

Certified to Serve

Deb Stevens

Let's band together and orchestrate life.

You get more when you share.

Teaching is the gift of the vocation we have chosen. Music is the magic through which we have the opportunity to teach. We are music educators.

Whether this year begins the first in your chosen vocation or marks the last as you approach retirement, we all have something important in common. We are teaching.

Your teaching license states the areas in which you are certified to serve. The written teaching assignment on your contract may suggest you are the only teacher in the world responsible to your students during the contracted dates. But keep in mind our strength is in community, and that community will allow our effectiveness to soar.

Do you consider yourself the only teacher in your band? To teach is to lead. To teach is to serve. To teach is to model. To teach is to broaden and deepen one's perspective on thinking and feeling and acting.

Might all the members of your band be teachers of one another? Posture, breathing, tone quality, articulation, phrasing, behavior, music-reading skills

and instrument care are just a few points that all members are modeling as active teachers.

Might parents be prospective teachers for your band members? In many ways, they already are—by providing a quiet, positive place to practice, enhancing their child's success;

- by transporting their child to and from rehearsals and performances, encouraging family support;
- by providing and maintaining a quality instrument and supplies for their child, increasing

the likelihood of musical growth and success;

- by listening with their children to good music, whether live or recorded, and discussing it as a shared interest; and
- by attending rehearsals or performances as music mentors, especially if they are practicing musicians themselves.

Might the other faculty, administration and school personnel be prospective teachers for your band members? In so many ways they already

are, especially those who are musicians. Other prospective teachers for your band members might be the many community connections you have already established, the many facets of technology now available, and even the students themselves.

Who teaches, therefore, is not the only question to consider. What we teach is already broadly defined by our contracts. What makes teaching an art, however, depends upon how we teach.

Serve others with love, faith, compassion, patience, discipline, knowledge, wisdom, humor, encouragement, honesty, active listening, presence, perseverance and balance. Be a caregiver rather than a caretaker and provide a solid foundation of support to all we serve. Model and encourage interdependency rather than dependency or self-dependency.

We often have the opportunity to listen to our students as they share events in their daily lives with us. Are we serving them



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with our active-listening skills? Explore “how to listen” through music. Teach that we are artists, and artists pay attention to details. Develop and increase students’ accountability to the music program, and in doing so, foster their ownership of the program.

We have chosen the gift, the vocation of teaching. Music is the magic through which we have the opportunity to serve others. We are not in this alone, and we do get more when we share. So let’s band together and orchestrate life.

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