

Fundamental Processes for Sustained Success in Your Middle School Band Program



Maria Menendez

January 28th at 11:15am, Athena E

High-quality middle school band programs have processes in place that ensure success. From the complexities of classroom management and instrument maintenance to tone and rhythmic fundamentals, join in on the discussion about the essentials of a successful band program.



**Musical
Fundamentals**



Rehearsal Methods



**Classroom
Organization
Techniques**



(770) 330-0678

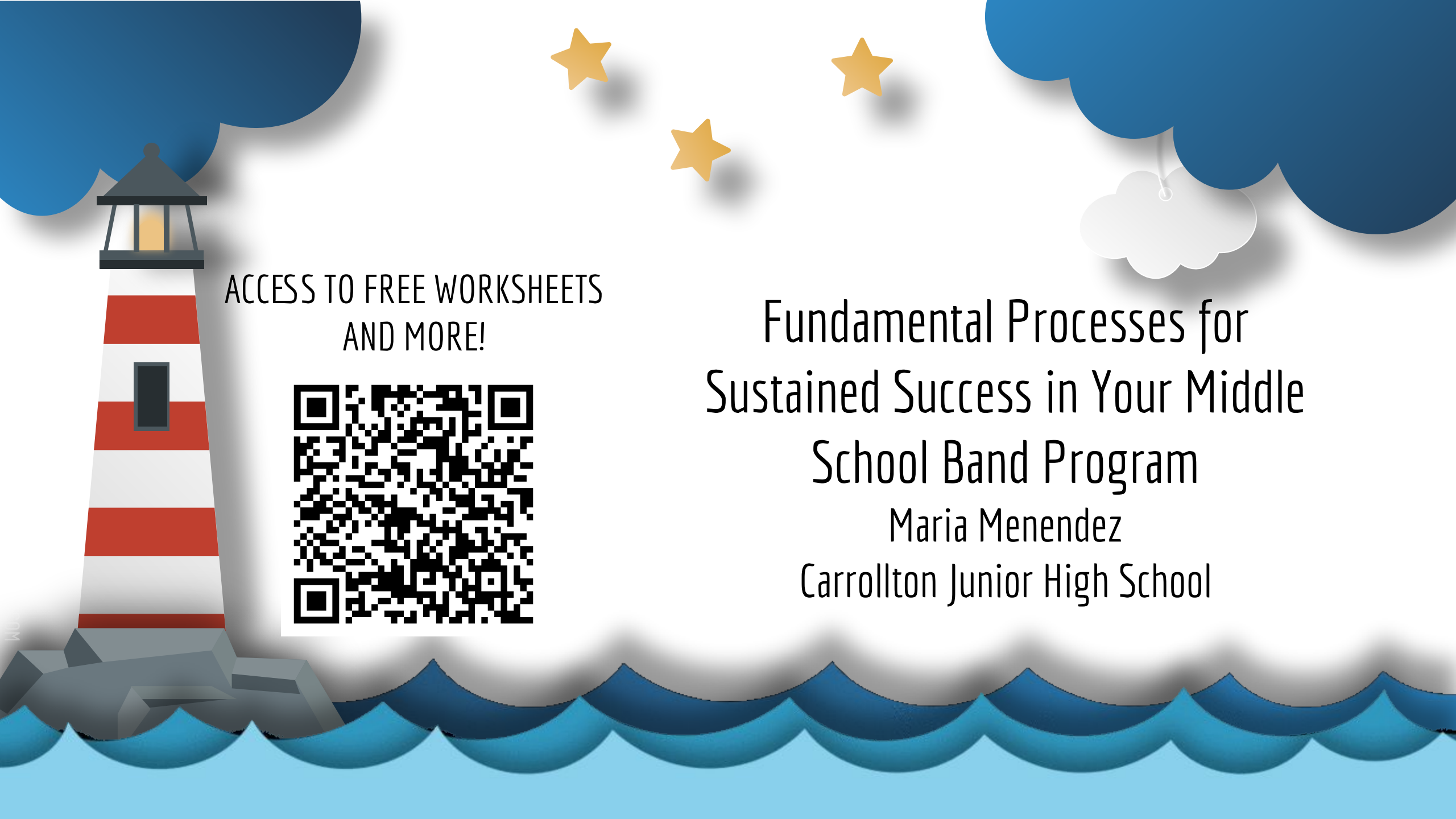
● **Contact**



maria.menendez@carrolltoncityschools.net



www.cjhstrojanband.com



ACCESS TO FREE WORKSHEETS
AND MORE!



Fundamental Processes for Sustained Success in Your Middle School Band Program

Maria Menendez
Carrollton Junior High School



Maria Menendez

Band Director

Carrollton Junior High School

GMEA In-Service Conference 1/28/2023

Covered Topics

01

Instrument Fundamentals

03

Rehearsal Methods

02

Classroom Organization

04

Classroom
Management/Philosophies

The background features a whimsical night scene. In the top left, three yellow stars of varying sizes are scattered. Large, dark blue clouds with soft shadows are positioned at the top. A yellow crescent moon is visible on the right side, with a small white cloud hanging from it by a thin line. At the bottom, a stylized blue sea with white-capped waves is shown. On the right side of the sea, a red and white striped lighthouse sits on a grey rock. The lighthouse has a black roof and a small window. The overall style is clean and illustrative.

01

Instrument Fundamentals

I will ensure that you feel confident in a productive way for all students to hold and produce a tone on each instrument.

All Woodwinds

- Their resting hand position MATTERS!
- Stickers/velcro
- Arms should not be against their leg
- Teach specific adjustments for range when necessary.
 - It is NOT a one size fits all for tuning, tone, and range.

Woodwinds



Reeds

- Students must cycle reeds
 - A new reed is the same as a broken reed. *GASP*
 - 2, 3, 4, or 5 reed cycle.
- Find the “fulcrum” (single reeds) with your kids and ensure they place their lip there.
- Ligature and reed should be taken off after playing to store in the case
- Reeds belong in reed cases when not being used
- Do not be afraid of trying different strength reeds for different students.
-

Brass

All Brass

- “Carrollton C”
- Where is the bell facing?
- Use books, pillows, etc. to help students with shorter torsos.
- Greased slides matter.
 - Students are goofballs and don’t mind stuck slides and valves. Stay on top of it!
- Jolly rancher or golf ball
- High register= “Fast air, firm lips, firm belly”
-David Trumble

Maintenance

- Instruments should have all slides pushed in when put away and pulled out when taken out.
 - Trumpet: width of first finger
 - French Horn: width of pinky finger
 - Trombone Baritone: width of thumb
 - Tuba: More than thumb width
- Slides should be wiped and re-greased quarterly, if not more.
- Slides should be taken out, wiped, dried and stored outside of the instrument for long breaks.
- *Ding* “Cheers!” is not a good thing for instruments!

Hand Position/Posture

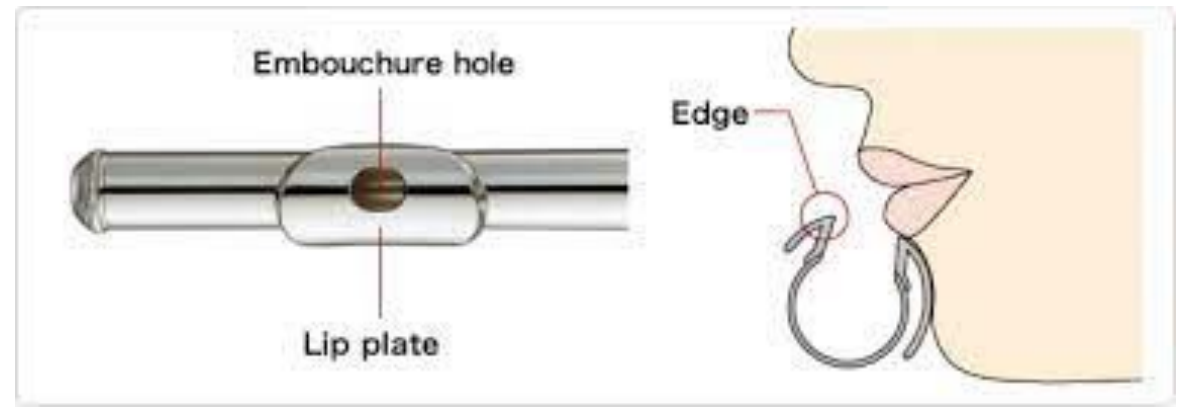
Why is it imperative to monitor it, constantly?

- Allows productive playing
- Prevents injury
- Prevents future errors before they happen
- Facilitates efficient playing
- Prevents instrument from breaking



Flute

- Three points of contact
- It is okay for the flute to angle slightly down but ensure that the head follows. Close to parallel is ideal
- Tube of head joint should be parallel to your lips
- General rule of thumb: cover 1/4th of tone hole with lips
- "Poooh"
- More of a flat embouchure versus other instruments
- Small diamond and aim air up for higher register
- Flat oval and aim down for lower register
- Fixing tone on the headjoint will work wonders



From YAMAHA Corporation



www.Fluteland.com

Clarinet

This instrument is easy to create bad habits on.

- Squeak=bad embouchure, bad reed, bad hand position.
- Firm corners, high tongue, relaxed throat, chapstick lip
- Lower chin teeth firmly on top.
 - Mouthpieces on top are a life saver!
 - Walk around and have them play a pitch and try to wiggle the clarinet. Should stay pretty still
- Cross the break and don't make it a big deal.
 - "Low E with register key"
 - "Lift a finger" or "add a finger" with register key.
 - Let kids with small fingers know it is okay that they struggle at first.



Oboe/Bassoon

- For most of us...Hire a professional/require private lessons.
 - I do this mainly so that their reeds can be custom made and adjusted
- They should not be treated like they are “on their own” because of our lack of knowledge.
 - You must learn tips and tricks
- The angle is different than other woodwinds.
- The students must own multiple reeds.
- The reeds rest on the squishy part of the bottom lip for oboe.
- Bassoon: “whistle and yawn”
 - Reed should go directly into the mouth, not angle up or down
- Mention “more reed, less reed, more pressure, less pressure”.
- Be careful if you do your own repairs, it may be worth it to wait for a professional.



Alto Saxophone

- Embouchure is COMPLETELY different from clarinet
- Neck strap should be adjusted daily.
- Should be placed between the legs
- Arm should not rest on leg
- "Vu" then "ahh" for back of throat
- "Bottom lip should look like a gummy bear"- Brandyn Taylor
- Entire embouchure supporting the mouthpiece in a circular shape
- Fuzzy sounds can often mean too pinched, especially in the lower lip
- Honky sound can often mean way too much mouthpiece.



Tenor/Bari Saxophone

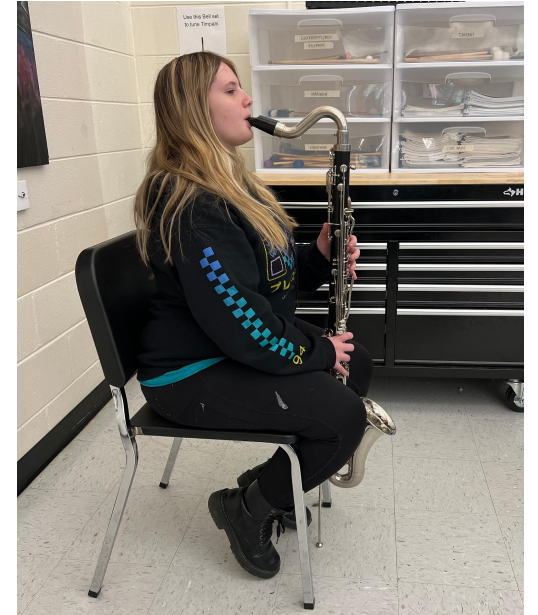
What is different as compared to the alto saxophone?

- More mouthpiece and more air is needed compared to their smaller siblings
- Instrument hangs to the side.
- Students tend to hunch a lot with this.
- Neckstrap or body harness is necessary for most students for Bari.
- Get them comfortable with the low register ASAP
- Do NOT neglect the upper register. Have them perform two octave scales and such.
 - They should not only be skilled at the range that the music writes the in.



Bass Clarinet

- More mouthpiece!!!!
- More air
- Ensure that they adjust peg daily to the appropriate height
- Keep cheeks in and not puffed
- I like to slightly angle the bass clarinet towards the chair.
- Make them play ABOVE the break!



Trumpet

Here come some important tips!

- C in the right hand (no flat fingers)
- Third valve slide must move, daily!
 - Are you mentioning it?
 - If you do not use it on low D it is a WRONG note
- The weight of the trumpet should be in the left hand
- Upgrade mouthpieces for 7th grade if possible.
- Mention air pressure, a lot!



French Horn

You must adjust per student

- Straight back
- Bring the instrument to you
- *More top lip than bottom in the mouthpiece
 - This is the only brass instrument without the 50/50 ratio
- Roll sleeves up
- The horn does not need to rest on the leg for most students
- Right hand is put straight with thumb touching the side of index finger, then slightly bend as a swimmer would.
- Right hand should be at "2 o'clock" with the weight of the bell on the thumb and first knuckles.
- The weight of the instrument should be held on the hand, NOT the leg. This builds terrible habits that are hard to break.



Trombone

Protect the slide at all costs!

- Remove obstacles from their path of destruction
- Right hand holds the slide with the thumb, index finger and middle.
- Allow them to really try to reach for 5th, 6th, 7th with a good sound while they are younger.
- Glissandos are a fantastic way to increase range
- Understand particular notes needing particular positions.
- Good singing voice and pitch is a must to play trombone.
- If you hear metal on metal, please ensure that they grease their slide.



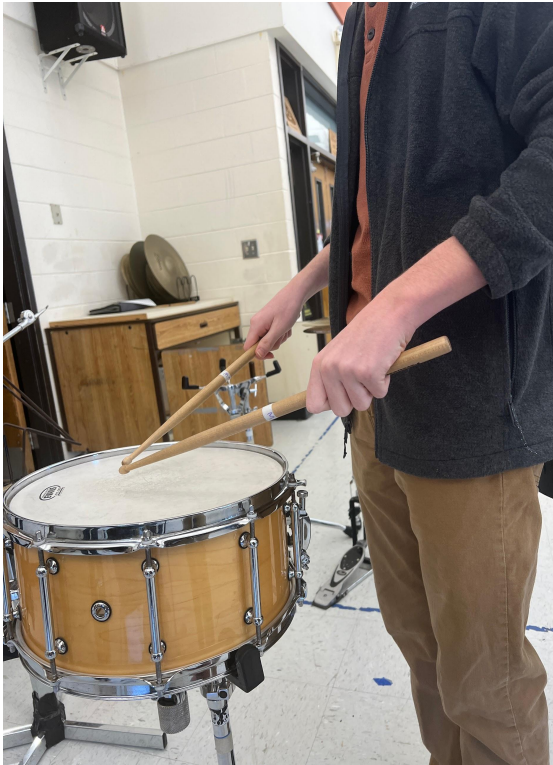
Tuba/Baritone

Should be accommodated for the size of the student.

- Prevent leaning and hunching
- Books and pillows can help tremendously
- Left arm should cradle but should not hold or pull at tuning slides.
- Angling the instrument is okay
- Try to purchase a 4 valved for older students.



Drums (Snare, Toms, etc.)



Notice how much you
can see from the side!

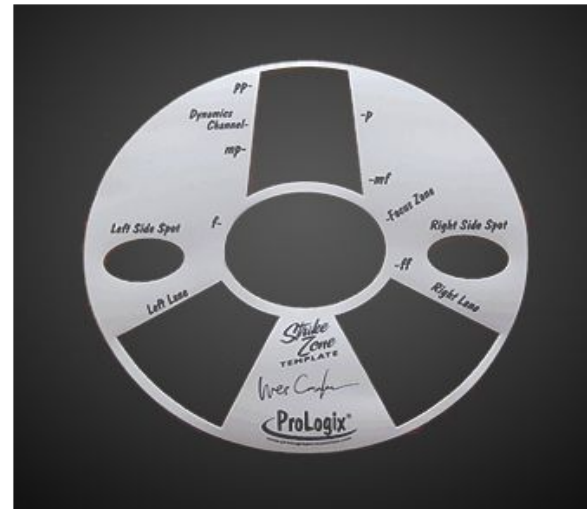
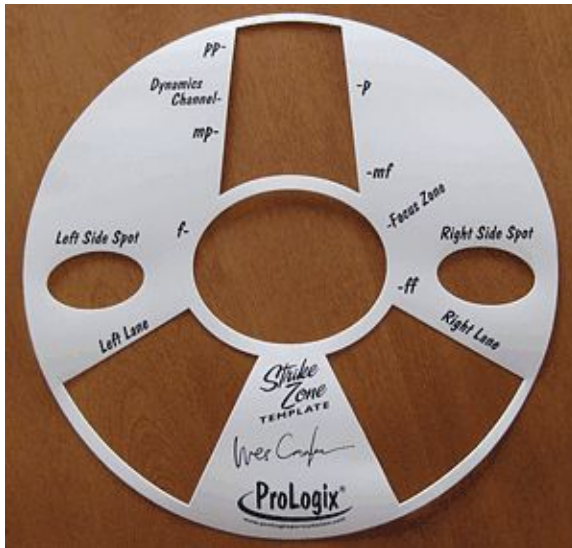


- Height of drum matters for every single kid. They should adjust it each time they play
 - Forearms should be slightly below parallel
 - Snares should go from top to bottom on the side rather than across from left to right
- Stick height, velocity, and stroke type should be your big phrases
- Embouchure= fulcrum/grip
- “Knocking on a door”
- Movement should engage from the wrist, not the arm
- Begin by teaching a full legato stroke
- Make comments about them as often as possible

Continued:



- Teach beginners BESIDE you.
 - You will notice so much more, be able to keep them on task, and make them feel important.
- If students only play on a practice pad, are they really going to learn everything that they need to know?
 - Too loud? Half on drums/half on mallets:
 - Try one at a time, on the rim, some on drum pads to give ears a break and allow clearer teaching.
- Consider replacing the drum head before the entire drum.
- Do not store drums on their stands. They should be put away after class.
 - Prevents kids from playing on them walking in and out of class
 - Prevents them from falling over
- Where they strike matters!



www.wescrawford.com

Mallet Percussion

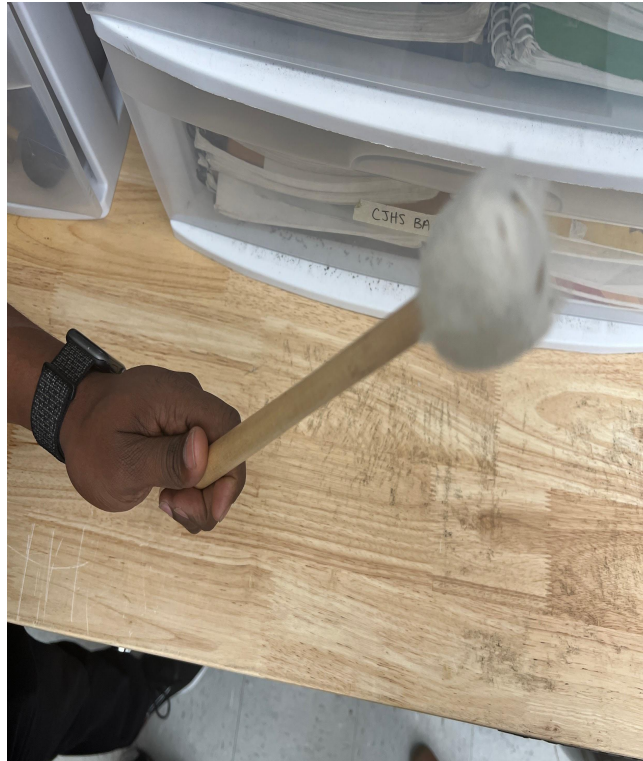


- Weight distribution is different than the snare stick because of the weight of the head of the mallet
- Listen and adapt mallets for pieces and moments in pieces
- Try to have at least a less articulate and more articulate option for all keyboards
 - Students should be aware of the impact each has on their sounds
- Explain where the nodes are.
- Students who only play drums and not other percussion instruments are not literate and not fluent in percussion. Rotate, encourage, brag, highlight, whatever you have to do to get your students to not just focus on drumming
- Two playing placements:
 - in the middle of the bar
 - On the bottom edge of the accidental keys
- It is okay for students to stand on a textbook or box

Timpani

How is timpani different than other instruments that uses implements?

- All students should learn timpani.
- All students should learn how to tune the timpani
- “Flick peanut butter off a spoon”
 - Emma Eddleman
- Lean more towards an upstroke
- Thumb on top (different than drums and mallets)
- Placement on each drum is slightly different
- Let your kids watch a good timpanist play a roll.
 - It almost looks like that bendy pencil trick



Auxiliary

- If we can see it, we can hear it!
- Each instrument has a different technique than the other.
- Take the time to look up how to play each instead of guessing
- There is an optimal placement for tone for all percussion instruments
- Percussion friends will blow your mind with tips, use them!



02

Classroom Organization





The way you set up and run your classroom
matters!



Let's look at some methods that have worked for me

Cleanliness and Organization

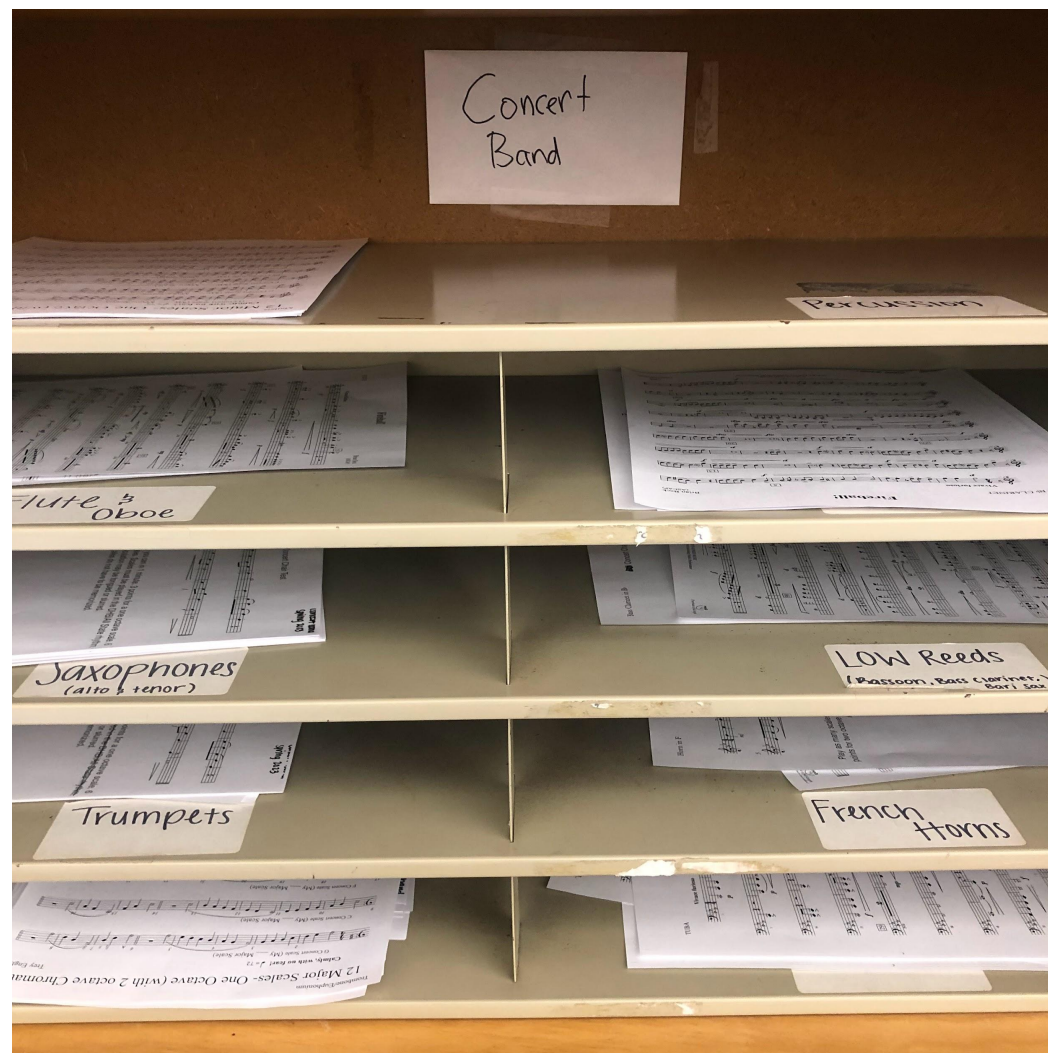
- Clean and sweep your own room. Even in front of the kids. Show them that it matters
- Keep your office and desk clean. Show them that you walk the walk
- IF you want your equipment taken care of, you must dismiss with enough time to allow the students to do so
- Every item and instrument in your band room has a place. Every. Single. Thing.
 - Are you mentioning it?
 - Are you pointing it out?



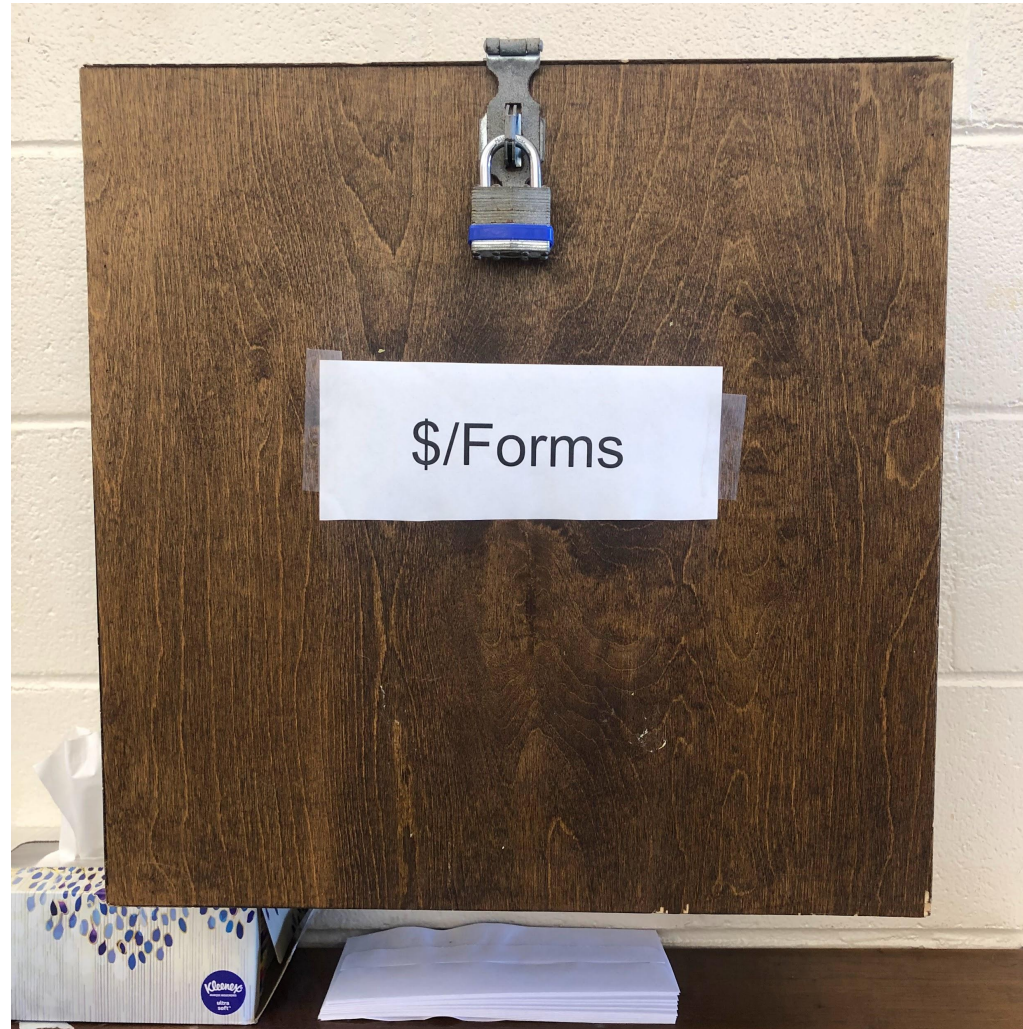
Label Shelves



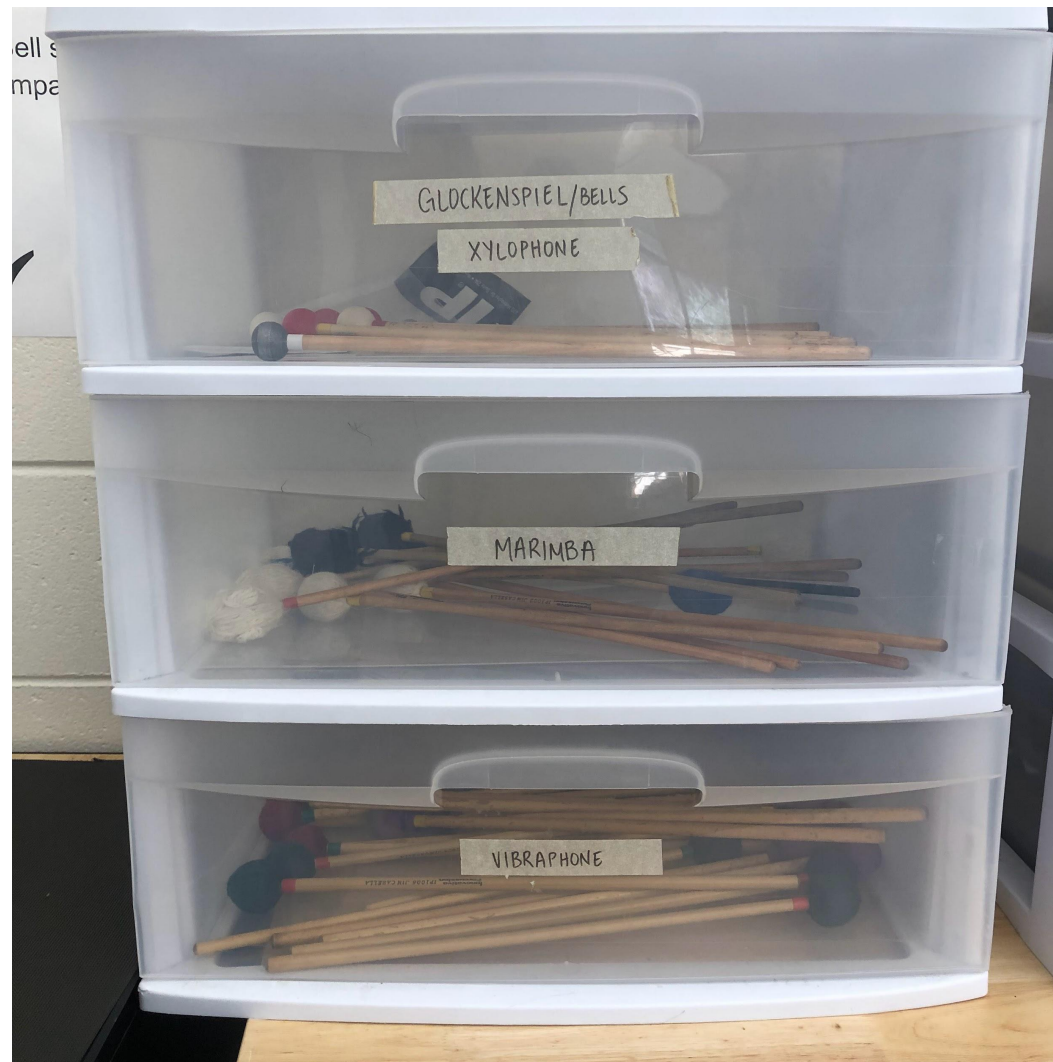
Label Classes and Parts



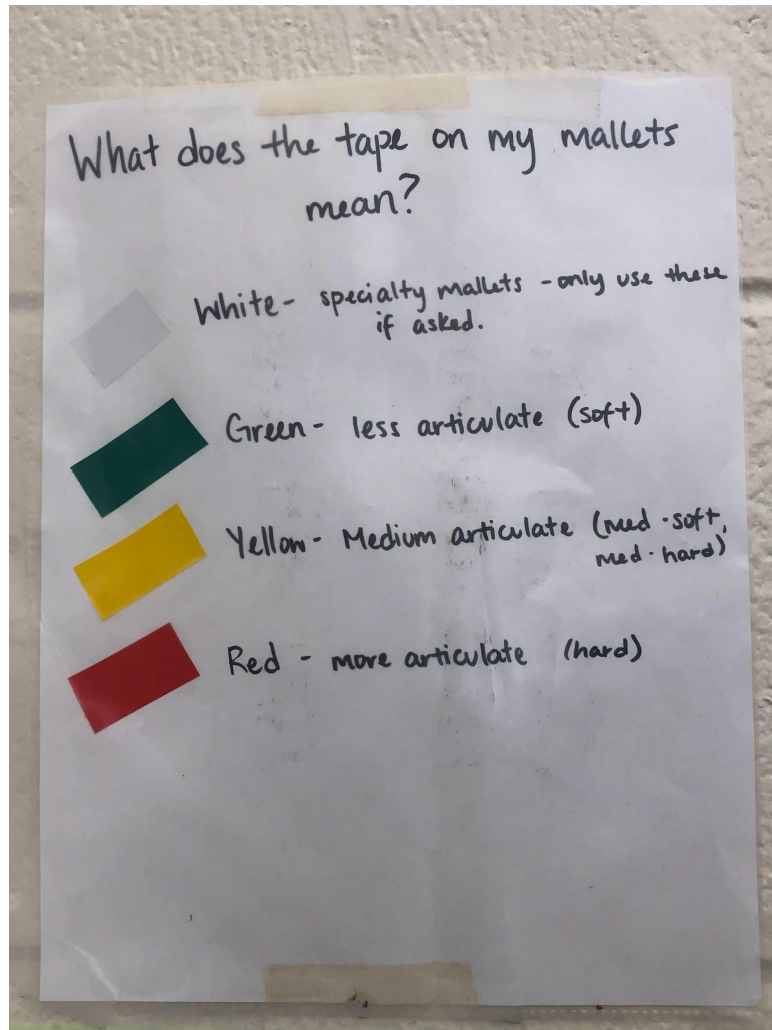
Keep Money Secure



Label Mallets



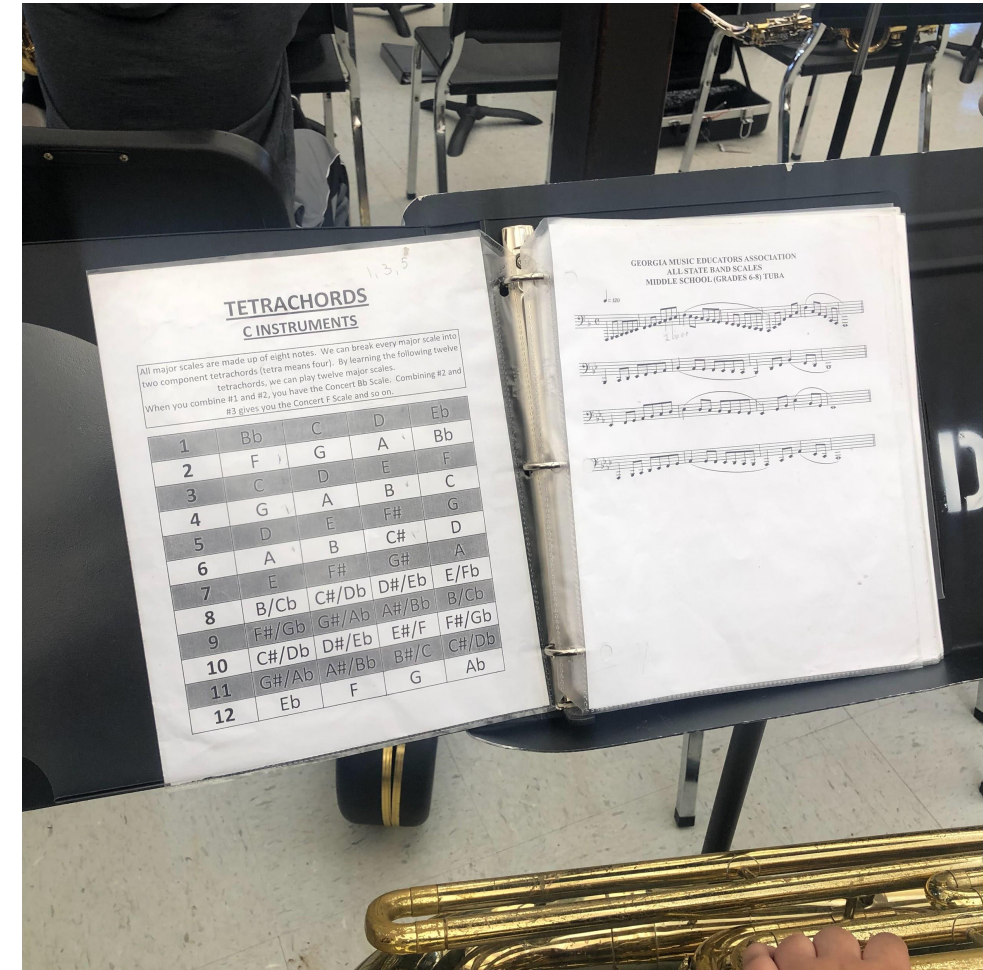
Label Mallets with Colors



Cymbal Storage with a pan lid!



Binders and Sheets



Initial Sticks



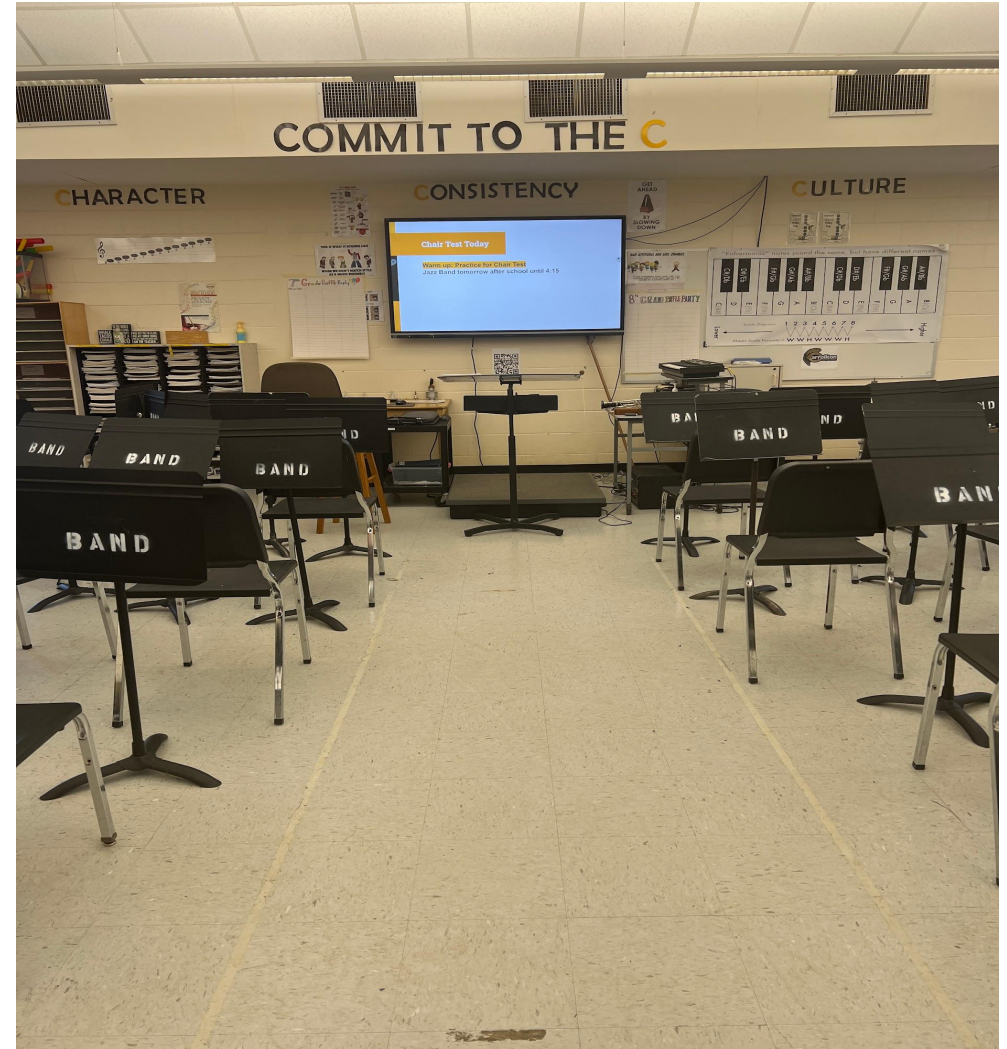
Center Aisle and Seating Arrangement

Why I like the center aisle.

- Center aisle allows you to physically get to students sooner
- Allows for you to get off of the podium and check for H.E.A.T.
- Allows you to play with kids more easily
- Allows for you to hear individuals better
- Classroom management can be handled discreetly
- *I would close up the gap as you get closer to the concert)

Why should you change the seats up?

- H.E.A.T. is easier to monitor
- “Row 1 is now in row 4. Everyone else come up one row”
- You make new students feel important
- Classroom management may get better
- Your ears and their ears will hear things differently
- Less monotony
- Develop relationships with more than your flutes!



03

Rehearsal Methods

Warm ups, fundamentals, method books, and rehearsal tips and tricks.



The best teaching tip that I have:



You ready?

The H.E.A.T. Method



Hand Position



Embouchure



Air



Tongue

E.A.T. Method - Neal Bright

The H.E.A.T. Method

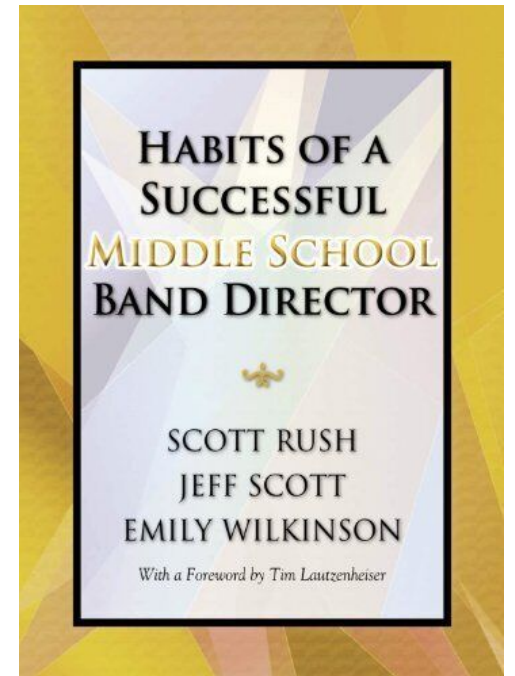
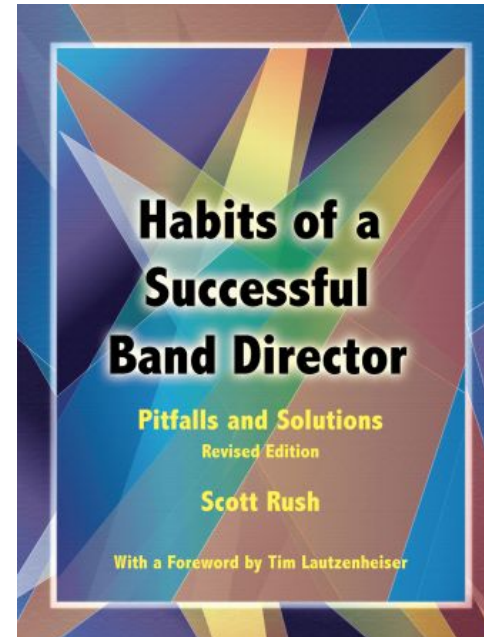
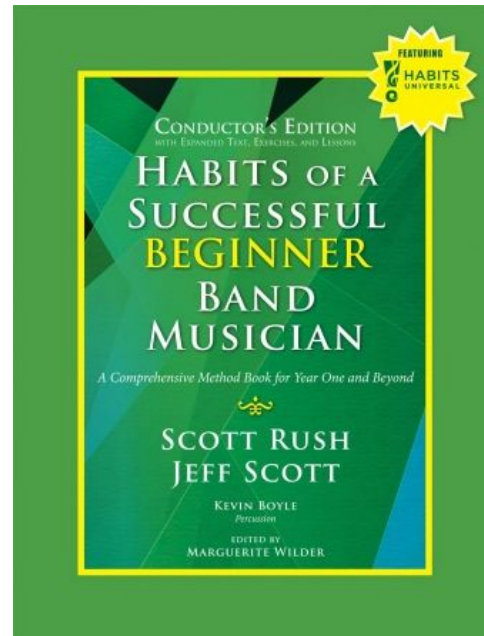


- Address these four concepts daily
- Understand how it differentiates for each instrument
- Make an easy way for your students memorize their specific set ups
 - Can they say it back to you?
 - Do they have it memorized?
 - Example: Trumpets what shape is our right hand? "Carrollton C!"
- If you have nothing to look for or to say, mention one of these and your students will always improve.
- Sometimes I will mention one even though I did not see a problem because my eyes may have missed something
 - Examples: "Wow, we have some interesting interpretations of a fulcrum right now. Can you all look at each other and double check?"

Recommended Text/Books to Support Each



Hand Position:

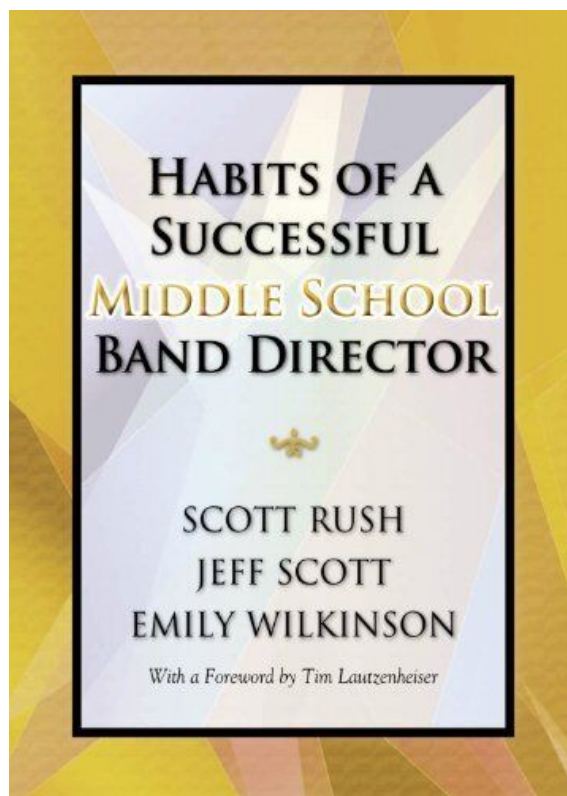


Recommended Text/Books to Support Each



Embouchure

www.banddaddy.com -Kenneth Beard



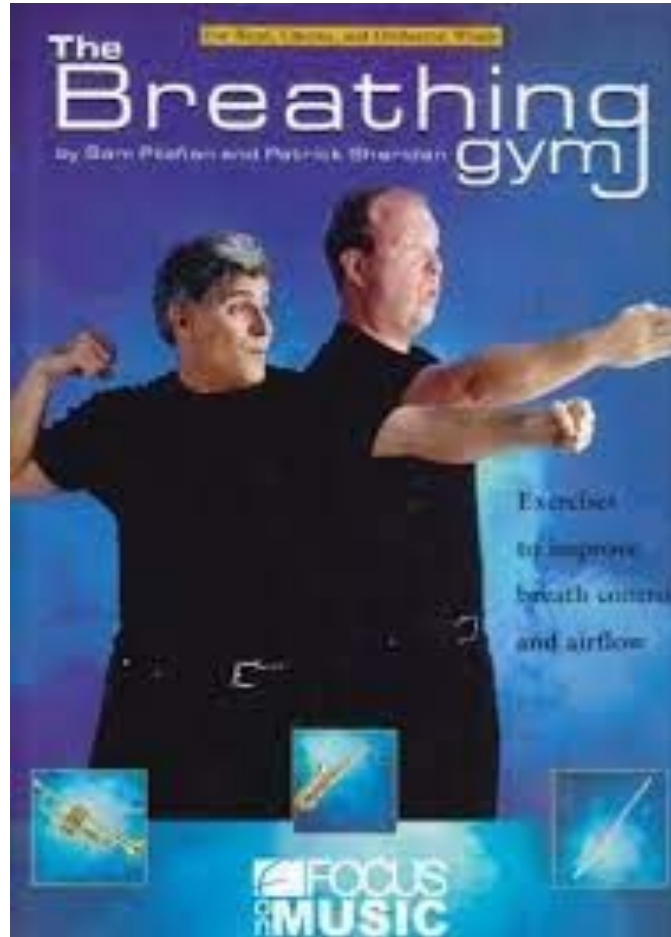
Embouchure Steps CMS Trojan Band			
Instrument	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Flute	Place	Roll	Adjust
Oboe	Place reed on bottom lip	Close top lip over teeth	Firm up corners
Clarinet	Place reed on bottom lip	Place top teeth on top of mp	Firm up corners
Saxophone	Place reed on bottom lip	Place top teeth on top of mp	Firm up corners
Bassoon	Place reed on bottom lip	Close top lip over teeth	Firm up corners
Trumpet	Place shank between teeth	Place mp on flat platform	Firm up corners
French Horn	Place shank between teeth	Place mp on flat platform	Firm up corners
Trombone	Place shank between teeth	Place mp on flat platform	Firm up corners
Euphonium	Place shank between teeth	Place mp on flat platform	Firm up corners
Tuba	Place shank between teeth	Place mp on flat platform	Firm up corners
Percussion	Fulcrum	Fingers closed	Place

Recommended Text/Books to Support Each



Air

- Balloons
- Breathing tubes



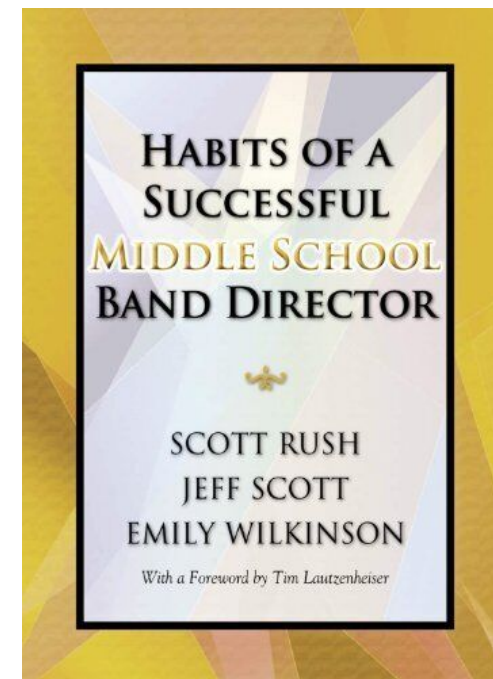
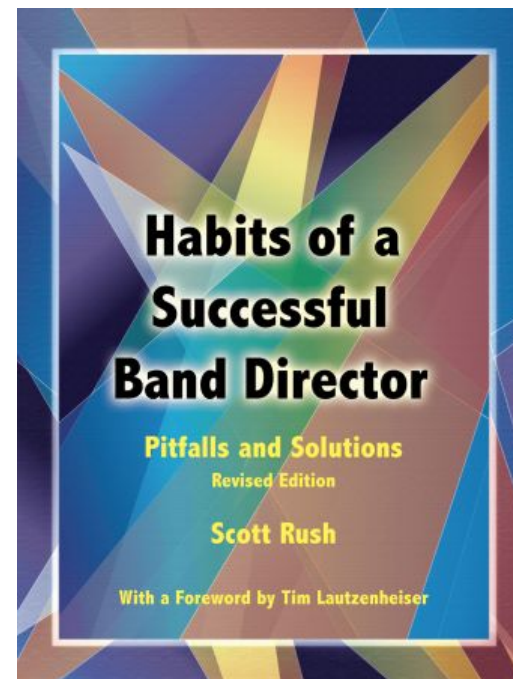
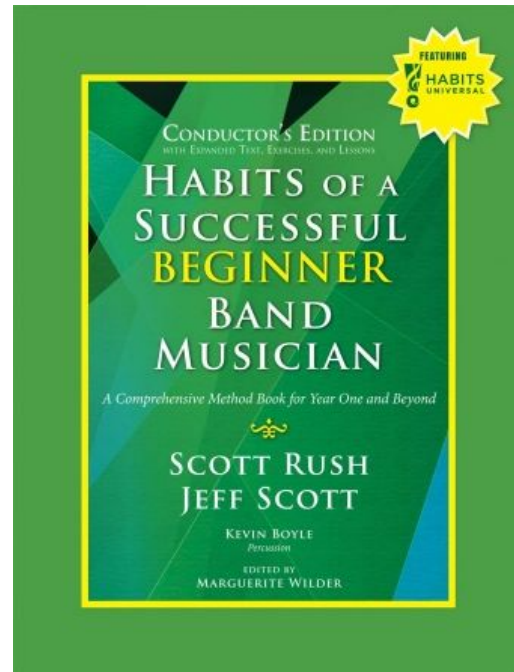
Why does this image exist on the internet?

Recommended Text/Books to Support Each



Tongue

- Placement for wind instruments along with adjustments depending on the register need to be discussed.
- Your student should know and be able to say their specific placement back to you.



Warm ups:

Why are we doing this? Why are we warming up? Why does this matter? How does it apply?

- Spend up to 50% of your class warming up, especially on Mondays.
 - That is the day that you should give lots of H.E.A.T. reminders.
- Reference in the music moments that your warm ups have helped to justify them to your students
 - Example: Remember the song with dotted quarter notes from our warm up? What you have at measure 25 is very similar
- Harder warm ups = easier time playing sheet music
- Unison warm ups are a must for middle school
 - Gets your lower voices in the upper register
 - Allows for experimentation for students to “figure things out”
 - Allows easier teaching so you can get your head out of the score and get off the podium to “catch” things
 - Build confidence
 - Catches up your students who are behind
 - Allows percussion to alternate from mallets to snare since not all students can play those instruments on a piece of band music.

Singing/Tuning:

- Start with humming
 - Hum-"Mah"-Numbers
- Teaches students to listen and match
 - Allows for you to hear students who do not sing and match pitch very well and who rely on their instrument too much
- Do they know their tuning pitch?
- Do they know how to flatten and sharpen their instrument?
- Do they know how to sharpen and flatten a note?

Equipment Checks

- At least once a 9 weeks, twice if possible
 - Name tag on instrument and stick bag
 - Binder with cover on front and name
 - Music in sheet protectors
 - Four working reeds
 - Greased/oiled brass
 - Sticks in stick bag that are labeled
 - Pencil

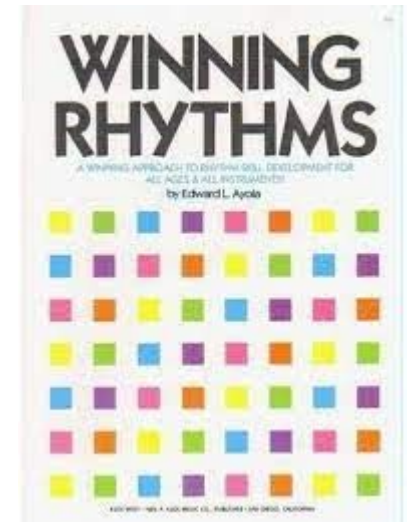
Rhythm Matters

Why should you hit this year round for every grade?

- A right note at a wrong time is still a wrong note
- Builds confidence
 - “Ms. Menendez how does this go?”
 - They are asking about rhythm more often than the pitch
- Improves sight reading
- Allows students to learn and grow independently

Recommended Method Books/Websites:

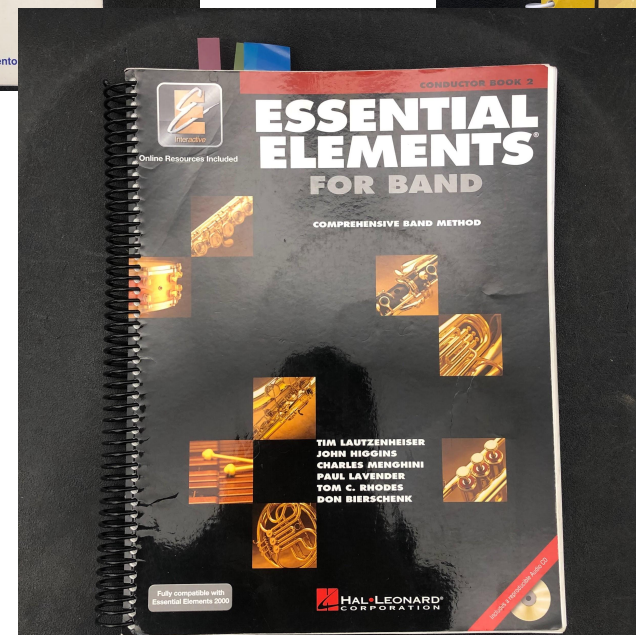
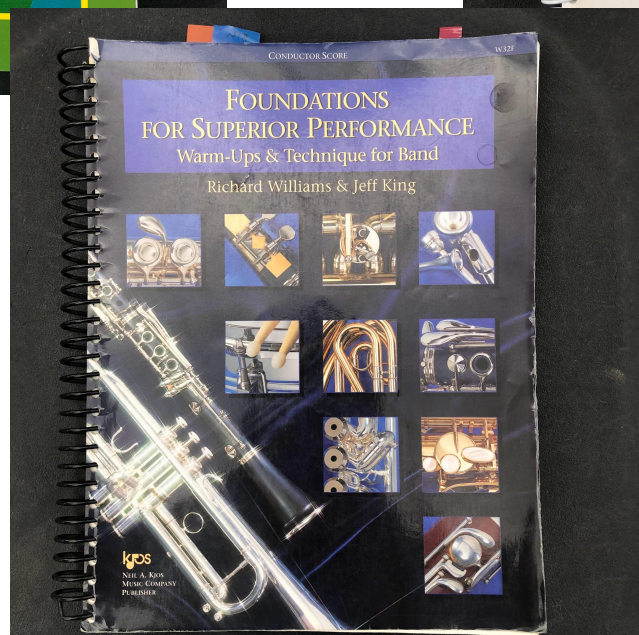
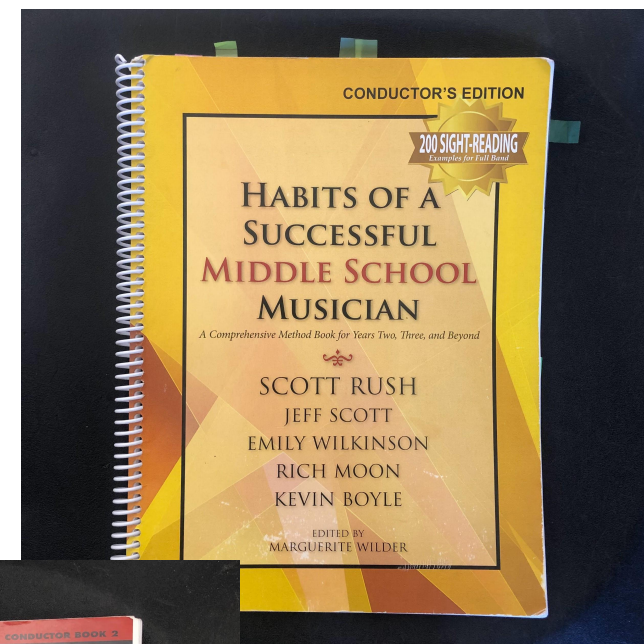
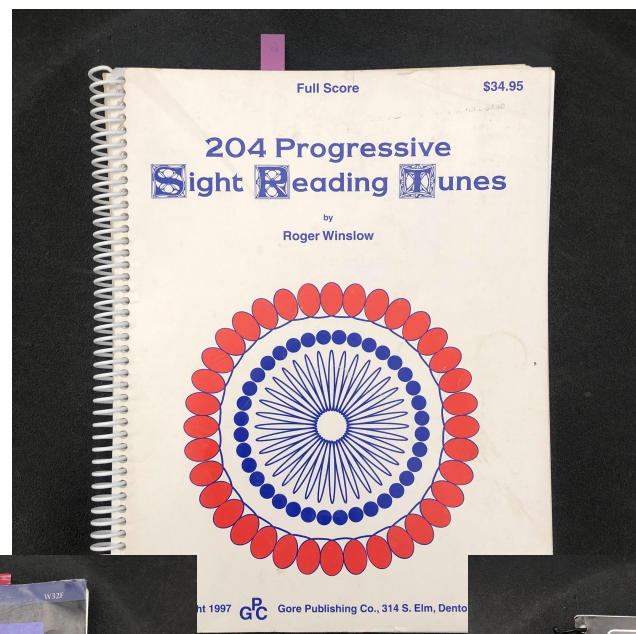
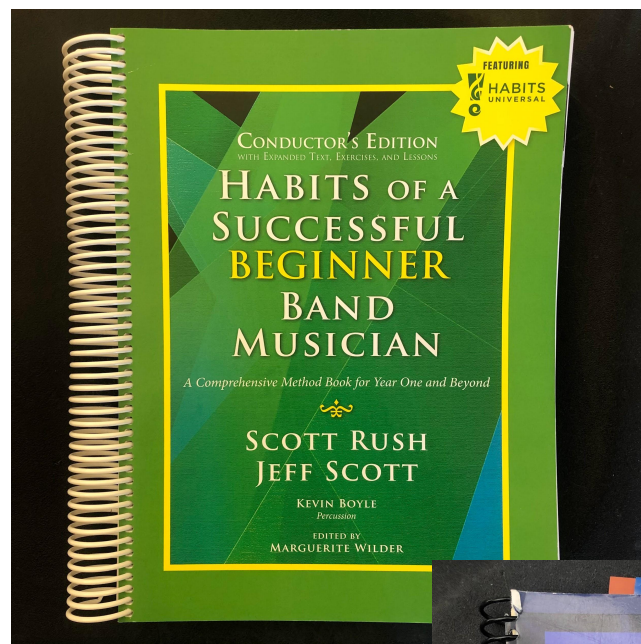
- Sight reading factory
- RhythmRandomizer.com
- Create two measures a day for them to study when they get in class
- Banddaddy.com beginners rhythm sheet
 - He also has a free book that explains HOW to teach rhythm counting
- Winning Rhythms
- Teaching Rhythm Logically



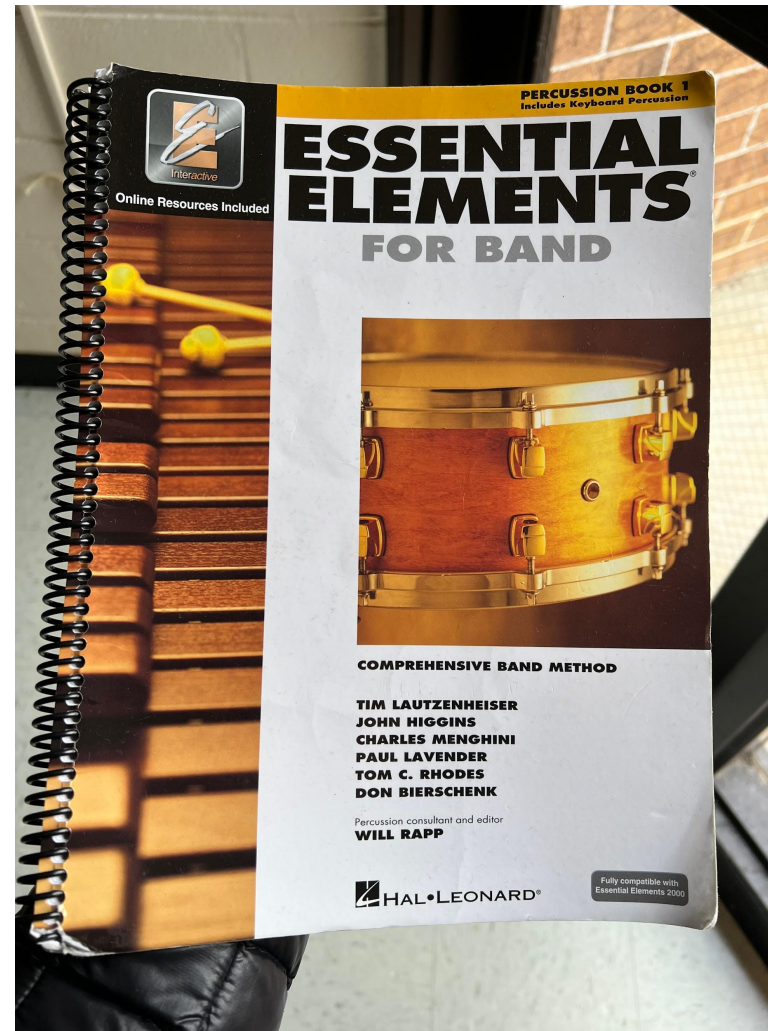
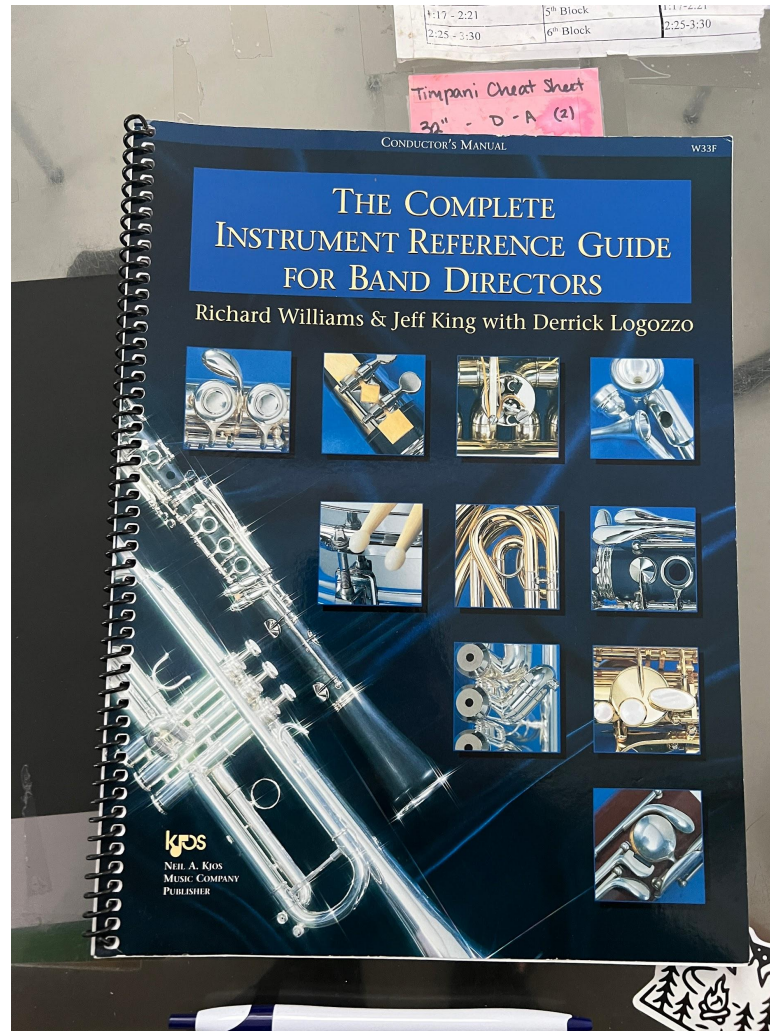
Tips and Tricks

- How to fix things from the podium
 - When sight reading have a section or two play the pitch on a concert F. Allows you to hear them differently
 - Warm up using first note of chorale or piece.
 - They need rules for everything: Embouchure steps, chorale style, sight reading rules. Must be short and memorable
 - Warm up exercise: split class in half so harmonies are heard even in sight reading sometimes. It also makes things stick out that your ear may not regularly hear
 - Assess students often: Pass a note around the room. Pass a phrase around the room. Play a scale and give each student a different note. Can use a different rhythm on that note?
 - Have students teach each other
 - Show your neighbor that fingering

Recommended Method Books



Recommended Method Books



04

Classroom Management/Philosophies

How your class is run matters, who you are to the students matters.





The Pendulum of Middle School



6th Grade

**The student LOVES
you!**



7th Grade

**The student LOVES you and
starts LIKING music!**



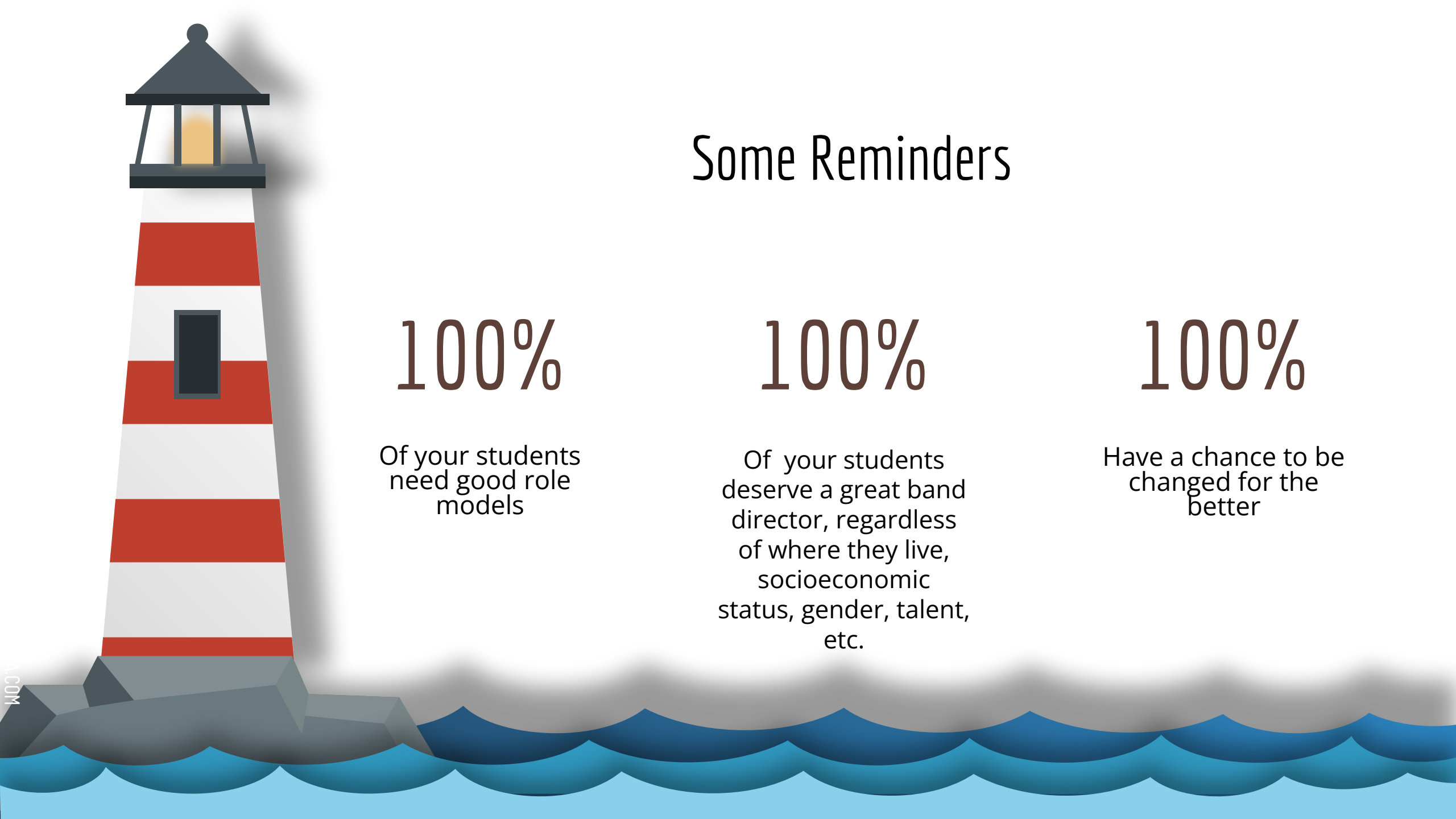
8th Grade

**The student LOVES you and
starts LOVES music!**

Classroom Management

- Discipline is everything. Poor classroom management= failed teaching. The entire purpose of a classroom is for students to learn. If an obstacle is in the way of that, remove it.
- Wag more, bark less. Students want attention, what attention do you want to give? What attention do you want to have on you? You praising or you scolding?
- Choose the 50+ kids over the 1.
- Ideas include: eye contact, proximity, switching seats (even to the front row), asking for them to step into the hall, office and then IMMEDIATELY going back to teaching, phone call home during class
 - “I am having to stop class to contact you because I am unable to teach the other 50+ students due to your students behavior. I am going to put them on the phone with you so that you can speak with them. If you would like to speak with me afterwards you may call me back during my planning at _____”
- When you remove a kid, follow up and allow them to speak first. I usually ask them how things are going in other classes, life, etc. and have been very shocked to find outside factors affecting them in my class.
- Do not get in an argument battle from the podium, even if they say things to you. Move on, show the students that you won't feed into that and TEACH.





Some Reminders

100%

Of your students
need good role
models

100%

Of your students
deserve a great band
director, regardless
of where they live,
socioeconomic
status, gender, talent,
etc.

100%

Have a chance to be
changed for the
better

So Let's Remember

We are the lighthouse
to our students.

They are self conscious,
stressed, sometimes unsafe,
hungry, lack motivation and are
waiting for SOMEONE to give
them hope and direction in
their lives

You matter to them

Focus on making one thing
better each day and the rest
will take care of itself. Progress
is gradual and slow.

The numbers at LGPE can be
daunting, but your students
feeling like more than just a
number in this world can be
life changing.



THE STARFISH STORY

*One day a man was walking along the beach
when he noticed a boy picking something up
and gently throwing it into the ocean.*

*Approaching the boy, he asked,
“What are you doing?”*

*The youth replied,
“Throwing starfish back into the ocean.
The surf is up and the tide is going out.
If I don’t throw them back, they’ll die.”
“Son,” the man said, “don’t you realize there
are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of
starfish? You can’t make a difference!”
After listening politely, the boy bent down,
picked up another starfish,
and threw it back into the surf.
Then, smiling at the man, he said...
“I made a difference for that one.”*





QR Code to this
presentation



Thank you!

Do you have any questions?

maria.menendez@carrolltoncityschools.net
(770)330-0678