budgets do not cover.

What: Pit Crew/Prop Crew

How: The band has *a lot* of equipment that we bring with us on show days from instruments to sound equipment on carts, to large and small props. Pit crew/prop crew parents are the ones who help our staff and students transport these items onto the field and around the show site. This is one of the more physically demanding responsibilities and while incredibly important, we understand there can be certain medical or physical limitations. Pit crew parents are responsible for:

- Pushing/carrying instruments and equipment onto the field (anything heavier than handheld is put on wheels).
- Pushing large equipment and instruments in small teams onto the field (the heavier something is, the more people we assign to it to alleviate strain).
- Assembling props in the lot before gate time (prop crew only).
- Carrying and staging large and small props on the field (prop crew only).

Why we need you: As previously mentioned, we have *a lot of stuff*. With all students and staff helping out, we still only are able to get at most, 75% of what we have. Having the right amount of prop crew and pit crew members helps us get on and off the field more quickly and efficiently which highly reduces the band's chance to receive a penalty. Additionally, the more people we have helping out here, the *easier* it becomes for everyone to transport the equipment.

Special Events Volunteer Roles

In addition to our weekly competitions, we have a few special events throughout the year that require additional volunteers or have unique requirements that we don't need on a typical day.

What: Band Camp Chaperones

How: Different from a typical show day chaperone, band camp chaperones are needed during the few days we are away at band camp in late August. There are a variety of responsibilities that include:

- Traveling to and staying with the band at YMCA Camp Bernie in Port Murray, NJ.
- Supervising students at night while they stay in their cabins.
- Supervise students during daily free time.
- Escort students in small groups to and from the cabin areas.
- Assist in organizing and distributing late night snack.

Why do we need you: While YMCA Camp Bernie is fully staffed, they really only take care of handling our main three meals a day and running the free time activity offerings (pool lifeguards, rockwall supervisors, etc.). Our parent volunteers during this span of time are PARAMOUNT in ensuring the well being and safety of our students while we are away. While relatively small, Camp Bernie is still in the middle of the woods.

What: Tricky Tray Donations

How: Our annual Tricky Tray fundraising event is the largest fundraiser for the Edison High School Band Program that we put on each year. One of the most helpful and straight-forward ways parents can help is by donating items to be raffled off in baskets. Information about this is sent out closer to the timeframe of the prep, but donations often include (and are DEFINITELY NOT limited to):

- Alcohol
- Bikes
- Makeup
- Toys
- Gaming systems
- Monetary donations

Why we need you: As mentioned, the Tricky Tray is the largest fundraiser we have each year for the band. It brings in *a lot* of money for our program, but it is an enormous undertaking that requires as many hands as possible on deck. We need to stock a certain amount of baskets to raffle off and anything we come up short on needs to be supplemented with BPO funds. The less BPO funds we spend to make baskets, the more net profit we make for the band.

What: Tricky Tray Basket Stuffers

How: As items for the tricky tray are obtained, they need to be put into festive and themed baskets which takes *a lot* of work. The BPO has specified dates for when basket stuffing occurs. You can help by:

- Attending basket stuffing nights
- Working with other parents to group similar items
- Wrapping items in baskets with ribbons, plastic, and other materials

Why we need you: In 2025, we had over 400 baskets that were raffled off during the tricky tray. The more help we have wrapping baskets, the less daunting the task becomes and the less time it takes to prepare the baskets themselves.

What: Tricky Tray Day-Of Help

How: There are a variety of tasks to do on the day of the tricky tray:

- Assisting with set-up of the gym
- Selling concessions
- Selling raffle tickets
- Selling 50/50 tickets
- Supervising the floor
- Assisting with ticket calling
- Carrying baskets to winners

Why we need you: There is no shortage of things to do at the tricky tray and put simply, the more help we have, the easier it all is. We have current students and alumni help as well, but because this event is considered gambling, anyone under the age of 18 is NOT permitted to assist in any way **during** the actual event. Anyone under 18 can assist with day-of set up, anything needed **before** the event starts, or basket delivery (excluding baskets containing alcohol) **after** tickets have been submitted. Since most of the day-of work happens *during* the event, it's easy to see why we need so much help!

What: Home Marching Band Show Volunteers

How: Each year, we hold our annual marching band show in mid-September. Like the tricky tray, this is another all hands on deck event as there are typically 13-15 high school bands that attend who bring with them hundreds of spectators, directors, staff, and alumni. There are a variety of ways in which you can help (the below are just SOME):

- Selling concessions.
- Selling admission tickets.
- Selling 50/50 tickets.
- Helping assist with parking.
- Selling candy grams/air grams

Why we need you: This is the other very large fundraiser that we do each year and its success not only impacts how much money we make for the band, but the kind of experience the other participating bands have at our show (and we want them to keep coming back)! Marching band shows have a lot of moving parts and things to think about for directors and members of other groups so the better the show is run, the more those other bands can focus on what they need to do that day which is something *we* hope to be able to do when we are the ones attending a show.

What: Home Jazz Show Volunteers

How: Similar to our annual marching band show, we also host an annual jazz show. This is much smaller in scale and involves a lot less moving parts, but it is still a fundraiser for us and something we want run as efficiently as possible! Typical volunteer opportunities include:

- Selling EHS Band Merchandise
- Selling Concessions

Why we need you: Just like the marching band show, we want these groups coming back year after year! A smoothly run show goes a long way with other directors and of course, any opportunity we can have to raise money for the program, we want it to raise as much money as possible! More volunteers helps people take shifts, opens up more opportunities at the show itself, and allows us to have a few extra hands on deck to help in emergency situations.

What: Band Trip Chaperones

How: Each year, the band takes a trip to perform and enjoy some time together (location changes yearly but usually rotates between Disney, Virginia Beach, Universal Studios, and a 4th trip). Dates are announced way ahead of time and typically happen at the end of March/beginning of April for about 4-5 days. Chaperones are responsible for:

- Having an assigned group of students
- Room checking their assigned group each night before bed
- Being the person responsible for their group of students to report to
- Being a liaison between the students and the directors
- Any other reasonable tasks as deemed necessary by the directors

Why we need you: Looking after a large group of kids on the home turf can be difficult enough without the right help, but taking that same group across state lines and on a plane or bus is a whole different level of difficulty if we don't have the right help. The more chaperones we have, the better our student to chaperone ratio can be and the easier it is to look after the students in our group. It also ensures that as we travel (especially in airports and on planes) we have eyes in multiple places.

Points of Contact

If you ever have any questions, concerns, ideas, or thoughts, please feel free to contact any of the below people. If we aren't the right person for what you are asking, we will get you in contact with the right person!

BPO President and Vice President: Kerel Cooper and Melissa Kersting

(president@ehsbands.org) or (vp@ehsbands.org)

For items related to general BPO needs/concerns, volunteering, parent board, and BPO meetings

***Assistant Band Director: Derek Dillman**

(derek.dillman@edison.k12.nj.us)

For items related to paperwork, medical needs/concerns, brass instruments, and general things

*(or if you aren't sure who you should email)

Head Band Director: Marc Denicuolo

(marc.denicuolo@edison.k12.nj.us)

For items related to emergencies, money/payments/student account funds, schedules, and woodwind instruments

Percussion Instructor/Assistant Band Director: Michael O'Leary

(mike.oleary@edison.k12.nj.us)

For items related to outdoor/indoor drumline and percussion instruments