

Mr. Smith,

I know that it is few and far between that I get a chance to see or speak to you and I thought this would be a good time to send you an email to let you know how proud I am of you and all that you have accomplished with the NHS Band. It's hard to believe that I graduated almost 20 years ago...time certainly does fly...The memories and experiences that I have from being in the band have lasted to this day. 20 years ago this weekend, you won your first EMBA championship and you've been winning ever since. I think the important thing though, is that winning was never really the goal. Doing your best was. As long as you knew that you came off that field, whether it be practice or competition, and you gave 100% then you had achieved your goal. Trophies come along with that hard work, but it is the experiences that you had in achieving that goal. Thus, traditions form. Traditions of excellence. That is what the Norwalk High School Marching Band is all about....traditions and excellence and settling for nothing less. I tell my students all the time that the trophies are great, but it is the experiences that you had while you were here that will last forever. When you leave the band room doors for the last time after graduation, the trophies stay....they collect dust over the years, but the experiences will last a lifetime.

***Please share this with your students:***

I have kept up with the band over the years from far away, grinning when I read the headlines and the lists of accomplishments. My grandmother, God rest her soul, and grandfather were huge supporters of the NHS Band back then, and although my grandmother has passed on, my grandfather still sends me the newspaper clippings when you are in there. It was such a big part of their lives. It gave them joy to be around something so positive for youth. My Grandfather still lives in Stamford. His next door neighbors were Frank and Rita Beluk....Ryan Beluk's grandparents! He was so excited when his doorbell rang not too long ago to see Ryan's dad standing there to tell him that Ryan was going to be the drum major of the Marching Bears! It was like my grandfather was a little kid again, reliving the days when I was there at NHS. He was so proud to hear that the Beluk's were going to experience the NHS Band and your leadership like my family did. My parents were big supporters. They were there for everything! Frustrating at times? Yes, but they got joy out of seeing the band grow from week to week and helping with the band boosters. There were so many band parents that were the backbone of the boosters and I know that you still have a tremendous amount of support for your program. Way to go!

***To the Students:*** You have a tremendous teacher there for you. Listen to what he says because what he says will last throughout your lives. To this day I still tell my students about my experiences in band, especially my freshmen year in band. I was placed in a circle in the middle of all of the band students and was told to play my music from memory. Tchaikovsky's 4th Symphony. I was so scared, but I knew I could do it and I did. To this day, I can still play it, believe it or not, and my own students get a kick out of it when I do. That moment changed my life. A feeling of accomplishment rushed over me and I felt like this is what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I'll never forget, walking back to the school after practice and Mr. Smith pulled over his "green bus" that

he used to drive and told me to hop in. He told me on the way back to the school that he was proud of me and to keep up the good work. To this day, I still feel like he is standing over my shoulder telling me the same thing every day.

You are about to head into the biggest competition of the year. You have all the tools to be great...superior. Stand a little taller, march a little prouder, play a little cleaner and be the best that you can be. There is a tremendous amount of support for you and all that you stand for. You have great leaders and hundreds of former "marching bears" that are depending on you to step it up one more time. ***Feet..together, Stomach...in, Chest...out, Shoulders...back, Elbows...frozen, Chins...up and Eyes.....with PRIDE! The "skies" are the limit!!***

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Please tell your family that I said hello. I would love to hear an update on how the boys are doing.

Kelly is doing great, she is an assistant principal at an elementary school here, we believe she is about to be offered a principalship real soon, so we are keeping our fingers crossed. Patrick is in second grade at Kelly's school and he loves it. He is going to be 8 in December. He started guitar lessons last week, although he loves to play my trumpet and the drums at my school. Ryan just turned 4 and is a pistol. He is also at Kelly's school in a Pre-K program and we are very happy with his progress. He is going to be a drummer. He does 8 on a hand better than some of my students and marches around with his own snare drum.

As for me, I feel like I have been rejuvenated. I am the first band director at Carson High School, a brand new high school, so everything is brand new and fresh. We had a successful first season in competition, although we weren't sure what we were going to have once we had students transferring in and we weren't sure if we would have a senior class or not. All things considering, I am very pleased and happy with the progress that we have made. I can update you later about the school and other things later on.

I hope to hear back from you.

With PRIDE!

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<http://www.schoolnotes.com/28023/carsonband.html>