



**Techniques and Foundations for a Successful  
Mariachi: TAME 2016 State Champions**

**CLINICIANS:**

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SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**



# Rio Grande City Consolidated Independent School District



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## How To Have A Successful Mariachi Program

1. Always start with a GOAL in mind! Set smart, attainable and measurable goals!
  - Ensure proper discipline for the program
    - Positive attitudes
    - Effective rehearsals
    - Pride
    - Self-Motivation
    - Proper and effective fundamentals
    - Commitment and Dedication
2. Give the students the proper foundation that will make it easier for them to understand music. Focusing on scales and fundamentals their first year, is the best way to have a strong foundation.
  - Focus on the common mariachi keys, for example, G, A, C, D, E, and F Major
  - a, d, and e minor
  - Incorporate Clarke Second Studies into daily warm-up
  - In time, this leads to an effective routine that the student will implement on his/her own
3. Use your class and rehearsal time efficiently. This will lead to more productive rehearsals and the students will be better prepared.
  - Have the proper warm-up in place. As soon as the bell rings, the students know the exact routine that is expected.
  - Balance out your time with the amount of songs you want to work on. Some passages need to be worked out in sectionals and some can be done as a group.
4. Prepare your students to a level that will make them feel good about their performance. Teach them to be confident about themselves. The students must sound good in order for them to have confidence. Do not expose them to an audience if they are not ready. This may have the contrary effect.
  - Be sure to give your group music that will challenge them enough to play at a high level.
  - Always ensure good balance and tuning
  - Once you feel your group is playing at a level that they sound good, you can expose them to performances

5. Teach your students how to be good leaders. A director must instill self-motivation in their students.

*-A Good leader accomplishes all expectations and works well with others.*

*-Motivate students to be at a Level 1, for example:*

- **Level 4**- Not able to play thru the music on your own
- **Level 3**- Able to play thru **some** of the music on tempo, with some style, and major note problems
- **Level 2**- Able to play thru **all** of the music with some minor tuning, style, tempo, and note problems
- **Level 1**- Able to play thru all of the fundamentals and musical selection with **precise** tuning, tempo, and style

6. **Vocal Expectation**----A Great Vocalist:

- *Warms up properly at all times.*
- *Is always in tune and works on developing a good ear.*
- *Knows and masters how to sing each style of music.*
- *Sings with correct pronunciation.*
- *Has a nice tone and full round centered sound.*
- *Masters the proper vibrato.*
- *Practices correctly at all times.*
- *Works on improving ones technical ability and tone.*
- *Is proactive and listens to high quality mariachi music.*

7. **Violin Expectations**----A Great Violin Player:

- *Warms up properly at all times.*
- *Is always in tune and works on developing a good ear.*
- *Plays and matches with the section.*
- *Knows and masters how to play each style of music.*
- *Has very good technique and gets a good centered tone.*
- *Has a good vibrato with a relaxed hand.*
- *Practices correctly at all times.*
- *Works on improving ones technical ability and tone.*
- *Is proactive and listens to high quality mariachi music.*

8. **Trumpet Expectations**----A Great Trumpet Player:

- *Warms up properly at all times.*
- *Keeps proper and consistent airflow.*
- *Develops proper vibrato and tone.*
- *Has a very good note transition.*
- *Practices correctly at all times.*
- *Works on improving ones tone and flexibility.*
- *Knows and masters how to play each style of music.*
- *Plays with a consistent beat always maintaining a solid tempo.*
- *Is proactive and listens to high quality mariachi music.*

9. **Rhythm Expectations**----A Great Rhythm Player:

- *Warms up properly at all times.*
- *Plays with a consistent beat always maintaining a solid tempo.*
- *Knows and masters how to play each style of music.*
- *Has a very good and smooth chord transition.*
- *Plays very precise and clean.*
- *Is always in tune.*
- *Practices correctly at all times.*
- *Works on improving ones wrist flexibility and tone.*
- *Is proactive and listens to high quality mariachi music.*

10. Put time into your Group (Ensemble). Rehearsals after school teach students about dedication and commitment.

*-Prioritize your work because your students will be a reflection of their director, and their performances will be a reflection of what you are teaching.*

11. Be a good role model for your students. Let them know that dedication is the KEY to be successful. A teacher must lead by example. Students can easily see if you are sincere about wanting to help them or if you are ready to head out the door.

*-When possible, make time to help students, for example, during the morning time or lunch time.*

*-Be consistent with rehearsals*

*-Cancelling rehearsals does not instill a positive mind set for the students.*

12. Be open minded for suggestions/constructive criticism. This will make you a better director for your students. Look to see what other groups are doing so you can incorporate different ideas into your teaching.

*-Being knowledgeable of strategies that work and strategies that do not work.*

*-Visit other mariachi programs to be more informed of what other groups are implementing.*

*- Ask other directors about their ideas on effective techniques.*

**Always work as a TEAM!!!**