



Guiding Your Band Program Through a Transition Year

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TRANSITIONS

A clinic for Texas Bandmasters
Association

Summer, 2011

Presented by
Rick and Barbara Lambrecht

TRANSITIONS

1. Taking over after a weak teacher, unsuccessful program
2. Taking over an established program, following a highly revered teacher
3. Transition from Middle School to High School
4. Transition from HS to College
5. Transition from HS assistant to Head Middle School
6. Transition from Assistant to Head at your present school
7. Transition from one classification to another (small school to large school and visa versa)
8. Transition from traditional school day to block schedule/ from every day rehearsals to every other day rehearsals
9. Transition from being a student to being the teacher
10. Opening a brand new school
11. Transition with regard to personnel cuts, budget cuts

COMMUNICATE

You have to have a plan.

Know and understand the situation – Know what you are getting into

Talk to the previous band director

Speak with persons in charge: principal, fine arts director, band booster president, other band parents

Get information about your inventory, budget, library, list of members of your ensemble, last year's calendar of events

Evaluate the facility, the schedule

TAKING OVER A WEAK OR UNSUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

Never criticize; only compliment.

Create success immediately. Success is critical. That does not necessarily mean you must make a One at contest to be successful, but that would be a good goal to shoot for. You must think that is possible. Believe it. Commitment on your part is critical. Shoot for the moon. If you miss, you are still on top of the world.

Do not tell them what you know; show them what you know.

You must take them from where they are and step forward. You cannot LEAP forward. You have to take it a step at a time, sometimes with baby steps.

One-on-one contact (having students play alone) may have been missing in the previous year. The good students will respond positively to this "being held responsible".

First individual playing might be to be able to play Concert F on their instrument.

Test #1 for Onate was 1-A, brass buzz and play.

Put Charts on the wall to document progress.

Do's and Don't's

Don't talk about your old school.

Don't tell them you are making it easy.

Do – Do things differently from how they did them last year

Yes, play easier music, but don't tell them that's what you are doing

Make it simple so they can be successful. You do not need to share this fact with them or your administration.

Work on fundamentals. Use the metronome and tuner – perhaps new activities for the students.

Bring Integrity to the program. Insist upon integrity about how the room looks, time to start, posture, everything.

Make rules that can be upheld, so you don't have to change your rules when things aren't working. Fewer rules are better.

Process and procedure....

TRADITIONS

There will be traditions you must keep. You must not kill traditions that are meaningful to the band just to make the program “yours”. Others, like meeting at the game instead of at the school, or not turning the band loose during the third quarter, can be changed by citing safety of the students as your concern.

TAKING OVER A STRONG, SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

Heap praise.

Minimize change.

Allow it to evolve.

Do things as they have been done with your twist on it, with your way of doing it...

Don't fix what's not broken. If that means that you change the way you do something, so be it.

You want to involve the outgoing director. Have a discussion and agreement as to how the transition will take place.

You want to establish yourself as the person in charge, but let the changes come after you have been accepted as that.

However the officers have been elected, keep that. You may add new director-appointed positions to begin the transition to your way of running the band.

Remember *Rudy*, (movie) and the new coach at Notre Dame

Don't change the marching band show/program/music. It's too late to make any changes right now, but if you know in advance that you are taking over the program, you should be involved in all the preparation for the following fall.

FROM ASSISTANT TO HEAD

Don't talk about the old director.

Don't say, "Now we are going to do it right."

Don't change just for the sake of changing. But change.

Now is the time to remember all of those things that you thought ought to be done differently. Remember when you taught middle school you wanted the high school person to be at your school every day, or on a regular basis.

FROM HEAD TO ASSISTANT

Remember you are not the boss any more.

Support your new boss. Be a team player.

MS TO HS

You perform immediately.

Are you ready for marching band? Are you ready to put your product in front of the public the first week of school?

The first football game is a lot more important than contest.

Plan for that first game. How are you getting on the bus? Have you handed out uniforms? Are you going to wear uniforms? Dinner? How long does it take to drive to that school? Seating chart? Who is filming? Will you watch film after the game? Do you have chaperones? Are the medical releases all turned in? Did they all sign the UIL form?

If you have a staff, communicate what our goals are and communicate how you want them to help achieve those goals. Include them in the goal-making process.

Student problems are more adult (decisions they are now making with regard to alcohol, sex)

You have children and adults in your band (9th graders are still babies)

Don't talk down to high school students.

Learn your stand tunes.

HS to MS

These students are children. They are Mama's babies. They are just acting old.

Their voices haven't changed yet.

They will cry if you look mean at them.

Say it to yourself before you say it to them. How does it sound?

Communicate much more with the parents.

However, keep your standards high. Just because they are young does not mean they are not capable of excellence.

EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE IS UNIQUE.
THERE IS NO ONE WAY TO TEACH BAND.

Be flexible.

Don't be afraid to ask for help.

Find a mentor. Ask the old people in your region/district to help you.

Do not re-invent the wheel.

Make sure you cover all the paperwork that may be new to you. Know what you are responsible for.

UIL Executive Secretary can help you with rules, deadlines.

TAKE CARE OF BUSINESS

Don't get your principal in trouble – with parents, with school officials (Know how to implement the budget)

Keep your music standards high.

Refresh your memory daily as to what you consider good sound, balance tuning.

(Listen to good music daily, played by outstanding musicians. Sirius/XM radio classics station, cd's)