



## Bands in a small, rural community.

A little philosophy and a few  
specific thoughts.

What's the same between big schools and small school students?

**Which of these students are from big schools, and which are from small schools?**







# Our Aspiration

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- **“Some little guy, maybe not even born yet, is going to find themselves—in a world that doesn’t care about whether they find anything—because of YOU.”**
- **--Gary Green**

# Our Responsibilities



- Are we in it for the kids?
- Knowledge of instruments—usually, no private teachers.
- Just as in big schools, we can't sell them short.
- Success is everything. We just need to know our definition of success.
- Recognize that small school students are just as smart as those in large schools.



What's the difference between big schools and small schools?



# Things to overcome

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STUDENTS DRAWN/TORN IN MANY DIRECTIONS.

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VERY POSSIBLY, LESS TIME TO MEET.

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ONE SET OF DIRECTORS FOR THE ENTIRE “CLUSTER”.

# Always Know Your “WHY”

(via Andy Sealy)

- Personal growth that takes place along the musical journey.
- The relationships students create because of music. A bond that can be achieved in few other ways.





LET'S  
TALK  
SPECIFICS!



# When Coming Into A New Program

01

Know what the current culture is with the band within the community.

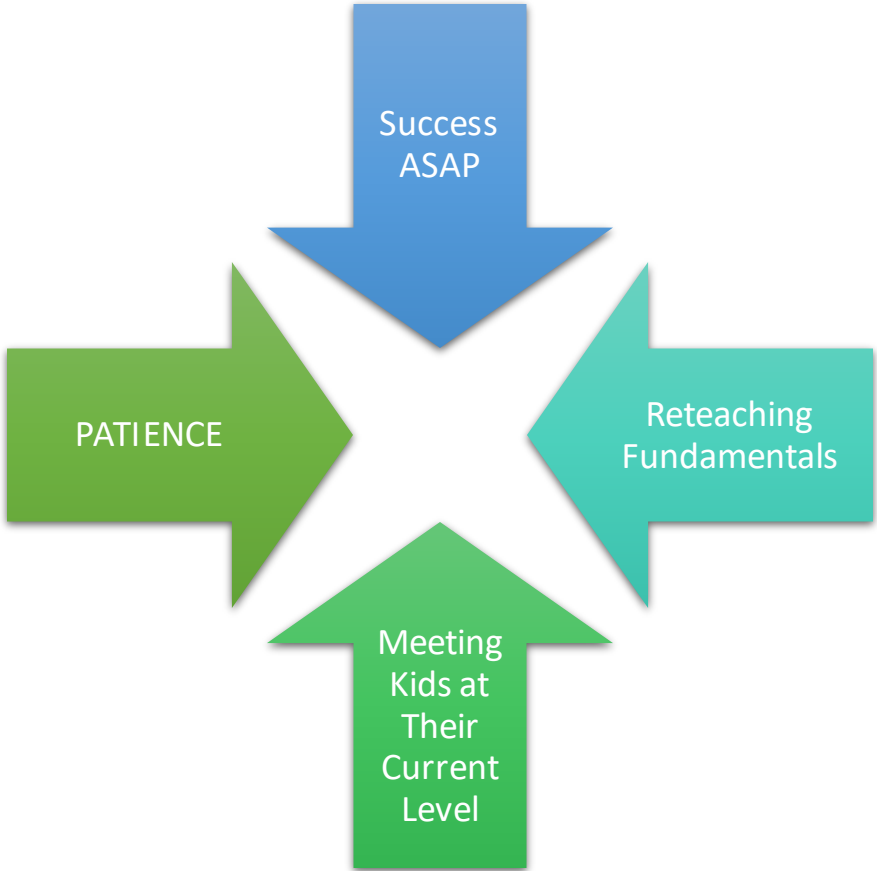
02

Know what the current public perception is.

03

Learn what the public expectations are.

# Standard of Musical Excellence





# Define Your Goals For Your Program!!

Here are some thoughts, but the  
decision must be yours.



# Regional Adjudications

- Marching
  - Your goal?
    - First Division?
    - State Marching Contest?
  - Show Design
    - Level of Music
    - Military band marching show.
    - Check for eligibility from day one.

# Concert and Sightreading Adjudications

Rehearsals times. Are there opportunities for sectionals?

## Choosing repertoire.

- Will the students learn from it?
- Will the students enjoy it?
- Winter concert possibility?
- Choose wisely, but don't let the kids think they are being shortchanged.
- Play to your strengths.



# Region Band, Honors Ensembles

- Region Band
- Invited performances at conferences.
- New in Texas, an Invited Program Spotlight.
- In Texas, ATSSB sponsors "Outstanding Performance Series".







Numbers?

- Recruitment
- Retention

Appreciation from the Townspeople?





# Going into a New Small School Program

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## **Tackle the big problems.**

Fundamentals—tone, balance, blend  
First halftime show.



## **Make yourself known.**

Make yourself a part of your school and  
community immediately.







OBVIOUSLY, IT MUST BE ENJOYABLE/FUN.

TONE, TONE, TONE

BALANCE/BLEND

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO THE MUSIC FOR BETTER BALANCE?

HOW IS THE PERCUSSION BOOK?  
ARE THE PIT PARTS ATTAINABLE?

ARE YOUR WOODWINDS BEING FEATURED AT ALL?

# Summer Band

# That First Halftime Show

- Have your music early—previous spring. Choose repertoire carefully.
- Can varsity FB players march at halftime? Check with your coach.
- Must conclude with a good feeling for the students and the audience. In a down program, sometimes it doesn't take much to look a LOT better.
- Ask the principal or superintendent to come talk to the students on Monday.





# Winter Concert and Spring Concert

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- All bands play on the same concert?
- A possible fundraiser with the concert?
- Involve other teachers and administrators in novelty piece.







# Spring Trip

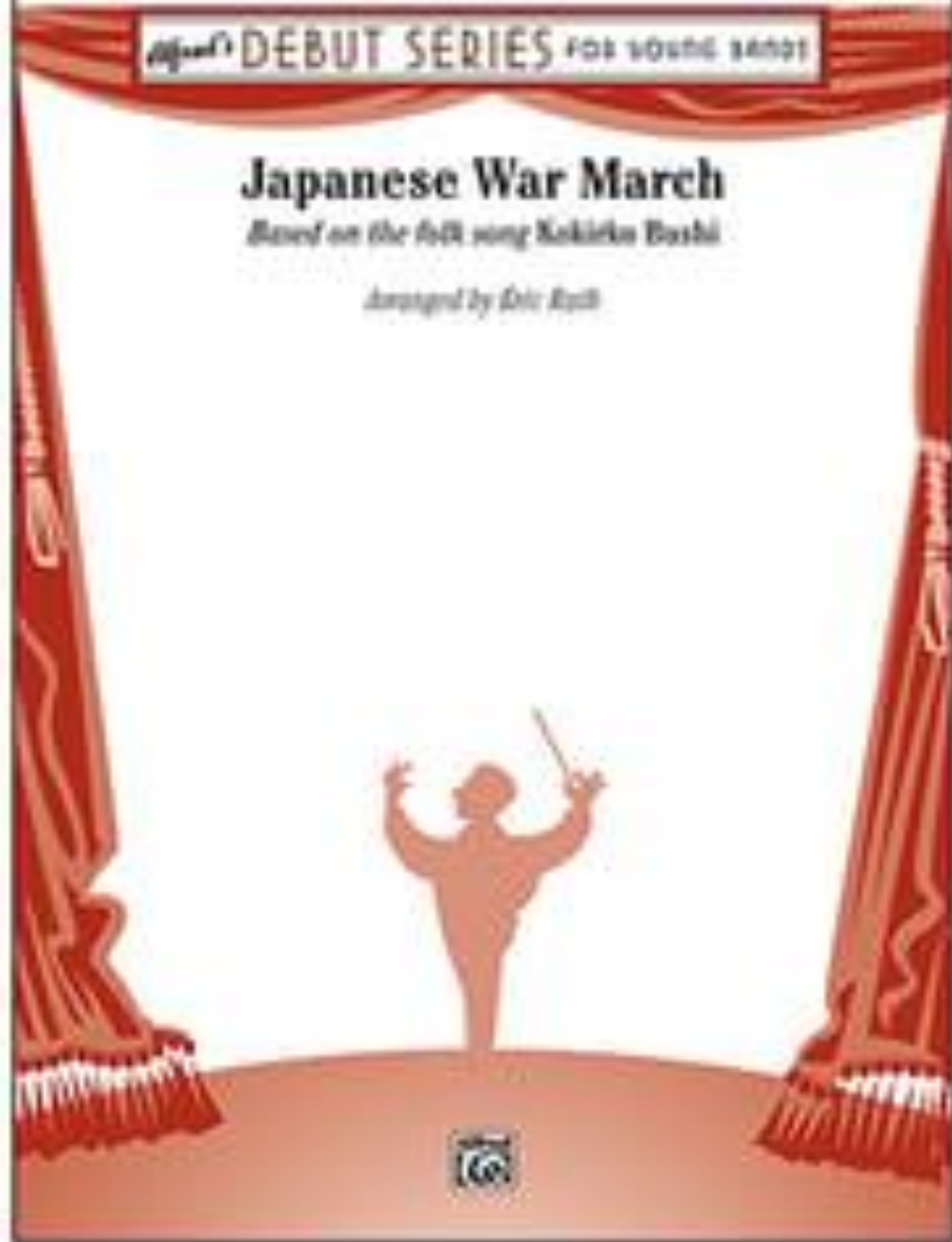
- What are the school's expectations? The students? The parents?
- Present it early.
- Should we use this as a tool for recruitment/retention?



# Mentorship

- The best band directors have mentors, both big and small schools.
- Video or record your band, and allow others to critique it.
- Clinicians.
  - Don't wait to get them in.
  - Follow through with clinicians' advice.





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An Incredible experience for all.

- We still teach fundamentals. That's a non-negotiable.
- Our rep might be easier, but don't let it be of less quality. There are too many great composers writing quality music for bands with less technical level.
- Remember that we continually share students with other programs.
- Because of that, we need to work smarter for the time, plan ahead incredibly well, and be totally flexible while still managing our goals for our students and musical standards.



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