



**Texas Bandmasters Association
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**Guardening 101: Growing an Effective
Guard Program**

CLINICIANS:

Zachariah Jacobes, Joey Lucita

**Demo Group: Moe and Gene Johnson
High School Color Guard**

Introduction:

Moe & Gene Johnson HS opened its doors in the fall of 2019 making this spring the completion of year 4 for the campus. The Moe & Gene Johnson HS Color Guard began that inaugural year with 2 incoming sophomores that had Color Guard experience; during that first year membership grew to 22 members, 20 of which had never spun a piece of equipment. Over the next 4 years the program continued to grow, evolve and set a solid foundation for its future. That first year was cut short due to COVID when school was canceled, meaning the guard did not finish their first season. Year 2 was a very sparsely attended year with the majority of the students being virtual, thus creating new challenges for everyone. Year 3 was the first full year of in person school. Through the adversity of opening a new school, very little experience and navigating COVID the program has continued to grow and excel. The Moe & Gene Johnson Color Guard has won numerous Outstanding Color Guard awards during marching season, has been a TCGC and WGI Regional Champion, has been a TCGC State Finalist and TCGC State Champion. Additionally, the Guard has been a WGI Scholastic Open and Scholastic World Class National Semi-finalist and placed 6th in the WGI Color Guard World Championship Scholastic Open Class Finals.

BAND DIRECTOR PERSPECTIVE

Growth and Recruitment:

- A. "Bring a Friend" has been a consistent and solid recruitment technique. Each of the current members are asked to bring a friend to a rehearsal thus opening the door to new students as well as creating a venue for word of mouth to reach a larger audience.
- B. Announcements and flyers are used throughout campuses in the spring.
- C. Lunch - free spin at middle school campuses. Send a small number of students to MS campus for exposure of the program and equipment, answer questions, and develop relationships. (MS students often think that Color Guard carries the flags for the National Anthem at HS Football games)
- D. Campus performances such as a Middle School Recruitment tours, HS event performances, performances at band concerts, etc....
- E. What students look like during games and events helps encourage participation. We have to keep up visually with Dance, Cheer and others to not be overlooked.
- F. NO AUDITION - all we want is for the students to TRY! In addition to the no audition policy, if a student is interested they may join at any time during the year.

Facilities:

- A. Facilities are one of the largest hurdles to overcome. Finding time in a gymnasium is the most common item. Work with specific sport coaches as well as Campus Athletic Director and District Athletic Director if applicable to ensure students have time in campus facilities. It is important to have a positive working relationship and maintain constant communication.
- B. Work to develop not only a schedule but a policy used for determining priorities for facility usage. Example:
 - 1. All in-season athletic events for District Athletic Competitions and Practices
 - 2. UIL District-Region-State postseason Competitions
 - 3. All District-Wide Extracurricular Events and Practices (including cheer, color

- guard, dance, band, and drumline)
4. All off-season sport open gyms, skill sessions, and player development activities.
 5. Hays CISD District-Wide Summer Events such as Sports Specific Camps and Strength & Conditioning
- C. Adjust rehearsal goals based upon facilities available - cafeteria, bandhall, various locations on campus.
 - D. Off campus options - middle school and elementary facilities, community centers, YMCA, etc.....

Funding:

- A. Work to keep fees as low as possible, create opportunities for payments, sponsorships, donations and waivers. (never want lack of funds to be a reason a student does not choose to participate)
- B. Campus fee collection support tied to Homecoming, Prom and Walking at graduation.
- C. Budget - Color Guard vs Winter Guard. Advocation, Advocation, Advocation!!!
- D. Booster Club involvement

Staffing:

- A. Tech staff - hourly. The number of hours and events attended is based upon budget availability. Rehearsals, games, contests, and full day events.
- B. Part-Time or Full-time Para position as Guard Instructor.
- C. FTE Certified Teacher. High School and Middle School Color Guard classes. PE & Dance certification

Working for long term goals is part of the process while also focusing on current needs. It has been a long process with countless emails, conversations and meetings with community, board, and district administration to reach the current staffing and facilities position within Hays CISD. This is part of the continued development and growth of our Color Guard program.

Staffing: Starting this fall Moe & Gene Johnson HS has a Full Time Color Guard Director (Zach Jacobes) that is a certified teacher. Certified in Dance and PE allowing the ability to cover both state PE and Fine Arts required credits. Additionally, Color Guard will be offered as a class at the MS Campuses and taught by Mr. Jacobes during the school day. This fall there are currently over 100 students enrolled in Color Guard class grades 7-12 within the Moe & Gene Johnson vertical cluster.

Facilities: This past spring Hays CISD community passed a bond to build a Fine Arts Gymnasium located in the Fine Arts area of the school to be utilized by Color Guard and Dance. Scheduling options will be made available to other non Fine Arts organizations following a policy similar to the example listed above using a Fine Arts focus for that facility.

COLOR GUARD DIRECTOR PERSPECTIVE

Environment:

- A. **Supportive Community**: A positive color guard environment is built upon a supportive community of individuals who encourage and uplift each other.
- B. **Effective Communication**: Clear and open communication is vital in a positive environment. The instructors should provide constructive feedback and guidance to help performers improve their skills. Likewise, performers should feel comfortable expressing their concerns, ideas, and needs to the instructors or leadership team.
- C. **Encouragement and Positive Reinforcement**: Recognizing and celebrating achievements, both big and small, contributes to a positive atmosphere.
- D. **Growth Mindset**: Instead of focusing solely on outcomes, performers are encouraged to value the learning process, embrace challenges, and persist through setbacks.
- E. **Inclusive and Diverse Atmosphere**: Color Guard should be welcoming to individuals of all backgrounds, abilities, and experiences. Emphasizing respect, acceptance, and appreciation for individual differences helps create a vibrant and enriching atmosphere for everyone involved.
- F. **Balanced Expectations**: Instructors should set realistic goals and provide appropriate challenges, while considering the physical and emotional well-being of performers.
- G. **Make It Fun**: Lastly, a positive color guard environment fosters a sense of fun and enjoyment. While hard work and dedication are necessary, incorporating elements of joy, creativity, and excitement into rehearsals and performances enhances the overall experience.

By cultivating these elements, color guard programs can create a positive environment where performers can thrive, grow, and truly enjoy their experience. This positive environment, in turn, assists in both recruitment and retention of members.

Foundational Skills:

The foundational skills of color guard are the fundamental techniques and abilities that performers must develop and master to participate effectively in color guard routines and performances. These skills form the basis upon which more complex movements and routines are built.

Here are some key foundational skills of color guard:

- A. **Body Movement and Dance**: Color guard performers must develop strong body control and coordination. Body movement skills involve fluidity, grace, precision, and the ability to execute choreographed movements with proper posture and alignment.
- B. **Equipment Work**: Color guard involves manipulating various pieces of equipment, such as flags, rifles, sabers, and other props. Performers must develop dexterity, strength, and control to handle these equipment effectively. They learn to spin, toss, catch, and manipulate the equipment in synchronized and visually appealing ways, often combining equipment work with body movement.
- C. **Timing and Counting**: This skill is essential for maintaining synchronization with the rest of the ensemble and creating visually impactful moments during performances. Performers must learn to count beats accurately and execute movements, transitions, and equipment work with precise synchronization to the music.

- D. **Spatial Awareness**: Color guard performers must be aware of their position on the performance field and their relationship to other performers. They develop spatial awareness skills to create formations, execute movements, and maintain proper spacing during complex routines.
- E. **Performance Expression**: Color guard involves storytelling and artistic expression. Performers must learn to convey emotions, themes, and narratives through their facial expressions, body language, and overall performance quality.

Differentiation and Incorporation of Students

Skill-Based Groups: Divide the color guard into skill-based groups, such as beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. This allows instructors to tailor instruction and routines to the specific needs and abilities of each group. It also ensures that beginners receive foundational training while advanced students can focus on more challenging techniques.

- A. **Beginner Group**: This group consists of students who are new to color guard or have limited experience. Instructors focus on teaching fundamental techniques such as flag basics, basic spins, and simple choreography. Routines are designed to be accessible and gradually increase in complexity as students progress.
 - **Example routine for beginners**: Choreography might involve basic arm movements, turns, and simple tosses that gradually increase in difficulty as the routine progresses.
- B. **Intermediate Group**: This group comprises students who have mastered the basics and are ready for more challenging skills. Instructors introduce more complex flag spins, tosses, and combinations, as well as advanced body movement and dance techniques. Routines for this group involve increased coordination and require a higher level of precision.
 - **Example routine for intermediates**: A routine might include intermediate-level flag spins like horizontal figure eights and vertical tosses. It could incorporate more intricate footwork, turns, leaps, and more advanced choreography that emphasizes musicality and expression.
- C. **Advanced Group**: This group consists of experienced and skilled performers who are ready for advanced techniques and demanding routines. Instructors focus on refining and expanding the performers' skill set, incorporating advanced flag spins, complex tosses, intricate body movements, and challenging choreography.
 - **Example routine for advanced performers**: An advanced routine could feature difficult flag spins such as toss illusions, multiple tosses with intricate catch positions, and complex body work. The choreography might include fast-paced movements, intricate formations, and seamless transitions between different equipment and body elements.

In conclusion, if you have any further questions or inquiries, please feel free to reach out to us at joey.lucita@hayscisd.net and zachariah.jacobes@hayscisd.net we will be more than happy to assist you.