

## **Finding Success at a Title 1 Middle School as the Sole Director**

- **Introduction**

- Who am I?
- How my career started
- Why I am doing this clinic

- **Main Topics of this Clinic**

- Logistics of Running a Title 1 Program by Yourself
- Maintaining Mental Health
- What is “Success” as it pertains to your program
- Free “Cheat Codes” for the day to day

- **Logistics of Running a Title 1 Program by Yourself (FAQs)**

- How many class periods did you have a day?
- How did you have your classes organized?
- Did students share instruments?
- Did kids have to pay an instrument fee? What amount did you find parents were comfortable paying? Were students given scholarships who could not afford the fee?
- How active was the feeder high school? Expectations VS Reality.
- Rehearsals- did you try and get it all done during the class period from the podium or did you have before/after school rehearsals as well?
- Transportation- did you have any attendance issues at before/after school rehearsals if students took the bus? How did you work around that?
- What did your budget look like and how did you spend it? What were your priorities? What would you prioritize with limited funds?
- How do you decide what instruments beginners play?
- How do you decide how many numbers each section should have as beginners?
- How many performing groups did you have?
- How do you decide which kids will be in the varsity ensemble?

- **What is “Success,” as it pertains to your program?**

- This may seem simple, but you can't succeed if you don't set a goal.
  - Short Term (weekly, monthly, semester)
  - Long term (at least 3 years)
  - Use the S.M.A.R.T approach to setting goals
    - Specific
    - Measurable
    - Achievable
    - Relevant
    - Time-Bound
- Create your band's culture
  - What is band culture?
  - The culture and program will not change overnight
  - Older students will fight change and some will quit.
- Growth in numbers
  - Recruit! Recruit! Recruit!
    - Make at least 3 visits to the elementary schools during the year
    - Take Honor Band or Jazz Band (if you have one) in Fall/Winter
    - Take beginners in the Spring
    - Let your kids talk to the 5th graders and take pictures with their former teachers
    - Have the students talk about their instruments and what they love about band.
    - You know you're doing a good job when 5th graders remember your name and are excited to see you.
  - Retention
    - 1st yr to 2nd yr is the toughest
      - They have not had the full band experience
      - They have more choices and less time

- Leaving to High School
      - Venturing into the Unknown
  - Region Band Competition
    - Can be an excellent tool to help your kids grow
    - Can hinder your program if you spend too much time on it
    - Be realistic about your expectations, especially if competing against schools with multiple directors and multiple tutors
    - Do not let this discourage you. This does not define you as a director.
  - Students staying in band through high school
  - Contest Scores
  - Programming Capabilities
- **Maintaining your mental health**
  - You may be the sole director, but you are not “Alone”
  - What you do matters. But, why you do it matters even more.
  - Do not get discouraged
    - You cannot compare yourself to programs that have multiple directors and tutors
    - Do compare your ensembles to themselves
    - Keep track of methods that work and do not work for you
    - Enjoy the small wins
  - Find a director or two to talk to on a regular basis
    - Former professors
    - Directors in the district
    - Music teachers you went to school with
    - If no one else, I’ll be happy to talk through things with you
  - Have weekly or Bi-weekly “PLC meetings” on a Friday or Saturday night
    - What is a “PLC?”
      - “PLC” = Professional Learning Community

- Your school may have official PLC time and groups, but this is absolutely not that
  - This is not official or formal at all
    - Meet up with friends/colleagues/people you trust
    - Play pool, sing karaoke, enjoy adult beverages responsibly, get online and play Call of Duty...
    - Bounce ideas off each other listen to each other's ensembles
- Set time limits to how much time you stay after school ends
- Advocate for your program
  - Invite school board members/Superintendent to your performances
  - Speak to your principal about your goals for the program
  - Ask for "homogenous" beginner classes
- **Free "Cheat Codes" for your day to day**
  - Elect band officers to help with day to day things
    - Keeping the Band Hall clean
    - Making copies
    - Passing out music
  - Start a band parent organization
    - Do not call it a Band Booster Club
    - Help with fundraisers
    - Help with uniform fittings
  - Utilize Technology
    - CHARMS
      - All in one inventory and roster organization
      - Can connect to other CHARMS users
      - Can be a little overwhelming when first learning how to use it
      - Annual fee for use

- GOOGLE Workspace ( I do not work for GOOGLE and I am not getting paid for saying any of this)
  - Many districts use Gmail as their email host so check if you already have access
  - If not create your own Professional email account using Gmail
  - GOOGLE Drive
    - Save and organize all types of files
    - Access anywhere you can login to your account
      - Laptop, tablet, phone
  - Google Sheets
    - Great for organizing inventory, rosters, fundraisers,
  - Google Docs
    - Connect with Sheets to utilize Mail Merge
      - Send personalized letters home with students
      - Create mailing labels or labels for instruments
  - Google Calendar
    - Easy to organize your events and keep your administration informed by sharing the calendar with them
- Yamaha HD-300 Harmony Director (I am not a salesman and I am not getting paid for this either)
  - Can change sound to emulate different instruments
  - Has some preset drum beats to make working on long tones and scales less monotonous
  - Great for working on tuning
  - Has a record and playback function
  - Can be controlled with your phone or tablet through the app

- Funds
  - Apply for grants
  - Present to the school board
  - Fundraise
    - Practice Challenge Fundraiser
      - Easy
      - No Overhead
      - Use prizes and trips to reward participation
    - Plate Sales
      - Parent volunteers/donations
      - Ask neighborhood businesses for donations
      - Join the plate pick-up with a concert
        - Only if you have volunteers to take charge and someone you trust to take money

## Helpful links

[Practice Challenge Fundraiser Info](#)

[UIL Selections Rehearsal schedule](#)

[How to use mail merge in Google Docs](#)

[Remind.com](#)

[Helpful tips for the Yamaha HD-300 \(Harmony Director\)](#)

Email me for help any time: [tgonzalez8859@swisd.net](mailto:tgonzalez8859@swisd.net)