

From the Board

Alfred Vélez III, 2008-09 TBA Secretary

Musical & Educational Therapy

Is this is why we call it a clinic? Take your meds and follow the prescription.

Your year is in full swing and I hope you and your students are beginning to realize all of the potential originally envisioned at the start of the school year. It is important that you too are evolving professionally and personally. We all want to feel that we have *yet to peak*. To better understand ourselves and our need for improvement we usually obtain another professional's perspective. We ask for guidance and insight from people we respect. It is also true that when our groups have a *malady* or are in need of more than we can provide, we will seek a clinician. Following are a few suggestions to attain the most from your "treatment."

Schedule the clinic months to a year in advance to ensure the best dates available for you and your clinician. Touch base within a month of your appointment to confirm the dates and times. This is also a great time to finalize the literature and procedures in your classes. Equally important is to give your parents sufficient notice in adjusting their schedules to avoid having absent children.



Have clear goals and expectations for what you and your students hope to gain from the session(s.) Share these goals with the clinician and he/she may be able to help you clearly define these expectations leaning on their expertise, experience and style.

Communicate to students your precise expectations of them during the clinic. I often informed my students that the clinic was a "**band-director lesson**" and they were just present and participating in my lesson. This type of scenario will help students to understand the manner of communication between you and the clinician. It is healthy for our kids to see us also as students and being open to different ideas. Give your students background on the clinician and make them aware of the level of respect and trust you have in this person. This will give more meaning to the information imparted and the students will feel a stronger connection by recognizing how you feel about the person. Above all, ask them to be completely open to instruction

and receive comments in a positive, inquisitive manner. Attention to the level of concentration should be stressed especially if the time allotted is longer than their normal rehearsal time.

Ask the clinician for **permission to video/audio record** the clinic ahead of time. It is often difficult to absorb all the information "live" and helpful when you have a recording to reference the information in the manner it was delivered and intended.

Become THE ULTIMATE STUDENT and relax. Be aware of your behavior and attitude while the clinician is present. Always keep in mind that the clinician's time is limited and valuable. Make an effort to be extremely receptive toward hearing something new. Afterward, you can decide what information you choose to assimilate and what you decide is not appropriate to your situation. This is your time to LISTEN and absorb! Asking probing questions for clarification is appropriate. If the clinician makes a suggestion, do not feel that you are ultimately agreeing to make that change nor should you feel threatened if it may contradict a previously made musical or pedagogical decision. It is counterproductive to be

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overly concerned with how you *think* the clinician is evaluating your work or of their opinion of you as a band director. Avoid interrupting the clinician to justify or defend the performance of your group or individuals. This is not your main focus in having them clinic your ensemble. We should be more aware of our expectations in terms of improving our conducting and our ability to become a better director. You are hiring this person because you want their honest feedback and suggestions and not because you're looking for a pat-on-the-back. Absorb and retain as we desire from our own pupils.

Immediately after the clinic, **plan time** for a discussion with the clinician and for additional conversations regarding your methods, music, and student's progress. Listen to the recording of the clinic for detail and reinforcement of shared ideas. **Frequent visits** (throughout the year) by a clinician can build a pedagogical foundation for you and your students. This allows for monitoring and **continuous evaluation** of your program and methods. It also builds familiarity with expectations for you and your students. The costs of frequent visits *are* a budget consideration as opposed to the infrequent clinician's visit just before a major performance. The infrequent visit *can* be extremely invaluable in giving you more of the "big picture" on your music and methodology, but you may be able to gain the most from the long-term evaluation process. Perhaps you may be able to pool your resources with neighboring schools towards the

cost of a renowned musician. Expect to remunerate your "concert" expert appropriately for their expertise and time. Many of these **consultants are at the top in their field**. We often give little thought into appropriating thousands upon thousands of dollars for our marching season (drill/music/guard/instructors/techs/props/travel/etc.) without accessing significant or equal value to invaluable, musical knowledge. Please use your best judgment.

There are countless rewards in inviting a clinician. The musical, pedagogical and inspirational benefits are immediate for our students. For the director, **building on your exchanges** will help strengthen your musicianship and broaden your approach to music education as well as acquiring a valued mentor. As an unintentional bonus you and your program may receive the networking benefit of colleagues becoming familiar with your work through the clinician's noting of your program's progress and achievement.

Consider asking often and asking *anyone* who you think can help you. There are many great teachers in our state that are available and eager to give back what they too have graciously received in their careers. We should strive be the "Greatest Hits" of all the incredible people, teachers and mentors we have all had in our lives. Expand your non-music and musical, intellectual circle. It's an investment in yourself and your current and future students. Good luck and enjoy your *Making of Music*.

Alpha Chapter



Phi Beta Mu

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL BANDMASTER FRATERNITY

The Alpha Chapter Phi Beta Mu
presents

The Texas Bandmasters

Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony

Tuesday, July 28 at 2pm

Marriott Riverwalk Ballroom, Salons A, B, C