



“I will teach with the enthusiasm of my first year of teaching... I will be as interested in details as if it were the day before contest... I will remember that every student has the right to expect an exciting and interesting experience in my class... I will teach with love and compassion as if I knew that this was the final day that God would allow me to teach.”

- Fred McDonald, “This Day”





It's Not '*Just*' Middle School Band

OkMEA Winter Conference, 2022
Megan Perkins and Kyle Wiemar



“IT’S JUST MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND”

This statement should offend you.

Our Mentality

Middle school band is not “ponies and candy.”

We don't like foul language.

We always tell the truth, even when it is not pleasant.

We have high expectations of our kids, but higher expectations of ourselves.

We want the absolute best for our kids.

Any program is capable of achieving excellence.



The First Person to Buy In...YOU!

Fully understand your “why”.

Establish your definition of excellence.

The band is a direct reflection of the director.

You get out of it what you put into it.



Getting The Students To Buy In

Students have no preconceived notions about band.

Every detail is important.

- The band room is a special place.
- Establish expectations early.
- This allows you to be detailed in rehearsal later.

Students appreciate expectations.

They will buy into someone who has bought into them.



Getting the Parents to Buy In

You never get a second chance at a first impression.

- Organize your instrument selection day.
- Meet with every family one on one.

Meet with parents as a group every year.

Communication is key.

- Sunday Morning Emails
- The Two Week Rule
- Be quick to respond.
- Help Videos
- Send praise emails.



Creating the Culture

All-Region Band

- Great way to build a practice culture in your band room.
- Directors must be invested and involved.
- Provide avenues to help.

Sectionals

- Yes, students will show up.
- It's a group effort.
- Make it worthwhile.
- Make it enjoyable.



Creating the Culture

Solo and Ensemble

- This furthers the culture of all-region band.
- Student-led ensembles create ownership.
- Directors must be invested and involved.

Private Lessons

- Very important, but also not the answer to all problems.
- Private lesson teachers must be bought in to your vision of the program, too.
- Private teachers should be visible and well known among your students.
- Data drives instruction - show parents the results.
- Private lessons are for everyone.



Teaching Your Version of Excellence

The fun is in the process.

Establish a professional atmosphere.

There is no substitute for procedures.

Developing a desire for improvement.

- It's a group effort.
- Playing by yourself isn't scary.
- Don't be afraid to say something isn't good.
- We are serious about what we do.
- Healthy competition is important.



Teaching Your Version of Excellence

Literature Selections

- “So, what are you playing?”
- Find a balance between challenging and attainable.
- They will love it if you love it.
- Rewrites might be needed and that’s okay.
- Kids can love pieces other than “Star Wars.”



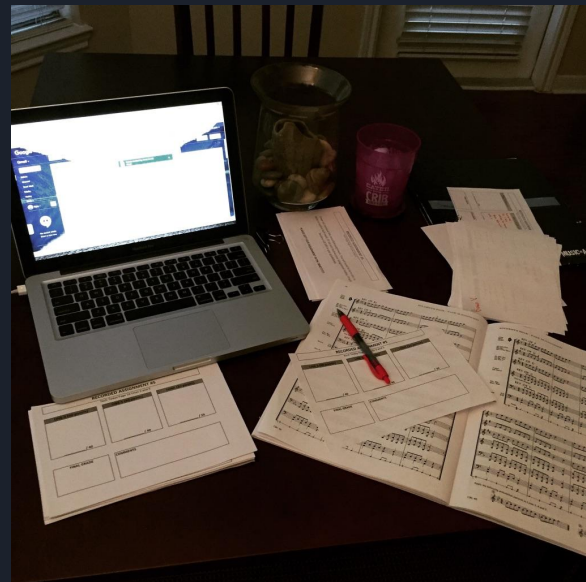
Holding *Everyone* Accountable

Hear students daily.

- This is not scary if it's built into the culture.
- Always follow through.
- This is an excellent time for praise.

Weekly Assignments

- Students have an opportunity to turn in their best work.
- Make it a routine.
- Treat it like a mini private lessons. Give solutions, not just critique.
- You should be just as accountable as they are.
- This is a quality check of your teaching.



Holding *Everyone* Accountable

Record your band regularly

- You will always hate this process.
- “I don’t need to record... I know what to work on!”
- Share your recordings with people you respect.

Ask for help

- Everyone needs a mentor.
- Your friends are not always the best clinicians.
- Kids need to see you vulnerable.
- Don’t avoid help out of fear of appearing unintelligent.
- Good teachers *want* help, and great teachers **want to help**.



The Final Piece of the Puzzle

An “Unforgettable” Musical Experience

It fills you up!





Megan Perkins

mperkins@stillwaterschools.com

Kyle Wiemar

kyle.wiemar@owassps.org