



**Taming the Beast:
The Middle School Non-Varsity Band**

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HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

Taming The Beast

THE MIDDLE SCHOOL NON-VARSITY BAND

*Access a digital and interactive copy of the presentation here:
TamingTheBeastNonVarsityBand.weebly.com*

About Us: **Alicia DeSoto & Chris Meredith**, Band Directors at Shadow Ridge Middle School in Flower Mound, Texas (25 miles north of Dallas). 240 band students; students start band in homogenous 6th grade classes with average beginner band enrollment of 90 students. Each class rehearses on average daily for 45 minutes.

Our Non-Varsity Band: The Shadow Ridge “Symphonic Band”

- Average 75 students
- 75% 7th grade, 25% 8th grade
- CC school enrollment 650
- Beginner Band, Symphonic Band, Honor Winds class structure
- Two band directors daily
- Percussion director once a week

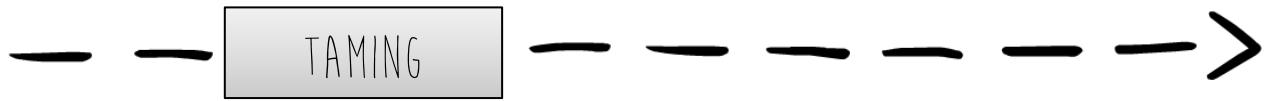
TRANSITION



Transitioning from Beginner Band to Advanced Band

April & May

- Independent performing, more comfortable learning/performing: encourage volunteering and show/tell, accepting constructive criticism
- Play daily drill sheet in woodwind classes (brass are already playing these exercises)
- Work on solo (audition music) to gain more independence
- Equipment: brass step-ups before summer
- Think of ways to bridge logistical items so kids are way more comfortable on day one with large ensemble process
- When combining beginners for spring concert, run this rehearsal exactly how you would want an ideal non-varsity band rehearsal to work



1st Six Weeks: Taming the Beast

August & September

Individual Skills

Focusing on the individual takes priority over the ensemble

The Individual Student:

- Summer Chops, Summer Brain

Defining and Reinforcing Daily Habits:

- Sitting, Pencils & Eye Contact

Instrument Maintenance:

- Setting high standards of personal responsibility
- Slide, Valve & Reed Care

Woodwind Concerns:

- Checking small parts of instrument for pitch

Practicing:

- Developing smarter practicing

Assessment: Objectives

- Personal Responsibility, 100% Achievement

Ensemble Skills

Structure of Rehearsal

Listening Awareness

Matching of Sound Concepts

Starts of Notes & Note Length

Awareness of Conductor

Balancing Melody and Harmony

Phrasing 101

Structuring Class Time

Fundamentals, Fundamentals, Fundamentals

- Set Expectations
- Focus on Basics

Brass & Woodwind Splits

- Use your Staff!

Sectionals

- Individual Performance

Performances

Pep Rally & Football Game Performances

- Combine with Varsity

Fall Concert

- "Go to" list
- Mental Engagement During Performance

Literature Goals:

- Familiar Music
- Suitable Tempo Range
- Chamber Music for the Large Ensemble
- Details & Quality over Quantity



2nd & 3rd Six Weeks: Training the Beast!

October, November & December

Ensemble Skills & Goals

Ensemble Skill Development

- Dynamics
- Intonation Awareness
- Style Development

Individual Goals

- Tonal Development
- Listening Development
 - Match Simple Style, Tone, Volume, Intonation

Assessment

Rehearsal/Sectional

- Sections in Full Band
- Individuals in Sectionals

Objectives

- Scales

- Technical Exercises
- Music Excerpts

Performances & Literature

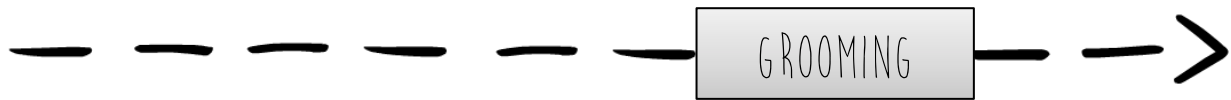
Winter Concert

- Four Pieces (1 UIL?)
- Performance on a Stage!
- Expanded Performance Tempos
- Up to 4 Musical Lines

Sectionals

- Focus on the Individual
- Develop Section Awareness

Spring Prep



4th, 5th & 6th Six Weeks: Grooming the Beast

January - May

UIL Preparation

Music Selection

- Mentors
- Proven Pieces

Sight-Reading Strategy

- Rhythm
- Progression from Small Snippets to Large Pieces
- Sectionals (Focus on Individual)

Solo & Ensemble Contest

Music Selection

- Solos
- Ensembles

Early Spring? Late Spring Contest?

Spring Concert & Festivals

Fun & Challenging Music

Bridging the Gap to Varsity (or High School)