



Welcome to the Salem Blue Devils percussion ensemble!

Congratulations! You have already taken (or are considering) the first, most difficult step in your journey toward becoming a member of the Salem Blue Devils percussion ensemble by attending the evaluations. It is the intent of the Salem Blue Devils organization to teach lessons that can be applied to the rest of your life, through an activity that is both intense and fun at the same time. Hopefully the evaluation process will be a rewarding and educational experience that you can take with you for years to come.

The evaluation process

In order to earn a spot within the ensemble, you must:

- Have a desire to be a positive member of the Salem Blue Devils family
- Demonstrate the personal motivation and dedication to work extremely hard and sacrifice to reach short and long term goals
- Demonstrate teamwork skills and a group-first mentality
- Demonstrate the ability to listen and actively learn new concepts quickly (this includes the ability and willingness to adapt in any situation)
- Demonstrate self-sufficiency, maturity and professionalism
- Demonstrate the ability to focus for long periods of time
- Constantly improve yourself and be willing to think "outside the box"
- Demonstrate advanced levels of musical and technical ability on your instrument(s)

These are, of course, only a sampling of what it takes, but this should give you the general idea. During the evaluation process, you will be able to demonstrate all of these things and we will assess you in these areas. However, it is very important to realize that we plan to invite every single person back for continued evaluation. We do not generally cut anyone. We will always try to find a spot somewhere in the ensemble for you. After the first rehearsal, you will have a few days to study, practice, reflect and improve on your performance and will be able to come back and show us your progress. It is progress that we are most interested in assessing, not necessarily the end product, though that is also very important. Everyone gets the opportunity to show how well they can improve and that's what wins you a spot in the ensemble on the instrument of your choice. The evaluation process will span a few weeks.

You are expected to get a packet of warm-up exercises and have them learned by the first rehearsal.

As stated before, everyone will be invited to be in the ensemble. If you don't perform particularly well at the first rehearsal, that's okay. If you work hard in between rehearsals, come back and play with a high level of proficiency, you will probably be in good shape. It would simply be up to you to prove that you can maintain that level of work ethic.

Veterans

I have a deep respect for the veteran members who are returning to the group and very much look forward to working with all of you! Veteran members must be evaluated just the same as rookie members. As second, third or more year members, you will be expected to demonstrate qualities befitting someone of your experience level. It is perhaps more difficult coming in as a veteran than as a rookie. The idea is that you will know exactly what is expected as a veteran and be more than capable of filling the role and winning your spot in the ensemble. I value the veteran leadership and am sure that you will understand the level that is expected from you.

End result

Salem Blue Devils is among the highest caliber groups in NESBA/MICCA/MMBA/WGI. We hope you find the process rewarding, exciting and educational. We very much look forward to meeting all potential members, both rookies and veterans. In the end, it is our goal to put together an ensemble, which includes the finest, most motivated and talented performers available. It is also our goal to have an ensemble who gets along and includes members who are dedicated to supporting each other. The family atmosphere is essential to the Salem Blue Devils tradition and to a successful and enjoyable season in this activity. Only you can determine what this ensemble can achieve.

The following are a few items to consider as a member of the ensemble.

Professionalism

The first step toward producing a successful ensemble is to adapt to a method of professionalism. Your approach to everything you do will define your image, as well as shape your personality as a group both on and off the floor/field. With that you must also show a high level of respect. This means respect for the instructors, volunteers and fellow students. You will be noticed at all times and everything you do is a representation of the organization. This goes all the way to folding uniforms, instrument covers and care of your shakos/plumes.

Care of your equipment

The instruments are to be treated with the finest care at all times. Nothing is ever to be placed on top of the keyboards or timpani for any reason, other than mallets, sticks and instrument covers. Instruments should be lined up and/or covered when they are not being played. Sticks and mallets are never to be placed on the ground/floor and mallets should never be handled by the heads, this keeps the oils from your hands from getting into the heads/keys of the instruments. No one outside of the battery membership is to play any battery instrument and the same

holds true for the front ensemble. Please make sure that you are checking your instruments and making sure that all screws, nuts, bolts, lugs and straps are always secure. You will be responsible for replacing any parts due to carelessness.

Weather will play a large role in your lives along the way. You will learn to care for instruments in the heat, sun, cold, rain, you name it.

The truck

Loading and unloading the truck is something that develops into a routine over the course of the season. Depending on the number of veterans and volunteers in the group, this may not take a lot of time. Speed and care will be of utmost importance. Instruments must be loaded onto the truck carefully and thoughtfully with consideration that they will be traveling both on the highway and rough roads. The truck must be unloaded with efficiency, care and organization as well. All instruments are to be lined up so that you look good even when no one is using the instruments.

Care for your health

At no time should anyone play hurt without a staff member knowing about it. If you suspect a physical problem, due to your playing or marching, you **MUST** inform us immediately. We are not doctors, but if something can be done for you, we will take care of it. If not, please understand that we need to avoid creating any lasting injuries. The technique program, musically/visually, is designed to avoid these issues when taken seriously. Stick to the proper technique, work diligently to make sure you are properly warmed-up and make adjustments to match the technique we teach and you should avoid any issues.

You must also make sure that you are properly nourished, hydrated, rested and keep your hands clean at all times. A package of multi colored Skittles does not constitute a balanced meal. In order for you to perform at your peak capability, you must be in control of these four elements at all times. It keeps your mind and body working at their optimum level.

If you are in rehearsal, you are in 100%, period. If you need to be out, that's fine, just never rehearse if you aren't going to do so at 100%. Take care of the problem and then get back in.

Care for the group

There are many parts of this activity that go way beyond playing and marching. You'll notice that this packet is several pages long and we still haven't said one thing about playing or marching technique. Far more important is how well you work with the group, how well you interact with others from different backgrounds, different ability levels, different ages, and different experience levels. You are all in this together and will have to take care of each other no matter what. Part of your evaluation will include your ability to become part of the group and bring others into the group. Salem Blue Devils is a family.

You are not in competition with each other for a spot. We are interested in a large ensemble so it is unlikely that someone who is qualified will be denied a spot unless we reach the maximum number of members allowed. Only you will determine if you are qualified to be a member of the ensemble. Help each other out to become great! Who knows, that might be the very action that gains you a position in the ensemble.

Items required at all rehearsals

- Black t-shirt
- Black wrist bands
- Three ring binder with sheet protectors
- Pencil/eraser
- Gym shorts or sweatpants
- Tennis shoes & marching shoes
- Sticks/Mallets
- Instruments
- Music

There will be a fee of \$1 assessed to each member for each item that is missing at any rehearsal or performance. Failure to abide by this may be grounds for dismissal.

Members! Please share this information with you parents and invite them to join us!

Salem Blue Devils is fortunate to have the support of many parents, family and friends who donate their time and talents to the success of the program. Their help is appreciated any time they can help with many important tasks.

Volunteerism and parental involvement is cherished and is critical to our continued success. Weekends are a parent's opportunity to see your program up close and get to know the people who make it work. We always need help with uniform fitting, sewing, vehicle work, equipment maintenance, prop building and other special projects.

Thanks for your interest and we look forward to a rewarding season!

Marching evaluation criteria

When being evaluated for a position in the Salem Blue Devils battery performance section, you will be evaluated in the following areas:

- Demonstration of flexibility, balance and posture (both with and without equipment)
- Ability to learn and implement the marching style with control and performance at both fast and slow tempos
- Demonstration of visual and musical performance, collaboratively in a manner that does not negatively impact sound in any way
- Candidates will be taught actual movement in a group setting and be asked to perform it
- Demonstration of ability to hold interval and the understanding of form relationship in both linear and curvilinear situations

Please be aware that the visual staff will have their own evaluation criteria as well. We will be looking more at your ability to "pick-up", retain and implement the visual style.



Percussion Ensemble Commitment Contract

By signing this form, I agree that I have read the attached packet of information on becoming a member of the Salem Blue Devils percussion ensemble and agree to abide by the standards which are set forth herein.

Student's name _____

Parent's name _____

Date _____

This form must be signed, dated and returned in order to participate in the Salem Blue Devil percussion ensemble.