

The Midwest Clinic 12/19/2014 3:30-4:30pm: "Building and Maintaining Quality School Music Programs in the Context of Current Educational Realities" Roy Holder, Lafe Cook, Richard Miles, Scott Rush, Denny Stokes

The following includes one sample answer selected from the extensive responses to a few of the questions included in a 41 state survey of two sets of successful band directors from across the country - one averaging 26.7 yrs ex. and the second averaging 6.1 yrs ex. The entire 71 page document of survey results and input from other sources can be accessed for review under at: www.americanbandmasters.org . This document contains many successful strategies for positively impacting the realities of contemporary education. If you would like to add your comments to the ongoing effort to find positive solutions to current educational realities, please request the survey at royholder1@gmail.com .

- 4) **As professional musicians and educators we believe in and have experienced the value of music in education. What words or examples can you share that could help create clear verbiage that can be used to help explain this to value those with less musical training?**

Music is the only activity that fully utilizes both sides of the brain. Hundreds of studies attest to the fact that student academic growth is enhanced by participation in music activities. However, these are, in my opinion, ancillary benefits. Music making is valuable because through music we express the inexpressible. Music has the ability to touch the human soul so deeply that its effects may last a lifetime. The self-discipline learned through rigorous practice is seldom replicated in any other academic discipline.

- 6) **What successful strategies or resources, containing examples, can you share that could help others develop more detailed advanced ensemble curriculums that do not limit the ability of ensemble conductors to continue to offer outstanding performance opportunities while also developing documentable skills within their ensembles?**

A strong fundamental program accompanied with a chamber music program will also provide more enrichment and growth for the ensemble member.

What current educational realities are affecting your classroom in terms of enrollment/retention? Most common answers: required classes, master schedule, AP, IB, in school remedial help, sports.

How have you successfully responded to these concerns?

Served on district committee to restructure the school schedule to allow for students to fulfill requirements while still being able to have an ensemble class.

What current educational realities are affecting your classroom in terms of class time? Most common answers: Testing, required classes, scheduling, paperwork and other administrative work.

How have you successfully responded to these concerns?

I meet with the guidance director while they are making the schedule and try to encourage resolution of class conflicts.

- 9) **In the past 5 years has your situation relative to enrollment/retention:**

Improved	
Exp. 73%	Younger 76%
Weakened	
Exp. 27%	Younger 11%
Up and Down	
	Younger 11%

11) What strategies have you used that have contributed to any gains in enrollment?

I give up my planning period to go to the middle school and team teach 8th grade. There is no other education field that is as relationship based.

Questions 15 through 23 dealt with university level preparation of music education students. Complete answers to this section are available in the complete document through the link posted on the ABA website.

With increased focus on standardized testing and rigor in the curriculum, music is one of the few opportunities to teach creative thinking, personal expression, and valuable life skills (time management, responsibility, et.) We need to use all of our available resources for music advocacy, both in terms of art for art's sake, as well as all of the other benefits ... higher SAT scores, cognition, abstract reasoning skills, improvements in language, reading, and writing.

24) What thoughts or examples can you share that others might use in explaining how to evaluate students in terms of current educational thinking.

Music in education completely supports the trend towards performance-based assessment and application of knowledge in the classroom. The Common Core Standards push for students to apply newly learned concepts to a variety of situations and understand the deep reasoning behind the application. Band (or music in general) has been doing this in the rehearsal setting since the beginning. We teach our students concepts, such as articulations and dynamics, and expect them to apply it to every situation in which they encounter those things without having to re-teach the concepts. Therefore, school music supports and deeply enhances the idea of deep understanding and application of newly acquired knowledge.

26a) Assessing student progress is a high priority in current educational thinking. What assessment techniques can you share that others might use to explain what we do to non-music administrators?

Rubrics, verbal critiques, rating scales, checklists, written critique, written tests, student self assessment, differentiated instruction, live performance reports.

Questions 27 – 29 concerned professional involvement outside the classroom. Complete statistics are included in the full document posted on the ABA website. The results show that these successful professionals are very involved in seeking both continued personal growth and offering help to others through professional organizations, conferences, service opportunities, involvement in both local and region educational events and serving as mentors/rehearsal advisors.

30a) What positive things have you done, that others might adopt, in order to ensure time for life outside the classroom?

Make time, each week, for those important in my life. That simple...put it in the calendar.

31) What is your opinion of how we as a profession can positively influence the process of deciding how we will teach in the future rather than waiting for others to do it for us?

We must leave the safety of our rehearsal halls, and become active, passionate and articulate spokespersons for the arts. Too many (and I was once one) wait for "someone else" to pick up the musical flag and carry it forward into battle. We ALL must speak for our profession. I think it important to note that the many generations of former band members are not utilized as a resource for change. Translation: these people VOTE, and represent significant numbers. Politicians pay attention to large voting blocks. Use those emails and phone lines for something more than advertising the next fund raising activity!

