

Surviving and Excelling in a Small School

The Midwest Clinic 2012

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Leadership and Advocacy

— [We will discuss 3 areas related to small school student leadership and advocacy:

— Self-Examination

— Strategies and Examples

— Student Experience

Self-Examination

— [As a small school band director you can have much more of an effect on music student's development.

— [We have much more one-on-one contact with our students which allows us to develop great leaders and musicians.

— [In many cases we are the only band director they might ever know, so what we do as an example has much more of an effect on the student.

— [We must be mentors. In many cases we are all they have.

Self-Examination

- [As small school directors we are observed much more often and more in-depth by each of our students.
- [We must be even more aware that leadership is in our actions and not in our position.
- [We must work as hard as we can for our students who in many cases have no other source of music instruction and be service-minded for them.

Self-Examination

- [So, where do you fit for your students?
 - Organizer: Cleans, arranges, maintains, schedules, etc.
 - Manager: Utilizes people efficiently to accomplish a given task.
 - Leader: Inspires others to accomplish a given task.
 - Mentor: Teaches others to become leaders, managers, and organizers.

Self-Examination

— [Traits we must pass on to our students:

— Punctual - You may be the only one that the students can depend on to be there.

— Organized - If you don't do it who will?

— Positive - You may be the only positive source of music education they may ever know.

— Prepared - You may not have the luxury of a staff. The students are depending on you for everything.

— Consistent - Everybody knows everything that goes on so treat every similar situation the same.

— Enthusiastic - You are the only "cheer leader" for your program and your students.

— Service-minded - You are "THE Band Director." Be prepared for the role in the school and community.

Strategies and Examples

— [Build student ownership in the program. Your program can have a much greater impact on the small school community.

— [Don't be afraid to let them make some of the decisions in program management. Small programs depend on positive student involvement for much of their results.

— [When students take ownership in their program you will see a drastic increase in the program's quality. Smaller programs can experience those increases much quicker.

Strategies and Examples

— [Allow the student leaders to create a motto for the year. In a small program they can be more encouraged to fulfill it throughout the year. Some of ours have included:

— Be the “Push” not the “Pull”

— Leave a Legacy

— It’s Never too Late to Better Yourself

— Remember the Past and Build for the Future

— [These can serve as a “rally cry” for the year and help directors attain the goals they put forth, especially in the small school where there may be limited staff.

Strategies and Examples

— [Allow the students to select goals for the year. This can help with student accountability in small schools where instruction may be limited. Some examples include:

- Be a family
- Be a positive influence to everyone, not just your section
- Leave a positive legacy for those that will follow
- Become a better musician

Strategies and Examples

— [Allow the students to make some of the rules for that year. This will take a lot of guidance from you, but in a small school it will build much more accountability and ownership to your program.

— [Small school students are much more aware of what has gone on in the past and can be more pro-active in effecting change within the program for the future. Their knowledge of fellow students and situations can help them generate positive change much quicker.

Strategies and Examples

— [Music students fit into 4 basic categories. Identify them to your students and inspire them to move up to the next level.

— Participant

— Player

— Musician

— Artist

— [In small schools this is vital for the progression of the program. Each category can be dealt with at a much greater level in the small school setting, allowing for even greater reward.

Student Experience

— [As a small school director you can have a far greater effect on each of your student's experiences.

— [Don't be afraid to take chances. Try new ideas and methods. The small school setting is also a place where mistakes can be fixed faster.

— [By providing personal, positive experiences you can build pride in the program.

— [Pride is no stranger to any size program but it can have such a more profound effect on the small school student.

Student Experience

- [We must make every effort to make every experience a positive and memorable one.
- [Our students in small schools may not have the means or opportunity to experience what our programs can do for them.
- [By providing these experiences we can have a much greater effect on the small school student, an effect they can carry with them for a lifetime.

Student Experience

- [Remember what you experienced?
- [What did you take away from your experience?
- [Why did you become a music educator?
- [It is our job as small school directors to pass on to our students a better experience than what we had.

Final Thoughts

- [Be a mentor not just an educator. In our small programs this is a necessity. You may be all they have.
- [Build effective student-leaders. Our small school programs will not thrive without them.
- [Provide a positive and meaningful experience at all times. Small school students will be affected much more by these experiences.

Program Overview

- [White Oak High School Bands

- 155 Students in the Program

- 398 Total Student Population 9-12

- [White Oak Middle School Bands

- 268 Students in the 6th, 7th, and 8th Grade Bands

- 326 Total Student Population 6-8

Program Overview

Schedules:

- HS Bands meet every day for 50 minutes. Students are in grades 9-12.
- 8th Grade Band meets everyday together for 55 minutes
- 7th Grade Band meets everyday together for 55 minutes
- 6th Grade Bands are divided into 2 classes both of which are heterogeneous settings for 50 minutes each

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Thank you!

— [Questions or Comments