

SDBA Pep Band Position Paper

PEP BANDS IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Revised 2002

Band students are an integral part of the total school community. Their involvement in concert band, marching band, jazz band, contests, and community service performances makes up the core of the band program. They are also called upon to perform at numerous athletic events throughout the fall and winter athletic seasons. In many instances, they are being asked to spend more time preparing for and performing at these events than the core activities of the band program. Time spent preparing for athletic events must come from one of the core activities mentioned above. Time spent performing at such events adds many extra hours to their already busy schedules.

The South Dakota Bandmasters Association surveyed the band directors of South Dakota, asking them to describe their situation regarding pep band and its impact on their students. The response was overwhelming, with directors from 119 schools replying. The following proposals have been drafted by a special committee of the SDBA based on the information obtained from these surveys. The SDBA intends these proposals only as reasonable guidelines. It is hoped that they may be helpful where such guidelines are not already in place or where current practices place unreasonable demands on the time of band students.

PROPOSAL 1: Band students should not be expected to perform at more than sixteen (16) athletic events, outside of school, during the fall and winter athletic season, or an average of once per week. This total would include all sports and related tournaments. If the band director believes it to be in the best interest of the band students, he or she may elect to perform at more events.

RATIONALE: This would establish what we believe to be a reasonable balance between pep band and the core of the band program. It would also lessen the possibility of *exploitation* of band students. With boys and girls basketball seasons going on at the same time, this is a very busy time of the year athletically. January is also an especially busy season musically, with All-State Band auditions. Many schools are also preparing for their Region Solo and Ensemble Contests.

PROPOSAL 2: Band students should not be expected to perform at athletic events that coincide with school vacations or breaks.

RATIONALE: The “season” for band students runs throughout the school year and, in some cases, part of the summer. Students in this sort of activity need those vacations and breaks, which are built into the school calendar, to avoid “burn-out.”

PROPOSAL3: Band students should not be expected to be in attendance past halftime at athletic events for which they perform.

RATIONALE: Bands generally are able to do the bulk of their performing only before and at halftime of athletic events. Once the students in the band have completed their performing obligation, they should be free to choose whether or not to remain for the rest of the game and where to sit. Although remaining throughout the game may give the appearance of team support, such a practice, when required, generally has a negative effect on the band students.

PROPOSAL 4: Band students should not be expected to perform at athletic events for one week prior to a major music performance.

RATIONALE: Time spent preparing for an athletic event immediately before a major music performance would be taken from preparation for the music event, thus detracting from said music event. Pep band also has a negative effect on tone production and musicality, which could be damaging to the major music performance to follow.

PROPOSAL 5: The band director should be consulted before any commitments are made on his or her behalf to perform for an athletic event.

RATIONALE: Among school officials, only the band director has a true picture of the performance demands being placed on the band students at any given time. To commit the band students to a performance without consulting the director shows questionable judgment and a lack of understanding for both the students and their director.

PROPOSAL 6: Bands should not be expected to perform at a scheduled pep band event if unforeseen and unavoidable conflicts with other school and community activities would not allow the remaining students to perform in a manner representative of that band program.

RATIONALE: The band students' only opportunity to perform for large numbers of people from surrounding communities is at athletic events. This is even true for substantial numbers of people within their community. To expect them to perform ineffectively due to circumstances beyond their control has a negative effect on them, on their band, and on the school.

According to the SDBA survey, sixty percent of the band directors in South Dakota are involved in other school activities during the fall and winter season. Too often, the band is seen as a "thing" that can gather and perform on demand rather than as a group of young people who have other commitments in their lives-to their families, churches, studies, other school activities, jobs and social lives. One must keep in mind that these students have many demands on their time. Band is only one of their commitments. Pep Band is only one portion of that commitment.

Thank you on behalf of the band students of South Dakota and their directors for your time and consideration of these proposals.