



*“Rural Schools in Times of Change:
Cultivating a Framework for Students to Become Their Best Selves”*

The Midwest Clinic
International Band & Orchestra Conference
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Barret’s Chapel School, Shelby County Schools TN
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I. Becoming Band Parents

Recruit future Band Parents; It’s a small school, everyone knows everyone else and their brother

- Attend non-band school-based events - Create opportunities to talk often with prospective band parents
- Work and play well with teachers and administration
- Share students
- Sit in on parent/teacher conferences
- Offer for parents and students to visit your band classes

Communicate to parents fact-based evidence - what Band will offer their child:

- School-wide highest achievers and most well-rounded students are in school instrumental programs
- Instrumental music programs teach time management, a sense of self-worth
- College scholarship potential for music and non-music majors

My kid plays sports year-round, and now band too?

- Listen to parents’ questions and concerns
- Peer pressure, band geeks, my brother / sister was in band
Social, friends, band trips... Band is *Fun!*
- Preconceived notions: students think band is easy, hard, fun or dull
Make after school rehearsals work for parents and students
- **Arrange a time for parents / students to explore the band room**

- Instrument Petting Zoo; Collaborate with local music stores
- Offer for parents to visit classes during the school day
- Share your contact information, be accessible

How Ya'll Doing?

- Minimum weekly parent contacts: emails, social media, Class Dojo
- Always respond quickly, and positively, to parents' questions and concerns; Use a sandwich compliment; Be proactive
- We need band parent organizations, let parents help and listen to their ideas; Part of our job is protecting parents too, so directors need to make the tough decisions.

Band Parents Share:

5th Grade Band Parent: *"My son loves band, daily he goes out in our back yard and plays on his clarinet, he does not think of it as practice. Playing the clarinet and being a part of the Barret's Chapel Middle School Band has had such an amazing influence on my son. He enjoys it tremendously."*

6th Grade Band Parent: *"My son is gaining confidence in himself through the band program at Barret's Chapel. He has ADHD and struggles in his schoolwork but excels in Band. He truly enjoys the music, making friends, and learning the instrument."*

7th Grade Band Parent: *"Since my child has joined band, she's drastically shown an improvement in her math. She over all does better with her class work than she has in previous years. She is more confident, content, calm, sociable with others, and excited about school. I will continue to lean towards music for my child because it gives her a great sense of belonging and she enjoys it a lot."*

8th Grade Band Parent: *"After 3 years in the Barret's Chapel Band, we are confident that this is one of the best decisions we ever made for our son. Band has reinforced qualities in our child such as dedication, determination, and perseverance, all of which will serve as a great foundation as he transitions to high school, college, and beyond."*

II. Becoming Band Students

First - Develop positive student/teacher relationships

- Model positive behaviors: care, listen, respond and interact with each student daily
- Always expect each student's personal best
- Include students in choice, procedures and options

Understand that all students are “our” students

- Framework – K-8 Pedagogical Relationship - Be intimately aware of what the students already know
- Each child is important, talented and worth our best efforts
- Each child is important and worth his or her best efforts
- “Hey Mom, I’m home” and a few more stories

Unique student classroom behaviors provide meaningful teaching opportunities

- Using students' ADHD and fidgety behaviors in positive ways
- Legitimate concerns vs drama, offer ways for students to “save face”
- “Do well and don't embarrass me”, Positive results without punitive actions

Objective based instruction

- Tone, Technique and Musicality – Use “Kid Speak”
- Teach students how to ask questions, practice and self-assess
- 3-2-1 Assessment Forms; create an assessment that works for your students
- Differentiate instruction forever
- Work backwards

Designate your classroom as a “Mistake Safe Zone”

- Mistakes should be made with fantastic tone qualities, it's part of learning
- Lack of effort is not a mistake – Own your part, You are important!
- “Ask me a question” – sometimes kids need help voicing their real concerns

It's all about student achievement and learning

- “Evidence of Learning Assignments” – Practice records haven't worked well for my students
- Daily ask” Practiced Instrument, Music & Pencil
- Always acknowledge practiced parts, improvement and students' efforts
- Foster environments that promote life-long musicians
- Celebrate student(s) successes!

3-2-1 Performance Assessment

3-2-1 Performance Assessment: Using NAfME Standards & WTSBOA

Objectives rate today's rehearsal performance *circle one*:

I Superior II Excellent III Good IV Fair V Poor

Reflect: Describe three ways you determined the assessment rating:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Describe & Compare from previous rehearsals: One objective area still needing improvement:

1 _____

Analyze how you can improve this objective & predict the result:

2 _____

Reflect and share what you'd like your director to know from today's lesson:

1 _____

Evidence of Learning Project

Evidence of Learning Project # ____ Student Name _____

Parent Signature _____

This project represents improved musical performance, as evidenced through a minimum three hours of instrumental practice for this assignment.

Students a minimum of three hours of practice every two weeks outside of the classroom on your Band instrument, is needed for successful learning and achievement. You may count private lesson time on this assignment.

Parents, by signing above, you are verifying that your child is aggressively improving to her or his highest potential through daily practice of assigned instructional material totaling a minimum of five hours of practice, outside of the classroom, for this project.

Students: Using your English Class format, write a paragraph describing your performance improvements that you've accomplished over two weeks. In your paragraph describe & analyze your performance improvements using our objectives: Tone, Technical Accuracy and Musicality. Use the back, if needed. Indicate the music you've practiced and how you've improved your "I Can" performance objectives. Also ask questions on any material needing assistance.

III. Becoming Successful

- Teaching at a small, rural school is not a career death sentence! Experiences in rural areas; Positive impact on students
- Anticipating change – not enough kids in 6-8 grades, so now we'll add a 5th Grade Band Class
- Make adjustments; 300 vs 50 students; Quality & Quantity are not related.
- We've got this but need that...now how do I make concert festival assessment work?
- Focus on what you have and not what you don't
- Pick music that's best for your students, it's not about us
- Instrumentation adjustments – Be empowered to do this
- Perform – special events, basketball homecoming, school concerts, concert festivals, solo & ensemble festivals, take a trip
- You've got to have a "Servant's Heart"

- On March 10, 2020, at the West TN School Band & Orchestra Association (WTSBOA) Concert Performance Assessment, the Barret's Chapel 5th-8th Grade Band earned straight Superior Ratings in Prepared Music and Sight-Reading. The Band Parents, students and I celebrated at school with pizza, cookies & chips. Our principal made a proud school-wide announcement...***And then the Curtain Fell, the students left and didn't return. Everything became very still and quiet. The music was gone.*** Shelby County Schools (SCS) closed due to the COVID-19 Virus. Our concert on Dec. 3, 2021 will be our first time my students and I will have performed together since the COVID-19 shut down.

“What do I want my students to remember?”

“What have I given them to remember?”

Wrapping up 2019-20: Picking up the pieces from the COVID-19 shut down

- Reaching out to students & parents
- Canceling concerts, solo & ensemble festival and a long-awaited trip
- Returning fund raiser and trip money
- Recognizing students' accomplishments
- Sending 8th Graders to high school and Virtual Hugs
- We can't recruit beginners for the 2020-21 year

IV. 2020-21 School Year Virtual Instruction & Learning

- In August 2020, SCS re-opened with 100% virtual instruction. On March 1, 2021 Shelby County Schools began the gradual return to in person instruction, however, most parents chose for their student to continue with virtual instruction. This resulted in hybrid learning and teaching situations, both virtual and in person simultaneously, for the remainder of the school year.
- Welcoming a student teacher
- Individual Instruction: Keeping students engaged & encouraged; finding a routine, adapting objectives, modeling and constantly reviewing content
- Figuring it out virtually: Microsoft TEAMS, Seesaw app, Smart Music, after school practice, field trips, regional honor band auditions, a solo (minus the ensemble) festival, internet woes
- Giving ourselves and our students lots of grace

Social & Emotional Learning

- Being available for students email and through TEAMS
- Weekly (and more frequently) parent contacts
- In class: “I’m glad you’re here”
- Listening to students: It’s okay not to be okay
- Coping together: When tragedy strikes
- Being honest: I don’t have many answers but we’re all in this together
- We are a Band Family & You are always important
- Allowing students time to visit, share & laugh
- Ceiling fans, strings of lights & invisible students
- **Finally moving forward: Returning to full in person teaching & learning and recruiting beginners for the 2021-22 School Year!**

Mrs. Abbye Miller Principal, Barret’s Chapel School: *“As an administrator, I see many benefits from having a band program at a small, rural school. Traditionally, our band students have fewer behavior referrals to the office. I think this comes from learning the importance of teamwork and through that teamwork, students learn how to get along. Also, often times in middle school, students are going through social difficulties. Band provides them a safe place / home base that help students bond with other students to create strong friendships”*

