

Teach Like Your Hair's On Fire Strategies for Successful Performance Groups Without Beginners Everyday

CLINICIAN: David Puckett

Texas Bandmasters Association 2015 Convention/Clinic

JULY 23-26, 2015 HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS



Teach Like Your Hair's On Fire Strategies for Successful Performance Groups Without Beginners Everyday

Presented by David Puckett Indian Springs Middle School, Keller ISD For the Texas Band Masters Association Convention 2015

Overcoming obstacles: THE GRASS IS ALWAYS GREENER...when you put in the work. Gimmicks or gizmos do not

replace solid teaching.

Getting started with the end in mind.

"The first year we build the habits, the next years we make music."

Unified staff approach:

Building the correct environment "band kids / band family / band culture".
Building relationships for a 7 + band year journey.
Same terminology for consistency of the students.

Building Habits: [Continued in upper grade level sectionals]

In the first year our goal for each child is: #1 look correct #2 sound as correct tonally as possible.

Non-negotiable habits that need to be built:

- o Professional presentation: What is seen in public/on stage/judged.
 - Behavior: How they enter and rehearse.
- o Body posture: no body part touches another body part, round hands, tension free
- o Breathing: Default 2 count breathe from still silence
- o Engagement in class. Faces and brains active for high percentage of class.
- o Individual accountability in daily and weekly goals.

Posture: FEET FLAT, BACK STRAIGHT, HINEY ON THE HUMP! [Huh!]

A student's posture must be balanced. Students should be able to easily stand up when they are sitting in their proper posture. Their feet should be flat on the floor with their knees over their ankles. Their backs should be straight and their shoulders should be down and relaxed. Their chins should be in a neutral position and their faces should be natural as there should be no unnatural creases. Unnatural creases mean the students are straining which signals tension. No part of their body should touch any other part of their body. Look for tension in their eyes and their hands. Most importantly, students must strive to remain still while both resting and playing.

Breathing: Spend the time EARLY and consistently in the first year to avoid issues later.

Focusing on relaxed, but full breathing from the beginning will eliminate most of all tension created sound issues. Everything should feel natural. As a student exhales, the air must be directional and focused.

STILL - STILL - BREATHE - BREATHE.

OUT - OUT - IN - IN

Once we COMMITTED to insisting on a two-count breath from silence in the 6th grade, our performing ensembles were more solid tonally and had less noise at the note starts.

Breathers: breathing aide found at local hardware stores ½ inch PVC Ball Valve.

Embouchure: Mirrors: Self-Portrait mirrors can be ordered from Art Supply Store. [Sax Art]

Constant care and attention needs to be given to the development and maintenance of the embouchure. Every instrument utilizes a different embouchure setup. A director needs to spend time fully understanding their subtle differences and MAKE THE STUDENTS aware and responsible for maintaining.

Tonguing: Students must have "tongue awareness". *In general I feel for every instrument, the tongue needs to use a quick up and down motion as well as strike the <u>same spot with the same strength every time</u>. The tongue also needs to be in the down position MOST of the time as to not get in the way of the air.*

Rhythm / Technique / Music Preparation: The MEAT and Potatoes!

Skills must be introduced in the first year to avoid "this is hard" in the future.

How is it possible get students through enough core concepts in the first year to meet the musical needs of the middle school literature? Well in short, we "Teach like our hair's on fire!!" Fast paced, high energy, high expectations and clear goals for what students are responsible for.

Changing READY - FIRE - AIM to READY - AIM- FIRE

<u>Puckett Performance Priorities</u> of learning music.

- Correct posture with toe tap and eyes on music (ready position)
 - o Saying notes or positions "Touch and Tell" on pitch with instrument secured
 - o Counting rhythms with toe tap and eyes on music "Touch and Count"
- Instrument in fingering position (The instrument and body is in as complete playing position as possible with mouthpiece slightly offset or below lip. This is translated in UIL Sight Reading position that you can practice everyday!)
 - o "Show and Tell" (on pitch)
 - o "Show and Count" (on pitch)
- Air-Fingers-Tongue / Brass Mouthpiece Vibration. [BERPS] Use this only after the students have established HOW to do mouthpiece vibration.
- Playing with toe tap and eyes on music

Benefits:

- Increased FACE TIME and BRAIN TIME: too much talking kills a class!
- It develops muscles needed to hold instrument.
- Students should be modeling correctness in all areas when someone is performing. I even encourage it during tests!
 - o Divide class into layers by seating or ability.
 - o Mix up chair placement! If you do chairs (I do not) be sure you don't always put your best in one area ESPECIALLY the start of the year.
- Teacher watches others in class while student(s) perform.
- How much instruction can be given during 4 count rests.
- Keep class moving forward with quality face time.
- Default repeats are GOOD! (Stop two measures later if needed.)
- Slow developers get chance of greater success.

Setting up for future success: "Future You" Making it important in their psyche.

Developing technique: Our top two goals are that each kid:

1. Looks correct with body and hands 2. Tonally sound the best they can. What about technique?

KIDS LOVE TO PLAY FAST! If you can tap into their love to play in TONE and TUNE, you have a winner! We don't go very fast, but what we do is constantly evolving.

Rhythm: Address it daily to avoid having to teach too many skills at once. Keep brains AHEAD of fingers – always. **Key Knowledge:** Beginner books do NOT cover enough different keys to prepare for Middle School and UIL literature!

Checking for understanding:

What's your key? Students respond with a confident PSV - Public Speaking Voice.

Key of Bb- 2 flats: Bb - Eb − A natural or A second position

Key of G - 1 sharp F# - B Natural

Key of C – no flats, no sharps – B natural

More than 3 # or b repeat final one and show fingers.

Concert pitch/transposed pitch: Don't confuse them too early! Let them live in THEIR world as long as possible the first year.

Assessments: Students will put value on things that you spend TIME on or TEST!!!!

LIVE assessments:

I encourage you to do some kind of LIVE informal or formal assessments daily, no matter the class size. **All players should be doing Performance Priority levels of your, or their choice when not their turn.** This helps build muscles and performance confidence.

Recorded assignments outside of class time: (Retests)

Encourages repeated practice, saves class time, eliminates performance anxiety, puts ownership on students. Allows redos without taking class time and it gives you a direct feedback contact with parents/student through electronic means, which is great documentation and administrators LOVE use of technology!! In our performance bands, most of our assessments are recordings, especially on performance music.

How do you model in class?

Utilize play-along tracks as much as possible to set them up for success. This allows correct modeling and can build greater confidence than simple metronome assignments. They can be created in Finale, played by an instructor or student. It helps eliminate the stops/restarts and "Can I do it again?". I am a firm believer that, especially in the first year, pitches need to be modeled in the correct octave. Sing, play, audio track on a loop, myeelibrary.com, etc. If you cannot provide a model, record an 8th grader/lesson teacher/colleague.

When do you move on? Ability, time, 1/3, 1/2, 2/3 of class?

These are all personal preferences, however I would encourage you to consider pacing decisions based on the top half of your students. Some students are late bloomers and you will loose the good kids if they become bored or are constantly waiting on the other students.

Building the individual "A chain is only as strong as its weakest link"

Objective sheets and Starter Sheets divided out by grading period. These are the where our MINIMUM skills are set to keep parents and students knowing they are not meeting their part of practicing requirements to develop needed skills.

Practice logs that the parents sign each week, which is located on the back of the objective sheet. This is a COMMUNICATION sheet and an easy way to build relationships with parents weekly. Stickers, notes, smiles...or areas of improvements go a long way!

Project Grades: Setting the bar, but not the ceiling...

Band Olympics (handout)

Scale Karate (Ribbons for each scale passed off from memory)

Chromatic Builder Levels: Brass divided by partials.

Flow Studies or any progressive series.

Final Exam: Goal expectation: 9 scales and one plus octave chromatic. Focus is on CORRECT SOUNDING scales,

not SPEED of scales.

Solo Preparation with accompaniment

Full Ensemble Expectations (setting up for MS): First year full band pieces need to be approached with MS in mind.

Music: Number and mark parts ahead of time: This goes for Region music, daily drill, exercises that will be rehearsed. Mark parts for them ahead of time taking what you decide in the score and applying to their music. Have students darken in director marks as instructed. If you are going to have the students mark it, you should be collecting their music frequently and checking for accuracy.

Middle School transition: We approach this the same way we do 6th grade. Utilize staff, set weekly and long term goals and be sure the students are ENGAGED during rehearsals and held accountable.

Our success with our top group is mainly that the students are held accountable in the classroom the year or years before entering that group. The Concert and Symphonic Bands have their own traditions of success. We work as a staff to find different levels of accountability that prepare for the top groups rigor, and then is modified to set a minimum, but not a maximum.

Sectionals

Scales Wars

Region Music (modified)

Music Pass offs (recorded)

Pass off charts: Grading 0-89% = dot, 90-95% = Avery sticker, 96-100% = STAR [Gold, Platinum, All-Stars] CELEBRATIONS monthly gatherings, down time with the students.

Professional Growth

Bring in colleagues, clinicians or mentors on a consistent rotation.

Video your rehearsals and watch students react to your instruction. Review it yourself and find someone that can be a constant source for feedback.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us for more information:

David Puckett david.puckett@kellerisd.net

Christopher Sebesta <u>christopher.sebesta@kellerisd.net</u>

Jennifer Alcocer jennifer.alcocer@kellerisd.net





Thank you Texas Bandmasters Association for all you do to make Texas bands great!

Texas Bandmasters Association 2015

"Teach Like Your Hair's on Fire"



Strategies for Successful Band Programs without Beginners Daily

Indian Springs Middle School



David Puckett

david.puckett@kellerisd.net

Christopher Sebesta christopher.sebesta@kellerisd.net

Jennifer Alcocer

jennifer.alcocer@kellerisd.net

Getting Started:



"The first year we build habits, the next years we make music."

Unified staff approach:

Building the correct environment "band kids / band family / band culture".



Building relationships for a 7 + year band journey.

Same terminology for consistency of the students.

In the first year, our goal for each child is:



#1 look correct #2 sound as tonally correct as possible.

Non-negotiable habits that need to be built:



- Professional presentation
- Body posture
- Breathing
 - Engagement in class
 - Individual accountability

FEET FLAT,

BACK STRAIGHT,

HINEY ON THE HUMP!

"Huh!"

Posture:

A student's posture must be balanced. Students should be able to easily stand up when they are sitting in their proper posture. Their feet should be flat on the floor with their knees over their ankles. Their backs should be straight and their shoulders should be down and relaxed. Their chins should be in a neutral position and their faces should be natural as there should be no unnatural creases. Unnatural creases mean the students are straining which signals tension. No part of their body should touch any other part of their body. Look for tension in their eyes and their hands. Most importantly, students must strive to remain still while both resting and playing.

Breathing:

Focusing on relaxed, but full breathing from the beginning will eliminate most of all tension created sound issues. Everything should feel natural. As a student exhales, the air must be directional and focused.

Once we COMMITTED to insisting on a two-count breath from silence in the 6th grade, our performing ensembles were more solid tonally and with less noise at the note starts.

STILL – STILL – BREATHE – BREATHE



OUT – OUT – IN – IN

1/2 inch PVC Ball Valve



Embouchure:



Constant care and attention needs to be given to the development and maintenance of the embouchure. Every instrument utilizes a different embouchure setup. A director needs to spend time fully understanding their subtle differences and MAKE THE STUDENTS aware and responsible for maintaining.

Tonguing:



In general I feel for every instrument, the tongue needs to use a quick up and down motion as well as strike the <u>same spot with the same strength every time</u>. The tongue also needs to be in the down position MOST of the time as to not get in the way of the air.

Meat and Potatoes



Rhythm / Technique / Music preparation



Ready – FIRE – Aim!



Puckett Performance Priorities

- 1. Correct posture with toe tap and eyes on music (ready position)
 - Saying notes or positions "Touch and Tell" on pitch with instrument secured
 - Counting rhythms with toe tap and eyes on music "Touch and Count"
- 2. Instrument in fingering position (The instrument and body is in as complete playing position as possible with mouthpiece slightly offset or below lip.)
 - "Show and Tell" (on pitch)
 - "Show and Count" (on pitch)
- 3. Brass Mouthpiece Vibration [BERPS]. Air Fingers Tongue
- 4. Playing with correct posture, toe tap and eyes on music

Benefits:

- Increased FACETIME and BRAIN time
- It develops muscles needed to hold instrument in a relaxed manner.
- Students consistently modeling correctness in all areas when someone else is performing, allowing for greater repetitions.

In the first year, our goal for each child is:

#1 look correct #2 sound as tonally correct as possible.

What about technique????

Technical Facilities



Counting / Scales / Chromatics / Tongue & Slur awareness

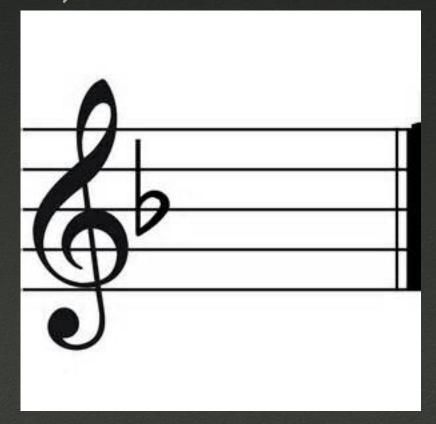
Rhythm Counting



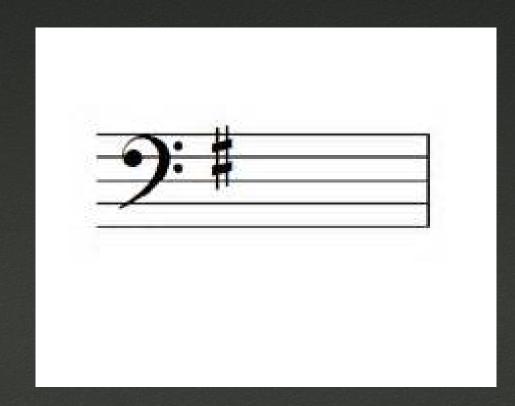


"Every Student Gets it!"

Key Knowledge "1 flat, Bb – E natural"



Key Knowledge "1 sharp, F# – B natural"



1 Flat: Bb - E natural
2 Flats: Bb, Eb - A natural
3 Flats: Bb, Eb, Ab - Ab 3rd
position



No flats, no sharps, B natural 1 sharp F#, B natural 2 sharps F#, C# – B natural

Assessments "Live"



WHEN do you test? Don't ALWAYS wait until they are 100% ready! Then they will always be waiting for/following your pacing instead of coming in prepared. If you wait on them and constantly reviewing for them before assessment, you are working harder than them! Put the ownership in their court by allowing recorded retests.

Recorded assignments: (Retests)

"There is no wrong way to record"
Many apps including CHARMS and Tonal
Energy, Voice memo and video camera.



Encourages PRACTICE at home for mastery! Saves class time, eliminates performance anxiety, puts ownership on students. Allows redos without taking class time and it gives you a direct feedback contact with parents/student through electronic means which is great documentation and administrators LOVE use of technology!!

How do you model in class?



Utilize play-along tracks as much as possible to set them up for success. This allows correct modeling and can build greater confidence than simple metronome assignments. They can be created in Finale, played by an instructor or student. It helps eliminate the stops/restarts and "Can I do it again?"

When do you move on?



Ability, time, 1/3, 1/2, 2/3 of class?

These are all personal preferences, however I

would encourage you to consider pacing decisions based on the top half of your students. Some students are late bloomers and you will loose the good kids if they become bored or are constantly waiting on the other students.

Setting the bar, but not the ceiling...

Objective Sheets / Practice Log
Starter Sheets

These are the where our MINIMUM skills are set to keep parents and students knowing they are not meeting their part of practicing requirements to develop needed skills.

Name	Inst/Class



SKI BEGINNER BAND OBJECTIVES

First 6 Weeks



*Band director will initial the line when 90% mastery or higher is achieved.

Responsibility Fill in and have parent signature on at least 3 practice records turned in on time by the date assigned. (Please see the back of this sheet)

Performance Materials: Students should have a pencil, binder, music book, and instrument with maintenance supplies and performance supplies at every class.

|--|

Director notes:

Professional Presentation: Demonstrate proper hand position, band posture and foot tap while playing with a consistent, steady, strong sound.

Director notes:

Tone Development: Demonstrate correct performance of the beginning "Fab Five Notes" of your instrument.

Director notes:

____ In class Performance:

Director notes:

PARENTS: Please notate below and initial or sign if you are receiving emails from us.

YES! I am getting emails.

NO: (here are my email addresses)

Play well – Practice often – Pride through performance!

MANATE.

Practice Log

Signature	 I have read the Goostak objective sheet on revense side. 								
unS									
Sat									
Fri									
Thur									
Wed									
Mon Tues Wed Thur Fri Sat Sun									
Week	1	2	3	4	5	9	7	8	6

Assignments/Notes/Reminders:

Building the individual "A chain is only as strong as its weakest link"



Band Olympics
Scale Karate
Chromatic Builders
Flow Studies
Solo Performance / Contest
Final Exam



SKI Winter Band Olympics! January 26 – March 3, 2015 "Light the Musical Fire Within"

Explanation: Students must complete at least seven "events", some are mandatory others are optional. At the end of each class period, we will allow each musician an opportunity to perform their "event". Correct posture, foot tap and metronome speed must be demonstrated as well as the actual notes and rhythms. If the event has been mastered with 90% accuracy or higher, they will earn point(s) for their team as well as for themselves.

Required events: One of these events must be completed FIRST.

Group events: Play together and earn four points! Tempo = 90 or higher.

One-octave chromatic scale by memory. Tempo = 90 or higher. (Four points for the chromatic scale)
Two of your best major scales by memory. Tempo = 90 or higher. (Four points per scale)

Other events: May use music. Tempo = 90 or higher.

CYCHE	3. 1914	ty use	music.	rempo.	- 70 OL 1	ngare.						
One point: (must do at least two before attempting double points)												
31	34	36	42	58	61	62	69	71	76	84	86	87
Two points: (must do at least two before attempting triple points) Tempo = 85 or higher.												
48	8	8	90	91	96	108	112	113	114	117	129	
132	1.	33	135	138	139	149						
Three Points: Tempo = 85 or higher.												
106	- 1:	50	155	157	160	162	164	166	167	168	170	172
175	17	6	179	181								
Four Points: Tempo=90 or higher												
Major Scales: Concert D, G, C, F, Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, Gb												
Вb,	Eb F	Mini	scale	Page 4	0 Bb#2	Page 4	40 Eb#2	Page 4	1F #2	Page 4	1Ab #2	

Electronic submissions! After completing required events and minimum two other events, students may submit their performances through www.charmsoffice.com, or record on their own device and email to their director. (See information sheet on the back of this page.) Remember to perform WITH a metronome or SMARTMUSIC.

Practice, Practice, Practice! All band students may practice in the band hall from 7:15-7:35am daily as long as a director is present. Students may also use this time for extra help, peer assistance, and to pass off events.

Awards:

- The three students with the highest points from the entire band will earn individual gold, silver and bronze
 medals, certificates of achievement, be recognized on the school announcements and at the spring concert!
- The top three students of each instrument will receive a certificate of achievement.
- Teams (instrument group) with the highest points per student will win the gold, silver and bronze recognition!
- All students who complete 15 or more events are invited to a VIP (Very Impressive Player) celebration party on MARCH 5th in the SKI Cafeteria from after school until 4:00 PM!

Grading: Students earn 10 points in the grade book for each event passed off. Students can earn up to 50 extra credit points in this project grade!

Name		Instru	ment/Class		
	SK		ER BAND OI rth Six Week		
Responsibili	ity: Turn in practice (Please see the			ions	
Band Suppli	ies: Have pencil, b	inder, book, and in	sitver MEDALS	BRONZE MEDALS	
higher). You matches the	Aiming for an Olympic event man play correct notes	"GOLD" – Musice eans that you have and rhythms, all werformance demon	cal Mastery. What e performed the skil with correct hand po strates that you hav	sition, posture, and	
				Olympics) Perfor with the metrono	m your one-octave me.
		cale (Requiredne and a charact		Olympics) Perfo	rm from memory with
		cale (Required eristic sound.	event for the O	Olympics) Perform	m with the metronome
	Band Olymp	Pass off at	least seven Olyı	mpic lines of you	r choosing to earn
	Event 1	Event 2	Event 3	Event 4	
	Event 5	Event 6	Event 7		
Additiona	l Lines for abov	re 100%:			

Cumulative knowledge is always tested in small portions first.



Final Exam
Solo
Full Band Music

Trombone/Euphonium

Brass Chromatic Builder

For Region 2 Chromatic Requirements

Part One Pass Off:





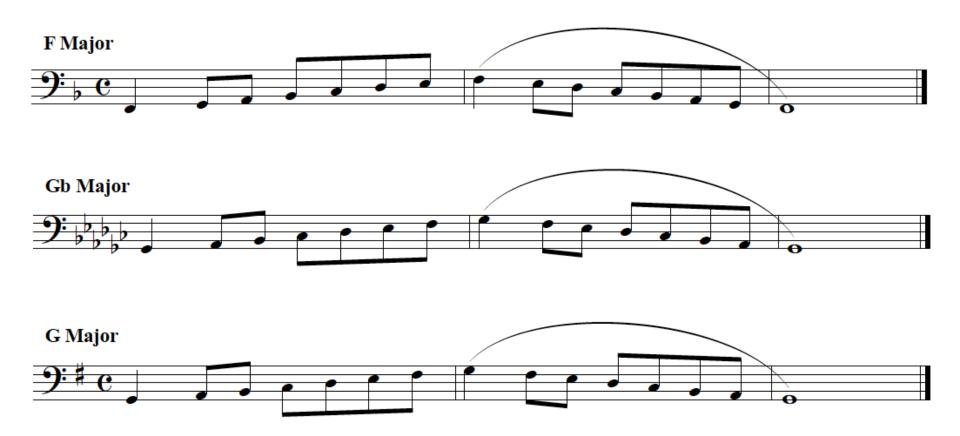


B7

Cb7

SKI Brass Scale Pass Off Sheet

Trombone/Euphonium



Order or Flats: Bb Eb Ab Db Gb Cb Fb (BEAD-Greatest Common Factor)
Order of Sharps: F# C# G# D# A# E# B# Fat Cats Go Down Alleys Eating Birds

Full Ensemble Expectations



Music Preparation: Director should number and mark parts ahead of time. This goes for region music, daily drill and any exercises that will be rehearsed. Director makes decisions and marks in the score and then transfers to their music. We touch every piece of music from percussion to piccolo and decide before the students see it for the first time.

1st year full band pieces need to be approached with middle school objectives in mind.



Professional presentation
Performance Priorities
PSV (public speaking voice) and full arm extension when asking question.

Pencil on stand. Marking music is not an option. Take notes on new information, especially when a clinician or guest is present.

HUGE



LEARNING CURVE

Middle School Non-Varsity



We approach this the same way we do 6th grade.

Utilize staff to create small group.

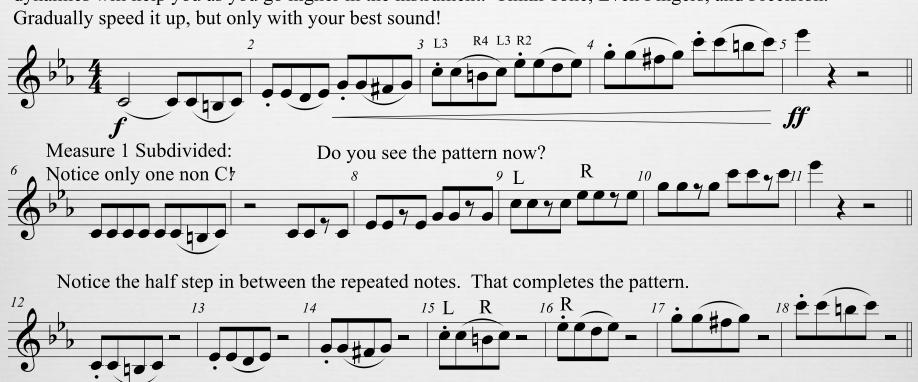
Set modified, achievable and structured goals

Students are kept ENGAGED and held

ACCOUNTABLE.

Clarinet Technical Measures 1-2

Variation: Written out half as fast. Notice the ascending pattern. Performing the dynamics will help you as you go higher in the instrument. Think Tone, Even Fingers, and Precision. Gradually speed it up, but only with your best sound!



*Breakdown from Chris Sebesta

The rest of these lines are fragmented, and put increasingly more together. Practice each line severlal times, say and finger, then play. Look up any fingerings that you are unsure about. Tongue everything at first for practice.



You need to practice this pinky combination to be successful on these measures!

Non-Varsity Success makes the most difference!



Sectionals
Scales Wars
Region Music (modified)
Pass Off Charts: "Star Status"
CELEBRATIONS monthly gatherings, down time with the students.

Continued Learning



Mentorships
Personal reflection and growth
Listen to great performances

Indian Springs Middle School



David Puckett

david.puckett@kellerisd.net

Christopher Sebesta christopher.sebesta@kellerisd.net

Jennifer Alcocer

jennifer.alcocer@kellerisd.net