



**Mentoring: It's Not Just for Kids! The Head  
Director's Role in Mentoring  
Their Assistants**

**CLINICIAN:**

**Gabe Musella**

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SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

# MENTORING: IT'S NOT JUST FOR KIDS!

## *The Head Directors Role in Mentoring Their Assistants*

### **Band is synonymous with team; We are all in this together!**

#### **CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:**

1. What are your expectations for your staff members?
2. What are their roles in the development of the program?
3. How do they assist in implementing your plan?
4. How much of a "say" do they have in making decisions?
5. Do you want independent thinkers as a part of your team?

#### **DO:**

1. Offer feedback on their classroom management!
2. Give constructive feedback on their methodology!
3. **COMPLIMENT THEM on their small victories and progress!**
4. **Give them an opportunity to voice their opinions even if they differ from yours!**
5. Change up the venue of your staff meeting!
6. Build them up to your parents and administration!
7. Make them in charge of a segment of the program if possible!
8. **Use WE in talking to your students, parents, and administrators!**
9. **Interject your opinion considering literature choices!**
10. Offer your assistance in parent conferences; *as head directors, we might have to take some bullets for the team!*

#### **DO NOT:**

1. SHAME OR BELITTLE THEM, ESPECIALLY IN FRONT OF THE BAND!
2. SIT IN YOUR OFFICE WHILE THEIR BAND REHEARSES!
3. TAKE CREDIT FOR ONE OF THEIR IDEAS
4. ALLOW THEM TO BECOME "WITHDRAWN"
5. LET TENSION SIMMER AND BOIL
6. LET YOUR PERSONAL FEELINGS GET IN THE WAY OF BUSINESS!
7. ALLOW MARTYRDOM TO BECOME PERVASIVE
8. **IF POSSIBLE** - EXPECT THE ENTIRE STAFF AT EVERY "BAND EVENT"; COACHES DON'T!
9. ALLOW POTENTIALLY CATASTROPHIC DECISIONS TO GO FORWARD SO THAT THEY CAN LEARN THEIR LESSON!
10. GET JEALOUS OF THEIR POPULARITY

**Gabe Musella, ASCAP**

Director of Bands, Spring High School  
832 515-5115

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## *The Head Directors Role in Mentoring Their Assistants*

### UNEDITED QUOTES ON THIS SUBJECT FROM GREAT DIRECTORS

*"One of the roles of a head band director is to create a culture where everyone (students and staff) desires to give it all they got everyday and love every minute of it....."*

**Ronnie Rios, Director of Music Programs, Harlingen CISD**

*"Meaningful mentorship efforts take time and effort on the part of both the issuing and receiving parties. Over the years there have been countless situations or events that could have been made more efficient for our program or for me personally had I simply made a determination on an associate's behalf, or issued program related requests, tasks or duties without explanation or a relay of the 'why' behind a particular item. The 'why' is everything- with the goals most often associated with either fostering positive relationships or defining and expecting exceptional student growth and outcome. I think of each academic school year as the potential equivalency of a year of graduate school for the associate directors (and for myself) so that growth and improvement is a constant for all of us. I strive to provide a myriad of relevant program related information with the staff and to delegate responsibilities so that everyone has some type of responsibility, experience and association with various aspects of the program. In addition to the inherent opportunities and responsibilities associated with the teaching responsibilities, an associate director may have an opportunity to work with and lead one of our booster committees or events, manage a line item in the budget, compose program wide communications, design a new process or method for the whole program or interact directly with administrators, clinicians, etc. It is important to me that their experiences encompass what may even be a little piece of most aspects of the program.*

*I ask myself the following questions on a regular basis- am I providing opportunities for the associate educators to learn, to develop their own voices, to benefit from a range of experiences, and to gain insight from anecdotal or real time observation of mistakes I have made or make in addition to their own? Am I fostering a healthy educational philosophy with the associate directors that will carry our profession onward and forward for the next generation of band students and programs? Am I passing to them what I have learned about performance standards, literature, pedagogy and about the heritage of our profession from those mentors that have so generously shared these items with me over the years? Am I demonstrating those qualities that I expect from them and from our students? If I were unexpectedly hit by a train one day, could the Marcus Band become an even BETTER organization than it had been before the next day/week/year? Would the program operate like a well-oiled machine as a result of the effort and investment made in the sharing of purpose, philosophy, resources, and relationship building by the entire staff? This is the goal at hand!"*

**Amanda Drinkwater, Director Bands, Marcus High School, Lewisville ISD**

*"It is crucial to the long-term success of both high school and middle school band programs that the head band director take very seriously his or her role in mentoring the staff. The mentorship role should include pedagogical and organizational goals and strategies. The success of this philosophy is contingent on the head director following up on a regular basis on goals provided, as well as providing outside experts to guide in the pedagogical information."*

**Scott McAdow, retired consultant and adjudicator, 3 - time Honor Band winner**

*"Be yourself. Be prepared. Be positive but honest with yourself and students! Remember it's not about you it's about the music and the students! Learn to say no! Smile more! Maintain balance in your life cause it's a marathon not a sprint! Enjoy the journey, this is the greatest job on the planet! Have fun!"*

**Randy Vaughn, retired consultant and adjudicator, Member of The Texas Bandmasters Hall of Fame**

*"As a Head Director It is important to make expectations clear from the beginning. The best assistant teachers/leaders work best when the band program goals, and everyone's role in contributing toward that goal is understood. This does not mean that you should dictate "How" in every area. New directors will have ample ambition but will need more guidance and supervision to realize success, regardless of musical ability. Once they demonstrate the ability to lead on their own, allow them the opportunity to experiment as an educator should. It is important to continue monitoring and offering suggestions as appropriate. Constructive feedback should be saved for private conversations rather than in front of students in rehearsal. The students need to believe that their teachers are all on the same page.*

*I believe the most important responsibility of a quality Head Director is to model consistent professional behavior and to be present as a supportive resource for the other members of their team. Remember that in reality they don't work for you, they work with you. Inspire them by being a positive role model, providing support and friendship whenever possible."*

**Eric M. Allen, DMA - Assistant Director of Bands, Texas Tech University**

*"There are two important factors in mentoring assistants:*

*#1-involving them in the long and short term goal setting for the program.*

*#2-delegating the overseeing or "management" of specific goals."*

**Dana Pradervand, Director of Bands, Oak Ridge High School, Conroe ISD**

*"The role of the head director is to facilitate the operations of the program and to be accountable for all aspects of the program. The head director should give staff members the liberty to teach in their most comfortable style while offering them quality guidance to develop their skill sets. It is the responsibility of the head director to set the tone and philosophy for the program. This would include setting the vision for students, parent support groups, and staff."*

**Dr. Scott Deppe, very recently retired, former Director of Bands, Lamar University**

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