



*The Key to Being a Great  
Assistant Director*

*Clinicians:*

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*Texas Bandmasters Association*

*61<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention/Clinic*

*July 27-30, 2008*

*Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center  
San Antonio, Texas*

# The Key to Being a Great Assistant

Goal of this clinic:

The goal of this clinic is to explore the roles we play in our band program and explain how what we believe at RHHS drives everything we do. We hope to help you determine your own personal music philosophy that will guide you through your actions and decisions toward being a great assistant.

Who this clinic is geared toward?

- A. Assistants
- B. Head directors looking at ways to encourage your assistants (This is not a laundry list.)
- C. Young teachers who haven't had the experience yet of figuring out who they are and how they teach and why
- D. Older assistants who want a more focused and fulfilling approach toward teaching band

Misconception:

Our clinic is not a "How to get hired" or "What head directors are looking for in good assistants." If your goal is to be a good assistant you need to be aware of the following:

- A. Personality type (outgoing, domineering, perfectionist)
- B. Teaching type (verbal, show, long explanations)
- C. Do you get along with others?
- D. What do you do well? (i.e. . . I'm great at rhythms but not theory.)
- E. Are you willing to take constructive criticism?
- F. End of the year goal. What do you want the students to know by the end of the year?

**ALL OF THE ABOVE WILL DETERMINE YOUR MUSIC PHILOSOPHY**

Before we begin, you must have:

- A. An open mind to new ideas
- B. Desire to figure out what works for you
- C. Willingness to work with others
- D. Realization that you are not the head director....you are the assistant. This is your job! Avoid the "my way is always better attitude."
- E. Willingness to hear the truth about yourself even if it's uncomfortable

What You Will Learn

It is our hope that you will leave this clinic with ideas that you can use everyday in your band program to help your students achieve more success musically. We also want to share some of the responsibilities we assume as assistant directors to make our program run smoother, providing each of us with more creative energy that we can share with our kids.

### Discovering your philosophy of music

1. What will define a successful year for your band program?
2. How do you measure the success of your band?
3. What is the most important thing you want your students to accomplish musically?
4. What is the most important thing you want to accomplish with your band?
5. What can you do to make your program better?
6. What will fulfill you professionally?

### What do I believe? (Philosophy of music education and band)

- A. Everyone should be in band (recruiting and retention, ambassador of band):
  1. Intrinsic reasons
  2. Extrinsic reasons
- B. We're lucky to have each other:
  1. Many places do well to have a band director, much less an assistant band director.
  2. Together we should be more than the sum of all band directors in our cluster (synergy of gifts and talents).
- C. Goals and objectives:
  1. Have common goals and objectives (head director and assistants).
  2. Have personal goals and objectives. (Keep them complimentary to the overall welfare and benefit of each director and student.)

I believe that each program should have a very well defined set of goals and objectives with regard to just exactly how you are going to achieve what you consider important. You really need to consider exactly what it is you believe and want to accomplish and how you will measure the success of your program. Is it a sweepstakes that defines whether or not you have had a successful year, or is it perhaps the size and scope of your organization? Do you know each and every step you want to take and do you put it in writing and communicate it to you students and parents, or do you have more general ideas? These are difficult and important questions and need attention. But not just from head directors. You need to be part of these decisions as well. If your head director does not consult you regarding the direction of the program, talk with him or her and explain how important these considerations are to you and ultimately to the program.

This is what we believe at Rockwall Heath High School:

1. We believe that private lessons are the number one most important ingredient in creating the best band that we can become.
2. We believe that each student should be held responsible for at least the freshman cuts for the TMEA all state auditions and all twelve major scales through all possible octaves.
3. We believe that our marching halftime/contest show should please our audience as well as the judges and that it should challenge our students musically as well as physically.
4. We believe that each student should play a class one or class two (some freshman are permitted to play a class three) solo at UIL, and that even those not eligible should play for a judge (band director).
5. We believe that each performing ensemble should play age-appropriate as well as level appropriate contest music and that it should challenge each student.

These five ideas drive virtually everything that we do at RHHS and while each director is encouraged to maintain individuality and maximize creativity in planning and instruction, we also must agree with and support each of these five core beliefs.

What Do We Do?

Things every assistant band director should be responsible for:

1. Teaching students
2. Assisting other directors (every director at every class)
3. Communicating with students (not just “your kids”)
4. Communicating with parents
5. Establishing and maintaining good will and working relationships with teachers and counselors.

# Assistant Band Director Responsibilities

There are many responsibilities that go into implementing and operating a band program. These are a few of the things that assistant band directors can either handle completely or with limited direction from a head director.

1. Taking attendance
2. Instrument checkout and return (inventory)
3. Uniform checkout and return
4. Auditions for drum major, section leaders, colorguard, etc
5. Assignment and evaluation of grades/objectives
6. Bus assignments
7. Time and facilities management (scheduling) for
  - a. after-school practices
  - b. sectional rehearsals
  - c. private lessons
  - d. all-region etudes
  - e. UIL solos
  - f. small ensembles
8. Scheduling pre, post and UIL contest and concert dates.
9. Completing and verifying bus requests
10. Completing and verifying facility requests
11. Dot or star charts for pass-offs, all region objectives, etc.
12. Teaching (or keeping up with) alternates or what we call “Friday night spots”
13. Communications with parents
14. Conceiving, writing, and teaching the halftime/contest show
15. Teaching marching fundamentals each day
16. Pre-game or contest inspections
17. Choosing music for concerts, festivals, or contests
18. Teaching sectional rehearsals
19. Liaison to band boosters (attend meetings)
20. Copying music
21. Updating website
22. Planning spring banquet
23. Planning spring trip
24. Making daily announcements
25. Upkeep, cleaning, and straightening the band hall
26. Attend all meetings (UIL Region, TMEA, TBA, band boosters, campus, etc.)

This list is by no means to be considered complete. It is simply a list of some of the things we do at Rockwall Heath High School. Always try to contribute to your program in whichever ways make the most of your gifts and talents.