



**Texas Bandmasters Association
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**Partners in Crime: Optimizing the Role
of Assistant Director**

CLINICIANS:

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HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER - SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Partners in Crime: Optimizing the Role of Assistant Band Director
Britni Hummel, Jack Zellar, Amanda Enriquez

1. Relationships

- a. Get to know your staff!
- b. We always talk about how our students are not going to show up day after day and work hard for us if we don't have a good positive relationship. We talk about getting to know them, their interests, and building a connection. That is important for us as a team as well.
- c. Have empathy.

2. Communication (Clarity is Kindness)

- a. It's an expectation that you keep constant and consistent communication.
- b. Find a time that works to regularly meet. This will be something that may be determined by the head director. If you are a new assistant go ahead and ask if there is a good time that you could meet each week? I guarantee having this time set is going to benefit everyone in the long run.
- c. Communicate what the rehearsal expectations are for your assistants
- d. It's an expectation that you ask questions!! REALLY!!
- e. It's so helpful if you communicate- even your concerns.
- f. Logistical or Role expectations
- g. Mentoring/Team Teaching Expectations - find how best to coach your assistants and their groups if you have a certain expectation already in mind.

3. Flexibility

- a. Head director perspective: You never know what is going to come up!
- b. Assistant perspective: Keep an eye out for what your head director does in case they need to be out
- c. Assistant perspective: Helping with even the most miniscule task helps build a sense of trust. You are someone reliable that your head director can trust to get the job done. Be willing to do things that are not expected of you.
- d. Be confident enough to say "I've got this, don't worry."
- e. Once you get the hang of your role, start to anticipate needs so even if/when things come up you're ahead of the game.
- f. Remember that you are doing things for the TEAM. If you have an "I'm in it for myself" mindset, you lose out on opportunities to build trust. Take the "Me" and turn it into "We"

4. Collaboration

- a. Help your head director implement their vision for the program, but also be someone that they can bounce ideas off of or brainstorm with. As an assistant your job is to promote the plan/vision your head director wants to establish and enable that process in as many ways possible.
- b. Be present in rehearsals even if that isn't an expectation!! If you are an assistant you can take turns in the top rehearsals, and in each others rehearsals.
- c. Don't be afraid to collaborate within the other band classes if your head director has that type of team teaching culture established.
- d. During your meetings, don't forget to set aside time to brainstorm upcoming events, rehearsals or teaching strategies. Sometimes I get stuck with a beginner and I need some more ideas. Talk about the kids!! Two or three heads are definitely better than one!

5. Create a positive work environment

- a. Be thoughtful, empathetic and understanding.
- b. These are literally your work partners! Sometimes that means sharing things that are going on in your personal life as well. This allows you to build more trust and a personal relationship with your team.
- c. Don't be afraid to do things outside the office! A positive work environment can be/should be built within the band hall and outside the band hall. Take even the work meetings to another location!
- d. Taking days off mindset-give permission to be human
- e. Celebrate each other!

6. **Success**

- a. "It is my job as a head director to help my assistants feel successful overall in the context of our particular program."
- b. "It is my job as an assistant director that the head director's vision moves forward successfully."
(This process is always ongoing)
- c. Success looks different for every program and everyone, and your results do not define your self-worth!! The top band teaching process is VERY different from a sub non varsity band teaching process!

Hopefully taking these six categories into consideration can help optimize the team dynamic to really help you be as successful as possible!