

Are You Developing Leadership Or Just Picking Leaders?

Fran Kick

Developing leadership is different than letting leaders “rise to the top.” Whether we’re talking about a band, a booster parent support group, an entire school, a company, or a community—growing more leadership within any organizational culture requires we do more than just “pick better leaders.”

Now, if your only goal is to fill a certain number of leadership positions within your organization, then you can continue to pick better leaders vs. developing more leadership. However, reaching out to simply select the best-of-the-best in your program and inspiring them to lead is one thing. Helping *all your students* learn to simultaneously be an example *and* a peer teacher for others is quite another thing. Likewise, convincing or twisting a few parents’ arms into volunteering for the band boosters is one thing. Attracting more parents to step forward and grow parental engagement in your program is quite another.

Picking Better Student Leaders

To their credit, many directors create an entire student leadership application process, with multiple components such as: applications,

resumes, essay writing, service projects, letters of reference, music advocacy portfolios, performance auditions, tryout evaluations, student surveys or elections. All good stuff and certainly created in the spirit of “picking better leaders.” Perhaps put in place to justify why someone is designated, as a leader while someone else was not.

Picking Better Parent Leaders

Some directors do the same thing with parents by putting out a parental interest and abilities survey. Asking parents to check off all the areas they could help out. They’ll politely ask parents (especially early in the season or school year) “to share any skills and interest so that we can make the best possible program for all the students and families in the band.” It makes sense to survey parents so that programs can pool resources and make the band boosters better for the students. But truth be told, many parents fear they’ll suddenly

be “put in charge” of some event, or aspect of the program, burying them and their family beyond “an hour a week.” The attitude becomes “I’ll help out, but don’t put me in charge.” So much for “picking better leaders” for the band boosters when parents don’t want to be put in charge of anything.

It’s Not About Picking Better Leaders

Recent research and years of historical reality reveals that leadership many times actually has less to do with “the leader” and more to do with “the followers”—who ultimately make things happen in collaboration with each other. This symbiotic *relationship* creates a followership + leadership dynamic that needs to be nurtured in our organizations. That’s different than filling a hierarchy of leadership positions, with different levels of importance designated by some star or asterisk next to your name

Fran Kick expands on this subject at the Convention/Clinic this summer. His presentation “Developing a Student Leadership Program that Works for You” is scheduled for Sunday, July 22 at 10:45 am. Band students will have the opportunity hear Fran Kick in their Student Day sessions.

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in the program. Ultimately, don't we want *more leadership* in our organizations vs. *more leaders*? Besides, if leadership can only be found in designated leaders, you'll always be outnumbered!

Leadership Isn't Just For Leaders Anymore

The distinguished leadership scholar, Joseph Rost, who was a schoolteacher, principal, and later a superintendent, suggested a paradigm shift from an industrial to a post-industrial understanding in *Leadership for the Twenty-First Century*. He defined leadership as "an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes." Post-industrial leadership is relational, collaborative, episodic, and transforming. It differs from a model that's predominantly designed for a top-down hierarchical industrial world—where the leadership is usually focused on the leader and emphasizes command and control of the followers.

Developing More Student Leadership

Frank Troyka, Director of Bands at Berkner High School in Richardson, Texas understands this post-industrial leadership model when he states: "Leadership is about learning to establish relationships." Having seen Frank teach students many times at the Music for All Summer Symposium, there's no question that the Texas Bandmasters Association is fortunate to have him serving as coordinator and curriculum developer for the TBA Student Day on Sunday, July 22, 2012. Last year over 1,700 students attended this full day of activities including special clinics designed just for students, student leadership sessions, admittance to TMEA and ATSSB All-State Music Clinics, access to the TBA exhibit hall, and admission to concerts. It will be an honor to work with Frank this year and I hope to see you and all your students KICKin' IT IN at TBA!

Directors like Frank Troyka and Gary Gribble, Director of Bands at Pope High School in Marietta,

Georgia understand that teaching your students and parents *how to lead* is more productive than just picking people to lead. According to Gary: "Leadership must be nurtured and developed, just like any other aspect of a band program. You have a long-range plan for your marching band, symphonic band, jazz band, etc. You should also plan for leadership growth and development. Students must be given opportunities to put concepts into practice so that they can develop necessary skills. Leadership capabilities can then be observed by their directors *before* the director gives them an active role/title/position. This way, you minimize 'learning on the job' and help ensure student success." The same could be said for parents.

Developing More Parent Leadership

Like everyone in the world today, parents are busier than ever, doing more with less, struggling to make ends meet, and just trying to "Git-R-Done"—as Larry the Cable Guy would famously say. If you want every parent to do a little bit at various times throughout the season or school year (vs. burning out a few parents who take on what can sometimes seem like a part-time un-paid job with the band boosters) go back and re-read last month's "Empowering Boosters" article by David Vandewalker in the TBA Bandmaster's Review. David understands that the secret to any successful twenty-first century non-profit booster organization is acknowledging that ultimately a booster club is in the "people business." It's all about establishing relationships with parents. If you want to help more parents establish a relationship with your band program, do encourage as many parents as you can to attend David's Booster Seminar Day at TBA on Sunday, June 22, 2012. They'll learn how to cultivate and nurture positive growth, improve productivity, and empower change for the twenty-first century booster club.

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Followership + Leadership

Since 1986, I have been KICKin' IT IN as an independent, professional speaker, author, facilitator and educational consultant with students and people who work with students. While I've said many times that "leadership isn't about a title or a position," I have often noticed that more often than not it's only a small group of selected students (with titles or positions) who end up going to leadership programs. What about teaching students without titles or positions about leadership? If we know leadership as "an influence relationship among leaders and followers" why do we only work with the leaders on leadership? Wouldn't we be smart to integrate student leadership development with all our students in band?

Kevin Ford, Band Director for The Leadership Conservatory for the Arts at Tarpon Springs High School, Florida suggests: "A student leadership curriculum that is integrated into an organization's infrastructure can have a direct positive impact on that organization's ability to successfully plan, practice, process and perform."

If we are truly going to *develop leadership* in our programs, we need to help followers follow better *and* leaders lead better. And we do neither by just "picking better leaders." So how do you create a student leadership curriculum that's integrated into your organization's infrastructure, knowing there's

only so much time? Well, you'll have to check out our director session at TBA this year entitled: "Developing a Student Leadership Program that Works for You!" on Sunday, July 22, 2012 at 10:45 a.m. sponsored in part by Drum Corps International.

Kick Start Your Season at TBA!

In addition to and in conjunction with TBA this year, DCI is also hosting a Kick Start Session for all your students on Saturday, July 21, 2012 at the DCI Southwestern Championship at the Alamodome. This unique day-long program strives to do something different. We want to give students—all of your music students—an opportunity to learn first-hand more about the followership + leadership dynamic. Experiencing what it takes to "make things happen," while nurturing a constant commitment to excellence, this event will provide a learning lab and case-study example for all your students, staff and parents. It promises to be fast-paced, hands-on, learning-by-doing and not just sitting, listening and watching.

Plan on sparking the self-awareness students need to see themselves as much more than just a follower or a leader in your organization. Invite all your students and parents to participate in two days of TBA July 21-22, 2012. Increase your group's commitment to excellence by bringing the followership + leadership dynamic to life in your band program.

Fran Kick is an author, educational consultant and professional speaker who knows What Makes Kids KICK! He is the creator and presenter of KICK IT IN® a series of self-motivational personal leadership presentations and materials. Since taking an educational leave of absence from teaching band at Centerville High School (Ohio), he has developed his part-time speaking adventure into a full-time mission. Today, Fran presents programs across the U.S. and Canada to thousands of college/university, high school, junior high/middle school students, plus the many people who work with them. In addition, he works with association, convention and corporate organizations who are actively engaged in teaching and reaching today's kids. Fran speaks at many state, regional & national conferences about What Makes Kids KICK and how they can KICK IT IN & TAKE THE LEAD. He has his B.A. in Music Education and a M.A. in Educational Psychology.