

# *New Director Guidebook*

TIPS TO HELP NAVIGATE YOUR FIRST YEARS



Compiled by  
**Rho Chapter**



# Welcome, New Band Directors!

We are so glad that you have chosen to be part of our great profession. It is exciting, rewarding, and intimidating all at the same time. We have designed a simple guide to help keep you “on track” in planning and organizing monthly duties. Although many of the activities listed apply to high school bands, most middle schools and elementary band programs have similar activities, and so this guide can be used by all levels. Events happen at different times as well, so we recommend reading a month forward as well as the present month to get a bigger picture.

The information contained in this guidebook is certainly not exhaustive; every program and director and teaching assignment is different and unique. Use this guide each month and add your individual notes and reminders for future planning.

We have also included a section titled “The Voice of Experience”, where many of the directors of Rho Chapter of Phi Beta Mu have included advice that will help you lead you through the common dilemmas faced by young directors. We are committed to helping you be a successful teacher. Reach out to any of us for a sympathetic ear and helpful solutions!

We will be improving and revising this guidebook in the future. Please send your feedback and input to: [pemin@mac.com](mailto:pemin@mac.com)

## Have A Great Year! - New Director Guidebook Committee

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We respectfully acknowledge the contributions of Delta Chapter (Mississippi) in the development of this Guide. The first edition many years ago was patterned after a handbook Delta created for the directors in their state.

## AUGUST

1. BEGINNING OF SCHOOL/IN SERVICE INSTITUTE- Do not miss the faculty meetings. Be an active member of the faculty. You need their support. Establish a strong, compassionate, honest, and fair relationship with your students, parents, administration, faculty and staff.

2. GRADES: Submit a grading system to be approved that complies with school policy and you can live with. Look at what has been done in the past years. Goals might be passing off music from memory (based on the ballgame schedule and halftime expectations). Scales are a must. Never assume any student knows them. Always test every student, even if the tests are short. Remember that students only reach the expectations you set, very few will go beyond. Keep accurate records and be ready to justify your grades.

3. SUMMER REHEARSALS: Education is a process, be patient and organized. Know the answers before the questions, keep students informed as to the daily rehearsal expectations. Be proactive so there are no big surprises. For high school marching band, here are some reminders: how to get to practice field, change of clothes, where, what can they wear, what time is roll call, why, how to report absences, tennis shoes, why, first aid, water, cups, garbage, volunteer parents, field set-up, who mows and when, who lines field off and when, yard line markers, bathrooms, if students can drive where to park, rules, permission, who can ride with who~ rehearsal goals, long range/ short range, one day at a time, do not miss the big picture by perfecting every rehearsal detail, students learn fast, keep it moving and be excited, remember lots of short breaks, and high expectations. (Make sure to have a condensed medical plan for your students. It would be prudent to train for CPR and Medical Assistant, as well. Keep a quick guide on your phone or anywhere you can get to it quickly. **(Remember medical information is confidential)**)

4. BALLGAMES: Know where your seating is and plan a seating arrangement. Have a format for both home games and away games. A realistic timeline is paramount to having students ready and on time, make it clear to parents and students. Contact visiting band directors for halftime procedures/parking/ seating. Do not assume they know. Have a parent or staff member to meet the visiting band. Make sure students are aware of stadium rules, school rules, band rules, and concessions. Plan which students visit the other band, bathrooms, how to wear the uniform properly, be very specific, consider weather and public perception, Please the public and they will support your fundraisers and say good things to the school board members! Do your students know how to enter and exit the field for performance and stands? Prepare a legible script for halftime with an announcer. Try to rehearse it before the first game. Check and double check planning for transportation.

**Middle School-** Do you provide a pep band (just home games). Do you have some type of uniform? Do you have student leaders? Student Conductor? If so, do you appoint or have tryouts?

5. CHAPERONES: You need parent leaders who organize everything for you with your approval. Use the same leaders all year, but incorporate new inexperienced parents as needed so they can learn for following years. You need bus chaperones (for multiple buses if there isn't a director available), a phone (text) or email tree leader, equipment manager, guard parents, concession chairman, chairmen for each fundraiser. Most chaperones must have background checks in place and this will take a couple of weeks.

6. BEGINNING BAND - Hopefully, you have met and had instrument assignments/tryouts in the spring prior to this school year. *If you are new to the position and enrollment is not up to expectations (at least 25% of the size of the class), ask the administrators and guidance counselors if you can have another recruiting event before school begins or at the first days of classes.* This is preferable than to wait another year for things to improve.

Before school begins, it is extremely helpful to have a Beginning Band Camp. You could use directors (if they are available and you have the budget), Music Ed college students (if they are available and you have the budget), or the upperclassmen in your band program if they have been properly trained. Never let students take middle school or elementary students out of your eyesight. You may need to get approval for each of the above options from your school and board. If not allowed, you could divide your day up into different sections on different days and times.

Go over posture, classroom instrument storage, how to open cases, putting instruments together, extra items they may need (folding stand, music apps, reeds, valve/slide oil, cleaning kits, etc), method books, breathing, how to produce a tone, first notes, grading system and classroom rules.

*You may not know every instrument as a beginner director but try to stay ahead of your students and ASK experienced directors for help/advice. Pick an instrument to play along with your beginners every semester/year.*

This may seem like a lot of time but it will be easier than having them all in the classroom together and asking other sections to be quiet or still while you go over each section once school begins.

7. BUSES: Get forms and submit them early. Plan sign-up procedure, band officers' responsibilities, chaperones, loading and unloading procedure, safety, first aid kits, ice chests and drinks or water coolers, company/school rules. Have a plan for students to be

dismissed after a ballgame. Do they all have to ride the bus back? Do you let students ride back with parents or legal guardians. Is there a sign out process? \*Remember they are your responsibility until they are released to a parent. Do not approve to be released to anyone besides a legal guardian unless you have written permission by parent ahead of time or permission from your administrator. **THIS MAY BE UP TO YOU AS A DIRECTOR BUT REMEMBER, IT ALL FALLS BACK TO YOU IF ANYTHING GOES WRONG.**

8. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MUSIC EDUCATION/ALABAMA MUSIC EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION/ALABAMA BAND MASTERS ASSOCIATION: Make sure you are an active member (dues run from June to June). Register at: <https://nafme.org/membership/> Many schools will pay this membership fee for you. After you register for NAFME, go directly to <https://alaband.org/> and register there so you can sign up for events such as Music Performance Assessment , All-State Band, etc. **This is the main source of connection you will have to keep you informed of all band events and must be a priority.** Make plans NOW to attend the State Convention in January. Submit requests for professional leave and plan for substitute and lesson activities/worksheets for students.

9. ALABAMA BANDMASTERS ASSOCIATION DISTRICT MEETING: get the date for the first meeting: when, where, time etc. Download the ABA handbook, read it yearly (by-laws change), participate, and help plan on issues, clinics, tryouts, Music Performance Assessment, and other important activities.

10. ALL-STATE/ALL-DISTRICT AUDITIONS: A great way to motivate students! This can really help your program. Inform your students and parents, set high expectations, but you must plan ahead. You can even make it required, plant the seed and it will grow! Incorporate the clinic tryout standards into a test situation. This one activity can be a great educational experience and raise the ability level of your band, take full advantage of it and help your students succeed.

11. BAND PARENT MEETINGS: Plan: When, where, time, advertisement in paper, use social media. Have a phone, text, and email tree activated. Use Remind App to communicate Plan the officers' meeting and general meeting agenda. **Remember that YOU are now in charge!**

12. BUDGET: Do you have a budget? Make one using the previous year's expenses as a guide. Also make a list of equipment and acquisitions to make if there is a surplus. Do not delay in getting quotes and bids. Stay on top of all of your purchases and bills. Be accurate, up-to-date book-keeping will minimize stress, impress the financial bookkeeper and

administration, and gain their confidence. Be honest, efficient and friendly--not demanding. **Make a list of needed equipment and be ready if an administrator or government official comes to you wanting to help!** They will be supportive if you make their job easier. Keep your purchase orders and bills separated by "paid" and "not paid" or "in process"; this is extremely important. Keep track of your balance and do not go over budget. **No one understands what your full responsibilities are, but everyone finds financial matters a high priority.**

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

## SEPTEMBER

1. FOOTBALL GAMES: Communicate to parents/students/administrators a complete schedule of events for the fall that includes ballgames, parades, tryouts, testing, concerts, fundraisers, meetings, festivals, clinics, etc... If your team is winning and stands a good chance of going to the play-offs, then reserve buses now because they are difficult to get at the last minute. Be prepared and prepare your band for this possibility, since they may be playing during Thanksgiving Holidays. Make it a positive experience, even if you are anxious to end the season. The students can read your attitude and they will reflect it at school and in rehearsals. The perception of your "success" is quite often based on marching band, so make it pay off!

2. PRIVATE LESSONS: Start teaching your interested students. Contact recommended teachers and other band directors/retired band directors for long-term lessons for these students.

3. ALL STATE/ALL-DISTRICT, PART II: Remember you MUST be an AMEA member for your students to participate. Watch for registration deadline dates. If you want your students to be interested in All-State and Honor Band clinics, then you have to be interested in them, too. Set high expectations and you will get results. Teach them scales, how to sight-read (because they really do not understand how to do this). Spend time with your most interested students and the others will follow. Give them the dates over and over and remind them of the fees for tryouts. Could the boosters pay for the sign up and then get reimbursed by the students? This will increase participation. Check on transportation!

4. DATES: Recheck all your dates with the school calendar and look at the school and state testing dates from the guidance office. Be sure the Christmas Parade does not conflict with other activities. If you are planning a spring trip, look at dates for the Prom, ACT, and other conflicts. Work with activity sponsors and coaches to assure there are no problems. Also, your spring concert should not conflict with school awards night or athletic banquets, special community events, and things that might take your students. Examples - other class trips, clubs, choral, Vo-tech, drama, ROTC, science fairs, sports events, etc.

5. SCALES: Set a schedule for students to pass-off scales and include this in your daily lesson. Scales should be a major part of your lesson each day as is developing tone and technique.

6. BEGINNING BAND - Make sure the students are continuing with good habits that you have established. Reinforce posture, hand position, embouchure, good tone, tonguing, and breath support. **You can never go over this enough.** Make sure they are not writing notes or positions in their book. This seems like a quick fix but they need to learn the notes, not something they have written in their book. Oftentimes they write the wrong note or position down and never notice. Walk around, have them play individually, and verbally ask them basic theory questions from the band method. It is also a good idea to keep your percussion players in the front by the podium so they can get more attention given to them. Walk around as they are putting up their instruments to make sure they are not rushing to put their instruments up. Watch for things such as reeds left on the mouthpiece, books placed over the instrument (it will bend keys), and putting instrument parts in the wrong areas and forcing the top closed.

7. MIDDLE SCHOOL – Take time to review all concepts that were taught the previous year. This can be fun and not drudgery. See if there is a set of a different beginning band books around your band room and take your intermediate group through it for a page or two each day. If the lines are in 4/4, see if they can count and play them in cut-time as well. Find a similar set of intermediate books for your advanced band. Have some simple cheers and songs to play that are similar to the high school band. **Plan to have a short Fall Concert if they have not had one before!**

ADDITIONAL NOTES:



## OCTOBER

1. REVIEW - Stay up-to-date with all scheduled ball games/directors, transportation, parents, etc. Do not be surprised, communicate! Students need to pass off music for grades, mid-term grades/progress reports. Scales???? Are you on schedule for your Fundraiser for fall?
2. FALL CONCERT/VETERANS DAY PROGRAM - select date and music, have some serious challenging works, easy fun stuff: and traditional music. This is a great opportunity to promote your program and acknowledge parents and the community. Invite the school board and city officials, advertise in the paper or social media with pictures & a program. To have your programs ready, find out what to do. When preparing the program remember to list the parent officers, student officers, administration, staff, any special guests, etc... Also list the full band by sections and chairs (denote recognitions). Band students are very competitive, so be accurate and do not leave anyone out. Order music if needed.
3. MARCHING FESTIVAL – Review dates, transportation, schedule, rehearsal schedule, props, equipment up-keep, extra sticks, mouthpieces, reeds, flags, poles, have designated parents to double check the areas assigned to them. First aid, shoes matched and polished, extra uniform parts, change of clothes, meals, money.
4. PLAY-OFF GAMES - Plan transportation, meals, money, chaperones, times, police or security escorts, communicate with coaches, etc.
5. SPRING TRIP- Has this been a “tradition”? What has the typical cost been? Is the goal an educational opportunity, performance opportunity, or competition? Get your initial planning done (with input from your administration and parents), get applications, collect deposits, plan rooms, transportation, and consider how often you want to take a trip.
6. MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND – You should have reviewed all basic concepts from the previous year and are now presenting the new concepts and techniques you need the students to learn to progress to a higher level of musicianship. For this to be truly effective, make sure it is assessed weekly, even if it is through recordings.,
7. BEGINNING BAND - Have a plan of the concepts you want completed and work toward those goals. **Beginners need repetition of good habits.** Test them on important musical concepts in a low-pressure manner It may seem early, but start working on Christmas music for their concert.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

## NOVEMBER

1. ALL STATE/ALL-DISTRICT, PART III:- Make sure you have all students registered by the deadline and that you have communicated with parents about the audition site and transportation. **The students will only achieve the level which you set.**

Check on scales (especially the “hard” ones for each instrument – these are easy points in the audition. Reinforce your method for sight-reading. Make sure all instruments are in good working condition, Make yourself available for lessons, even five minutes can make the difference!

2. KEEP LOOKING FORWARD! – Are there Football Playoff Games and has transportation been arranged? How about dates/times for Christmas parade and Christmas concert and/or school programs? Honor Band dates and applications are due. Be sure to inform your students about rooms, transportation, permission forms, school forms, rules, fees and expenses for these Honor Bands.

3. CHRISTMAS CONCERT - When, where, time, advertisement, programs, equipment, parent/student help, transportation, VIPs, any awards, recognitions, administration, staff, guest conductor, uniforms, decorum, announcements, and acknowledgements. Do you charge admission? Print Tickets?

4. SOLO & ENSEMBLE· When and where? It is not too early to get motivated students working on good literature. MakeMusic Cloud can be a valuable tool for soloists, as it gives an accompaniment and also assessment feedback. Ensemble music can help develop musicianship, as well as being fun! Make sure you budget some money each year to expand your music in this area. Photocopying is strongly discouraged.

5. SYMPHONIC/CONCERT BAND - Are you going to split your band into different concert ensembles? Have you already done so? Start reading music from the state list at your classification. Ask questions, and try recommendations from experience and successful directors. Listen to recordings, study scores for range, solos, and pitfalls. Your decisions on music will have a major impact on your rehearsals and the outcome at Music Performance Assessment. Consider all the musical factors, strengths, weaknesses, and student responsibility, time management, rehearsal schedule.

6. MIDDLE SCHOOL/BEGINNING BAND- will your middle school and beginning band be in the high school concert or will there be separate performance? Add to the program or make a separate program. Parents love to see their children's name in print.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

## DECEMBER

1. HONOR BAND CLINICS- When? Where? Which students were chosen? Do you have the list of selected students, transportation, rooms, expenses, permission forms/activity forms, substitute for your classes, lesson plans, purchase order numbers, instruments in good playing condition, students need lessons on scales/sight-reading, decorum, rules, band uniforms, times/schedule, etc.

2. CHRISTMAS PARADE- When? Where? Line up, times, uniforms, transportation, parents' participation, equipment, banner, refreshments for band, and any rehearsals.

3. FUNDRAISERS- Stay organized and have parents doing most of the work. Be careful with the money handling, and make sure you are following all procedures set down by your school. If parents are helping with money, have two or three witnessing and assisting.

4. SYMPHONIC/CONCERT BAND – Continue reading a wide variety of music, but start narrowing down your choices for Music Performance Assessment. Make sure your sight-reading procedure is well in place and understood. Take some time to explain the criteria and rubric that is used in the Assessment to all students.

5. MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND/BEGINNING BAND – Make sure that your students have plenty of supplementary material to play over the long break. Especially recommended are books of Christmas carols (Christmas Favorites-Hal Leonard) or other Holiday songs or folk tunes. This will be very impressive to parents and family that hear the child performing familiar melodies and should earn the student a lot of praise. It will also affirm the validity of the band program.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

## JANUARY

1. ALL STATE/ALL-DISTRICT, PART IV: Be prepared! Take the time to work with each participant, **there is no substitute for your time**. They need help and it is your responsibility to provide it. Provide them with a sample score sheet so they can see how they stack up. Make sure that they are prepared to play the entire audition.

2. REHEARSALS - Set a schedule for sectionals/extra rehearsals and stick to it. Be fair and do not waste time, get help, ask questions, and be prepared at all times! Come to work early and stay late to select music/sight-reading and prepare rehearsal goals, you should be reading new music every week.

3. MUSICIANSHIP – Build your program, hit the fundamentals every day: tone, intonation, rhythm, dynamics, phrasing, articulation, range, sight-reading. You must listen and listen with attention to detail, teach your students to listen, there are many techniques for this, but nothing will work unless you point it out and lead the way every day! Be persistent and do not settle for less. You will be surprised how well students can do if they are expected to do it and held accountable. Listen to individual players. If it is not correct, then it will show up in the overall sound; so fix the individual players and the whole band will improve. MAKE MUSIC!

4. SPRING TRIP , PART II – Make sure you are on schedule about the cost, rooms, deposits, applications, transportation, chaperones, administration approval, equipment needs. This is a busy month: you have parents that will be happy to help you with details if you let them.

5. PURCHASE ORDERS - Have you ordered the equipment that you asked for in your budget? Do not wait, check your balance, spend your funds while you have it. Administrators are always looking for money that is not spent. Think ahead! What new music and supplies do you need? A good idea is to create a “wish list “of items that are a priority for the band if windfall money comes your way. This might include a few professional model instruments for high achieving students that can’t afford one or a list of compositions to fill out your basic band or solo and ensemble library. Be prepared and organized, keep up-to-date and accurate records, and hold on to all your paperwork.

6. CALENDAR – Begin to set all your dates for the coming year, including the summer. Many of your parents and students make long range plans and they do not always ask before they plan or do. Remember parades, contests, banquets, awards, letters, camps, concerts, spring trips, graduation, tryouts, clinics, solo/ensemble, test dates (SAT, ACT,)

7. HONOR BAND CLINICS - When? Who? Where? Time? Remember transportation, chaperones, equipment, music stands, meals, and extra money.

8. PUBLICITY – Inform your school and community about your All-State students, honor band students, and upcoming events. If you don't have time, let students write the content and you serve as editor. Photos are also important!

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

## FEBRUARY

I. CONTEST PREPARATION - Once you know what music you plan to play at Music Performance Assessment (MPA), and you have the students working and cooperating with the short/long range goals, bring in other band directors to critique your work. If nothing else, send them recordings of segments of your warmup and music you are performing and ask for feedback. These directors should be successful with their programs and will be honest in their observations and comments. Listen to recordings of bands that have superior programs and let your students hear short portions of them during rehearsals, or while they are entering the class. Study your score closely, now is the time to be really prepared when you get on the podium. Small group sectionals will alert you to what your students can do and what they are capable of doing. You can solve a multitude of problems in these sectionals. **Students only accomplish what you expect of them.** Remember there is no substitute for time. Advise your students of when they are to play for you for a grade and select parts of the music to be used for passing off and for challenging.

Keep them working toward realistic goals. An important aspect of a superior band is intonation. Learn how to fix the individual pitch problems on each instrument with proper alternate fingerings and you will have come a long way. There are many charts and books available for references. When preparing for any sectional, look up the particular material for that instrument and fix it every time.

2. TUNERS - Have a plan for students using tuning apps on their phone or using small tuners. Each student in your symphonic band should have a device that can be used to train them in how to adjust their instrument, **and more importantly, learn to listen and adjust.** Have each student place their tuner on the music stand and turn it on for certain parts of the rehearsal. Teach the proper use of it and make sure it is calibrated to A440. Each time you are stopping, have them check their pitch and make the appropriate corrections. Soon they will know in advance what notes are problems and will make the corrections. The use of individual tuners will revolutionize your rehearsals and student accountability, if you continue to tell your students whether they are flat or sharp, then you will always be fighting the odds. Empower your students and hold them responsible for playing in tune, they will enjoy having the power to make decisions, and you will reap the rewards on a daily basis.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:



## MARCH

1. Heading into a very busy time- Review Spring Trip Info, solo/ensemble, purchase orders, order awards, check dates and transportation, fundraisers, make sure any extra rehearsal dates are posted. Mail out information to parents again.

2. MUSIC PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT - Time is running out, so get some help. Call in experienced directors to listen and make comments. You will be surprised by what they hear, and **what you might hear if you let them take the podium and stand back and listen**. Make notes and go in for the final sweep of problems. Don't let your ego get in the way at this critical time. Double check that you have scores for adjudicators, and that you know your times for performance. Make sure that you have transportation time planned accurately, and that you have a purchase order for trophies and medals (Think positive!). Have a sight-reading routine in place and rehearse it daily (airplay, sing on syllables, count, etc.).

3. PREPARE FOR SUMMER CAMPS - Set dates, hire personnel for your particular needs (Percussion, Auxiliary, Sectionals), check on location, transportation, etc.

4. RECRUITING – You are busy, but recruiting is a must. Set dates, give concerts, surveys, letters, etc. It is easier to retain than retrain. Keep students in your program or find out why they are leaving.

5. SOLO AND ENSEMBLE – Make sure you are aware of registration deadlines. **This is an important activity that can really build your band; try to involve every student and make it a big deal!** Have digital accompaniments or pianists for each solo.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

## APRIL

1. REMEMBER - Stay on top of recruiting, plan your spring concert, plan your banquet, check on your awards for the banquet, invite the local VIP/ADMINISTRATION. Check your current budget and plan next year's budget. Check your inventory, label and keep accurate records. You have a very expensive equipment inventory! Wind up trip payments/deposits, rooming list, bus seating lists.

2. SPRING CONCERT- Programs printed? Guests invited? How about a concert that includes all of the band programs? Invite the fifth grade or sixth grade, recruiting, advertise with a picture if possible, list contest results and individual achievements.

3. CALENDAR - Update and send out letters or emails to all band students for next year and include information to the remainder of this year. Communicate! Check the school calendar to avoid conflicts.

4. MUSIC - Decide on your marching show now. Order your music and start the excitement of next year. Plan your show.

5. BEGINNING BAND RECRUITING - Go talk to the elementary teachers of the grade level you will be starting in beginning band. Have them visit the band room as a class to talk about music, band and your program. Maybe have upperclassmen attend and play for them. Have a meeting with parents and a "petting zoo" to have students try-out instruments. Give them the best options.

1. the top two instruments in which they had the most success. 2. Financial availability. 3. what instrument they hold the most interest. All three of these should be part of the decision-making process. There are many ways to conduct recruiting, but it is the lifeblood of your program! **The meeting could happen in March/April/May. Whichever works best for your schedule.**

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

## MAY

1. REMEMBER- Spring concert programs, etc. Hire camp assistants, plan and submit a budget for next year, complete inventory, work on music library, organize and select next year's leaders: section leaders, captains, drum majors, auxiliaries, librarians, historians, band officers, or whatever suits your program. Give advice as to summer camps that you require for drum majors, guard, percussion.
2. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT- Make plans to learn and grow over the summer weeks. Alabama Bandmasters Association offers an outstanding Summer Workshop, which includes time for "R n R". Investigate attending Conn-Selmer Institute, Music For All Summer Workshop, Texas Bandmasters Association, as well as online possibilities. BE LIFELONG STUDENT.
3. SPRING TRIP, PART IV - Have fun, be safe, think how you would want your child to be supervised, assign chaperones to rooms/students/buses. Double check (or delegate someone to check) transportation, housing, meals, expenses, itinerary, luggage, refreshments, rules, amusement park tickets, concert or contest information, rooming list and format.
4. BAND BANQUET- Do you have all the awards and certificates? Have you picked your outstanding students? **Double check and triple check, a simple mistake can be devastating to a young student.** Remember to invite Community VIP'S, and administration. Be organized: have parents in charge of decorations, set-up, clean-up. Advertise, promote your staff with recognition and phrases, have fun and acknowledge all of your supporters. Have the band officers prepare a program of memories, senior wills, senior prophecies, list, and other important events from the year.
5. SUMMER BAND CAMP – Begin to get organized. Try to get an up-to-date roster, plan your marching show, make sure your music is ready. Recruit and engage the new students from middle or junior high school programs, check with the individuals and guidance office. Contact parents and students personally if possible. Your summer camp is an important beginning, so get your instrumentation set, if possible. Make sure everyone knows about camp and plan to participate. Have your new leaders make phone or email contacts. Remember to get all the information out on when, where, cost/housing (if applicable), transportation, rooming list, meals, etc. Make arrangements for all school instruments and equipment to be examined, cleaned, and repaired before band camp.
6. CONCERT BAND- Begin to plan for next year, get lists of students, decide which

students will move into Symphonic Band and which will need to repeat a year before moving up.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

## JUNE

1. **CAMP DETAILS:** Order your band shirts now!! Is your show going to be ready?? Collect money, check on camp instructors, housing if needed, make up daily schedule, volunteer parents for practice field preparations, (who, when, mow, set-up yard lines, maintain, keys, bathrooms) refreshments (frozen pops, watermelon, snow cones, Gatorade, candy bars) meals, ice machine, coolers clean, cups for water, first aid, towels, ant-killer, canopy/shelter, captain's time to help, notebooks, music copied and sorted, show copied and put in notebooks, assign numbers for each instrument, use a different color for each section if possible, send letter to all students and parents as a reminder (first band parents meeting?)
2. **INSTRUMENT INVENTORY AND REPAIRS:** Number and account for every instrument. It will save you much stress later. You should have already sent in the needed repairs, or made plans to do them yourself. Large instruments like sousaphones should be ready before band camp.
3. **FOOTBALL GAME SCHEDULE AND FIELD USE:** Get the football schedule, make decisions on out-of-town games, any overnight, see the Coach about special events, (Meet The Team, homecoming, band night, how to park and seat visiting bands, cheerleader stuff, any recognitions). Copy football schedule (with playoffs) and mail out with camp schedule, give the coach and athletic director your contest dates and practice dates, set up times to use the stadium field (example - every Tuesday night 7-9:00p.m.) get gate key, use of lights, need a dry field so check on watering schedule, how about short run-thrus on game day? Make a habit of dropping in at the stadium office to talk about the football team and of course, the band. Invite the coach to one of your festivals. Make a habit of communicating with administrators, coaches, faculty, and staff.
4. **TRANSPORTATION:** Submit bus requests for all the football games that need school buses. Get quotes on charter buses for out-of-town games that are more than one hour away and get them approved and contracted. Be prepared for play-off games. If you have a band trailer, who is going to pull it? If you need a maintenance truck to haul instruments, schedule it.
5. **CONCESSION STAND:** How to recruit volunteers? Do you have a manager? Who has keys to doors? Has equipment been inspected? Who are your vendors (Coke, Pepsi, Ice, etc.)? Is there a place to store things? Do workers need Health Department training in order to work? **You don't have time to run the entire operation, but you need to stay informed!**

6. MUSIC LIBRARY: Reorganize, sort, number, and order needed books for group and individual lessons. Remember how busy you get when the students are there and take advantage of this time. Appoint two students to assist you as librarians. Order plenty of music, file folders, envelopes, and boxes.
  
7. FACILITIES: This is the time for repairs and major cleaning. Ask maintenance and submit work orders for the things that you need to make the band room more functional (shelves, good lighting, tables, desks, cabinets, convenient outlets, etc.) **Give camp schedules to custodians so they can do major carpet cleaning and such before students arrive.** This will also make them aware that bathrooms will be used during that time. You must ask for these things and thank your maintenance people

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

## JULY

1. PURCHASE ORDERS: What date is the budget approved for the upcoming school year? Submit your P.O.s at that time. Ask your principal. Marching show music, stands music, supplies (reeds, valve oil, flip folders, windows, striper paint, drum heads, mallets, sticks, flag/guard equipment, music stands, chairs, stationary, office supplies, etc...)
2. DRUM MAJORS: Have them develop leadership by assisting you, Have you ordered their uniforms, planned for their training camp and other instruction?
3. BAND UNIFORMS: What is the cleaning fee? Order band shirts! Train volunteer parents and/or students to take over much of these tasks. Organize, sort, number, repair, check-out/in, have your complete roster ready for them. What about hats and plumes (check them out) reorder any if necessary. If you need new uniforms, start the process one or two years in advance.
4. CALENDAR OF EVENTS: Set-up all of the dates for the year, get them on the school calendar in the office, check on testing conflicts and other important school events/sports, ACT, SAT, & others. Homecoming, parades, marching festivals, concerts, (principal approval), trips, fundraisers, deadlines for fees, clinic sign-up/cost, (state & local) director's meetings, places, times, transportation. Keep your principal and athletic director aware of your activities. No surprises!
5. BAND CAMP: Is the show ready, student leaders, "Dot" numbers assigned, field preparations (mowing, lines, etc...), instructors, music, folders for show, copies of show, equipment needs, props, instrument check-out forms up-dated, duties of parents and instructors, goals, camp activities (student leadership), meals, refreshments, parents, call each student to double check instrumentation, student leaders/parents, chair set-up, approval for use of all needed facilities (cafeteria, restrooms, sectional rehearsal rooms), article in paper, social media and television coverage, camp schedule copied, staff meeting dates/times, first-aid, copy of scores.
6. MEDICAL FORMS: This is a very important safeguard! These need to be

up-dated annually to include all information for emergency treatment including copy of insurance card, waiver, swim release if necessary for any trips, medications, allergies, all phone numbers of who to contact in an emergency, signatures, principal approved, one for every student, with a recent photo of the student. These could be kept in a three ringed notebook with vinyl slipcovers and should be carried wherever the band goes. Assign a responsible parent to be in charge of this notebook on every trip or better yet, keep it with you. REMEMBER MEDICAL INFORMATION SHOULD REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL.

7. METHOD BOOKS: Decide what method book you will use with each ensemble. You should use several books as students tend to learn the lines from one book and not learn the concept. By alternating books on a weekly basis, students will learn the concepts and not just the lines.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:



## The “Voice of Experience”

We surveyed and compiled information from veteran band directors to help young directors navigate the first years of teaching. These directors have proven to be very successful and are highly recognized by their peers. Most have won teaching awards that recognize their work that were given by their fellow faculty administrators, and parents. Many times, the things young teachers struggle with have nothing to do with what was in their music classes, so we are helping address those “gaps”. You will find a wide array of advice here, but it was all given with the purpose of helping to guide and encourage you.

### Contributors

**Phil Min**

Bragg Middle School, Mississippi State University, Vestavia Hills High School  
38 Years

**Nancy Frith**

Meek/Priceville  
26 Years

**Dr. Mark Foster**

John Carroll Catholic HS  
33 Years

**Rusty Courson**

Smiths Station  
30+ Years

**Randell Wallace**

Clay-Chalkville High School  
32 Years

**Steve McLendon**

Dothan High School  
39 Years

**Becky Rodgers Warren**

Ft. Payne High School and Mandan Middle School ND  
40 Years

**Justin Ward**

Pelham High School  
18 Years

**Jon Bubbett**

Thompson High School (retired)  
38 Years

**Deborah Basinger**

Florence Middle School  
37 Years

**Mike Stough**  
Opelika High School- Retired  
50 years

**Garry Taylor**  
Cullman High School (Retired)  
31 Years

**Suzanne Winter**  
Retired, Pizitz MS  
33 Years

**Ken Bodiford**  
Jacksonville State University  
34 Years

**John Cooper**  
Retired from Austin High School  
32.5 Years

**Ski Winter**  
Vestavia Hills, UAB, Huffman and Daleville  
35 Years

**Clay Sloan**  
Austin High School  
32 Years

**Gene Inglis**  
Rome HS (GA) and Saks HS (AL)  
29 Years in Ga 20 in AL

**Alan Brooks**  
Robert E Lee (Montgomery), Mtn Brook , John Carroll Catholic  
32 Years

**John W. Bradley**  
Homewood Middle School  
51 Years

**Carlton Wright**  
Alabama A&M University  
28 Years

**Chuck Eady**  
(Retired) Briarwood Christian, Pleasant Grove  
42 Years

**Dr. Frank Buck**  
Pizitz Middle School, Goodwyn Junior High  
12 years as a band director 20 as Administrator

**Donald Dowdy**  
Monrovia Middle  
44 Years

**Terry Ownby**  
Retired - Florence HS  
30+ Years

**Rusty Logan**  
Auburn High School  
33 Years

**Dane Lawley**  
Chelsea High School  
45 Years

**Corey Spurlin**  
Auburn University  
24 Years

**John Hillsman**  
Current: Beaugard High School / Retired from Georgia: Hawkinsville High School (13 years),  
Washington County High School (12 years), and Jeff Davis High School (5 years)  
38 Years

**Theo Vernon**  
Grissom High School  
38 Years

**Kim Bain**  
Pizitz MS (retired)  
34 Years

**John R. Bradley**  
Florence High School  
41 Years

**Mark Walker**  
Troy University  
30 Years

**Elva Kaye Lance**  
Mississippi State University  
40+ Years

**Lloyd Edward Jones III**  
University of North Alabama  
23 Years

**Regina Raney**  
Cedar Park Middle School  
33 Years

**Gena Inglis Nix**  
Ohatchee HS  
23 Years

**Greg Gumina**  
Jefferson County School District  
28 Years

**Sallie Vines White**  
Hoover High School  
38 years

## **What is the best piece of advice that you would give a young director about dealing with school administrators?**

Remember that the administrator often has a wider view of where your program fits in the school and community. If you leave a decision in their hands, be ready to accept the decision without complaining. – Phil Min

Make rules and follow them. Deal with them yourself when possible. Administrators do not like to visit the same classroom because you cannot handle your class. Make sure you notify your administrator of issues that may come his way BEFORE they hear it from the other side. – Nancy Frith

Establish a positive working relationship early on. Share your vision and goals for your band program with them so they'll know what you are working toward. Present them with a long-range plan for equipment purchases. – Dr. Mark Foster

Keep detailed records of interactions with students and parents, because inevitably, you will need that information. – Rusty Courson

Be respectful and don't lose your cool when discussing issues with them. Use terms they understand as administrators. When we changed the name from State Contest to Performance Assessment, my principals understood the purpose of our state concerts more clearly. – Randell Wallace

Be kind and work to get along with them. – Steve McLendon

Try and be proactive rather than reactive. Keep administrators informed so that they are not blindsided by a problem. – Becky Rodgers Warren

Be proactive instead of reactive. If there is something that seems like it might end up in the administration's email box, voicemail, etc. have a discussion with them beforehand. – Justin Ward

Understand the administrator has to see the "big" picture. Keep them informed of everything you can both good and bad. – Jon Bubbett

Be flexible, positive and try to develop a relationship of respect and dependability. Have a plan when addressing issues that can become problematic. – Deborah Basinger

Keep the lines of communication open. – Mike Stough

Take the time to build positive relationships with school administrators by being respectful, professional, and communicative. Keep school administrators informed about your band program's activities, achievements, and needs. Be proactive in addressing any issues or concerns that may arise, such as scheduling conflicts or funding requests. – Garry Taylor

Be available to assist with things other than band: committees, etc. – Suzanne Winter

Always keep them informed about everything so that they are not faced with any surprises. Invite them to your events. Thank them publicly for their support often. Keep paper trails of all communications. – Ken Bodiford

Be proactive as much as possible. – John Cooper

Do better than me and do their bidding no matter what. – Ski Winter

Always try to keep open channels of communication. Anticipate issues that might come across a principal's desk and be ready to explain the reasons for your actions. Encourage a positive relationship between administration and students/parents. Invite principals to be a part of concerts (narrating/announcing). – Clay Sloan

Work hard, report to all duties on time, give their position respect, be a life-long learner and be kind. – Gene Inglis

When you interview for a new position, make sure you and the Principal have a good connection, ie. he/she agrees with your vision. – Alan Brooks

Keep them informed about what is happening in your program. Having been an administrator, nothing is more embarrassing than having a parent ask about something he/she knows nothing about. – John W. Bradley

Invite your administrators to attend the first and last booster meetings of the year. Communicate in writing everything that is important. – Carlton Wright

Keep a solid line of communication and keep them informed. – Chuck Eady

Come to your administrator with good news from the very beginning. Look for times to spend time with your administrator when there's not a "problem" or request. When you do need help, you've already built that relationship. – Dr. Frank Buck

Ask questions that will be easily answered with a "Yes". Once a "No" is given, it's easier for an administrator to keep answering "No". – Donald Dowdy

Always keep your administrators in the loop about what is going on in the program and touch base before making big decisions to get their input. Once a week or bi-weekly is plenty, along with a schedule of events for the year. – Terry Ownby

Be upfront with them so there are no surprises. – Rusty Logan

Just know that you are just part of the "puzzle." You are the representative of the band program at your school. – Dane Lawley

Describe your needs in terms that they can understand. Get a feel for their background to better understand their perspective. For example, if your principal is a former coach and you need funds for someone to work with your color guard, describe the position as a color guard coach or coordinator rather than instructor. – Corey Spurling

Sadly, there are times when it becomes best for you to move on and put yourself in a situation that is more conducive to the development of your career and one where your goals align with those of your administrator(s). Your emotional well-being is important if you want longevity in the profession. A contrite administrator can put you on an emotional rollercoaster that you do

not need to endure. When you come to an impasse with an administrator that you cannot overcome and/or your goals do not align any longer (maybe a new administrator), it may be time to move. One very important thing to realize is that your agreements to accept a position are made with the administrator(s) that hired you. Your goals are aligned with theirs. Those agreements you made therefore have the potential to become void when a new administrator or group of administrators take over a school and/or school system. – John Hillsman

Introduce yourself and make sure you keep them in the loop about all things band. Act professionally and handle issues within your band room so they do not have to if possible. – Theo Vernon

Administrators do not like surprises! Be sure to stay in communication with them regarding sticky issues as much as possible. While emails are OK, it's always good to just stick your head in the door and say "hey when is a time I could come by for a few minutes about.....". And when you do show up, make it just as few minutes as possible. They are very busy and need your brevity. – Kim Bain

Develop a program which they will wholeheartedly support, follow all school policies, and maintain good communication with all administrators. – John R. Bradley

Communicate clearly and often. Do not allow them to be blindsided. – Mark Walker

Good communication is essential. Your administration must be informed in advance about all aspects/activities/decisions regarding your program. Get approval of all policies and procedures and make certain that they align appropriately with the policies of the district. Make certain that you convey to them that you are on their team and interested in the overall success of all the students in the school. Face to face meetings convey emotions more effectively, but an email summary after a meeting establishes clarification. – Elva Kaye Lance

Persevere. Find a way to speak their language. Find out what would cause them to support your band program. If you get a bad administrator, just persevere. You can outlast them and go back to improving your program. Don't let them run you off - that's allowing them to win. – Lloyd Edward Jones III

When you have a concern about a situation, always present a solution. – Regina Raney

Always communicate the positive aspects of your students and not just the negative situations that occur with your program. – Gena Inglis Nix

Be helpful and understand that their goal is not to impede the advancement of your program. They have a nearly impossible job and are responsible for all the programs at your school plus they must answer to those above them in the established hierarchy. – Greg Gumina

In dealing with school administrators make sure you always show respect for their authority. Keep deadlines, complete all PD, always be on time, be the best you can be at all times. Get to know them as people as well. Above all, let them see your passion for your students and for the subject you teach. There are times in your career you may have to help them see how important band, and jazz band are to the students involved and to the community as a whole, especially when there are scheduling issues. There was a time many years and administrators ago I really had to be forceful to keep the wonderful class set up I have for jazz band. It was worth it. – Sallie Vines White

## **What is the best piece of advice you would give a young director about nurturing a good relationship with the school faculty and staff?**

Make time to meet each teacher at some point during the first year. Lend a hand as they need help. Do not isolate yourself in the Band Room. – Phil Min

Be courteous and kind. Always let your faculty know AHEAD of time when your functions will interrupt their teaching time. Make friends with your custodians and lunch room workers. – Nancy Frith

Be kind. – Dr. Mark Foster

Don't hide in the cozy confines of the band room. Interact with the faculty whenever possible. Make friends QUICKLY with the custodial staff, the secretary, the counselors (or whoever is responsible for scheduling), and don't forget the bookkeeper!!! – Rusty Courson

Keep an open mind. Say thank you. And give them a band tee shirt or hat. – Randell Wallace

Very important to build a good relationship with faculty and staff. Be a good "team player". Try to be cooperative with each one. – Steve McLendon

Stay out of the staff/faculty lounge. That is often just a petri dish for negativity. Do join in on activities in and out of school. – Becky Rodgers Warren

Communicate and collaborate. Communicate early and often about the activities and successes of the students in the band program. Additionally, find ways to collaborate with other departments to create cross curriculum connections. – Justin Ward

Always be pleasant and work to find the middle ground when dealing with conflicts. - Jon Bubbett

Be open minded and willing to give and take. Be active with them in school endeavors. Show appreciation and respect! – Deborah Basinger

Understand that they or at least a lot of them don't really understand what you do. Realize that and be interested in what they are doing. – Mike Stough

Learn names and use them. Treat all members of the school faculty and staff with respect and approachability, including custodians, lunchroom workers, secretaries, and other support staff. Collaborate and communicate with other teachers and staff members. Celebrate the achievements of other teachers and staff members, such as awards or recognition. – Garry Taylor

Visit their classroom; offer to enhance lessons with music; definitely make an effort to engage in conversation at the lunch table with them. – Suzanne Winter

Don't hide out in the band room all the time. Go to the faculty lounge and get to know everyone.....especially the coaches. – Ken Bodiford

Speak to others. Eat lunch with them even if you don't have time to eat! – John Cooper

Get to know these folks. They are in it with you. – Ski Winter

Get to know your custodial staff. Always express your gratitude when they do something to help you. Try to keep their jobs as easy as possible by having students keep the band room neat and orderly. – Clay Sloan

Be professional, courteous, and respectful of other disciplines and activities. Remember you are part of the whole! – Gene Inglis

Make friends (quickly) with the head of maintenance. – Alan Brooks

Be a team player. Volunteer to do things no one else wants to do. – John W. Bradley

Periodically during your planning period, just pop your head in colleagues' doors to say, "Hey, I'm just checking to see if my band kids are doing ok. Let me know if you have any trouble with them". Invite the athletic department to attend concerts and other performances. We play at sporting events, so why can't football and basketball teams and coaches attend our concerts? – Carlton Wright

Let them (and your students) know you respect and honor their classroom instruction time. – Chuck Eady

Get out of the band room and introduce yourself. Eat lunch with other teachers. – Frank Buck

Know every teacher's/staff member's name and smile at every opportunity. – Donald Dowdy

Be professional. Be courteous. Listen to others and work to nurture the relationships within your department and with the staff. Find ways to be a part and be seen outside of the band room. Volunteer, as time allows, to help other groups with things as possible. – Terry Ownby

Don't just stay in the band room. Get to know the other faculty and them you. – Rusty Logan

Involve them whenever you can and keep them informed of the band's activities. – Dane Lawley

Learn the names of your colleagues and greet them with a smile when passing in the hallway. Demonstrate genuine concern for them when interacting. Try to use the band program to promote and/or collaborate with other entities in the school. – Corey Spurlin

It is also important to immerse yourself within the culture of your school. Make yourself important to your school's organization in ways other than serving as the band director. Most importantly, always present yourself as an educator first and a music teacher/band director second with your peers and superiors. When the others in your school recognize you as being a serious educator, it will foster a higher level of respect for you. It is important for them to hold you in high regard. – John Hillsman

Always thank them for their support especially when you must get them out of class for a band event. Invite them to your concerts for FREE. Allow students to make up work when they miss due to band related activities. – Theo Vernon

Try not to isolate yourself in your band room. This will pay dividends later when you need help regarding topics like scheduling, field trips, etc. Make it a point to be on those critical committees that impact your program so much. These include the scheduling committee, and budgeting committee for sure. I was always told at the most important people in the building for you to develop a good relationship with, in addition to your principal, are the secretary in the front office and your janitor. – Kim Bain



Become a valued and active member of the faculty and develop a positive relationship with all members of the faculty and staff by treating them with respect and showing respect for the jobs they do. – John R. Bradley

Be nice. Learn names. Call the secretaries and custodians Mr. and Mrs. (or Ms). Speak to them and show interest in them. Be flexible and work toward the success of everyone, as much as is possible. – Mark Walker

Be genuinely interested in the other activities of the school. Attend other events outside of band events if possible. Be a team player. Do not participate in gossip about students, administrators, or other faculty. Work to convey a positive attitude about the community. – Elva Kaye Lance

Constantly build bridges. – Lloyd Edward Jones III

Always be a team player and help a teacher or staff member outside of your department. – Regina Raney

It's important to be visible and to be a team player. – Gena Inglis Nix

Be friendly, personable, and as helpful as possible. Make time to get to know the right people. Do not get stuck in the teacher workroom with negative people. – Greg Gumina

In nurturing good relationships with other faculty and staff in your school be friendly, get to know them, and be considerate. Make sure you respect their time with their students. Do your best to not have students out of, or tardy to, their classes. Especially take time to show your appreciation to the custodial staff, the bus drivers, and all office staff. They are so important! – Sallie Vines White

## **What is the best piece of advice you would give a young director about developing positive relationships with students?**

Keep things professional and establish boundaries, especially if you are young. This being said, ALWAYS try to have a little fun with the students and don't be afraid to praise. – Phil Min

Be fair and consistent. They need structure to feel safe in their environment. Be the adult in the room. You are not there to be their friend. – Nancy Frith

Be professional and positive. – Dr. Mark Foster

Be firm, but fair. – Rusty Courson

Be yourself. Let them realize you are a human being. Put yourself in their shoes and what they are going through in this world that is so different from just a few years ago. – Randell Wallace

Be fair and honest. – Steve McLendon

Always be honest about what your expectations are. Do not try to be their friend. – Rebecca Rodgers Warren

Be in the band room in the mornings and afternoons. Be at the door each class period to greet the students. Don't be afraid to converse with them to see what they are interested in, are involved in, etc. – Justin Ward

ALWAYS BE POSITIVE. Eliminate ALL negativity even in a joking manner. Remember they are children. If you have children of your own, imagine your child's face on top of the student you are dealing with...does it change things? – Jon Bubbett

Pick your battles. Not every parameter you develop fits every student. Be respectful, genuine and a good listener. Treat them with kindness and show them you are a leader that wants the respect of them by being respectful and showing them that they matter. – Deborah Basinger

Be consistent! Develop discipline and take an interest in what's going on in their lives outside of Band. Students know if you truly care about them so be kind to them as much as possible. This includes band students who may not be the best players! – Mike Stough

Get to know your students. Take the time to learn their names, interests, and goals. Create a positive learning environment. Be personable but always professional. Give students opportunities to take on leadership roles. – Garry Taylor

Own your mistakes. Be honest, don't expect from them what you won't give in return – Suzanne Winter

Be fair to everyone.....do not show partiality and always model the behavior that you want them to exhibit. – Ken Bodiford

Be “busy.” Be professional. Be positive. – John Cooper

Be a consistent positive face for music and your band program. Every negative thing is magnified due to your position. – Ski Winter

Simple things make a big difference. Try to greet students at the door every day. If there is an unpleasant exchange with a student or group of students in rehearsal, try to have a positive interaction with them later. – Clay Sloan

Be professional, knowledgeable, caring and kind. Don't be afraid to admit mistakes. Remember, the students are the reason you are there to teach them. Without them there is no music and you have no job. -Gene Inglis

Let them know upfront that you will help them, but make sure they know you are the teacher and not “one of the gang”. – Alan Brooks

Let your students know that you care about them and you want them to be successful. Don't hesitate to ask them about what is happening in their lives. – John W. Bradley

Draw the line in the sand from day one! Be firm in the beginning of your tenure. It will be difficult to establish control if you start off by letting the students get too close to you. Once you have established your expectations, you can loosen the grip slowly. Most of all, just be yourself! – Carlton Wright

Have a healthy balance of praise and correction, and clear classroom rules. – Chuck Eady

Don't try to be their "buddy." Be friendly but not a friend. Know your expectations and communicate them consistently. – Dr. Frank Buck

Know every student's name and smile at them at every opportunity--know their birthdays. – Donald Dowdy

Be professional. You are their teacher, not their friend. This doesn't mean don't be friendly; it means keep the appropriate boundaries in place. Work to develop a good rapport with them and earn their trust by being a person of your word. - Terry Ownby

Be fair in your dealings with them. They need to know your expectations and then follow through with them. – Rusty Logan

Build relationships with your students. Realize that they have more than just band in their lives. – Dane Lawley

Draw clear boundaries immediately. Be consistent with your expectations of them and make sure those expectations are communicated clearly. Within the established professional boundaries, make sure the students know you are more concerned about the people in the program rather than the product it produces. – Corey Spurlin

The best way to get students to like you is not to be their "buddy," but to let them know that you genuinely care about them, that you care about what they are doing, and that you truly have their best interests at heart. They need to both like and respect you if you want to be an effective teacher for them.

The best way to foster respect is not to demand it, but to make others (including your students) fear disappointing you. When the fear of disappointing you is prevalent, it is a resounding symbol of respect in the highest form for you. – John Hillsman

Set your standards UP FRONT DAY ONE and be consistent. Students appreciate consistency. Let them feel as if they have a "say" in what you do but ultimately you make final decisions. – Theo Vernon

It's good to be friendly to your students, but it is not OK to be a friend. Always remember that you are the professional in the room. Try to get to know your students better outside of podium time. Mornings before school, during study hall, after school, those are the times to develop those appropriate teacher-student relationships. Always make the music the main thing during rehearsal time. – Kim Bain

Develop a familial relationship in your band. – John R. Bradley

Be yourself and be friendly but keep a professional distance. Stay off social media and do not share your personal info with the students. You will have a good relationship if you keep a reasonable barrier and establish boundaries. Show interest in the students' lives outside of band. – Mark Walker

Be organized, consistent and fair. Treat students with respect and work hard to earn their respect. Care about them as individuals and help them be successful. Be sensitive to the fact that they have lots of demands on their time. – Elva Kaye Lance

Build bridges. Find something you can do to communicate with them on their terms. – Lloyd Edward Jones III

Make sure your students know your expectations for your class. Present yourself in a positive manner and greet students daily as they come into your class. – Regina Ramey

Be consistent day to day and they will meet your expectations. Your will must be stronger than their will; don't give in to their lackadaisical habits. – Gena Inglis Nix

Be the teacher and do not try to be their friend. Set definite boundaries for how you expect to be treated. The students will respect you for being the adult and taking control. Always be nice and treat students with respect. – Greg Gumina

In developing positive relationships with students, show them that you truly care for them. Learn their names, give positive feedback, be consistent in your expectations, smile a lot, be enthusiastic, expect and demand their best effort on a daily basis. – Sallie Vines White

## **What is the best piece of advice you would give to a young director about having a successful relationship with parents and the community?**

Always remember you teach the most expensive elective in the school and parents are putting a huge investment in money and time into this product. Even when you might not agree with them, there is usually a little germ of what they might be telling you that you can use. – Phil Min

Be available to the community as much as possible without overextending you and your program. A positive vibe is contagious. Always let parents know ahead of time what your practice schedule will be. Follow it. They will respect your time if you respect theirs. – Nancy Frith

Be visible. – Dr. Mark Foster

Be accessible to parents. Ultimately, you have to make the decisions for your program, but unless you're independently wealthy, you're not going to be able to do it by yourself! – Rusty Courson

Be involved as much as is plausible but you do have to learn to say no. – Randell Wallace

Show a good work ethic and be a good supporter of other activities. -Steve McLendon

YOU are the face of your program. Make opportunities to publicly promote your program. (Offer to be a guest speaker at Civic Club, Government, School Board meetings.). Get to know the industry leaders. (Provide ensembles to perform at their events.) With parents, approach them just like administration. Be proactive and don't let them get blindsided. – Becky Rodgers Warren

Communicate frequently and effectively. – Justin Ward

Always be positive and appreciative! They are the reason you have a program. When boundaries are crossed, deal with it in a positive and professional manner, quietly but firmly. – Jon Bubbett

Parents can be difficult but being willing to listen to their concerns is very important. Don't burn your bridges. – Deborah Basinger

Keep the parents informed about things going on in your program. They love to get compliments about their children. Don't be afraid to brag on their children to them. Also, if their child is causing a problem, don't be afraid to contact them to discuss a problem. – Mike Stough

Communication is key! Keep parents and the community informed about what is happening in the band program. Don't expect announcements made in class to get home to parents. Most importantly, when parents realize you have their child's best interest at heart, they will be on your side. – Garry Taylor

Keep an open dialogue through messages, emails, telephone calls - for problems and for praise! -Suzanne Winter

Again, communicate with the parents. Make sure that they are aware of everything that the band is doing. Be willing to take a group to community events...make your program visible in the community. – Ken Bodiford

Be positive. Be nice. – John Cooper

Communicate with them about EVERYTHING. – Ski Winter

Communication is very important. Make sure parents are informed on upcoming events/performances. – Clay Sloan

Always present yourself in a professional manner and a positive voice for the students, parents, school and community. Parents like to hear the good things their children are doing. Be patient and cautious working through difficulties, all the while, keeping your administration aware of all facets of the program. – Gene Inglis

You want the band to be successful and especially their child. Be visible throughout the community (church, town functions, service clubs, etc). – Alan Brooks

Contact parents occasionally about how their child is doing in band. Make sure your band is seen as much as possible in the community. – John W. Bradley

It will take a lot of time, but it's beneficial to have a conversation with as many parents as possible (not just when a child is in trouble). Invite local businesses to attend performances. Take the band to perform at local businesses like Wal Mart or grand openings. – Carlton Wright

Keep parents informed and expose your program to the community through media and public appearances. – Chuck Eady

Develop a good communication pipeline. SMORE or another Web-based tool is excellent. Shoot for something once a week. Invite community leaders to your program. A hand-written invitation to the mayor will be the best 65 (or however much stamps cost by then) cents you'll ever spend. – Dr. Frank Buck

Communicate with parents at every opportunity. – Donald Dowdy

Be professional and present the program as an outreach of the school and community. Make time to be at community events both personally and with the band. Do your best to work out at being at places that the group is asked to perform. This is outreach to your community and will help build a sense of pride. – Terry Ownby

Communication is the key to good relationships with parents and community. – Rusty Logan

Be part of the community and community activities whenever you can. – Dane Lawley  
Communication is the key with parents. Be as organized as possible and respectful of the parent's time and energy. Take the time to thank them for their extra efforts to support the program. Think of ways to promote the band program in the community. Be willing to march in parades, perform at shopping complex, etc. -Corey Spurlin

Parent organizations are just like individual parents in that they can be your biggest allies or enemies. Again, it is crucial for you to maintain control of the situation. You are the band director and everything that happens to or within your programs directly reflects upon you and your principal. There are decisions that the two of you must make rather than your parents. Your relationship with your community has the potential to vary significantly depending upon the size and the characteristics of your community. First and foremost, it is important to become

a part of it (even if you don't live in it). If you work in a smaller community, you will likely have greater importance within the community. For those working in larger towns and cities, your relationship will potentially be very different. In general, be perceptive of the characteristics inherent within your community and find your place in it. – John Hillsman

Post rehearsal and performance schedule ASAP so families can try to plan around as best as possible. We always post 95% of our calendar in mid-June every year and publish it everywhere. – Theo Vernon

Communication is key. You must toot your own horn and get into the public, the news of all the successes you have going on in your band program. Occasionally, it is important to take on those civic responsibilities that help the community understand and appreciate those accomplishments. You are not their boom box, but when you are called on for a Christmas tree lighting or a parade, you must accept so that your community leaders can see that you are truly a part of the area.

The same is true for relationships with your band parents. Communication will solve a host of problems. Towards the end of my career, it became more evident however, that people do not take the time to read information as carefully as they should. These days we have so many different ways for communicating with parents it becomes confusing. I recommend one primary form of communication with your band parents. This should be your central hub, where information regarding upcoming concerts, band camp dates, etc., can be found. This will also help prevent you from constantly having to respond to separate emails from parents. Also, kindly convey to your parents and students the important responsibility they have in reading, understanding, and committing to the information that you send them. – Kim Bain

Make the parents feel like valued members of the band whose help and respect are essential to the success of the band program, and maintain good communication with all parents. – John R. Bradley

Consistent communication that is accurate and properly vetted. Be friendly and helpful to others. Show interest in others' success. – Mark Walker

Treat others with respect. Be visible in the community. Offer assistance to the community by engaging in a special service project in the community. Service is a real differentiator no matter the size of the program. In addition to accomplishing something positive in the community, parents of potential band students will see this service and realize that they would like their child to be involved in an organization with similar goals. – Elva Kaye Lance

Build bridges. Never get ruffled - always be the adult in the room. Always be the best-dressed person in the room. Always speak from wisdom - if you don't have much wisdom, do more listening. – Lloyd Edward Jones III

Take time to talk to students at events. – Regina Raney

Be considerate to everyone's time other than your own. In your planning, have practice and performance schedules posted in plenty of of time so families can plan. Do not change schedules on a whim as that causes frustrations. If your practices are over at 5pm, don't hold practice past that time. – Gena Inglis Nix

Communicate very often, specifically, and in several different methods. We live in a knowledge-rich world, so your message will get lost if you do not communicate effectively. – Greg Gumina

Communicate with parents. Keep them informed. Try to always be as positive as possible. Try to fill as many community requests for performing groups as possible. Jazz Band is a wonderful vehicle for all types of community performances. Always go the extra mile to give your students opportunities. – Sallie Vines White

## **What is the best piece of advice you would give to a young director about selecting music literature for Music Performance Assessment Festival?**

Choose wisely. This is the only subject in the school where the curriculum choice is guided by the teacher. Your choices can help your students succeed! – Phil Min

Find your strong sections and find music that will showcase them. Ask experienced directors for advice. – Nancy Frith

Use all the resources at your disposal. Listen to great music. Go to Midwest and listen to the bands. Find an old copy of an ABA cumulative list and read it. Talk with old band directors. – Dr. Mark Foster

Select literature that accentuates the GOOD things about your band! Don't pick Holst's Second Suite because you loved playing it as a student, when you don't have euphonium player to cover the solo in the second movement. Also, just because you learned that you should choose contrasting literature DOESN'T mean you HAVE TO PLAY A LYRICAL PIECE! Go there when your band is ready and they've learned to provide proper breath support and everything else that comes along with tone quality and characteristic sound. - Rusty Courson

Know your band and look at the scores beforehand. – Randell Wallace

Know the abilities of your group; challenge them, but make sure you stay within their means. – Steve McLendon

ASK FOR HELP. Pick literature that will develop your weaker sections, not hide them. – Becky Rodgers Warren

It all starts and ends with programming. Program music that will keep the students engaged in (during a difficult time of the year), but play to the strengths of the student musicians while not exposing their weaknesses. In programming for MPA, less is more. You can always rehearse additional pieces of music if it is too easy, but there is not much you can do little if the music is too difficult. – Justin Ward

Select music what is best for your students NOT what you want to play. Programing is hard work and requires a lot of time. Program AT or BELOW grade level. Program to be expressive NOT impressive. ASK FOR HELP! – Jon Bubbett

Play that piece that YOU love that is a super challenging piece on your spring concert. Pick music for Assessment that is a good fit for your instrumentation that will be teachable for the balance, blend, techniques etc so you can develop those skills in your ensemble with success. You can play musically that way. – Deborah Basinger

Pick music that fits your bands instrumentation and pick music that they can handle. If the music is way over their heads, they can get discouraged easily. It's ok to challenge them, but don't pick something that is too difficult and that they're just not capable of learning. - Mike Stough

Choose music that will showcase your ensemble's strengths while also providing opportunities for growth and development. Don't be afraid to seek advice from experienced directors. – Garry Taylor

Ask for help; cater to the strengths in your band. – Suzanne Winter

Evaluate the strengths and weakness of your performers. When you select pieces, contact established (successful) directors for their opinions. – Ken Bodiford

This is the toughest thing we do each year. Take your time and get advice and help from others. – John Cooper

Know your band's strengths and weaknesses. Stay away from selections that promote your weaknesses. – Ski Winter

Don't pick literature because you like the way it sounds...pick it because it will help the band get better. With young or weaker bands, try to pick music that lets them play. They did not join the band to count rests. – Clay Sloan

Know your students' abilities, collect/review past Festival programs taking note of consistently successful bands, go to clinics and reach out to more experienced directors for ideas and advice. Spend a lot of time listening to recordings of good concert band literature. – Gene Inglis

Listen to and read or examine many conductor scores of as many recordings as possible; talk to successful band directors; pay attention to the repertoire of successful band programs. - Alan Brooks

Make sure what you pick "fits" your personnel. It is best to pick something a little easy than something that the band will struggle playing. – John W. Bradley

Listen to music that is in your band's classification. Check with other directors for suggestions. Select music that caters to the strengths of your ensembles. – Carlton Wright

Don't select music that your students can't play successfully. Have someone you trust come into your rehearsal and assess student progress and appropriateness of music selection. Be willing to listen. – Chuck Eady

Pick music that shows the band's strengths and don't be afraid to rewrite and rewrite the rewrites. It's not a sign of weakness; it's a sign of being smart and having a vision for what you want the band to sound like. – Dr. Frank Buck

Try to avoid ostinato "One, & of Two, Four" rhythm patterns. - Donald Dowdy

Everything sounds good on the recordings, Be realistic about where your groups limitations are musically and play within those. It's okay to stretch them some but make it on one piece of literature while the others are both teachable and attainable by the group. – Terry Ownby

Select music that is challenging, but obtainable to your students. You do not have to play a four to five minute lyrical piece as your second selection. As long as there are lyrical sections in your other pieces, this will be okay. – Rusty Logan

Choose music that your band can play. Don't select music just because it may be popular or by a popular composer/arranger. - Dane Lawley



Find music that will improve your student's abilities, not repertoire that you enjoy conducting or enjoyed playing in college. – Corey Spurlin

In all reality, the director's personal goals should likely be last on the list with regard to selecting music for performances and evaluations; therefore, is success measured by the band director's personal goals? It should not be. It is highly important for a band director to teach and lead the band that he or she "has" in contrast to the one he or she wants. If a director teaches the band they have, they will be afforded the opportunity to develop the band program into the ones they want. If he or she teaches the band they want rather than the one they have, he or she will likely foster a lot of frustrations and disappointment for themselves and their students. Pick selections that fit your ensemble and the ability levels of your student in all respects that you can rehearse and prepare within the span of time at your disposal. – John Hillsman

Listen, listen, listen to lots of music. Choose music that "fits" your ensemble that will teach them something. You can choose music that also "appeals" to the students but you will know what is best for them at their level. There are always mentors that can come hear your group to help you choose your first few years of teaching. - Theo Vernon

Some people say you pick your rating when you pick your program for MPA. Your top ten greatest hits from your college career are definitely not the place to start when selecting literature for your students. First, pick the appropriate grade level for the age of student that you teach. Focus on great composers, and program to the strengths of your band. Seek out mentors who can offer advice about your programming. – Kim Bain

Assessments are times to be conservative and show your work on fundamentals. You can expand and go nuts in regular concerts. – John R. Bradley

Don't try to be a hero; this is not the time to experiment. Be conservative and choose music that will enhance your band, not detract. – Mark Walker

Select literature that showcases your strengths and minimizes your weaknesses, while also giving ample opportunity for growth. The music should also allow a growth opportunity for you as a teacher/conductor. Research literature lists of respected organizations and look for composers and chosen gems from the past that frequently appear on multiple lists. Look at your curricular goals and select literature that reinforces those concepts. – Elva Kaye Lance

It's not about you, it's about what your students can accomplish successfully. Half the challenge is picking the right music. So, don't over-pick your band's abilities. – Lloyd Edward Jones III

Have a mentor to bounce off your music selections. – Regina Raney

Know the level of your students' instrument playing range. Be mindful of your instrumentation. Create challenges for your students within the reach of their potential. Try not to repeat music literature that has been played within 4-5 years. Go and listen to other band's performances to study other literature that is available. Listen to music literature during your planning, driving in your car, etc. – Gena Inglis Nix

Do not over program. Be realistic with the strengths of your program. Ask other directors who have a proven track record of success at contest for advice. Then, follow it. – Greg Gumina

In preparing for Assessment - know your group. What are their strengths and weaknesses? Just because you love a piece does not mean it will work for your group. Many times pieces that seem easy can be deceptively difficult especially lyrical pieces. I will never forget my first year of teaching. My Middle School Band played Balladair by Erickson as one of our "contest" pieces. Beautiful piece of music, but it exposed every flaw of a young band (and director) in terms of phrasing, balance, and blend. Start early in the year reading through a lot of music. Not only will

this help their sight reading skills it will also help you decide which pieces will work for your group. Pick music that will push your group and help develop their musicianship. I also have consistently through the years looked at the MPA programs to see which bands made all I's and what pieces they selected. Also talk to other directors about what are some compositions that worked well for their groups. – Sallie Vines White

## **What is the best piece of advice you would give to a director about preparing the band for Assessment or Concerts?**

Get some experienced directors in to hear your groups EARLY (or send audio files) Take careful notes on their advice and implement as much as you can. – Phil Min

Make sure you fill out all the paperwork EARLY. Check with coaches and activities calendars to try to work around their schedules as much as possible. Get your events on the school calendar asap. – Nancy Frith

Work hard. Do sectionals. Bring in people to help and listen to your band. – Dr. Mark Foster

See above regarding literature selection. – Rusty Courson

Don't be afraid or embarrassed to ask veteran directors for advice and assistance. It really will help, especially when you ask a retired director. It makes them feel appreciated. – Randell Wallace

Have a plan. For Music Performance Assessment be reasonable in music selection, for Concert make sure the program is enjoyable to work up and perform. -Steve McLendon

The prime teaching time is during the warm-up. That should not be treated as a time to hurry through so you can get to the music. Teach for musical literacy and the development of great characteristic tone quality. In my opinion, you should not be preparing for assessments or concerts. You SHOULD be preparing students to be successful musicians. Then the music performed for assessments or concerts should come much easier. – Becky Rodgers Warren

Read through the music before Christmas Break to ensure that the literature is attainable and to make sure the students have the music in their hands before the break. Consider hosting a Symphonic Band Camp (with a guest clinician) once all pitches and rhythms are prepared to help pull the music out of the performance. It is also a way to show the importance of concert playing and the MPA preparation process. – Justin Ward

Quality of sound is number 1! Work hard to avoid over programming! – Jon Bubbett

You should strive daily with your ensemble to play with the correct fundamentals of good musicianship. Teach them to take ownership of their place in the ensemble by tuning, tone, technique development on their own by practicing for auditions, honor bands, etc. Play companion pieces and exercises that have similar styles and fundamentals as the pieces you plan to prepare for performance, so you are teaching those skills adjacent to your performance pieces. – Deborah Basinger

If possible, have section rehearsals to work on individual parts. Don't spend too much time talking in rehearsal and create a sense of urgency in your students. Try not to have a lot of dead time in rehearsal. Be sure to test students on parts of the music. Work as fast as you can and be excited about their progress! – Mike Stough

The regular rehearsal warm-up routine should continue regardless of time of year or what performance is coming up - long tones, breathing exercises, chorales, singing, listening. In preparation of specific performances, set clear goals and expectations. Break down the music into manageable sections and focus on one section at a time. As the performance gets closer, try to rehearse in performance settings such as an auditorium and in front of an audience. – Garry Taylor

Invite others in to listen and comment; to work with your group; record group to hear what is going on and to make adjustments. – Suzanne Winter

PLAN every rehearsal carefully and try to stay on schedule during each rehearsal. – Ken Bodiford

It's all about fundamentals. If you don't start work working on those until January you have waited too long! - John Cooper

Get many ears (veteran ears) to hear your group prepare and get advice. – Ski Winter

Have a timeline for achievement and landmarks for what you need to accomplish by what date. Listen to multiple recordings of what you are playing and revisit them as you go along. Have other directors that you respect listen to your band to provide a set a fresh ears and different ways of telling the students the things you have told them. – Clay Sloan

Once the selections have been made, study the scores and teach the musical techniques and elements. I suggest presenting each piece as sight reading material. This will help you be more diagnostic in understanding students weaknesses and strengths, plus developing efficient rehearsal plans. Work sectionals as needed and reach out for other directors to listen &/or rehearse. Have clear goals, be consistent, stay positive while sharing the joys of performing music together! Let them know it's a process to reach the shared goal of musicality, but worth it! – Gene Inglis

Record and analyze your band's rehearsals. – Alan Brooks

Study and mark the scores so that will be very familiar with your plans. Warm up in the keys of the music you will be performing. Take your time when rehearsing the band. Pace yourself to go as slowly as necessary to "get the notes under fingers". Use metronomes and tuners as necessary. Work on singing the music as accurately as possible! Work on rhythm drills for sight reading from day one. Sight read short excerpts in the initial rehearsals. Increase the amount of material and difficulty level as you get closer to your festival date. – Carlton Wright

Pick a music program that is diverse and shows your band's strengths and hides their weaknesses. – Chuck Eady

Pick the music early and have a variety of possibilities in the folder. Make sight-reading as a part of every rehearsal your goal. – Dr. Frank Buck

Vary the pacing of preparing the literature. – Donald Dowdy

Plan your concert programs to build upon the skill sets needed to do the literature you would like to perform with your ensemble. I would plan my Fall and Christmas concert, each adding styles and some harder literature to help teach the skills needed to perform the literature I was going to program at MPA and the Spring Concert. For the concert, always have a challenge piece for the group that's a bit beyond where they are to help stretch them and push them to grow. Pick literature that helps you develop both the whole ensemble but also sections and groups that are weaker. – Terry Ownby

Get other people to come in and listen to your band approximately a month before the assessments. One week is not enough time to use their suggestions if you choose to do so. – Rusty Logan

Rehearsals are most important. Performances are the “icing” so to speak. A band will seldom perform better than the best rehearsal. – Dane Lawley

Focus on objective qualities of music first (rhythms, notes, intonation). Those elements in music are either right or wrong. – Corey Spurlin

Generally, consider three (3) separate stages of preparation: 1. Sight-reading the music and learning the notes, etc. (Develop Facility - Facility is considered to be the ability to meet the technical demands inherent in the music.); 2. Rehearsing the musical aspects of the selections (Develop Musicality - In this step focus upon phrasing, dynamics, dynamic contrast, etc.); and 3. Develop fluency in the performance itself (Fluency may be the single most important aspect of a quality performance. Developing fluency affords the students the opportunity to develop confidence and to become "comfortable" performing the music without struggling. Set aside time to play the selections in their entireties during this stage of preparation. As you approach your performance date, play the entire program regularly. Endurance can be an issue with especially young and inexperienced bands. Be sure that you address endurance during preparation.). Most importantly, strive with every rehearsal to focus upon playing with good tone quality and in tune. (These are generally the first two (2) captions on any adjudication sheet for a reason!) – John Hillsman

Record the band often and listen back to make notes. Have other directors come in to listen or even send them your recordings for assessment. – Theo Vernon

Get help! Bring in mentors to listen to your band rehearsals. Be open to their comments. Hire people to teach sectionals. Have a pass off system that is a grade for your students. Record your rehearsals and listen to the recordings and take notes. These notes will shape your lesson plan for the next rehearsal. – Kim Bain

Pick appropriate music for your group which they will enjoy working on. Demand excellence and rehearse to reach that goal. – John R. Bradley

Assessments are times to be conservative and show your work on fundamentals. You can expand and go nuts in regular concerts. – Mark Walker

Focus on Five Performance Areas:

- 1) Accuracy
- 2) Tone and Intonation
- 3) Balance and Blend
- 4) Precision
- 5) Musicality

- Elva Kaye Lance

For Assessment it's about choosing appropriate music from which they can learn. For concerts this holds true - but parents are not interested in the students being challenged. They want to ENJOY the concert. Pick things they know, or things which are enjoyable. Play a salute to the US

Armed Forces - they'll love it! You will want your audience to look forward to your next concert - not loath it. – Lloyd Edward Jones III

Plan for your band to be prepared 2 weeks before the concert because you will have unexpected interruptions in your schedule. – Regina Raney

Start Assessment rehearsals before the new year if possible, even if it's just one piece of literature. This will help you and your students not be overwhelmed. Plan out your rehearsal plans and don't wing it day to day. It is important to have directors you trust come in and listen/rehearse your band's rehearsals to help you problem solve your music and ensemble setting. – Gena Inglis Nix

It is a year long process, not a six-week unit. The day after assessment is the perfect day to begin preparing for the event which is 364 days away. – Greg Gumina

In preparing for MPA enjoy the process. Decide on your selections at least 3 months before MPA. If you can have sectionals. Have extra instructors come in if your budget allows. Give the students reference recordings of quality bands to listen to. It really helps them to know the ultimate goal they are working toward. For marches I love to have them listen to the Marine Band. Record your band as you work towards MPA so you can better assess what they need the most work on.

Have a consistent plan. Use every moment of rehearsal time to work on learning and refining the music.

-Sallie Vines White

## **What is a good, short bit of general advice that you would give outside of the topics listed here?**

Make time every day to develop your spiritual life and personal relationships. It will make you a better teacher. – Phil Min

You can never overplan!!! Have your ducks in a row anytime you step in front of your students, parents, administrators, or the community. On the other hand, if you make a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it...especially where your students are concerned!!! – Rusty Courson

The Golden Rule: Treat everyone in a way that you want to be treated. And sometimes, just let it be. – Randell Wallace

Be professional. Be on time. Always be prepared to work and teach class every day. – Steve McLendon

Be willing to admit mistakes and admit that you don't know everything. Seek answers and advice from experienced directors with great programs. Attend Midwest. Go to graduate school. Don't be afraid to ask for help. - Becky Rodgers Warren

Make a calendar of everything that needs to be done throughout the year so nothing slips through the cracks. Work with more seasoned band directors to help achieve this. Lastly, be organized so that you never do anything to take away from your students' experience. – Justin Ward

Find the POSITIVE balance between work and your life. Work to enjoy the microscopic successes you will have each day with your students to keep the larger than life problems in balance. – Jon Bubbett

Lead by example. Build bridges to relationships. Support their efforts in other activities. Be an active part of the faculty and community events. – Deborah Basinger

Be yourself. Don't expect everyone to be as excited as you are. Students are in band for many different reasons. Most of them will not be music majors. Just because they don't share your passion doesn't mean that they don't like band or they don't care. Meet them where they are! – Mike Stough

Always prioritize the needs and well-being of your students. While it is important to strive for excellence in musical performance, it is equally important to remember that students are individuals with unique talents, interests, and personalities. – Garry Taylor

The custodial staff and the office staff should never be forgotten. Keep them in mind on special occasions and give them a small gift, or a card. – Suzanne Winter

Be kind to students, parents, and administrators. That will go a long way. – Ken Bodiford

Don't forget that tone is the most important part of your performance. It doesn't matter how fast or technical you perform if the tone is not good neither will the performance. – Ski Winter

After a while we get used to the sounds that the students are giving us. Continuously listen to great individual musicians and ensembles (live and recorded) to maintain perspective on what your ensemble SHOULD sound like. – Clay Sloan

Be involved in ABA and touch base with the leadership for names throughout this state and beyond as well as members of Phi Beta Mu. – Gene Inglis

Don't get "cocky". If you think you are a great director just look around the corner, there is someone who is better. – Alan Brooks

Balance your professional life and your personal life. – John W. Bradley

Just hold all parties accountable without being overbearing. – Carlton Wright

Always work on producing good characteristic sound. – Chuck Eady

Home practice is money in the band. Give a specific assignment at the end of every class. Call on students individually to play short sections but keep it moving. Nobody hides. Everybody is a contributing member of the band. – Dr. Frank Buck

Show genuine enthusiasm at any progress (without over-stating it). – Donald Dowdy

Be passionate about what you do and let it show in your teaching. Take pride in your work and always strive to be professional. Be purposeful in how you interact with both the faculty and parents, but also the students. Your job is to give the students the most meaningful band experience that you are capable of in the setting you are in. EVERY student deserves this and you are the catalyst that makes this happen. – Terry Ownby

Be sure that you allow time for your family. – Rusty Logan

Recruit. Try to meet all of your students no matter how big or small your program is. – Dane Lawley

Strive to try something new every year you teach. Teach 25 years, not one year 25 times. – Corey Spurlin

Don't make your job your life. Make time for yourself. You can be excited and want to do it all but it will run you down fast. – Theo Vernon

No matter what level of band you teach, have a counting system and continue to work unison lines and rhythm exercises throughout all grade levels. – Kim Bain

In every endeavor there are frustrations, difficulties, and disappointments. Have a vision for your program and never lose sight of it. – John R. Bradley

Be honest and humble. Follow through on your commitments. Communicate often and clearly. Let your work speak for you. – Mark Walker

Focus on serving the needs of others. As a leader, do more than your share. When deciding - think about how your best students and your weakest students will respond to your decision. – Elva Kaye Lance

There's only one letter difference between Cool and Fool. – Lloyd Edward Jones III

Set high standards for your professional life, including higher degrees. Turn off work when you leave the campus. – Regina Raney

Be passionate about why you chose this profession and be deliberate about it every day. Each day you will face a new challenge; don't give up! – Gena Inglis Nix

Be nice. Be cooperative. Advocate for our profession. – Greg Gumina

Give your students all the opportunities you can. Opportunities to perform and to learn. Truly have a passion for music and continually share that passion with your students.

As you select contests and other performing opportunities don't choose those with the biggest trophy, but rather those that your students will learn the most at. They will take what they learn with them for the rest of their lives.

Think big! Apply for national or international performing opportunities.

Work hard and enjoy what you do! You have chosen an incredibly challenging and fulfilling career! You will make a difference in young lives! Carpe Diem! – Sallie Vines White

RHO CHAPTER of Phi Beta Mu International Bandmaster Fraternity is committed to the improvement of Bands and Band Teaching. We are especially interested in helping band directors in the formative years of their careers. If you need advice or mentoring, please contact President Kim Bain ([kimbainpbm@gmail.com](mailto:kimbainpbm@gmail.com)).