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## Why compete; why now?

I was asked that very question by a well-respected colleague at a recent marching band contest. My response was one that caught my colleague by surprise: *“Because Marion band students deserve the same opportunity as the rest of the state of Indiana.”*

Now that the Marching Giants have finished their competitive marching band season — the first in nearly a decade — I wanted to share our gratitude, and to give you a glimpse into the future of our band program, and how you can be a part of it.

- **THANK YOU to the greater Marion community** for the tremendous amount of support given to the students who represented our school, our community, and our county for five Saturdays across northern Indiana. We could not have done it without that support!
- **THANK YOU to Superintendent Brad Lindsay and the Marion Community Schools Board of Trustees** for supporting this program and our return to competitive marching band.
- **THANK YOU to Mr. Lennon Brown and the entire administration at Marion High School** for encouraging our students to be the best that they can be. Thank you to the **faculty and staff of Marion High School** for supporting the band as it traveled most every week for competition.
- **THANK YOU to the Marion Band Boosters** for making sure we had the necessary items we needed each week in order to be a competitive marching band.
- **THANK YOU to Mr. Brad Powell and Mr. Troy Freeman** for securing a truck for us to pull our trailer to every invitational.
- **THANK YOU to the countless people** who stopped me in town, at football games, or at church, thanking us for taking this important step.
- **Most importantly, THANK YOU TO THE STUDENTS** who took a chance and became the first Marion Marching Giants to compete since 2005. I hope that together we brought this community a tremendous amount of pride in the band program.

Now, we are busy preparing for pep band, concerts, concert band contest, jazz band concerts, and other community functions. And as always, we are looking to the future and trying to minimize costs as much as we can. That’s where you can help us again.

Did you know that currently there are more than 350 students in grades 6 through 12 involved in the MCS band program? Did you know that Marion's instrumental music program was once considered one of the best in the state of Indiana? We can rebuild that proud tradition, but **we need your help**. *There are several ways you can contribute to the Marion Community Schools instrumental music programs:*

- **Attend band events.** Currently the Marion High School band is planning three concerts this school year; we will also perform at a concert band contest in April, and our pep band will perform at several sporting events. Our goal is to provide Marion with as many opportunities to see our students as possible. The bigger the audience, the more support the students feel. We would love to see the Walton Performing Arts Center packed for every one of our performances. Our first is set for 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 14. Add it to your calendar! We hope to see you there!
- **Donate used instruments.** Do you own an instrument you no longer use? We can match it to a student who cannot afford to purchase one. Your donation will be used for years to come and will provide a student with an invaluable opportunity.
- **Donate funds.** With hundreds of students involved in our instrumental music programs at our lower grades, we project in the next three to five years we will see increasing participation in our high school band program. This is a fantastic direction to be headed, but it also means added expenses in the way of uniforms, trailers, instruments, transportation, and other areas. Another big expense will be a portable tower for use on the practice field in marching band season, which allows us to view the field formations and hear the music from a perspective similar to that of our judges at marching competitions. Your monetary donations can help provide better opportunities for our students.

While there is a great tradition of band in Marion, we understand that it will take time and effort to get to the level that we desire. We can get to that level as a team, working for the betterment of our students, and providing them with the best education possible. So why do we compete? We compete, not for trophies, but for the ability to see our hard work pay off and to represent you, the greatest community in the nation: Marion, Indiana!

Thank you for the support you have given our students, our band staff, and me this past marching band season. We look forward to seeing you at a concert, pep band game, parade, or wherever the Marion Band is performing.

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*Joshua R. Huff is in his first year as Director of Bands at Marion High School and his 10th year in education. He earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Indiana Wesleyan University. If you would like to make a donation to the band program, please contact Marion High School and leave a message for Mr. Huff.*

