



**Texas Bandmasters Association  
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**Success with Your Middle School Band**

**CLINICIANS:  
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# Success with Your Middle School Band

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*“Teaching kids to count is fine, but teaching them what counts is best”  
-Bob Talbert*

## **High Expectations = Small Details**

- It all starts in BEGINNING BAND
- Setting up classroom environment from the start (how they enter room, unwavering expectations on the tiny details (posture, how to count))
- Creating safe environment where students feel safe to make a mistake
  - Celebrate mistakes
  - Learn from them - talk about the WHY
  - Ask input from the kids to get their opinions and to get them thinking on a higher level

## **Before the year starts....**

- Make sure your assistants/staff are all on the same page in regards to EVERYTHING (pedagogy, counting system, how to sit in chair, etc).
- Make a Google Spreadsheet with responsibilities for each assistant so there is no confusion (inventory, private lessons, handbook, etc)
- Designate a time each week that you can meet with your assistants/staff and check on them. Perhaps it is every Monday during conference time, regardless you must meet!
- Have a google spreadsheet or whiteboard for accountability goals for staff or tasks that need to be completed

## **Beginning Band-**

- Get kids on the RIGHT instruments
- Homogeneous classes as much as possible
- Focus on TONE- 1st and foremost
  - Throughout year, reinforce embouchure, posture, hand position, use of air, rhythm, counting, literacy, technique, instrument maintenance
- Supplement with instrument specific handouts
  - Warm ups, scale sheets, lip slurs, register slurs, etc..
- Mastery in the most basic of concepts (posture, hand position)
  - Have tests to celebrate those that excel in these

- Tuning tendencies
  - Teach from the start- kicking out, etc.
  - Assignments
- Private lessons
  - Optional and not required
  - Scholarship assistance is available
- Scale and Rhythm Goals by end of the year
  - Every section playing at least 8 major scales
  - Every section playing chromatic
  - Smallest Rhythmic Goal- counting and performing 16th note rhythms
- Use of Band Aides to help with modeling, fixing posture and hand positions.
- Holiday “Extra Credit” assignments to keep kids playing
- All beginners participate in Solo Contest at the end of the year
- Beginner Select Band
  - Spring Semester

<i>Beginners</i>	<i>Begin</i>	<i>Cooley</i>	<i>Herrings</i>
<b>Method Book</b>	Essential Elements 2000	Essential Elements 2000	Essential Elements 2000
<b>Theory</b>	Bandable Tech	Readymade Music Literacy - formerly Rob Chilton Theory	5-Minute Theory
<b>Practice Records</b>	150 minutes to start then will graduate to 180 min by end of year	150 minutes to start then will graduate to 180 min by end of year	180 minutes
<b>Chair Tests</b>	No	Occasionally after Thanksgiving Break	Fewer Chair Test <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Caption awards               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Posture, Hand Position, Foot tap, Tone, Articulation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Passoffs/recordings</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Beginner Select Band</b>	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Solo Contest</b>	Yes, for my campus only	Yes, for my campus only	Yes, Leander ISD Solo Contest
<b>Objective Sheets</b>	Yes	Yes in 2023	Yes

## Varsity Bands-

- Every student attends a one-hour sectional once a week
  - Instrument specific warm-ups
  - Instrument specific technique exercises
  - Weekly sectional assignments
  - Skills Testing/Objective Sheets
- Warm-up everyday
  - Stress the importance- students need to know the why
  - Articulation/Note Length drills daily
  - Warm-up directly related to music
- Daily Assignments
  - Written down DAILY
- Recording Assignments
  - All bands participate
  - All require a metronome
  - Every recording is graded on a specific rubric
- Students participate in our Private Lesson Program
  - Optional and not required
  - Grant Assistance is available
- Students prepare for District and Region Band Auditions
  - Varsity band students required

<i>Varsity</i>	<i>Begin</i>	<i>Cooley</i>	<i>Herrings</i>
<b>Book Used</b>	Foundation of Superior Performance	Foundation of Superior Performance	Foundation of Superior Performance
<b>Individual class warm up time</b>	Yes- use Timer with Sections to structure	Yes- about 2 minutes after they have been trained.	Yes, AFTER they have been trained.
<b>Sectionals</b>	1 hour and 15 mins taught by me	1 hr- homogenous taught by Cooley	1 hour and 15 mins taught by Herrings
<b>Friday Full Band</b>	Weekly from the 1st Friday of the year - 4:30-5:45 PM	4:30-6PM Starts after TMEA until UIL	Weekly from the 1st Friday of the year - 4:30-5:45 PM
<b>Practice Records</b>	180 minutes	210 Minutes	210 Minutes
<b>Chair Tests</b>	No	Yes	No
<b>Objective Sheets</b>	Yes	Yes in 2023	Yes
<b>Passoffs/</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes

<b>Recordings</b>			
<b>Pullouts by Assistant</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>UIL</b>	End of April	End of March/beg of April	Beginning of April
<b>Solo Contest</b>	District Solo and Ensemble Contest in February	LISD Ensemble in February and Solos in May	Yes, Leander ISD Solo Contest
<b>Festival Participation</b>	Yes	1 a year	Recording years, more Festivals
<b>Clinician</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes

### Non Varsity Bands-

- Treat them as if they are just as important as the Varsity band. They are the assistant's top band.
- Everything the top band does, but at a slower/modified pace
- Review, Review Review
- More Objective Sheet Skills Tests
- Count/play rhythms from the first week of school
- Pass off a scale a week
- Sectionals once a week- Homogeneous whenever possible- use as an extension of beginner class

<b>Non-Varsity</b>	<b><i>Begin</i></b>	<b><i>Cooley</i></b>	<b><i>Herrings</i></b>
<b># of NV bands</b>	2	1	2
<b>Sectionals</b>	Yes- assistant	Yes- assistant does all for NV	Yes- assistant does all for NV
<b>Tuners on Stands in class?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Practice Records</b>	180 minutes	180 minutes	180 minutes
<b>Chair Tests</b>	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Pullouts in class</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Passoffs/ Recordings</b>	Yes, but less than Varsity	Yes	Yes
<b>District/ Region Process</b>	Encourage a select few to audition	Encourage a select few to audition	Many NV students audition

<b>UIL Participation</b>	Yes - early April for all three	Yes-early March	Yes, early March for SNV Early April for NV
<b>Solo and Ensemble</b>	District Solo and Ensemble in February	LISD Solo and Ensemble in May	LISD Solo and Ensemble in May
<b>Festival Participation</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Clinician</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Other things we do to MAKE BAND FUN!**

- Lock-Ins
- Main Event/Pinstack/Andretti's/ Dave and Busters
- Rent out Movie Theater
- Medieval Times
- Top Golf
- Rewards and Prizes
- Band Bucks
- Sarcasm
- Buy lunch for students if they complete a big challenge (They love that Chick-Fil-A)
- Challenges
- Trivia during transition times during class
- Change seating days
- Rehearse in a circle (have to also sit by someone else)
- Upside down scales
- Contests, i.e. speed contests, chromatic madness
- Tag Wars- coins they can win for pass offs and recognition
- Branding
- Let them design shirt (winner gets a gift card)
- Decorate lockers- Halloween and Christmas time
- Region Bingo
- Work closely with Coaches/Teachers so all kids are able to be apart of everything they want to be involved in
- Attend athletic games, choir concerts, ballet recitals, etc. to show support
- Care about each student- they are a human not a product

***SUCCESS DOESN'T COME FROM WHAT YOU DO OCCASIONALLY. IT COMES FROM WHAT YOU DO CONSISTENTLY!***