



**Texas Bandmasters Association
Convention/Clinic July 21-23, 2022**

**Secret Steps to Building an Ultra
Successful Small School Band**

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

Secret Steps for Building an Ultra-Successful Small School Band

1

Texas Bandmasters Association Clinic

Thursday, July 21, 2022

11:00 am CC 217

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- 1) Small School Band vs Rural (Country) Band
All small school bands are not created equal. Some small school bands are suburban schools with the same resources as large schools i.e., private lessons, funding, etc. Some small school bands are rural bands where you are the only music person in the school. The Pecos HS band was 83 miles from a Whataburger.... That's rural!
- 2) You... the director do everything!
What are your jobs? Bus Driver, Custodian, Youth Minister, Bookkeeper, Instrument Repair person, Psychologist, Librarian, Fundraiser, Drill Writer, Program Coordinator, Parent Liaison, Truck Driver.... the list is endless... OH, BAND DIRECTOR too!
- 3) I start every meeting with, "It would be cool if _____?"
- 4) There are 2 kinds of directors.
Those who say "This is what we have (our resources... budget, kids, parents, location, size of school) and that's all we can do" and those who say "This is what we want to do, how do we... raise the \$, recruit the kids, engage the parents etc.?"
- 5) Find ANY help you can. Student leaders, church choir director, cheerleader sponsor, retired musicians, former band members. ANYONE who can help. Partner with a local college or university to supply help... student teachers, master classes, private instruction. Use your ESSER or Title IV monies to help fund these programs.
- 6) Band IS the community: YOU are the Fine Arts for your community
Even in this internet driven world the small school band is the main source of music for your community. That's good news and not so good news.
- 7) Kids are Kids
Band kids are band kids whether they are in a small school or large school. GROW WHERE YOU ARE PLANTED!
- 8) Achievement doesn't know size of band or school size!
Good teaching is good teaching no matter what size of school. GROW WHERE YOU ARE PLANTED!

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2

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- 9) Who do you accept in Band? EVERYONE
You are making a connection with students that a large band may not make. In a small school band, the idea of cutting performers or having alternates in marching band doesn't exist. We play everyone.
- 10) Create a relationship with your admin and work with them for a favorable schedule.
Band and Athletics tend to be the largest groups on campus. Hopefully, your admin. will recognize that and schedule the remaining classes around these two groups. Yes, there are exceptions... dual credit, AP, etc. but HOPEFULLY, the admin. can help.
- 11) Small school kids are in EVERYTHING.
So are the large school band students. Cultivate an atmosphere of cooperation; work with every program.
- 12) INSPRE Attendance
Be aware of the time commitment and use your time wisely. Start on time and end on time. It's helpful to make announcements first so the kids know they will be missing something if they are not on time. Use your student leadership to create a culture in your room where tardies and absences are not acceptable. Educate the PARENTS on WHY it is important to be at rehearsal. Create a system that starts on time... with or without the director. Use your student leadership.
- 13) Hold the Instrument Correctly
Simple to say but somewhat difficult to do. Be diligent and remind the kids in a positive way. Ask: "Why do I want you to hold the instrument correctly? Because you sound better".
- 14) Sit Up
See #13 above.
- 15) People hear what they see
No french horns? No problem! Rewrite the part for sax/trumpet/trombone.... then get some kids to hold a horn. You don't get credit for what you can't see.

Secret Steps for Building an Ultra-Successful Small School Band

3

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- 16) Adjust the parts for better success
Even the ultra-successful big school bands adjust the parts. If there are parts that just don't fix, then you will need to make a choice. Do you play what is written and leave the flaw in the music or do you rewrite the part and let another instrument cover the part?
- 17) Flex arrangements
One of the few positive things coming out of the pandemic is flex music. Use flex music for a better student musical experience.
- 18) Daily Fundamental Drill....Key word... DAILY!

Daily fundamentals

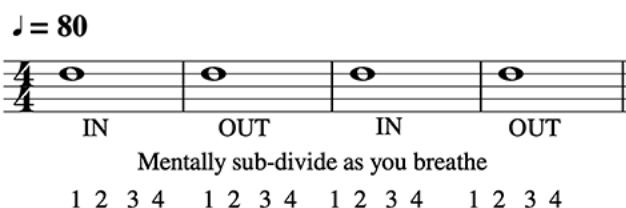
(a) Count to 4



After the band counts better, then begin counting some of the complex rhythm patterns in the music.

Breathing

Stand in open 2nd- Relaxed upper body.
Use your hand as a visual representation of what your air is doing.
Concentrate on the "M" in your hand.
In 4, Out 4.
When breathing in, concentrate on the cold spot.
Work on keeping your tongue down, upper body relaxed.
Be aware of shoulder movement... Try not to move shoulders.



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4

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Play Unison Lines.

Full Band play 'F'

Take a 2-count breath

Be diligent about starting together

Always play your best, most resonate sound

Listen to your trio... THEN listen to your quintet

Balance in groups

Group 1- Tubas, Bassoon, Bari Sax, Bass Clarinet

Group 2- Baritone, Trombone, Tenor Sax

Group 3- French Horn, Alto Sax

Group 4- Trumpet

Group 5- Clarinet, Oboe

Group 6- Flute, Piccolo

Concentrate on Balance and Tuning

Be diligent about stopping together

Be aware of EVERY part of the note Beginning, Middle, End

Be certain the students are playing only the note.

No additional noise on the note.

Listen for the overtones.

FREEZE...Keep your vowel (oral cavity) set and consistent.

RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO MOVE ON...

It gets more difficult when the notes and rhythms change.

Echo Buzz

Woodwinds Play 'F' Brass Buzz 'F'

Flute

Woodwinds Play

Trumpet

Brass Buzz

$\text{♩} = 80$

Exhale 1&2
Breathe 3&4
Be diligent about
starting and stopping

FREEZE
Stop Note on 1
Exhale on 2
Breathe 3&4

5

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♩ = 80
#8 Legato 16th's (They are always legato 16th's)

Concentrate on
Full/Resonate Sound
Make the last note
touch the silence.
FULL VALUE!

FREEZE
Sub Divide
BREATHE

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6

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- 19) It's all about balance/tuning... EVERY note in EVERY register

Flute

B♭ Cornet

Horn in F

Trombone

Tuba

- 20) There are NO dynamics

Always play your best sound. THEN after the band plays better, expand the dynamic range.

- 21) Have a breathing plan on EVERYTHING!

The kids play a pneumatic instrument. The instrument requires air. Use lots of air...it's free

- 22) Play the hard stuff

Your students CAN perform the difficult music. Make a PLAN on how to TEACH the music. Look for patterns in the music and teach the patterns in your daily drill. Compose a rhythm sheet, tuning sheet, rest sheet... whatever is giving you a challenge.... make a daily drill sheet and work on the concepts, THEN apply the concepts to the music.

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7

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- 23) Slow is Fast, Fast is Slow

Be ULTRA DILIGENT about using a metronome and a tuner. TAKE YOUR TIME! OH... use a tuner! A 12-wheel tuner.

- 24) Perform often

Experience tells us that if we have a concert in 90 days the music will come together on day 89. If we play every 30 days, it comes together on day 29. Performing often requires the band to read better.... which will make the band play better..

- 25) MARCHING BAND

Marching Band is easy. In its most fundamental form, marching band is connect the dots... only with people. The line is made up of plumes, shoulders, body, feet. Watch the shadows for WAY better interval.

- 26) Be diligent and purposeful about EVERYTHING.

Think about body alignment, step off's, stops, instrument alignment, feet, hands, shoulders...EVERYTHING,
Try to be more organized and improve daily.
Get your student leaders involved daily.

- 27) The exercises don't make the band better... YOU make the band better.

You must decide on the amount of time and energy you want to sacrifice in order to have an Ultra-Successful Band. It IS a sacrifice to have a incredible Small School Band. How much time do you want to take away from your spouse and family to give to the children in the band program? There are no cheat codes ... it's hard work for the band to be Ultra-Successful. As you get older and a more proficient teacher everything will be quicker and easier.

- 28) TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF!!

I found, in retirement, that it's ok to rest. It's ok to not be at everything. Divide the duties with your directors. Let someone go home after the half. Switch out on the late nights. Have more FUN!

- 29) Find a Mentor