Marching band serves several purposes in music education today. The primary role of marching band is to provide students an opportunity to learn musicianship as well as visual performance and have frequent performances. Marching band really gives students a unique musical chance to finely tune a singular show, consisting of music and visual, to the point where it is near perfect. While other musical ensembles offered in school do work tirelessly on the details of musical performance, marching band is different in that students have the opportunity to perform at least once a week and the organization as a whole is largely self-lead and self-corrected. Student leadership will give direction for their peers in addition to what the staff has to offer in terms of instruction. No band director or staff member has the ability to watch every single student from beginning to end of a performance to make sure that they are performing well. Student leadership can step in a provide some detail for their sections; even if it is just reminding the group to step off on their left foot. Student leadership plays a large role in the success of a marching band and if the students are not dedicated to the craft entirely then they will not be successful. In a concert setting, a band director can trudge through music, even if students don’t really want to be there, but they could still sound okay. Marching band on the other hand is so visual that if students don’t look engaged the performance of the band is noticeably worse. Marching band serves the purpose of giving students leadership and unique musical opportunities where they have to fully invest themselves in order to be successful.

Marching band also serves the purpose of showing off a school’s music department. As Wayne Markworth says on page 29 *of The Dynamic Marching Band*, “It is the most visible music ensemble in most communities”. Even though concert band lays the foundation of music education, marching band sometimes takes the spotlight. That is largely because football games are the most attended “concerts” and therefore the marching band takes advantage of that. Hopefully, through great performances and shows that win in competition, the marching band will attract donations and funds from the school district and from outside donors. Funding the department allows for even more musical experiences that will make music education as a whole more in depth and meaningful for the students that choose to participate. Funding allows for guest artists and speakers, new material and instrument purchases, and field trips for the music students. The marching band provides a look at a school’s music department for the average football fan, and therefore is the most public ensemble. If they perform to the top of their ability, the marching band is likely to receive donations for the music department so that way they can keep doing what they do as well as they do.

Finally, marching band is a social atmosphere. Just like any other sport, students spend a lot of time with one another in marching band. From practices, to bus rides, to Friday nights in the stands, a marching band spends lots of time together in the fall. Marching bands, by the end of the marching and football seasons, are a family. Many students stay in marching band and music in general for the social atmosphere that performing with peers brings. Creating a beautiful show over the span of several months is easier done with friends. Marching bands also create that atmosphere of comradery within a school. From pep rallies to marching through the hallways on game day marching band is the glue that binds social events within a high school.