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Being Instrumental – Detroit Public Schools Foundation a Major Player in All City Marching Band Revival

Detroit, MI – August 24, 2011 - In 2001, a team led by Benjamin Pruitt assembled the first All City High School Marching Band. Almost immediately, the band was a success, earning a Rose Bowl bid. Over the next few years, budgetary issues overcame momentum and the band went into hibernation. Uniforms were mothballed, instruments re-distributed.

Now, with the help of a \$560,000, five year grant from First Student Transportation, a commitment made by the Pickard Family Fund and gifts from additional individual donors, the Detroit Public Schools Foundation (DPSF) has been instrumental in bringing the band back to life with an initial investment for instruments and band start-up costs. The first public performance will be part of the **DPS Education and Enrollment Expo and Parade and Rally** 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturday August 27 at Hart Plaza. The parade step-off is 11 a.m. at Grand Circus Park.

Willie McAllister, DPS Director of Fine Arts Education and successor to the retired Benjamin Pruitt, now takes the helm. The goal is nothing less than another bowl bid for the 85-member band. "Because of the financial hit that the (DPS) music program had taken, many talented students throughout the city were unable to participate in music classes. Now, we can bring these kids together through this band, and let them flourish," notes McAllister.

DPSF President and CEO Chacona Johnson speaks proudly of the resurrection effort: "The Foundation is grateful for the generous support from First Student, Pickard Family Fund and additional individual donors. We are committed to create, enhance and maintain crucial DPS programs in the arts and because of the character building and teamwork associated with this band, we know we will reap many rewards down the road."

Rehearsals over the summer have taken place 3 days per week and in the fall will be held every Sunday afternoon. "You've got to be passionate about this, it takes so much time, you have to have your heart in it," according to Aalyiah Heath, a member of the band's flag squad.

The Detroit Public Schools Foundation is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to supporting Detroit students. Our mission is to raise, manage and steward funds and other resources to support value-added programs and activities for the benefit of the Detroit Public Schools and its students. Please join us in supporting Detroit's children and investing in their future. Your contribution to the Foundation will help build quality programs that will enrich the educational experience of DPS students and promote student achievement. For more information on giving options, visit us online at www.detroitpsfoundation.org.

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