



How to Purchase a New Band Uniform

CLINICIANS:

Monte Mast, Eric Sabach

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How to Purchase a Uniform Effectively

{ TBA – July 2015
Monte Mast and Eric Sabach - Presenting



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OVERVIEW



- ⌘ Official Representative of the District – Admins, Principals, Board Members, Dept Heads
- ⌘ Follow District Policies and Procedures because of district funds.
- ⌘ Texas – 90% of School Districts Purchase Uniforms for the Bands.
- ⌘ The “Klein Oak Situation.” – First major purchase made in this district (pluses and minuses)
- ⌘ Time for Change

The Administrator's (Monte's) View

- ⌘ We want a chance to present our full wares
- ⌘ It is frustrating when purchasing departments treat all uniform companies the same.
 - ⌘ Some make wash and wear, some make fusion uniforms, some make fully constructed, some do it all.
 - ⌘ Some make “suites” and others make “athletic marching apparel.”
 - ⌘ We are all different from each other. Do your homework.
 - ⌘ It is not like buying the same brand of shoulder pads from three different suppliers.
 - ⌘ A design and a sample product are not the same.
 - ⌘ We love when schools are transparent in their process, have their acts together, and let us know what is important from the start.

The Company (Eric's)

View

So how do we create a process that will give us an affordable, durable, and great looking uniform?

And give the companies the info they need to give you the most for your money?

- ⌘ The Mission – Define what the needs are first. Including the type of band that you are and the needs of your community.
- ⌘ The Team - Who needs to be involved. Why and how?
- ⌘ The Funding – Where is it coming from?
- ⌘ The Essentials / “Sacred Cows” –
- ⌘ The Design
- ⌘ The Scrutiny
- ⌘ The Decision – How it is made. Creating the Rubric
- ⌘ The Pitfalls

How to Approach the Process

- ⌘ Why are you changing uniforms? (mm)
- ⌘ Old? Outdated Design? Need more uniforms? (es)
- ⌘ New School
- ⌘ New Director
- ⌘ New Identity
- ⌘ Change of School Mascot – We have heard some funny ones over the years. (mm)
- ⌘ Timelines, discounts, ease of delivery (es)

The Mission

- ⌘ Who is on it and why? (es)
 - ⌘ Band Director
 - ⌘ Band Staff
 - ⌘ Parents
 - ⌘ Administrators
 - ⌘ Former Directors or MS Directors
 - ⌘ Seamstress
 - ⌘ Apparel teacher
 - ⌘ Uniform Mom or Committee
 - ⌘ Purchasing Dept
-
- ⌘ Define the team early and make sure their responsibilities are clear. (mm)
 - ⌘ Who has the last say? (mm-es)

The Team

- ⌘ Where is the money coming from? (mm)
- ⌘ 90%+ of Texas Schools get their monies from school funding. (mm)
- ⌘ 80%+ of Florida Schools get their monies from parent fundraising. (es)
- ⌘ Price is what you pay, Quality is what you get. (es-mm)
- ⌘ Is there a budget cap or ceiling? Over-all dollar amount or amount per unit? (es)
- ⌘ How many units? And how many over the number of students you had last year? Growing or older community? (ES – Growth of community. Cost later. Custom work and matching)
- ⌘ Bid, RFP, Buy Board, or Direct Sale. (MM - dif between Bid and RFP)

The Funding

- ⌘ What style of band are you?
- ⌘ School colors or not?
- ⌘ Can you use black as a base color?
- ⌘ Mascot or logo and how to use it?
- ⌘ Branding – “Klein Oak – Oak Leaf” Creating an identity and a new brand that sets you apart. (mm)
- ⌘ Are there any “Sacred Cows” – Have you worn capes for years? Maybe busby’s and kilts?
- ⌘ Defining your uniform specs. Who does it and why? Generic spec vs. Specific spc. (mm –es)
- ⌘ Generic spec should have enough detail to keep the “garage businesses” out of the equation. (mm)
- ⌘ Are they bonded?

The Essentials

- ⌘ Relationships with people in the Industry (mm)
- ⌘ Trust the experts.
- ⌘ Have an idea that you want, then ask for a theme and variation. (es)
- ⌘ Don't be afraid to ask them to redesign, but don't go too far. (es)
- ⌘ Will it look good on all of the sizes? (mm)
- ⌘ Are there such things as proprietary designs and how to or not use them? (es – mm)
- ⌘ Is there a time when you tell the company how much you have to spend? And why? (es)
- ⌘ How much buys what?
 - ⌘ \$335-\$375, \$375-\$425, \$425 and up? (es)
- ⌘ Getting a sample made. How many do you get? (es)
- ⌘ Accessories – raincoats, hangers, uniform bags, hat boxes, plume tubes, plume carriers, gloves, shoes, etc. (es-mm)

The Design

- ↳ **Build your rubric**
- ↳ Have your rubric constructed and in place at the start of the process.
 - ↳ Design
 - ↳ Price
 - ↳ References
 - ↳ Representation
 - ↳ Warranty
 - ↳ Technology/Latest and Greatest
 - ↳ Charms, spreadsheets, or online. Barcodes and QR codes
- ↳ Assigning percentages to each of these and where potential issues might arise.

Make sure you know what you want for an endgame when doing this. If price has the most points... or Design...or Technology. (mm)

- ↳ Do you tell the uniform company this? (es)
- ↳ Do you allow the uniform company time to rebut any concerns? (es)
- ↳ Finally, ask the companies what size, height/weight, etc person this uniform will fit or give them the measurements that they would want so that your sample should fit exactly that person.
- ↳ Is the uniform unisex, made for each gender, or slightly altered for each gender? (es)
- ↳ Put the uniform on them and take pictures close up and on the field during the day and under the lights. (es)

The Scrutiny

⌘ **SO YOU THINK YOU HAVE A WINNER**

⌘ What do you do to confirm that? (es)

⌘ What if this particular uniform is a departure? (es)

⌘ Who is really making the decision? (mm)

⌘ How do you satisfy the skeptic?

⌘ How do you assuage the people that wanted a different winner?

⌘ Will the school board approve it?

⌘ Northrop HS – Big Orange Pride (mm)

⌘ There isn't black in our school colors! (es)

⌘ How do you know when you are done?

⌘ The infamous last minute and unknown "Sacred Cows!"

(mm – parade id)

The Decision

- ⌘ That is what I wore when I was in High School or College. (es-mm)
- ⌘ I know the guy from the uniform company.
 - ⌘ (es-mm) – “The coupon concept”
- ⌘ That is what I wore when I was in drum corps
 - ⌘ Fitting, sizing, tailoring, cost, construction (es)
- ⌘ “Well I get their catalog often!”
- ⌘ Giving too much control to purchasing. (mm)
- ⌘ Having the wrong team deciding. (es)
- ⌘ What happens if there is a problem with delivery, service, and/or the product. (es)

The Pitfalls

& What did we miss?

Your
Questions.



Monte Mast

Director of Fine Arts, Klein ISD

mmast@kleinisd.net

Eric Sabach

Uniform Company Representative

ericsabach@gmail.com

If you want to contact
us...

A BAND UNIFORM BUYER'S GUIDE

A concise, authoritative guide to every facet of evaluation and process to purchase a new marching band uniform.



Presented as a public service by:

Stanbury
UNIFORMS

INTRODUCTION

So you're going to buy uniforms for a band.

For some readers, this will be a one-time experience that can really be interesting. For others, it's a regularly recurring assignment. But for all, the purchase of band uniforms can be an exciting and challenging project.

Conversely, purchasing band uniforms can be an exasperating, confusing, laborious affair. And it can turn into a disastrously expensive disappointment.

The pages that follow guide you to a completely sound decision. They show you just how to reach the successful result that makes everyone happy – you, your colleagues, the school or organization backing you, and, most important of all, the band itself.

This booklet takes you step-by-step through every phase of the decision-making process – from the preliminaries of forming a professional point of view, through basics, style, fabric, inner and outer construction. It contains *professional tips* throughout, both to point out sound decisions and to warn you against the most common mistakes made by laymen in the past – errors you couldn't possibly anticipate beforehand.

Professionals – people, who have spent their entire business lives in the highly specialized field of band uniforms, have compiled the text for you. They know exactly what information you need to acquire, and they're happy to share their expertise with you.

Whether you're a band director, a school administrator, business manager, a home economics teacher, a volunteer parent or a band booster – whether you're buying for a school, an individual or an organization – you can turn from an amateur to a professional buyer in the time it takes to read this booklet. Only after completing it should you turn to the manufacturer's catalog to select style, color and ornamentation – the areas that are most fun. Armed with your newly acquired expertise, you'll be protected against "falling for a pretty face" – selecting a uniform that looks great in the catalog, but won't stand up in practice.

Welcome to the world of professional band uniforms.

We wish you happy, profitable reading!

1. DEVELOPING A "BAND'S EYE VIEW"

The first and most important point you have to know is that you never, never, never buy band uniforms the way you select any other clothing.

Think about how you buy your own wardrobe. Only you will wear it. You are free to choose styles that personally become you. Proper fit is a pre-consideration, because you've got to look good close up.

Current styling is important to you—cuffs vs. no cuffs on trousers, width of lapels, height of a hem. Details are important. You care for and maintain your clothes

meticulously during the average one to three years you wear them. Finally, you protect your good clothes from inclement weather.

Now you've got to forget every word in the two paragraphs above. You must train yourself to think exactly in reverse.

Band uniforms must last for many more years than the best suit or dress. They may be worn by as many as ten or twelve different band members – sometimes of both sexes. They will be worn in snow, sleet, heat and downpour. Uniforms are often carelessly cleaned, improperly stored. Yet every time they come out of the garment bag, they must look great and wear well.

As for treatment: band uniforms must stand up under really tough abuse. This is no place for delicate hand stitching. Think of what your children do to clothes (and budgets), even under watchful eyes. Now imagine a bus load of students. You may begin to wonder why band uniforms aren't made of concrete. Even military and police uniforms can't withstand this treatment. They, too, are individually tailored, owned and cared for.

The plain truth is that no normal fabric or manufacturing process is durable enough for band uniforms. You must go to specialists in the field. Only an expert combination of professional knowledge, special construction methods, custom-designed machinery, durable fabric, and proper trim can possibly meet these needs.

Now, you can understand why you will have to consider some aspects, very carefully, that never occurred to you before. For example, where and how often does your band perform. You also have to consider fabric, inner construction and small details like extra long turn up on trousers – because next year's tuba player may be taller than this year's. These are practical considerations that will influence your decision on how your uniform will be made.

There's another factor just as important—how your uniforms are going to look overall. Here's an important rule—a band in action is always seen from a distance...from the perspective of bleachers, the width of a wide street or a seat in the concert hall. Uniform buyers have actually wasted hundreds of dollars on magnificent trim detail that could be spotted, at best, six feet away.

But you won't make this mistake. Because right now, you're going to develop what we call the "Band's Eye View". And every time you're likely to forget it – in each area we have learned that buyers are most apt to go astray – we'll remind you. Like this:

Band's Eye View #1 – Don't put anything on your uniform you can't see from at least ten yards away.

A Band's Eye View pointer means that this is a place where you must stop. Re-orient your self. Completely reverse your usual thinking. You must look at a particular point "inside-out", in direct contradiction to everything you've learned or been taught about personal clothing.

It's our way of signaling the important warning: *Watch out!* This is an area where others – intelligent people, successful in their own fields like yourself – have gone wrong!

2. BAND UNIFORM BASICS

Here are the basics, plus some background information about bands and their uniforms, that will help you in the decisions coming up.

Historically, band uniforms have been a variation of other types of uniforms. Many uniforms are based on American and foreign military styles, dating back centuries. Some have been representative in motif of an organization; others are based on geographical or ethnic influences. Still others adopt a style for no other reason than personal taste.

Band uniform styles are trends, similar to regular clothing trends. A marching band uniform, in most minds, is festive or ceremonial garb. They are colorful or drab, depending on the mood or the ceremony the uniforms are purchased to represent.

Much of the influence on the styling of band uniforms dates back to John Philip Sousa. After directing both the U.S. Marine and U.S. Navy military bands, he formed and directed his own, world famous band, which toured extensively. The Sousa band uniforms were similar in appearance to the military bands of the times. Around 1900, private, community and organization bands began to bloom and flourish. They all took on the Sousa band appearance.

A short time later, instrumental music, or bands, were introduced into high schools and colleges. As they started to put forth marching bands, they too were influenced by the "Sousa Look".

The professional drum corps influences many of today's styles. Traditional uniforms are still very much in style, for example, the many variations of the West Point or military style. Today's styles can be a derivative from the Sousa era or a design which encompasses a futuristic look of the new millennium.

3. THE ABCs OF STYLE

Ageless – When styling your new uniforms, keep in mind that you will have these uniforms for eight, ten or even twenty years. The design must be ageless; something that will be current and stylish for the life of the uniform.

Basic – Keep the style basic. Remember; don't put anything on your uniform you can't see from at least ten yards away. Also, try to keep the "parts" of the uniform to a minimum; it will save you headaches in the future.

Colorful – Band uniforms should be exciting, bold and most of all colorful. The bright, crisp colors not only make the band look good, they make the band feel good.

All uniform styles come from variations of only a few different elements of the uniform. Before turning to a manufacturer's catalog to mull over an amazing and bewildering variety, you need to master only a few basics.

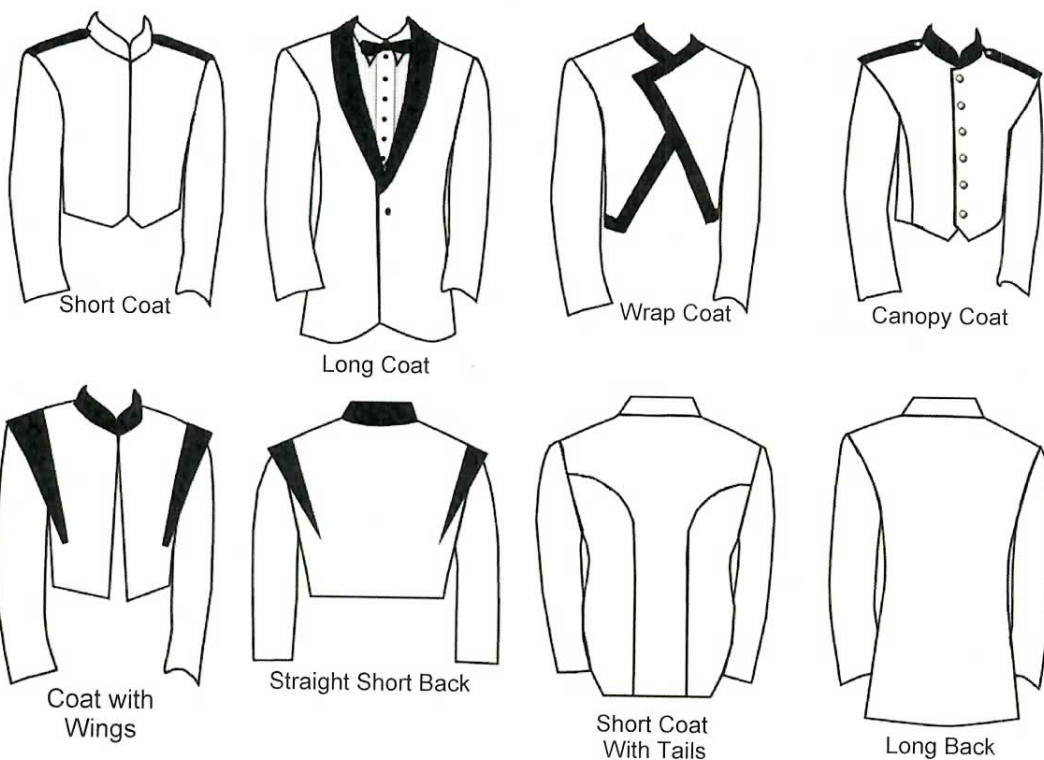
The Coat/Collar

Most band coats are relatively short or waist-length coats. However, some continue to prefer long coats or short coats with tails. Short coats have become the most popular, in part, due to the military appearance they give the students. Some coats can have extensions at the shoulders called canopies. They can contain numerous configurations of trim and can open at various locations, for example, a front center opening, a side opening, back opening, etc. A standing military collar is obviously the most popular design. More recently, a soft collar “wrap style” coat has become very popular and lends itself to limitless design options. Open collar coats, as on blazer collars, are used primarily on concert wear.

Trousers/Jumpsuits

Bands are most frequently wearing a high waisted trouser or bibber/jumpsuit with a short coat. This creates the illusion that the band is taller, because the trouser is a big color block.

Band’s Eye View #2 – The heaviest wear on a coat is in the area of the collar. Be sure to compare collar construction before purchasing.



4. FIBERS AND FABRICS

Band uniform fabrics are quite different from “civilian” or fashion materials. They must be controlled for continuity of quality on a day-to-day, year-to-year basis. Color, too, must be closely controlled, for matching replacements may be required years after the initial order. As for strength, a good band uniform historically has a longer life expectancy than any other garment sold for any other purpose.

Uniform fabrics are manufactured to the rigid specifications of the industry, assuring reasonable fabric matching for indefinite periods. Fashion fabrics, conversely, are loomed one season and may never appear again.

Authentic band uniform fabrics are created in a variety of fibers. Different weaves and weights are available. Here’s a highly condensed run-down for your guidance.

Fibers

Polyester. Polyester is a synthetic, or chemically manufactured, fiber produced by chemical companies. The fibers are purchased by fabric mills, which weave or knit the fibers into cloth.

Polyester fabrics have the advantage of great tensile strength and high resistance to wrinkling. They are not as costly as woolen fibers or fabrics.

With the predominant use of whites, polyester also offers the brightest white available in our industry. Chemical treatments, Visa or scotch guard, are available to resist soiling and/or staining. Visa treatment also affords the transportation of moisture. This allows the fabric to dry rapidly, without stain or mildew.

Blends. Blends are fabrics, which combine man-made fibers with wool, in the same weaves and colors as all-wool fabrics. The great shape retention and high strength of polyester, when blended with wool and woven into lightweight fabrics, offers the best of both worlds. It is a lightweight cloth with high wrinkle-resistance and long life expectancy, plus the absorbency and crimp of the wool and the stability of the polyester. Blends are authentic band uniform fabrics. ***Professional Tip:** A highly used blend is 55% polyester and 45% wool. This combination is especially recommended in lighter-weight fabrics.*

Wool. Wool is a natural animal fiber. It is graded by fineness; by degree of wave or crimp; and by length. Mills producing wool fabrics buy different types of wool, which they blend to achieve a certain character or hand.

Wool is the most highly complex textile fiber known. The most costly of all band uniform fabrics is 100% wool.

Later Replacements

Whether you select a natural, man-made, or blended fabric, you will eventually face the problem of replacement or additional uniforms.

Authentic band uniform fabrics take this into account. They provide more consistency over the years than any other fabric known. But it is extremely difficult to match *exactly* when time intervenes. It is absolutely correct to expect some slight discrepancy in color. Most of the time, however, this will only be detected in a close examination.

Professional Tip: *The way to judge new uniforms is to mix them with the rest of the band and view them from a distance. You'll find the tiny differences vanish. Remember the rule of perspective:*

Band's Eye View #3 – If you can't spot a color difference from ten yards away, there isn't any.

5. THE INNER COAT

Close your eyes and think of a band uniform. Naturally, you'll find yourself visualizing its color, eye appeal, style and design. But these are only the visible features, the "shell" of the uniform. In a band uniform, something else is just as important.

Band's Eye View #4 – In band uniforms, the inside is as important as the outside. Develop your inner eye.

Hidden inside the foundation of the entire uniform is the essential painstaking work that gives it reinforcement and shape retention, and enhances the appearance of the human body. The matching and balancing of the weight, the wearing qualities and the manufacturing procedures of all these parts is vital. You just can't skimp on details here.

Linings

The lining is a very important part of the total uniform. The coat lining serves several purposes. It hides inner construction details which are unattractive; it lets the coat slide easily up, down and around the body and arms; it enables the coat to fall back into its natural position when the body relaxes. Simply, lining makes the coat look and feel better, and it adds substantial comfort to the wearer.

A lining material that will satisfy these purposes must be compatible with the "shell" in wear, tailoring and colorfast qualities. If it isn't, your uniforms will have to be discarded or expensively refurbished in a short time.

The lining should be guaranteed perspiration-proof, colorfast and preshrunk. Seam allowances should be generous and machine sewn. Dark colors will hide soil. Finally, check for a full center pleat down the back and around the bottom, to permit adjustments during cleaning and pressing.

The Coat Canvas

The most important component of the inner construction of a coat is the *coat canvas*. This is called the foundation, coat front or hymo.

This foundation is the layer of unusual materials between the outside coat fabric and the lining in the front section of the coat. Its function is to maintain the shape or "roundness" of the human body in the coat, which has been cut from a *flat* piece of cloth. Sewing, shrinking, and stretching the fabric achieve the transformation.

Shrinking and stretching is temporary. Under normal circumstances, any change created in a piece of cloth by this method would soon disappear due to the molecular relaxation of the fiber. This human shape can only be made permanent by the application of a coat canvas to the coat front.

The coat canvas is constructed to form the human shape by cutting and sewing a series of irrational-looking seams. These are then reinforced with materials that will not shrink or stretch. When the canvas has been completed it is carefully and permanently joined to the pre-formed coat front fabric with invisible stitches and a variety of special tapes. This method, if properly done, insures lasting shape and allows the coat to return to the flat shape of the fabric from which it was cut.

Many different qualities of coat canvas are available. They range from very low-cost, lightweight goods to very expensive canvases.

Professional Tip: *Beware of inexpensive canvas that has been very heavily starched or "sized" to give it firmness.* The firmness, of course, is temporary, as the sizing will dissolve during the first dry cleaning or wetting. The coat will appear "baggy" and lifeless. Canvas of this quality is a shortcut to save manufacturing costs and represents very poor value.

The proper foundation material for the canvas in a service uniform is "hair" canvas cloth, sometimes called hymo. Typically, this is made of 35% genuine hair, 47% rayon, 18% polyester and should be closely woven. The goat hairs in the fabric are very wire-like and rigid. Though hymo is difficult to bend into a permanent set, it provides the "spring" needed for a lasting, life-like look. The fabric should be sanforized and double-shrunk, with permanent water-repellent. It must be guaranteed 100% washable (or soakable) with no shrinkage.

The canvas should be constructed with a chest piece of Mono-Flex (synthetic haircloth). There is a third layer in the chest area approximately 12" x 8" made of haircloth. Attached to the coat canvas is a ¼" thick layer of washable, non-shrinkable, 100% polyester non-woven padding. This padding should be sewn firmly to the canvas with a series of eight to ten rows of zigzag stitching, approximately 1" apart. The canvas should be secured to the coat front and bottom with ¼" edge tape and to the neck and armhole. Canvas should not be sewn into the shoulder seam, as this results in the restriction of movement. The edge tape should be sewn to the canvas and coat. Fused canvases are not recommended.

Taping

Other areas in the construction of a band uniform coat must be tempered or reinforced. Any woven fabric has a built-in stretch factor, some more than others. Due to the natural stretch of the fiber which becomes the fabric and later the coat, it is necessary to hold back the natural stretch at various stress points by backing up the fabric with non-stretch materials.

This is done with special tailoring tapes that are manufactured free of any stretch. Taping should be applied to any area of the uniform that might give way to stress and strain, or might change size or shape. Such areas are neck holes, armholes, coat edges, shoulders and coat bridle.

Shaping is an extra insurance policy for the buyer. It is generally invisible and adds cost, but it is sadly missed when, after a few wearings, the neck or collar becomes bigger than it was when new, and the front edges grow longer than the rest of the coat.

Band's Eye View #5 – Very few companies use proper taping because it is not easily visible to the customer. It can make a huge difference in appearance and durability.

6. VIP'S: VERY IMPORTANT PARTS

Certain areas of the band uniform demand special attention. A little extra care given to them when the uniforms are first ordered can save much grief later on. Don't wait to discover the importance of these parts after delivery; make your sound buying decision now. An important step in the process is for your and/or your committee to go over all of the construction features with your representative.

Sleeve Head

The sleeve head, which adds shape and durability in the shoulder area of the coat, should be of garment industry high quality. It should consist of 100% polyester non-woven padding with a tab of haircloth at the forward edge.

Arm Shields

The purpose of the arm shield is to prevent excess wear and minimize damage from perspiration. This shield must be of a "Visa®" treated fabric with an absorbent-like characteristic to aid in rapid evaporation and soil release. Arm shields utilizing felt and/or wool will retain moisture and decay.

Shoulder Pads

Constructed of hardform synthetic padding and secured by a needle punch process. A layer of scrim cloth is added for "body".

Shoulder Straps

Shoulder straps should be innerlined with two layers of fused pellon-like material. This will prevent the shoulder strap from losing its shape after repeated cleanings.

Hard Collar

A dry-cleanable mylar material must support the hard collar. Two heavy non-woven fabric layers should be fused to the inboard and outboard side of the mylar. This will insure the softness and comfort necessary in this highly critical area. In order to prevent sharp edges from cutting through the outer fabric, the top edge of mylar and non-woven fabric should be bound with double folded tape. The lining of the collar itself should be two-ply, treated with "Visa®" soil release, and have a non-absorbent wicking characteristic to prevent staining, mildewing and deterioration of the collar. The collar should close with a heavy-duty nickel hook and eye, which must be riveted at an angle to the mylar base. Each collar and removable liner are cut in a slightly curved pattern. This allows proper fitting for the front chest drop.

Every standing collar should also have a removable, washable liner. It's purpose is to protect the collar from perspiration, soil, hair oils, and to protect the wearer's skin from any irritation caused by the rubbing of the standing collar against the neck. The collar liner is to be made of the same "Visa®" treated fabric as the collar lining. It should be attached to the collar with nine heavy-duty snaps to hold it in place and to ensure a proper fit. The liner is to be set so it extends 1/8" above the collar. Each collar liner must be sized to the corresponding collar and not be a one-size-fits-all variety. Each collar and removable liner are cut in a slightly curved pattern. This allows proper fitting for the front chest drop.

Trousers

Trouser construction follows the same tailoring concepts as in the coat. Trousers should be reinforced where needed, in pockets, waistband, crotch, and fly.

Band trousers that will be worn by different persons each year should definitely be purchased with an adjustable waist feature. This will save you many dollars in waist alterations over the years.

Trousers vs. Jumpsuits

A decision has to be made as to whether your band is more suited for trousers or jumpsuits. Trousers should be constructed with adjustable side zippers, which allow greater flexibility in fitting.

High-rise trousers, worn with short coats, are worn up over the rib cage as high as the chest area. This allows the coat to rise slightly in playing position and does not allow undergarments to show.

Jumpsuits, on the other hand, are a higher rise and offer additional comfort to the wearer. Spandex gussets can be added at side seams for a bit more flexibility in fitting. Your representative can show you samples of trousers and jumpsuits and ultimately the decision is yours. Beware, some companies are manufacturing inferior jumpsuits that are basic shells, without the heavy construction features needed for longevity.

Fitting Features

The general tailoring of a well-made band uniform is targeted not only for durability, but convenience as well. Making alterations easy in the coat, trousers, headwear and accessories are extremely desirable extras.

Such alteration features constitute extra manufacturing cost, but should be considered extra value. They represent an investment, which will later save money on tailoring costs. They will also reduce the need for additional uniforms as the complement of the band changes.

7. HEADWEAR

Band uniform headwear is a very important facet of your total purchase. The headwear adds a visually exciting completion to the uniform. It must be comfortable, as it is difficult enough to play an instrument on the move without having to wear a hat and plume. The two most popular forms of headwear are the shako and helmet.

The Shako

It is preferred that the manufacturer of the uniforms also makes the shako. This will ensure that all of the manufacturer's quality control practices will be followed. The practices include but are not limited to, workmanship consistent with the uniform, fabric matching and timely delivery. The shako body is to be vacuum-formed high impact Styrene. The visor should be made of non-breakable, one-piece plastic, not laminated material, which will crack and/or deteriorate. Most of all, the shako must be comfortable. It is best to purchase shakos that have a high rubber content in the shell. This obviously makes them more flexible and comfortable to the wearer. The shako must also be of an oval shape to conform to the human head, which is also oval.

Shakos that are round are uncomfortable and will not conform to the wearer's head shape.

The Helmet

Helmets are generally rigid, molded, heavy-gauge plastic. They are usually decorated with emblems, front chains, and topped off with a long flowing plume. However, there are numerous helmet styles available. The inner construction should stress comfort and adjustability. One size fits all helmets have a simple and practical method of adjustment.

Headwear Containers

Plastic boxes are available to store and transport shakos and helmets. Be sure to examine the quality of these boxes. They should be stackable for easy storage, big enough for the hat and plume to fit in properly, and relatively easy to open and close.

8. TRIM & ORNAMENTS

Following the selection of uniform design, fabric, shell and headwear, the final element in the completion of your uniform is its glory: the outside trim and ornamentation.

Here's an area where a great number of band uniform buyers get carried away. They spend a disproportionate amount of time on trim selection, get lost in fine details that disappear when viewed from marching distance, and waste money on intricacies that become invisible in the total picture.

So before we cover any details, let us remind you:

Band's Eye View #6 - If you can't see it from a distance, it isn't there.

The major point to keep in mind is that trim should be *big, bold, and colorful*. Intricate designs are wasteful. Rely on the time-tested maximum of bold, brilliant color and motif to carry your ornamentation through successfully.

New and popular ways to decorate the uniform consist of baldrics, front slashes, vests, or other detachable items. You can become familiar with these accoutrements by browsing through uniform catalogs. One word of caution – these separate items create more inventory to keep track of and are generally not as durable, especially when made of fabrics such as sequins.

Types of Trim

If you follow the advice of your professional representative, trim presents little difficulty. There are two points to keep in mind. The first point is that all trim and ornamentation should have characteristics compatible with the basic fabric. The second is that the different elements of the trim should be compatible among themselves.

For example, purchasers sometimes want to combine parts that have unequal wear qualities or uneven color fastness.

Here is one area where your manufacturer knows best. You have plenty of choices; just be wary of making a decision without obtaining a full explanation of what each added material will do.

Professional Tip: *Your manufacturer is out to please you. If a reputable company firmly advises against your selection – and gives you a good reason – listen!*

Embroidery

The key here is quality, easily detectable with the human eye. It is easy to judge good embroidery from bad. It must be evenly sewn, tightly stitched and properly placed. The stitching done by computerized embroidery machines is generated by highly complex computer software and hardware.

Select companies perform their own in-house digitizing service. This is crucial to ensure consistent quality. In some cases handwork is required. This must be done by highly skilled operators. Be sure to study the qualities of submitted samples when comparing embroidery. Let's face it, embroidery is not cheap and it is a focal point when looking at a band uniform.

Professional Tip: *Be sure the company you select can guarantee duplication of trim and embroidery on future orders.*

9. SOUND ORDERING PROCEDURES

Purchasing band uniforms basically involves the same sound principles of economics, which you have experienced and learned in other day-to-day activities. Just as the least expensive is not necessarily the best buy, so the cheapest band uniform may, in a real sense, be all too cheap.

You wouldn't buy a school bus just because it costs the least. You'd look at the inside and outside and examine the details. The same care should hold for a band uniform. Look at it inside and out. Find out how it's made. Don't settle for a flashy exterior that only hides shoddy work. Examine the company, their history, and their representative.

It will pay you, therefore, to consider some of the factors that will make your purchase of band uniforms a sound economic project.

Timing

There are two time considerations in a successful band uniform purchase. First, *your time*. Remember that it can take months to select committees, raise funds, get your Board of Education's approval and obtain signatures on purchase orders. Then there is the *manufacturer's time* – the time he needs to execute your order.

Band uniform buying is seasonal. The overwhelming majority of school uniforms are purchased for the fall football season. This means that most, if not all, band uniform factories are very busy from April through September, but are comparatively slow from November through March.

This also means that if you wait until spring to place your order, you are going to be rushed on your buying decisions. The process of choosing a manufacturer, getting a pilot sample and then awaiting delivery all takes time.

Placing your order during the winter gives you the chance to consider the details of your uniform more leisurely, without the pressure of fall football schedules. Give yourself the luxury of enough time.

Under certain circumstances, there might even be financial advantages in buying during the slow season. Delivery is faster, too, arriving within three months at times.

It pays in many ways, then, to work with your factory representative and plan for your purchase of new band uniforms for a delivery during the slow season – from November through June. You may find that the school budget, running on a June fiscal year, prevents the placement of an order during the slow season. There are still a number of things that can be planned and done. Get your start-up going as soon as possible.

Preparation of a Computer sketch

After you have had a chance to review the catalog begin the design process by meeting with a representative to develop a computerized sketch. This will help you visualize your concepts in the form of a graphic illustration. This process generally helps you nail down your “Band’s Eye View”.

The Sample Uniform

A general rule of thumb is that you and the company must eventually see a completed sample before an order is placed. The sample should not cost you anything, and it gives both you and the manufacturer strong guidelines for positive results.

The sample will help you decide final details on trims. Frequently, what looks good on paper does not have the same esthetic appeal in reality.

Some band uniforms are very complicated, and the factory can benefit by having an approved sample to use as a guide in making the bulk order. You benefit by seeing just what you are getting; it’s mutual insurance.

The acceptable practice is to return a signed Sample Approval Form with the sample. It should be signed, generally, by the band director, with any changes clearly noted. You should not rely on your own or the representative’s, memory on such changes. Provide the manufacturer with your own authorized approval and changes, in writing.

Congratulations! You have now acquired the expertise to make a sound, professional decision on new uniforms for your band. It has been our intent to provide you with the information that will not only make your new uniforms stand out, but also stand up to the most rigorous standards. We have appreciated the opportunity to share our guide book with you, and we hope you will keep it as a source of reference for many years to come.

SECTION 3.0 Detailed Specifications

The uniform must be completely washable and dryable in standard commercial and residential machines. Jackets, pants and other garments must meet exact standards of washability. There will be no hair canvas, HYMO construction or traditionally available materials used to lend shape to a garment incorporated into this product. All bidders must submit full, accurate samples/models/uniforms of client's specific design that can be test washed by customer, prior to awarding of bid. Instructions for care must also be included.

Jackets will be available in an extended size range with special patterns to be provided for any jackets exceeding the standard silhouette. Garment pieces shall be pressed and shaped to insure proper style and permanency of dimensions. In addition, a final steam pressing shall be done before shipping to allowing a true "ready to wear" condition upon receipt by the customer. All garments must have sewn in size labels and numbered individually for identification purposes and for inventory control. All orders must have a complete inventory or roster containing sizing information for each student and complete care and cleaning standards.

JACKET

Jackets must be available in an extended size range from chest/bust 26 - 60 (increasing in 2" increment additions). Custom sizing for jackets which exceed standard silhouette must be accommodated through custom pattern work and manufacture. Jacket patterns must offer separate male and female versions of design to ensure appropriate fit. Unisex jacket patterns are not acceptable. No size multiple grouping is allowed (S, M, L, XL, etc.). Jackets must be available in hem and sleeve lengths in a full size range of: Extra-short, short, regular, long, and extra long (in increasing 1" increments) to accommodate variation in heights and arm length. This feature must be available in all custom-size work as well. All jacket measurements must be proportional to chest/bust size based on current size-ratio standards of athletic and sportswear industries.

In order to provide maximum opportunity for alteration, comfort and size adjustability, all jackets must feature 1/2" seam allowance at shoulder seams, arm holes, side-back seams, and center-front seams. All jackets must feature 1" seam allowances at center-back seams and side seams. These are plain, fully surged, over-lock edged and have a total outlet of 3". Ends of all seams are back stitched and all seam edges are surged. Sleeves must be constructed with 1/2" seam allowance, to provide ample fabric for alteration.

Sleeves must be constructed in a manner that allows maximum range of movement for performers. The construction must be designed to allow repetitive motion over the life-span with out showing premature wear or strain along the visible seams.

All jacket backs must be a minimum of four (4) external pieces, with fabric grain line parallel to the center, back line of the wearer's body. All center back seams must be

straight and perpendicular to the neckline and straight hem edge. All jacket fronts must be a minimum of two (2) exterior pieces, with fabric grain line parallel to the center-front line of the wearer's body. All center-front seams must be straight and perpendicular to neckline and straight hem edge.

Zipper fastenings for closure must be placed directly center-back or center-front of jacket. Zipper is a heavy-duty auto-locking Vislon (YKK Quality) separating zipper, 9/16" tape - strong, easy to use and completely washable. Any metal, or small, dress-weight zippers will be considered unacceptable.

If used, all external shoulder-extensions (wings) must be double stitched and back-stitched to face of coat (butted to arm hole) and quad-stitched at stress points. Wings must not impose into armhole or impede arm motion in anyway. All epaulets (if used in design) must be cut in one piece, sewn with grain line parallel to shoulder seam.

Buttons (if used) must be high quality buttons used where specified and attached by rivet-based tack back. Buttons must have brass base top and rust resistant back. The use of buttons in the design is not encouraged.

All jackets will be constructed from colorfast, fade-and heat resistant Milliken 11 1/2 oz. 100% polyester gabardine/twill with a Visa finish. The flexible weave will allow ease of movement and accommodation of the elbow and armhole areas of the jacket. These fabrics have a long life span and durability allowing them to endure machine washing and drying for extended periods of time. Wool and wool blend materials are unacceptable as they are not suitable for washing.

Shoulder pads are high quality, washable and made of washable foam. Shoulder pads are covered with matching Milliken 11 1/2 oz. poly gabardine. Uncovered shoulder pads or those covered in stretch lining fabric or non-woven materials are not acceptable.

Velcro must be Velcro brand or equivalent to be used on closures and baldric attachments. The color of Velcro, where possible, should approximate surrounding color.

BIB PANTS

Bib pant patterns must offer separate male and female versions of design to ensure appropriate fit. No unisex bib-pant patterns are acceptable. Female bib pant patterns should accommodate current garment and athletic garment industry standards for female measurement and proportion. Patterns and style must be in keeping with the end use of marching to modern standards. They have ample room for movement, are non-restrictive, and must have a trim, fitted look, along with complete washability. Bib pants must be available in an extended size range from chest/bust 26-60 (increasing in 2" increment additions), custom sizing for bid pants which exceed standard silhouette must be accommodated through custom pattern work and manufacture. No size multiple grouping

is allowed (S, M, L, XL, etc.). Bib pants must be available in short, regular, or long lengths in every size to accommodate variation in height, and proportioned accordingly.

Seam allowance on bib pants must be plain and allow for total outlet of 3” expansion, placed for immediate access and easy alteration. Ends of seams are back stitched and all seam edges are surged.

All bib pants must be constructed from colorfast, fade-out heat resistant Milliken 11 1/2 oz. 100% polyester gabardine with a Visa finish. Wool and wool blend materials are unacceptable as they are not suitable for washing.

All seat and crotch seams must be reinforced construction, designed for durability and appropriate movement range.

All shoulder straps are adjustable for size and fit variance secured with high-impact, high-density, non rusting, washable polymer/plastic sliders. No excess strap length should be visible at anytime or should excess hang loose from the pants.

All bib pants must include two (2) symmetrical pockets built into upper torso (not patch-pocket additions) on either side of center-front closure.

All zipper closures (M & F) must be placed center-front, and be of a coat-grade, YKK Brass metal locking type, 18” length, 9/16” tape, triple tacked on each end for stability.

Ample length must be left on pant legs for economical hemming and easy change for re-issue by customer.

BALDRICS/SASHES

Fabric is based on design specifications and fabric choices. Sizing must be determined according to jacket specifications coordinated to size and length. Fabrics used are 100% washable VISA treated polyesters or other decorative fabrics upon request.

GAUNTLETS

Gauntlets and independent cuffs will be made from custom fabric options, sequin fabrics or others. These items may not be washable as durability may be compromised. Gauntlets made from 100% washable VISA treated polyester materials will be available and completely washable at customer’s request. Gauntlets and independent cuffs must be made to design specifications and available in extended size fit and range – extra small, small, medium, large and extra large. Gauntlets will use a 3/4” Velcro closure hooking the outside angles together in conical format. All edges will be bound.

SHAKOS

Sizing – The hat sizes are to follow national standard men’s hat sizes as follows:

<u>Hat Size</u>	<u>Hat Size</u>	<u>Actual Head size in Inches</u>
XXS	6-3/8 to 6-1/2	20” through 20-1/2”
XS	6-5/8 to 6-3/4	20-5/8” through 21-3/8”
S	6-7/8 to 7	21-1/2” through 22-1/8”
M	7-1/8 to 7-1/4	22-1/4 through 22-7/8”
L	7-3/8 to 7-1/2	23” through 23-5/8”
XL	7-5/8 to 7-3/4	23-3/4” through 24-3/8”
XXL	7-7/8 to 8	24-1/2” through 25-1/8”

Fabric is based on design specifications and fabric choices. Sizing must be determined according to jacket specifications coordinated to size and length. Fabrics used are 100% washable VISA treated polyesters or other decorative fabrics upon request.

The shako shall be made of ABS (Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene) material, G.S. Grade for Hi-Impact properties and maximum resistance to ultraviolet light only. Rubber modified styrene is not a substitute.

Each shako design will be accessorized as needed. The component parts and how they are attached will be considered in the evaluation. All shakos will include a hat box or tote that is made of high density polyethylene with a tensile strength greater than 4800 P.S.I. or comparable.