

Developing Social-Emotional Leadership in Band: Think, Act, Reflect

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Using social and emotional learning plus social-emotional leadership will help you develop more student leadership capacity in your entire band program—beyond just the few student leaders who have titles.

During our 2022 TBA convention director clinic session, we connected the dots between SEL + Social-Emotional Leadership. Defined by the Center for Creative Leadership, social-emotional student leadership is about “building the capacity of all young people to have a greater impact on themselves, their peers, and their world.” Their work is based on a multi-year, mixed-methods research project that involved teachers, parents, administrators, and over 10,000 students from grades 3-12 in public and private schools across multiple states. Interestingly, their student leadership framework parallels the Social Change Model of Leadership Development—which was developed in collaboration with the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA.



You will notice that all three leadership frameworks start with leading yourself. And we have all heard the phrase “You can’t lead others until you lead yourself.” So by focusing on increasing self-awareness, self-management, and self-regulation, student leaders can begin to improve the example they set in any situation.

During our session, participating directors came up with 65 different practical, applicable, and adaptable ideas to use in a developmentally appropriate way in order to help students **think, act, and reflect**. Here are the top ten ideas shared as ranked by the participating directors in the session:

1. Give time for students to pair up with another student to listen to one another. Give feedback on what went well and what can be improved.
2. Walk away, take a deep breath, and write it down.
3. Create class social contracts where students engage, agree, and sign on how they want to be treated, resolve conflicts, etc.
4. Use a refocus form when behaviors arise.
5. Set students up with a buddy in the program. They can help others use self-reflection when having problems.
6. When a student is called upon after raising their hand, have them

wait for set amount of time before speaking to collect their thoughts.

7. Take a deep breath, step away from the situation for a minute, cool off in a designated area, and go get some water.

8. Have the band come up with a short mantra to say to themselves when they need to take back control.

9. Clearly establish rules and procedures with students giving ideas and thoughts on them.

10. Create a student planner/agenda for writing down things with mindfulness-related questions with daily, per class, or weekly related questions.

NOTE: All ten of these ideas work equally well all year long to help nurture smarter social-emotional student leadership development within all your students.

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You may have also heard the phrase, “You can’t take care of others unless you take care of yourself.” And certainly, as a band director, self-care is an important example to set for your students, your family, and your peers. After all, SEL for teachers is just as important as SEL for students. Participating directors during our session shared ideas that helped them **think, act, and reflect** so that they could proactively and constructively deal with the many common stressors that can lead a teacher into a state of burnout. 39% of the ideas related to “saying no” to the things that don’t really matter so that you have the time, energy, and bandwidth to “say yes” to the things that really do matter. 30% of the ideas were about “saying yes” to more time with family and friends. 15% of the ideas surrounded the goal to be healthier, exercise more consistently, and take better care of yourself. 10% of the ideas specifically mentioned unplugging from technology, emails, texts, or phone calls, after work hours and on weekends.

Since neuropsychologists have identified the “generation effect”—which is simply the idea that you will remember the material that YOU have generated yourself much longer when compared to the material you might have just read—give yourself one minute, right here, right now, to write down one idea that you want to apply in your life to help you **think, act, and reflect**:

RESOURCES:

H. E. R. I. (1996). A Social Change Model of Leadership Development (Guidebook Version III). Los Angeles, CA: Higher Education Research Institute, University of California.

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Fran Kick, MA, CSP, 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. Every year 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. Since 1998, Fran has served as the Leadership Coordinator for the Music for All Summer Symposium. He also serves on the NAfME Collegiate Advisory Council as an at-large member supporting leadership development for pre-college and collegiate student activities in music education. Fran speaks at many state, regional, and 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. His involvement at TBA was graciously sponsored in part by Drum Corps International and Music for All.