



**Texas Bandmasters Association  
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**A View from Both Sides of the Fence!  
HS and MS Directors Working  
Together to Get Kids to the Next Step:  
High School Band**

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

# ***A View from Both Sides of the Fence! HS and MS Directors Working Together to Get Kids to the Next Step: High School Band***

## **Presented by:**

Jarrett Lipman, *Claudia Taylor “Lady Bird” Johnson High School* (est. 2008)

Bernard Rosenberg, *Frank Tejeda Middle School* (est. 2001)

Kim Rosenberg, *David Lee “Tex” Hill Middle School* (est. 2014)

**Why are we here?** To share our experiences over the last thirteen years building the Claudia Taylor Johnson Band Cluster to help other clusters strengthen bonds between the middle school and high school band directors. Clusters that operate as a team will achieve success retaining band members from grades six to twelve, and create lasting memories for their students during those seven years.

## **Vertical alignment; Horizontal progression**

Vertical alignment creates continuity and familiarity for the band member from beginner class through high school graduation. This creates a smooth progression for the student as they move from year to year and campus to campus.



## **The Claudia Taylor Johnson Cluster aka “CTJ” Cluster**

- North East Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas
- Tejeda opened in 2001 as a feeder to Reagan High School
- Claudia Taylor Johnson opened in 2008 as the seventh comprehensive high school in NEISD, splitting from Reagan
- From 2008-2014, Tejeda was a 100% feeder and Bush was a 20% feeder
- “Tex” Hill opened in the fall of 2014 as the fourteenth middle school in NEISD
- Currently, both Hill and Tejeda are 100% feeders for Johnson
- Lopez is the current dual language middle school for Johnson and sends several students
- Until 2020, Bradley sent several students to Johnson as part of the dual language program

## **The “7-year Journey”**

Focus on creating a band experience in your cluster as a 7-year journey that encourages students to pursue music for life as they move from grade to grade.

- Create camaraderie between older and younger students through peer mentoring programs
- Pair high school with middle schools students to ease the transition from 8th to 9th grade or 9th to 10th grade depending on campus structure
- Consider pairing 8th grade students with 6th grade students to help retention
- High school feels invested in middle school, middle school shares success of high school
- Handing down traditions, expectations, and the culture
- Encourage students to pursue band beyond their 7-year journey, whether or not they will major in music or not. Inspire life-long musicians.

### **Values...what really matters in your cluster?**

- Programs are a reflection of your love for your students and relationships with your colleagues
- A love for music
- A high standard of excellence
- Establish positive relationships peer to peer
- Learning conflict resolution skills
- Discover the power of goal setting
- Create a sense of family
- Build self confidence
- Provide life experiences and life lessons

***Positive working relationships can lead to friendships.*** What begins as a functional partnership can evolve into so much more through patience, compromise, and an overwhelming desire to support what's best for kids.

### **High School Director Visibility at Feeder Programs**

- Visiting your middle schools is an investment in your future
- It takes effort and requires going above and beyond your “contractual duties as assigned”
- Building strong relationships with staff and campus administration in cluster supports kids staying engaged as they transition from middle school to high school or junior high
- Visit the middle schools at least 2-3 times per week
- Visit each of the bands if they are split up
- Visit the beginners from time to time so they know who you are
- Invite middle school students to the high school to play with the bands and bring high school students to the middle school to serve as role models
- Keep it positive and professional and work through conflicts or differences of opinion
- Never ever give up.

### **What can vertical teaching look like?**

***Identify the strengths of each teacher and “distribute the wealth.”***

- In a model where one band director teaches 6-12, consistency is a given; how can we learn from this and copy the positive aspects?
- Distribute strengths across the board; woodwind work with woodwind, brass work with brass, percussion work with percussion whenever possible across campuses
- Establish a schedule that allows travel between campuses
- Align master schedule between middle and high school, or multiple campuses including elementary, middle, and high school
- Share resources and find ways to utilize the strengths of each director to problem solve issues in ensembles and beginner teaching
- Work with campus administration and district administration to replace “duty” with visiting the middle or high school campuses to create total alignment
- Visiting the feeders creates comfort for the middle school kids as they “imprint”

### **What does vertical teaching NOT have to look like?**

***Not a “top-down” model or dictatorship from the high school down to middle school***

- Use caution with the concept of a middle school “feeder”
- The goal should be consistency not conformity; be open to change and new ideas
- Allow each instructor to bring their strengths to the table; maximize what each person can do and improve upon weaknesses through teamwork
- Compromise breeds ownership

### **Create a personalized experience for each band member**

***High School Directors get to know each incoming family as you would a client. Know their location, grades, and other activities. Middle School Directors assist with this and work to achieve this with incoming fifth grade classes through studying elementary data.***

- Schedule a meeting with each incoming family to discuss concerns and introduce yourself
- Offer to work with guidance counselors to create a student's course load
- Each student's involvement will be slightly different, how can you personalize
- Coaches work to keep each student in their program ... so should you!

### **Keep kids engaged from year to year**

- Make sure students and families know the benefits of being in band program
- Use “instrument petting zoos” to recruit incoming students from elementary school; high school students can assist with teaching young kids to play instruments and get them excited
- Create experience nights for middle school kids to learn about high school band; try band out with no commitment and learn about it
- Build bonds with middle and high school students through “side by side” rehearsals where you combine groups to make music together
- If you have more than one middle school in a cluster, have those two middle schools do things together before high school to create that sense of team and family early on
- Middle school students come to high school football games to play in the stands

***Allow students to participate in band, athletics, JROTC, choir, orchestra, theater, debate, or whatever else they want to. Don't make them choose.***

### **Aligned Instruction and Goals**

Create a band hall environment where kids **want** to be.

- Encourage kids to be in the band hall early and stay late to practice; those habits begin in middle school and carry through high school
- Fun doesn't mean anarchy; focus doesn't mean militance - find the middle ground and ultimately allow kids to be kids and make great music together
- Align concepts and terminology between instructors, but allow for individual flavor and let each teacher's voice come through
- Agree upon tonal concepts, creating characteristic sounds, counting and rhythm expectations, consistency in fundamentals, and anything that creates a smooth transition to high school