

## **Every Other Year State Marching Band Contest Rationale**

The decision to hold the State Marching Band Contest in alternating years was made in 1991 and involved extensive discussion on the part of band directors and school administrators across the state. The contest had been in existence since 1984 and there had been a steady growth of dissatisfaction and displeasure regarding the every year limited participation format. The primary reasons were as follows:

1. The cost of transporting bands to area and state was becoming excessive. In many schools other music programs were being subjected to reduced funding in order to underwrite the necessary cost for participation in state marching competition.
2. When bands went to area and state every year it was necessary to limit the number of bands that advanced from region to area. Not all Division I bands got to advance. As a result it diminished the significance of earning a Superior Rating at region. This was a very negative factor for many schools and many communities.
3. By going to an every other year format many more bands get to participate at the area level. Under the old system there would be only 8 bands (2 per region) at area from each classification. Only 14 bands performed at state and only five bands advanced to finals. Now there are as many as 30 bands at the area contest and as many as 32 bands at state in a given classification. Most view this format as a much more beneficial structure for the majority of programs.
4. The every-other-year format is coordinated with the Texas Music Educators Association Honor Band Competition that identifies the outstanding high school concert bands in the state of Texas. The schedule is set so that a given classification will compete for TMEA Honor Concert Band on year and the UIL State Marching Band Championship in the alternating year. The intent is to create a balance between the importance of concert band and marching band performance.
5. Since the adoption of this format there have been three occasions that the every-other-year schedule has been subject to review. In each case the vast majority of directors and school administrators have reaffirmed their support of the alternating year format.

It is important to note that this structure was conceived by band directors, was developed by band directors and submitted to the governing body of UIL by band directors. It is representative of the majority view of music educators in our state and has been validated on three occasions. The issue can be revisited at any time if there is sufficient support for considering a different contest structure.