

HABITS OF A SUCCESSFUL MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND

Building Blocks for a Better Middle School Band

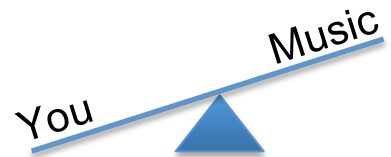
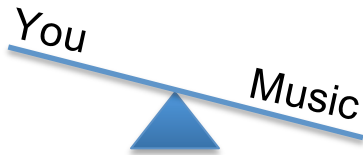
Scheduling	Individual and Small Group Instruction	Retention	Musical Success
Image of the Program	Recruiting	Evaluating Prospects	Balancing the Ensemble

JEFF SCOTT AND EMILY WILKINSON
Cario Middle School • Mt. Pleasant, SC



GIA Publications, Inc.
Chicago

The Evolution of a Middle School Band Student



What a Successful Middle School Program Looks Like

- Students love music
- Students musical skills are improving technically and expressively
- All students, regardless of ability, feel successful and proud to be in band
- The community is aware that band is a strength of the school
- The program is growing in enrollment and accomplishments
- There is an expectation of excellence throughout the program

Making a Difference

There are THREE kinds of children in your program:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Leaders | 20% Kids YOU NEED |
| 2. Social Set 60% | Kids who enjoy the activity |
| 3. Lambs | 20% Kids who NEED YOU |

Make sure you offer something for ALL students.

The Social Side of Band

They Get To...

- Be PART of a popular environment (and around popular kids)
- Be SUCCESSFUL
- Feel ACCEPTED and RECOGNIZED
(for shy kids, a safe way to get recognized)
- Have a chance to EXPRESS their personality
- Be with their FRIENDS (often the ONLY time during the day)
- Take TRIPS, ride coasters, miss school, etc.
- Have a special place of their OWN in a new school
- Learn an art that they will eventually LOVE

Selling the Program

- We are in the *music business*, but recruiting is also about sales.
- You are selling TWO products *Music and YOU!*
- What are you offering them that makes both music and you attractive?

Overview of Recruiting Process

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| • Introductory Talk, in music class | Early April |
| • Recruiting Concert | Mid April |
| • Follow up Meeting (including assessment) | Mid April |
| • Instrument Testing Night, to narrow choices | Late April |
| • Evaluating your prospects | Late April |
| • Balance Your Ensemble (take a week to do this) | Late April |
| • Hand out Invitations at elementary school | Early May |
| • Follow up (abbreviated) Instrument Testing Night | Early May |
| • Send rosters to administration
(divided into homogeneous groups) | Mid May |
| • Summer contact: emails, newsletters | June/July |
| • Fall Instrument Testing for new students | First 2 weeks |

The Musical Aptitude Test

- Some aptitude tests: Selmer Band Test, Gordon Test, or make your own.
- A good aptitude test should include:
 - Pitch difference recognition: higher, lower, same
 - Rhythm recognition: same, different
 - Melodic recognition: same, different
- Note areas of difficulty
 - Rhythmically challenged students may not be suited for percussion
 - Students who have trouble with pitch may not enjoy French Horn
- Allow students that don't pass the test to re-take the test.

The aptitude test is NOT used for exclusion!

The aptitude test is only ONE part of allowing children to EARN membership.

Allow students to re-take the test until they pass (help them if you need to).

Physical Issues (Potential Problems)

- Oboe: Extreme overbite or under bite
- Bassoon: Extreme under bite and students with very short finger span
- Clarinet: Rounded or protruding teeth.
Look for ability to display flat chin
- Trumpet/Horn: Under bite or extreme overbite.
Protruding teeth on mouthpiece rim.
- Trombone: Under bite and arm length.
(Consider trigger trombones)
- Flute: “Cupid’s Bow” and extreme overbite
- Tuba: Torso long enough to reach mouthpiece.
(Consider tuba stands)

The Instrument Testing Night

If you don't have the resources to run a full night like this, here are some "Solutions for the Lonely"

- Use area directors for your testing night (Return the favor)
- Combine ITN with other schools in the area
- Use college music majors
- Start with only limited instrumentation.

The Instrument Testing Night Process

The Registration Table

- Welcome from friendly students in band shirts
- Receive registration packet
- Assign a group of 4-6 prospects to guide
- Issue "Player Passes" as needed. Expedite those students.

The Registration Packet

- Welcome letter from the director
- The Evaluation Form
- Information sheet about each instrument's uniqueness
- Fact sheet and flyer about the band program
- FAQ Sheet

The Waiting Line

- Student guide providing information and encouragement
- Videos of performances (only if of high quality)
- Slideshows of smiling happy band kids, recruiting videos
- Advocacy facts about music
- "What band means to me" student testimonials

The Instrument Testing Room

- Charismatic teacher to test recruits AND charismatic student assistants
- Assistant, booster parents or other faculty oversee testing room
- Signs stating unique advantages of each instrument over each table
- Students are scored: great fit, good fit, average fit or not recommended.
- Instruments presented in logical order
 - Similar concepts together (saxophone/clarinet, flute/double reeds, trumpet/horn, trombone/euphonium)
 - Easiest before hardest-to play AND recruit

Suggested Order of Testing Tables

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1. Saxophone | 6. Trumpet |
| 2. Clarinet | 7. French Horn |
| 3. Flute | 8. Trombone |
| 4. Oboe | 9. Euphonium |
| 5. Bassoon | 10. Tuba |

Percussion Testing is OPTIONAL and held in a separate room

The Closer

- They come to YOU to discuss placement
- Use 1 or 2 student runners to send messages to testing room
- Explain balancing band in terms of sports teams. Each position is valuable for team to succeed
- Visually re-check inspection for potential problems
 - Physical features, Personality and Attitude
- *Narrow* instrument choices, not finalize!
- Parting gift- something small with band logo

After Instrument Testing Night

- Thank you email within 24 hours
- Take only one week to balance, settle instrumentation.
- Resolve concerns
- Deliver the Invitations

Placing the Student for Success

- Student ability to be successful on the instrument
- Recommendation from elementary music teacher
- Scores from Music Aptitude Test
- Accommodations and academic record
- Transportation issues
- Family history with band and other activities
- Family financial situation

Placing the Student on an Instrument

- Pay attention to the student's behavior, personality, neatness
- Always try to place a student on their first or second choice
- IF, you have to go to the third choice, always call to discuss
- Be willing to work with students who want to change instruments

Suggested Instrumentation for 100 Member Band:

Flute	10	Bari Sax	1
Oboe	4	Trumpet	16
Bassoon	4	Horn	6
Clarinet	24	Trombone	9
Bass Clarinet	3	Euphonium	4
Alto Sax	6	Tuba	4
Tenor Sax	2	Percussion	7

Note: Clarinet and Trumpet are “padded” because this is where we see most attrition: Clarinets when crossing the break and Trumpets when getting to higher notes tend to have higher drop rates. These instruments also lend themselves well to filling in low reed and low brass spots later

The Invitation

- Invitations are printed on nice GOLD paper. *Willy Wonka effect.*
- Have elementary school announce when band invitations will arrive
- Be ready to grab more students after others get invitations
- Final invitation has the meeting time for the New Band Families Meeting

***Congratulations! You have been chosen to play _____
in the _____ Band!***

Final Steps

- Present rosters to principal for scheduling
- Maintain contact throughout summer with students and parents via email/mail
- Schedule a “Fill In” testing in the fall for students who move in or missed the first night
- Relax! If you’ve done all of these steps, you’ll be exhausted

Balancing the Ensemble/Evaluating Prospects

- First and Foremost is the student’s ability to be successful on the instrument
- Transportation Issues: Tuba, Euphonium, French Horn, Trombones
- Family history with band
- Family involvement with conflicting activities
- Financial situation. Don’t put the parent in a no-win situation.

The First Year

- Connecting with your students
- They don’t care how much you know...
- Establishing a solid foundation for musical success

Scheduling for Success

- Homogeneous groupings
- What to do with the percussion?
- Weekly sectionals vs. full ensemble time

Individual and Small Group Instruction Going from “Good to Great”

- Private lessons program
- Weekly sectionals
- Honor Ensembles (2nd and 3rd years)
- Symphonic Band or Wind Ensemble (2nd and 3rd years)
- Jazz Band (3rd year)

The Second Year

- Middle child syndrome
- Continue to build skills upon the established musical foundation
- This is the year of a thousand techniques. Advancing technical skills
- Help foster and encourage a connection to music

The Third Year

- Increasing performance opportunities
- Developing leaders
- Increasing individual artistry and expression
- Teaching rubato, more advanced melodic contouring, agogic weight

What a Successful Middle School Band Rehearsal Looks Like

- Breathing Exercises
- Mouthpiece Buzzing and Long Tones
- Flexibility Studies
- Scale Studies
- Articulation Studies
- Balance and Dynamic Exercises
- Technical Studies
- Rhythm Counting
- Sight Reading
- Quality Literature

Thank You

- Cario Band students and families
- Cario Band staff, instructors and booster club
- Scott Rush
- Marguerite Wilder, Alec Harris and GIA Publications, Inc.
- Sharon Randall, principal, Cario Middle School
- Cario Middle School administration and staff
- Hallie Knudson, Eric Wilkinson, Maralee Barela, Dan Leonard, Katie Powell

Jeff Scott

Jeff Scott is the Director of Bands at Cario Middle School in Mount Pleasant. He is a graduate of the University of Kentucky and received a Master of Instrumental Music in Conducting at Southern Oregon University in 2005. In 2006, Mr. Scott received National Board Certification in Instrumental Music. In 1992, Mr. Scott was named national winner of the Stanbury Award for "Young Director of the Year". He is also listed in Who's Who Among American Teachers.

Mr. Scott is co-author of the highly touted book, "Habits of a Successful Middle School Band Director", published by GIA Publications. Bands under Mr. Scott's baton have consistently received Superior ratings at state, regional and national competitions, and have received the SCBDA's Outstanding Performance Award consecutively since 1989. Mr. Scott's symphonic bands have received Superior Ratings at the South Carolina Concert Festival every year since 1989. His Sedgefield Middle School Band was honored to perform at the 1992 SCMEA In-Service Conference, and his Cario Middle School Band enjoyed that same distinction in 2005.

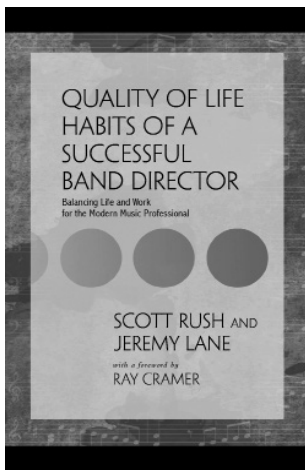
Mr. Scott is active as an adjudicator and clinician for concert and marching events throughout the Southeast. Mr. Scott maintains professional affiliations with the National Band Association, MENC, Phi Mu Alpha, and Phi Beta Mu. He also received an appointment as a "Kentucky Colonel" by the Governor of Kentucky for his contributions to education.

Emily Wilkinson

Emily Wilkinson is Associate Director of Bands at Cario Middle School in Mount Pleasant, SC. Prior to joining the Cario team in 2011, Wilkinson served as the Band Director at Fort Johnson Middle School on James Island from 2009-2011. During this time, the Fort Johnson Band program received the South Carolina Band Directors Association (SCBDA) Outstanding Performance Award for two consecutive years. Before teaching at Fort Johnson, she was the Assistant Band Director at Bates Middle School in Sumter, SC.

Wilkinson has also been working as a marching instructor, clinician, and chamber winds coach for the Wando High School Band program since 2003. She has served as a guest clinician for bands in SCBDA Region 5, GMEA District 1, and Berkeley County, SC. Wilkinson is an alumna of the world renowned Cadets Drum and Bugle Corps, and also an inaugural member of Bands of America's INergy, a nineteen member performing troupe that functioned as the musical ambassador for Indianapolis, IN. In 2008, she performed at the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Conference with the Palmetto Concert Band.

Wilkinson is a graduate of the University of South Carolina where she earned her Bachelor's Degree in Music Education, Magna Cum Laude, and a Performance Certificate on euphonium. Emily Wilkinson's professional affiliations include NAfME, SCBDA, the Charleston County Band Directors Association, Pi Kappa Lambda National Music Honor Society, and she is an alumna of Sigma Alpha Iota. She is married to Eric Wilkinson, and they reside in Mount Pleasant, SC.



Quality of Life Habits of a Successful Band Director Balancing Life and Work for the Modern Music Professional

Scott Rush and Jeremy Lane

With a Foreword by Ray Cramer

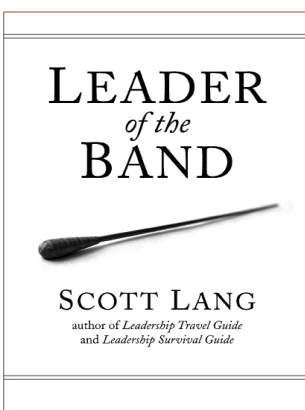
Being a band director is more than a career—it is truly a way of life. Demanding and extended hours are par for the course. Then there's the stress of concert performances and managing students and budgets, let alone the parents!

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Scott Lang

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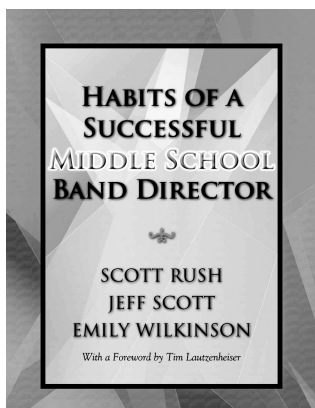
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Habits of a Successful Middle School Band Director

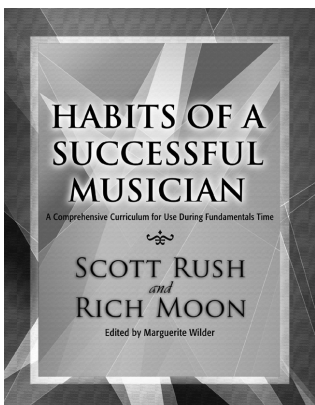
Building on the successful *Habits* series, Scott Rush and his team have created a practical guide to all aspects of the middle school band program, including:

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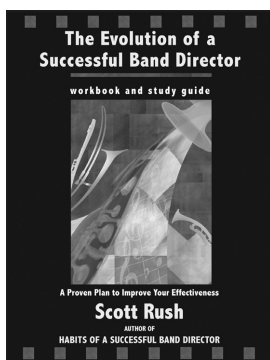
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The Evolution of a Successful Band Director

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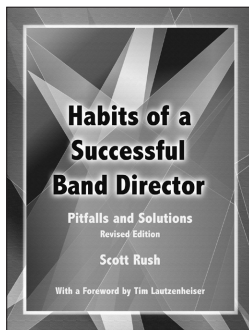
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