



# *Building A Successful Small School Band Program*

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# SUCCESSFUL TEACHING IN SMALL SCHOOLS – AA

## I. **Don't be afraid to ask!**

Jeff Bradford must have cost Cooper ISD hundreds in phone bills, but he constantly called established directors, executive secretaries, region coordinators, salesmen and whoever else he could think of to ask every possible question. He asked everything from what pieces to play for contest to how to make sure that his entries were done properly. If you have any doubt at all, ASK!

## II. **Get quality directors to hear and watch your group early and often.**

Don't get your feelings hurt when they are critical. They want to help you to be successful.

## III. **Use your methods and materials notebooks and resources.**

I lived with my notebook for my first two or three years of teaching. It had the wisdom of Mel Montgomery and was priceless to me.

## IV. **Communicate!**

- Small schools have superintendents and principals who are usually easily accessible. Take advantage of this with small talk visits and just give updates about how things are going. Act interested in their jobs, too! Look for good timing when asking for budget increases, scheduling help, etc. Make friends with janitors and cafeteria people!
- Let the parents know what is going on. They are busy and need to schedule well in advance. Try to avoid surprises.

## V. **Get to know your kids and let them know that you care about them.**

Remember, your success is in their hands! They don't care how much you know, they want to know how much that you care!

## VI. **Choose music and a drill that fits your group and stretches their abilities just enough.**

Nothing is more frustrating than trying to do a drill or music that is unreachable. Try to look ahead and choose music two or three years in advance and use one year to prepare for the next.

## VII. **Try to keep balanced instrumentation in each grade.**

This will keep you out of trouble if students quit or move.

## VIII. **Go to every clinic and workshop that you can possibly attend.**

If you are weak on a particular instrument or area, go to those clinics! Go to the TMAA workshops even if you are not yet qualified to become a judge. You will learn what the judges are supposed to be looking and listening for.

## **SUCCESSFUL TEACHING IN SMALL SCHOOLS – AA**

- IX. Use the chat boards and professional websites for ideas. (ATSSB, TMEA, Yellowboard)**
- X. You will enjoy your job so much more if you will prepare ahead of time.**  
Have music run off. Make sure that drill will work, etc. Work smart and use every minute of rehearsal time.