

How to Finish Student Teaching with a Glowing Recommendation

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About me:

- Graduate of the University of Houston
- Student taught at Kleb Intermediate School in Klein ISD with Jennifer Wren and Oak Ridge High School in Conroe ISD with Dana Pradervand
- Have been at Henry Middle School in Leander ISD as an Assistant Director for 5 years now

Preparing to student teach:

- Research possible school placements
 - Look for their calendars
 - Attend events that you can! Scout out a program that will be a good fit for you!
- Observe before you student teach
 - Go see as many programs as you possibly can! Seeing more programs will help you form more connections, get more perspectives, and add more tools to your toolbox!
- Once you find out where you will be, reach out to your cooperating teacher! Introduce yourself and see if you can come in before your assignment begins.
- Buy a nice journal. One that you will enjoy using and be able to look back at!
- Review your instrument pedagogy
 - Take lessons on other instruments
 - Read instrument pedagogy books, method books, etc.
 - Some of my favorite books:
 - *On Teaching Band: Notes from Eddie Green*, edited by Mary Ellen Cavitt, Ph.D.
 - *The Art of Successful Teaching: A Blend of Content and Context* by Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser

- The Art of Brass Playing by Philip Farkas
- Listen to podcasts... my favorite is After Sectionals
- Start creating your resume

Student Teaching:

- Be a "go getter"
- "Fill the void"
- Be there!
 - You need to be there when the band directors are there. Don't show up at the student's call time. Show up at band director call time, and try to beat them there if you can.
- Take really good notes the first week of everything the directors do
 - Ex: Write down the exact procedures/order of rehearsal
- Take away any tasks that the directors don't have to do
 - Grade/return practice records
 - Lock up at the end of the day
 - Ensemble Set Up
 - Help students with music/sit near them in the ensemble
- Take notes for directors when clinicians are there
 - Sticky notes for their scores
- Mark everything in your scores so that you will rehearse parts correctly if students are sent out with you
- Learn students' names
- Take attendance
- Attend every single event you can
- Diagnose internally during rehearsal and see if the director says something similar
- Be the energy/light
 - Be happy to be there and do whatever is needed
- Ask your cooperating teacher/principal/fine arts administrator if they would be willing to give you a practice job interview!

What we look for in our student teachers at Henry MS:

- People who take initiative
 - See a void, fill a void
- Curiosity
 - Ask about the "whys"
- Self-awareness
- Desire to grow

- Friendliness
- Humility
- Timeliness
 - Showing up on time
 - Leaving when the team leaves
- Someone who is part of the team

How being a good student teacher prepares you to be a good director:

- Working hard and picking up the “not so fun jobs” prepares you for the reality of being a band director
- The more you practice, the better you get!
- Listening and taking notes on what you’re hearing develops your ear
 - Diagnosing problems is one of the hardest things as a young teacher
 - Listening for what solutions are to common problems will help you clean your bands better
 - Ex: if a brass player is tending to be sharp, you may ask them to: open their teeth, make their top lip softer, not press their lips together too much.
 - Writing down alternate fingerings for common problem notes on certain instruments
- Being willing to accept and get as much feedback as possible is going to make you grow a lot faster
- Asking about the “whys” prevents you from being a parrot - you need to know why you want students to do things a certain way and what your belief system is
 - Why do we play Concert F? Why do we do Passing 4s in the order we do? Why do we use the counting system that we do?
- You may not have someone to help you and you need to know all of the moving parts!
- Being aware of your shortfalls/areas of growth can help prevent you from falling into those areas. For example: if you know that you are a wordy person, you can go into teaching knowing you need to use fewer words to communicate your ideas.

The Glowing Recommendation

- DO NOT PUT PEOPLE AS A REFERENCE WITHOUT ASKING!
- If you are a good student teacher, your cooperating teacher can give their full recommendation knowing that they truly think you would be a great addition to any program. When you leave, it should feel like there is a void and they should miss your presence.