

Small School/Big Results

“Tips and Tricks for Building a Successful Small School Band”

Presented by:

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- 1) **Small School Band vs Rural (Country) Band**
All small school bands are not created equal. Some small school bands are suburban schools with the same resources as large schools i.e., private lessons, funding, etc. Some small school bands are rural bands where you are the only music person in the school
- 2) **You... the director do everything!**
What are your jobs? bus driver, custodian, youth minister, bookkeeper, instrument repair person, psychologist, librarian, fundraiser, drill writer, program coordinator, parent liaison, truck driver.... the list is endless... OH BAND DIRECTOR too!
- 3) **Find ANY help you can.** Student leaders, church choir director, cheerleader sponsor, retired musicians, former band members. ANYONE who can help. Partner with a local college or university to supply help... student teachers, master classes, private instruction. Use your ESSER III or Title IV part A monies to help fund these programs.
- 4) **Band IS the community: YOU are the Fine Arts for your community**
Even in this internet driven world, the small school band is the main source of music for your community. That's good news and not so good news.
- 5) **Kids are Kids**
Band kids are band kids whether they are in a small school or large school.
- 6) **Achievement doesn't know size of band or school size!**
Good teaching is good teaching no matter what size of school.
- 7) **Who do you accept in Band? EVERYONE!!**
You are making a connection with students that a large band may not make. In a small school band, the idea of cutting performers doesn't exist. We play everyone.

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- 8) Create a relationship with your admin and work with them for a favorable schedule.
Band and Athletics tend to be the largest groups on campus. Hopefully, your admin. will recognize that and schedule the remaining classes around these two groups. Yes, there are exceptions... dual credit, AP, etc. but HOPEFULLY, the admin. can help.
- 9) Small school kids are in EVERYTHING. So are the large school band students. Cultivate an atmosphere of cooperation; work with every program.
- 10) INSPIRE Attendance
Be aware of the time commitment and use your time wisely. Start on time and end on time. It's helpful to make announcements first so the kids know to be on time.
- 11) Hold the Instrument Correctly
Simple to say but somewhat difficult to enforce. Be diligent and remind the kids in a positive way. Ask: “Why do I want you to hold the instrument correctly? Because you sound better”.
- 12) Sit Up
See #11 above.
(Stanton Band Demonstrate)
- 13) People hear what they see
No french horns? No problem. Rewrite the part for sax/trumpet/trombone.... then get some kids to hold a horn. You don't get credit for what you can't see.
- 14) Adjust the parts for better success
Even the ultra-successful big school bands adjust the parts. If there are parts that just don't fix then you will need to make a choice. Do you play what is written and leave the flaw in the music or do you rewrite the part and let another instrument cover the part?
- 15) Flex arrangements
One of the few positive things coming out of the pandemic is flex music. Use flex music for a better student musical experience.

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- 16) Let’s play!
The Stanton HS Band demonstrates their daily fundamental drill. Key word... DAILY

Daily fundamentals

(a) Count to 4

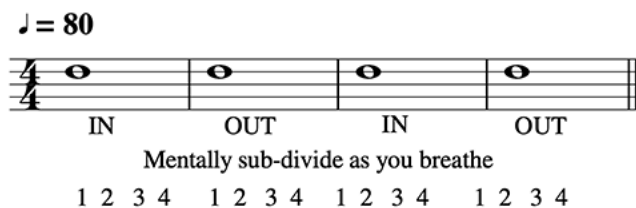


After the band counts better then begin counting some of the complex rhythm patterns in the music.

(Stanton Band Demonstrate)

Breathing

Stand in open 2nd- Relaxed upper body.
Use your hand as a visual representation of what your air is doing.
Concentrate on the “M” in your hand.
In 4, Out 4.
When breathing in, concentrate on the cold spot.
Work on keeping your tongue down, upper body relaxed.
Be aware of shoulder movement... Try not to move shoulders.



(Stanton and Audience Demonstrate)

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Echo Buzz

Woodwinds Play ‘F’ Brass Buzz ‘F’

Flute
Woodwinds Play

Trumpet
Brass Buzz

(Stanton Demonstrate)

Play Unison Lines.

Full Band play ‘F’

Take a 2-count breath

Be diligent about starting together

Always play your best most resonate sound

Listen to your trio THEN listen to your quintet

Balance in groups

Group 1- Tubas, Bassoon, Bari Sax, Bass Clarinet

Group 2- Baritone, Trombone, Tenor Sax

Group 3- French Horn, Alto Sax

Group 4- Trumpet

Group 5- Clarinet, Oboe

Group 6- Flute, Piccolo

Concentrate on Balance and Tuning

Be diligent about stopping together

Be aware of EVERY part of the note Beginning, Middle, End

Be certain the students are playing only the note.

No additional noise on the note.

RESIST THE FEELING TO MOVE ON...

It gets more difficult when the notes and rhythms change.

Flute

Trumpet

Before Starting Note
Exale on 1 & 2
Breathe on 3 & 4

Release on 1
Exale on 2
Breathe on 3 & 4

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J = 80
#3 Remington Down

Exhale 1&2
Breathe 3&4
Be diligent about starting and stopping

FREEZE
Stop Note on 1
Exhale on 2
Breathe 3&4

J = 80
#4 Articulation Legato /Touching Notes

Concentrate on Starting/Stopping notes
Make the last note touch the silence.
FULL VALUE!

FREEZE
Sub Divide

J = 80
#5 Lifted/Not Touching (Not Short)

Concentrate on Full/Resonate Sound
Make the last note touch the silence.
FULL VALUE!

FREEZE
Sub Divide

J = 80
#8 Legato 16th's (They are always legato 16th's)

Concentrate on Full/Resonate Sound
Make the last note touch the silence.
FULL VALUE!

FREEZE
Sub Divide
BREATHE

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- 17) It’s all about balance/tuning... in EVERY register
(Stanton Chorale)

The image shows a musical score for five instruments: Flute, B♭ Cornet, Horn in F, Trombone, and Tuba. The score is written in 4/4 time and consists of four measures. The Flute part is in the treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The B♭ Cornet part is in the treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The Horn in F part is in the treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The Trombone and Tuba parts are in the bass clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with some measures containing rests. The score ends with a double bar line.

- 18) There are NO dynamics

Always play your best sound. THEN after the band plays better, expand the dynamic range.

- 19) Have a breathing plan on EVERYTHING!

The kids play a pneumatic instrument. The instrument requires air. Use lots of air...it’s free

- 20) Stanton Perform Lyric Piece

- 21) Play the hard stuff

Your students CAN perform the difficult music. Make a PLAN on how to TEACH the music. Look for patterns in the music and teach the patterns in your daily drill. Compose a rhythm sheet, tuning sheet, rest sheet... whatever is giving you a challenge.... make a daily drill sheet and work on the concepts, THEN apply the concepts to the music.

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22) Perform often

Experience tells us that if we have a concert in 90 days the music will come together on day 89. If we play every 30 days, it comes together on day 29. Performing more often will make your band better readers and have a stronger sense of urgency on a daily basis.

23) Stanton demonstrates how they learn a more difficult piece

24) Slow is Fast, Fast is Slow

Be **ULTRA DILIGENT** about using a metronome and a tuner. **TAKE YOUR TIME!** OH... use a tuner! A 12-wheel tuner would be best.

25) The exercises don't make the band better... YOU make the band better.

26) TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF!!

You must decide on the amount of time and energy you want to sacrifice in order to have an Ultra-Successful Band. It IS a sacrifice to have an incredible Small School Band. How much time do you want to take away from your spouse and family to give to the children in the band program? There are no cheat codes ... it's hard work for the band to be Ultra- Successful. As you get older and a more proficient teacher everything will be quicker and easier. I found, in retirement, that it's ok to rest. It's ok to not be at everything. Divide the duties with your asst. directors. Allow a director go home after the half; switch out duties on the late nights. Have more FUN!

27) Find a Mentor

28). Stanton Performance