



**Texas Bandmasters Association  
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**Small School/Big Results: Tips and Tricks  
for Building a Successful  
Small School Band**

**CLINICIANS:**

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**Demo Group: Gonzales HS Band**

**Sponsor: ATSSB**

# Small School/Big Results

“Tips and Tricks for Building a Successful Small School Band”

Presented by:

Stan Mauldin, Ramon Parker and the Gonzales HS Band

- 1) Let's Agree: EVERY CHILD can learn and deserves a quality music education.
- 2) Let's also agree: Band kids have better discipline, better grades, better attendance, and their parents are more involved in school activities.
- 3) There MUST be a reason.  
What is your WHY!
- 4) YOUR BAND is the live music for your community. Perform often.  
Even in this internet driven world, the small school band is the main source of music for your community.
- 5) Kids are Kids  
People are social. Create a reason for students to be in your band.  
Band kids are band kids whether they are in a small school or large school.  
You must build TRUST with every student!
- 6) Build Your Leadership Team  
You can't do everything.  
Establish and develop your student leaders.  
Get the kids to help!
- 7) Challenge the kids!  
**Musically:** Everything starts with great TONE in every register!  
**Artistically:** Play in tune, with great balance with great tone.  
**Build technique:** Finger Busters, Clark Studies, Scales  
**Attendance:** Be aware of the time commitment and use your time wisely.  
Start on time and end on time. Use your student leadership team to help build a culture of good attendance.  
**Grades:** Get the leaders to help each other; have study groups, practice groups, support groups,
- 8) Achievement doesn't know size of band or school size!  
Good teaching is good teaching no matter what size of school.

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- 9) How do you recreate YOUR sound every day?  
How does it feel?  
How does your room feel? What is the environment in your rehearsals?  
How does it feel to sit up?  
How does it feel to play a perfect note?
- 10) Create a relationship with your admin and work with them for a favorable schedule, budget,  
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) Stan's secrets for success:  
Wouldn't it be cool if.....?  
You gotta show up.  
Be the most meticulous and most stubborn person in the room  
Plan EVERYTHING  
Rehearse Fundamentals (Both musical and visual)  
Hold the instrument correctly  
Sit Correctly  
Do the hard stuff first.  
GO SLOW! Slow is fast; Fast is slow  
Be quick but don't hurry... John Wooden  
Adjust for Success  
Fix it, change it, or take it out!  
Communicate with EVERYONE. Answer your emails/texts/phone  
Effort counts twice, Talent counts once.  
Practice is an adult activity. ASPT!  
You are out of time.  
Be brave & courageous  
Believe in the unlimited potential of a high school band student  
Take Action... NOW  
If it's too easy you need a bigger goal.  
Dream BIGGER!!  
Keep trying. Don't give up!  
Get 1% better every day  
You are a family.
- 13) Let's play!

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The Gonzales HS Band demonstrates their daily fundamental drill. Key word... DAILY

## Daily fundamentals

(a) Count to 4

♩ = 80

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

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

(Gonzales Band and Audience)

## Breathing

Stand in open 2<sup>nd</sup>- 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.

♩ = 80

IN OUT IN OUT

Mentally sub-divide as you breathe

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

(Gonzales Band and Audience)

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## Echo Buzz (Vibrations)

Woodwinds Play ‘F’ Brass Vibrate ‘F’

Flute  
Woodwinds Play

Trumpet  
Brass Buzz

## Play Unison Lines.

Flute

Trumpet

Before Starting Note  
Exale on 1 & 2  
Breathe on 3 & 4

Release on 1  
Exale on 2  
Breathe on 3 & 4

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 Building Exercises

- 1) Tuba
- 2) Low Brass
- 3) Low Reeds
- 4) Horns
- 5) Alto Sax
- 6) Trumpet
- 7) Clarinet/Oboe
- 8) Flute/Piccolo

Tubas HOLD play 4 counts, REST 4 counts (It’s really not a rest but you get the idea)  
ADD Low Brass 4 counts, rest 4 counts **LISTEN** for the **OVERTONE!**  
ADD Low Reeds listen for the overtone and the **INSTRUMENT COLORS**

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## Balance exercise #2

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 starting/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.

### SIT UP

RESIST THE FEELING TO MOVE ON...

**Don't move on until you have a great 'F'.** It gets more difficult when the the band changes notes and rhythms.

**The goal is to match tonal energy, color, volume, balance, pitch, quality of sound, resonance, hear overtone... this is what makes your band sound your band sound!**

**J = 80**  
#4 Articulation Legato /Touching Notes

Concentrate on Starting/Stopping notes  
Make the last note touch the silence.  
FULL VALUE!

FREEZE  
Sub Divide

**J = 80**  
#5 Lifted/Not Touching (Not Short)

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

FREEZE  
Sub Divide

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$\text{♩} = 80$   
#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

$\text{♩} = 80$   
#3 Remington Down



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

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

- 14) There are NO dynamics

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

- 15) Have a breathing plan on EVERYTHING!

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

- 16) Play the hard (FUN) stuff

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

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17) 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 more often will make your band better readers and have a stronger sense of urgency on a daily basis AND your community will LOVE IT!

18) 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 would be best.

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

Everyone plays an 'F' (or Bb scale). Some get better... some don't.

20) TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF!!

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 really good 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. I found, in retirement, that it's ok to rest. It's ok to not be at everything. Divide the duties with your asst. directors. Allow a director to go home after the half; switch out duties on the late nights. Have more FUN!

20) Find a Mentor

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