



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

**It Starts with Culture! Building
Program Culture Strong Enough to
Overcome a Pandemic**

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HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER - SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS



Texas Bandmasters Association Convention & Clinic

It Starts with Culture:

Building a Culture Strong Enough to Overcome a Pandemic

Saturday, July 24, 2021 - 8:00 AM - CC214

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The On-Demand Video Clinic follows this handout. Please utilize the video for further elaboration of the material below.

At the foundation of any successful organization, a standard underlying theme is the establishment and protection of organizational culture. Strong and positive organizational culture creates a collective “why” within the members of the organization AND can help the organization withstand hardship. These hardships can often be out of our control (i.e. a global pandemic), BUT a positive band culture will not only help you withstand obstacles, but will also help the organization utilize them for further growth.

Relationships

Healthy and positive relationships are EVERYTHING when looking at the culture of your program

- Staff to Staff
 - Assistant Lens
 - Constant support is key
 - Be willing to disagree appropriately
 - Head Director Lens
 - Constant support and mentorship
 - Be willing to have the difficult conversations
 - Delegate...it builds trust with others
- Staff to Student

- Engrain the culture of the band hall into the students from Day One of beginning band
- Build a rapport that makes students feel comfortable participating in rehearsal
 - Great teacher-student relationships improve intrinsic motivation
- **Make every student feel accepted**
- Provide students with choices
- Learn something about every child (non-band related)
- Student to Student
 - Facilitate opportunities for students to interact outside of rehearsal
 - Utilize the leadership team and train concepts of relationships being the foundational concept of leadership
 - Student to student connection is the reason MANY students participate in band. Taking time for it will pay off in building your program
- Staff to Parent
 - Effective and timely communication builds strong relationships with parents
 - Transparency and honesty
 - Small talk can turn into big support! It's part of the job to get to know your parent community
 - Keep it professional
- Staff to Administration
 - "Professionally Personal"
 - Figure out the administration's communication style
 - Focus on student well-being and performance
 - Establish trust
 - Invite them to see what is happening in the band hall, not just performances
 - Acknowledge their presence at performances

Embrace the Process/Not the Product

- Evaluate how you are utilizing the bulk of your time...
 - The learning/rehearsal process is where you will spend the majority of time with your students
 - The environment that you utilize for the majority of your time=Band Culture
 - Rehearse wisely my friends... (and positively!)
- Be process focused, not competitively focused
 - Competitive stress doesn't just wear down directors, it wears down students
 - Build a culture that is process focused with goals that are measurable by the directors and students
 - Outside achievements are just byproducts of the process

Performance/Musicianship

- Do the kids love music when they leave?
 - Even if they don't pursue music afterwards...
 - Create lifelong music allies
 - Set high expectations
 - It's ok to be demanding in the framework of inspiring the students and offering the tools to make them successful
 - Give the students varied performance opportunities
 - Play varied literature
 - Provides a more well-rounded education and will appeal to different tastes

Evaluation/Reflection

- Retention
 - Retention is one of the key metrics to analyze culture within your organization
 - Often, as band directors, we can take to take it personally when we don't retain students
 - Take a deep breath and analyze why students might be leaving. Pivot and proceed forward.
- Recruitment
 - Be a local celebrity on every campus
 - Your consistent visibility and association with students in every grade level can be a comforting factor for students as they switch campuses
 - Have an exciting web presence
 - Websites, videos (with testimonials), etc.
 - Change up the routine
 - Trends change every day!
 - Get help from previous teachers
 - 5th grade teachers are your best resource!
 - Have current students send letters to new students
 - Assign accountability partners
 - Teach at multiple campuses for a day
- Student Feedback
 - This can be solicited globally or through targeted conversations
 - Utilizing large program activities such as leadership auditions to solicit student feedback on the band program
 - Being open to student feedback is difficult, but can be very beneficial to program culture

- Parent Communication - "How's your inbox looking?"
 - Often times, the amount of email you get can be a direct reflection of your level of communication and your culture
- Stakeholder Feedback (Admin/teachers)
 - Frequent visits to administrative offices can help you gauge the perception of your program with campus administration
 - Email the teachers - "Let us know how we can help support you so that our band students can be academically successful."
 - Development of an academic grade monitoring system with students can help pave the way for effective communication and feedback with teachers