



# **Texas Bandmasters Association Convention/Clinic July 22-24, 2021**

## **The Total Band Program**

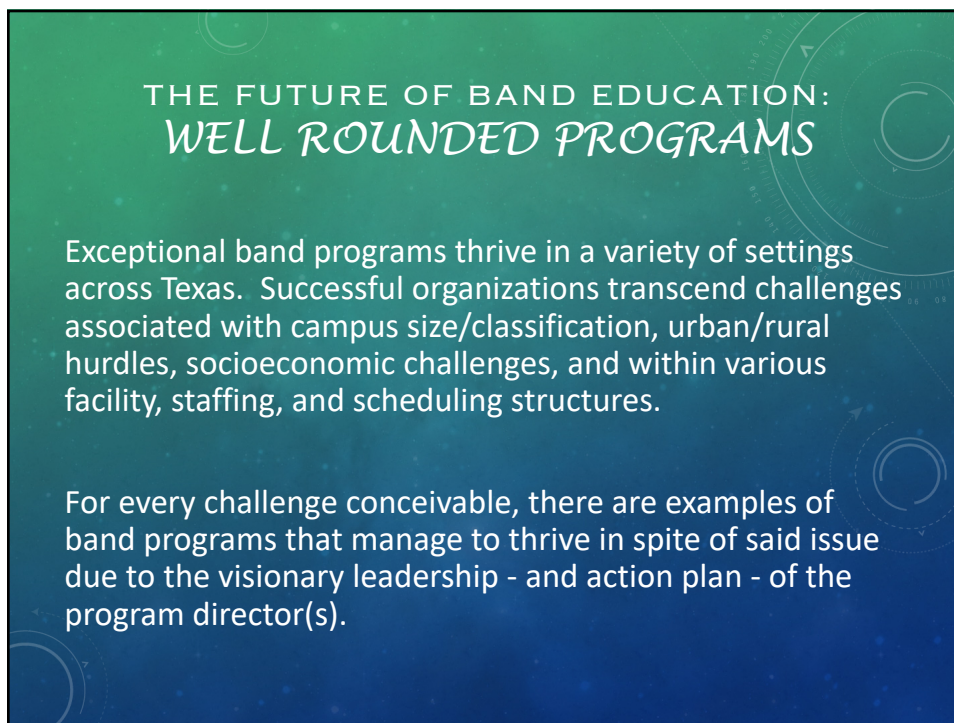
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**HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER - SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**



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## SIMPLY INDISPENSABLE

Band (music) programs are most likely to be perceived as vitally important to the scholastic environment when there is clear and compelling evidence of –

- STUDENT ENRICHMENT - program enrollment demonstratively enhances and enriches students' lives
- PERFORMANCE IMPACT - organizational endeavors include regular presentation of high quality, accessible, well-programmed and duly-prepared (outstanding) performances
- INVESTMENT RETURN – band (music) programs should elevate the entire campus environment and help engage the surrounding community; band is a high investment program (staffing and scheduling, equipment and travel, facility needs, and time commitment for families)

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## THE GREATEST RESOURCE = *BEING RESOURCEFUL!*

- It is highly unlikely that programs would suddenly be recipients of too much funding, find themselves with too many students or instruments, or complain of too large a rehearsal facility, too much rehearsal time, etc. Every campus has blessings and challenges. *No matter the challenges at hand, directors have a daily opportunity to champion the cause for band (music) education. This is truly no different than the obstacles ALL educators are facing today.*
- EMBRACE the wabi-sabi (beauty of imperfection) of your setting when challenges do no direct harm or will not change in the foreseeable future.
- A resourceful program director utilizes all available resources and works to create resources where there are none or few.

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## COMPARISON IS THE THIEF OF JOY

(Too often) program directors *project feelings of dissatisfaction or disillusionment* due to direct comparison without context or ownership:

- “Band, you will just have to practice harder than Over Yonder Middle School to make the Region Band because all those students take private lessons.”
- “Percussionists - I’m going to need you to watch me extra close in this acoustic atrocity known as a gymnasium. Maybe one day this district will build nice facilities for music like they do for sports.”
- “I’ve told my principal all three years I’ve been at this school that we can’t compete with Uptown High School unless this district can find (\$XX,000-\$XXX,000) to support the marching band. Until then we just show up wherever we’re told and hope we don’t make the football playoffs...”
- “I’m looking to move to a school/district/community where there are better schools and students who care. They just don’t get it where I’m at.”

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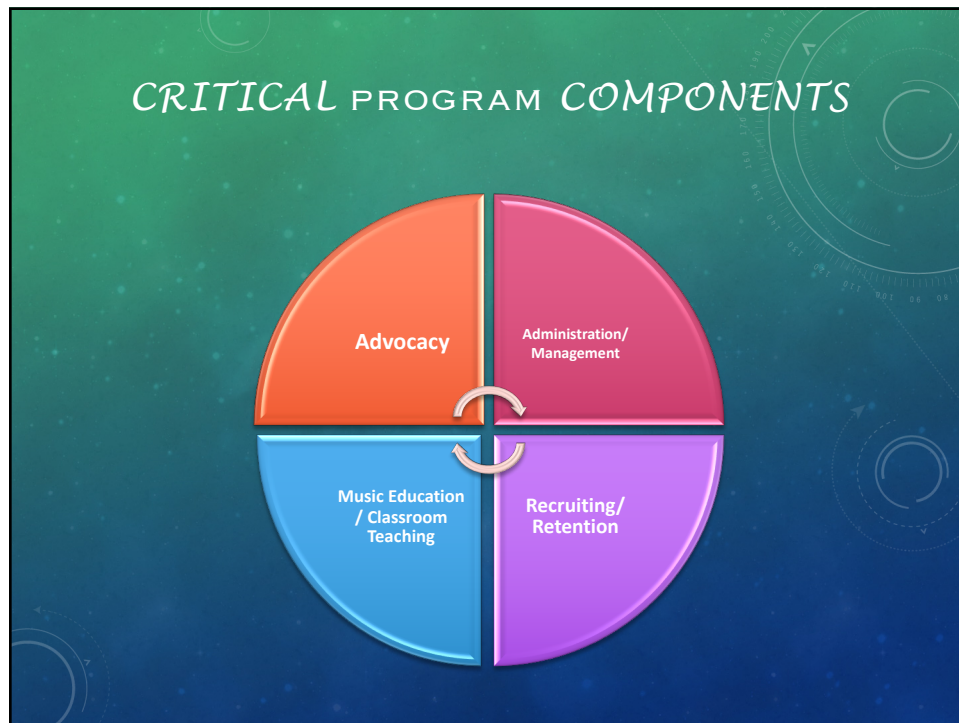
## SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS ARE BUILT FROM INSIDE OUT

- Organizations of substance and merit take TIME to build. There must be visionary leadership at the helm and consistent commitment to all aspects of the program. Total program development takes vision, grit, and time.

Programs CAN and should be built from the INSIDE OUT.  
i.e., 1. WHO WE ARE, 2. WHAT WE DO, 3. HOW WE DO IT

- The overall success of our programs is dependent upon our understanding and active engagement in the cornerstone components that support and sustain our existence →

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## I. ADVOCACY

- We are the agents best equipped to foster awareness and appreciation for our programs - including on our campuses, across the school district, and within the community
- It is our DUTY to actively demonstrate the importance of music education- this is NOT someone else's JOB... Program directors and student members are the greatest assets in this endeavor
- Sometimes we receive more recognition and appreciation when we are away from home. Seek earnest service opportunities (no need to post..) and shine light upon other organizations - be visible supporters for ALL music, arts, all programs on campuses

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## ADVOCACY (CONT.)

- Utilize readily accessible resources (newsletters, district publications, websites, community bulletin boards) to promote the activities and achievement of the students
- Seek performance opportunities for your students in the community and on campus (large ensembles, small groups, individuals). Consider performing before faculty meetings, school board meetings and for district and community events from time to time throughout the year. That National Anthem request, Veteran's Day performance, or community parade exhibition HELPS THE SUPPORT CAUSE for all!

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## II. ADMINISTRATION/MANAGEMENT

- Excellent program administration can result in a positive and professional image of the organization
- *Thoughtful calendar management and efficiently worded mass communication efforts* can have an incredibly positive impact upon perception of the program; we must respect students' time, academic pursuits, and family life/other interests – this has never been more important
- In the end, more is not always more...

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### ADMINISTRATION/MANAGEMENT (CONT.)

- Cultivate positive relationships with administrators - stop by the principal's office just to say 'hello' or to let him/her know you appreciate their support; lend a hand to busy AP's and be mindful of the scope of their roles
- "When there's a will..." Do whatever it takes to provide for your program and students through contextual planning, organization and forethought; this is even more important than funding
- Directors should be actively engaged in booster meetings and endeavors. Parents should positively represent their program (as well as all band programs) in public settings

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### III. RECRUITING/RETENTION

- Band (music) directors must be recognizable figures in their communities and must have some presence a feeder campuses or events (MS ->HS, HS ->MS)
- We must stay absolutely informed about state/district credit requirements and be a resource for credit-related information with parents, students, and campus counselors. Be 'in the know' and answer questions in earnest for students with multiple interests
- Maintain current, accurate enrollment records and analyze retention data; remain vigilant to identify membership patterns within sections, classes, neighborhoods, feeder schools, during certain times of year, etc.

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## RECRUITING/RETENTION (CONT.)

- Current students must feel that they are a part of a worthwhile endeavor! They should feel that their time is respected, their efforts are recognized, and should readily be able to experience intrinsic rewards of membership regardless of skill level
- Sustain an open dialogue with your students about overall membership commitment and goals for the program (THEY will tell you why students quit... be prepared for any answer). Try to identify root causes of apathy, disenchantment, boredom, and stress

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## IV. MUSIC EDUCATION

- This is the area in which music educators feel most comfortable- our daily instructional time is our 'bread and butter'- relish the opportunity to TEACH students
- ANY amount of time students engage in band class or rehearsal can be UNIQUE and SPECIAL and VALUABLE
- There are NO BAD REHEARSALS (we know this now...)

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## MUSIC EDUCATION- CURRICULUM

- Rehearsals should provide DAILY opportunities for instrumental and ensemble development- fundamental methods and literature selected will either enable or inhibit these efforts
- Committed instrumental training will expand literature opportunities. An inverse philosophy can result in improper pedagogy as well as potential decline in confidence and overall performance level – as well as the morale of the ensemble
- *Concert PERFORMANCES* are critical, curricular components of our programs. We must prepare and put forth performances day one 'til day done. Educate parents/students/admin about suitability and perimeters (no beginner parades(!)) by demonstrating process and progress in 'informance' settings early in the school year.

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## MUSIC EDUCATION (CONT.)

- **Beyond the music** curriculum, endeavor to provide daily instruction in the areas of discipline, focus, awareness, empathy, and self-confidence through the development of individual and ensemble skills - this can be done whether rehearsals are 45 min twice a week or 90 min every day
- BE CONCISE and CREATIVE in rehearsals. Students are quick to respond and learn when called upon to do so! Establish a routine, don't waste time or hold court, bring positive energy to the classroom. Directors must BE PREPARED FOR REHEARSAL!

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## MUSIC EDUCATION- LITERACY

- **Music literacy** can only be cultivated if the students are encouraged to read on a regular basis. This can be a few measures out of a rhythm book or two lines a day of level appropriate literature. Read anything for the sake of literacy in addition to the strategic pedagogical plan! Sight reading is not something we should do only in preparation for UIL contest
- Foster an active small ensemble/chamber program for reading purposes. Flexible duet books can be one of the most valuable additions to your music library.  
*Encourage live performance of new material in non-evaluative settings. Play for fun sometimes!*

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## MUSIC EDUCATION- ENGAGEMENT

- **Select methods that support your musical ideals and invite the students to participate**- give them OWNERSHIP in the process; avoid pursuing accomplishment that reflects only the effort of the conductor/ director. Embrace a Socratic ensemble environment if you feel you can manage it! This initially requires patience and the utilization of strategic questioning strategies in small doses
- Students become more engaged when they are allowed to contribute to the forward motion of the rehearsal. Have pairs of students provide feedback to one another. Hear individuals DAILY, even if only briefly
- Scope and sequence are important! **We must DEFINE expectation before we DEMAND them of our students**

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## MUSIC EDUCATION - COMPETITION

- Competition/festival can be a wonderful tool to promote excellence and for students learn about a variety of musical styles and performance practices in your area/state
- If we elect to participate in competitive or evaluative events, and our students show up to perform, the day will have been a win for the program and for music education regardless of subjective outcome
- Students can be taught to value internal assessment and feedback more than they do external (adjudicators, crowd, etc.). This almost always results in higher performance standards for the organization

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## BAND (MUSIC / ARTS) ≠ SPORTS

Here's what band (music) directors know and what must be shared with the students, families and communities we serve:

- There is no win/loss record in band
- All members have the potential to win every day
- Winning in band does not require another student or program to be defeated

All members in all sections can be encouraged to feel a tremendous sense of pride and accomplishment at the conclusion of rehearsal, following an audition or after an evaluation performance, regardless of chair order, rating, ranking, or placement.

Director disappointment cannot/should not dictate reaction to contest results in a context that disregards students' effort and growth – otherwise, the students will stop trying and growing.

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“Happiness is not a matter of intensity  
but of balance, order,  
rhythm and harmony.”

*Thomas Merton*

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## RECOMMENDED READING LIST

- *The Six Thinking Hats*- Edward de Bono
- *The Alchemist*- Paulo Coelho
- *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*- Dr. Stephen R. Covey
- *The Art of Happiness*- Dalai Lama/ Howard Cutler
- *Linchpin*- Seth Godin
- *Who Moved my Cheese?*- Spencer Johnson, M.D
- *The Joy of Inspired Teaching*- Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser
- *The Giving Tree*- Shel Silverstein
- *The Power of Now*- Eckhart Tolle

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