

HABITS OF A SUCCESSFUL MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND

Building Blocks for a Better Middle School Band

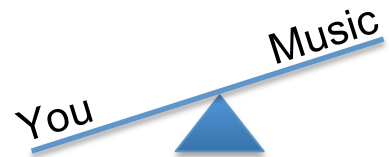
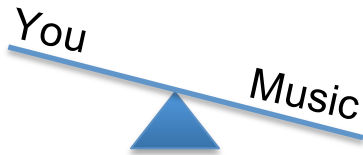
Scheduling	Individual and Small Group Instruction	Retention	Musical Success
Image of the Program	Recruiting	Evaluating Prospects	Balancing the Ensemble

SCOTT RUSH



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 | • Balance and Dynamic Exercises |
| • Mouthpiece Buzzing and Long Tones | • Technical Studies |
| • Flexibility Studies | • Rhythm Counting |
| • Scale Studies | • Sight Reading |
| • Articulation Studies | • 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

Excerpts from

Habits of a Successful Middle School Musician

Interval Study

a.

b.

Whole Tone Scale Exercises

c.

Lip Slurs

a.

Articulation Exercises

1.

Chorale Example 1

Chorale Example 2

Excerpts from

Habits of a Successful Middle School Musician

Rhythmic Vocabulary Exercises for Alto Sax

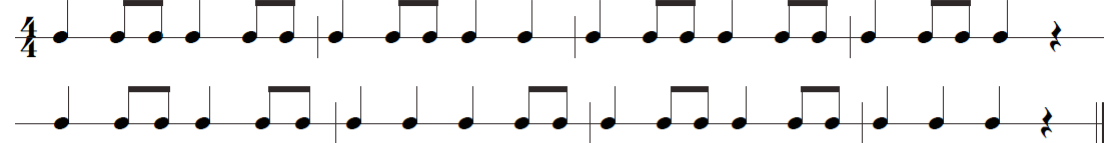
6a.



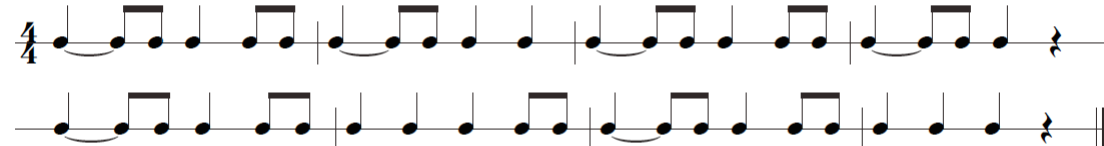
6b.



11a.



11b.



11c.



31a.



31b.



49a.



49b.



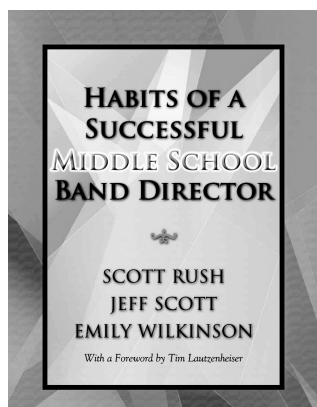
Scott Rush



Scott Rush is currently the Director of Fine and Performing Arts for the Dorchester Two School District in South Carolina. Prior to his appointment, he was Director of Bands at Wando High School in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina for fifteen years. He is a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Massachusetts, where he received a Master of Music degree in French Horn Performance and studied with Boston Symphony principal hornist, Charles Kavalovski. While at NEC, Mr. Rush studied conducting under Frank Battisti and Pascal Verrot. He was a Concerto Competition winner and member of the Boston Philharmonic under Benjamin Zander. Mr. Rush received his Bachelor's degree from the University of South Carolina where he studied under Robert Pruzin and was the recipient of the Arthur Fraser Award for the Outstanding Graduating Senior in Music.

As director of bands at Wando High School, Mr. Rush's bands received consistent Superior ratings in the areas of concert and marching band. The Wando Symphonic Band performed at the 2007 Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic and were the 2007 recipients of the Sudler Flag of Honor, administered by the John Philip Sousa Foundation. The Wando marching band was named a finalist at the Bands of America Grand National Championships in 2009 and 2011. They were also SC State 5A marching band champions from 2005 - 2013.

Mr. Rush is active as a clinician and adjudicator throughout the United States. He has presented clinic sessions at major conferences in fifteen states, including the 2006 and 2013 Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic, and has presented workshops for several universities and school districts. He is the author of two highly touted books, *Habits of A Successful Band Director* and *The Evolution of A Successful Band Director* for GIA Publications. He has co-authored four other books for GIA, two new method books for band and orchestra entitled *Habits of A Successful Musician* and *Habits of A Successful String Musician*, *Habits of A Successful Middle School Band Director*, and *Quality of Life Habits of a Successful Band Director*. He has been the recipient of the National Band Association's Citation of Excellence on five occasions and was named Teacher of the Year in 2004. He is Nationally Board Certified by NBPTS. In 2010, Mr. Rush was elected into the prestigious American Bandmasters Association and in 2015 was elected into the South Carolina Band Directors Association Hall of Fame. Other professional affiliations include WASBE, Phi Beta Mu, and Phi Mu Alpha.



Habits of a Successful Middle School Band Director

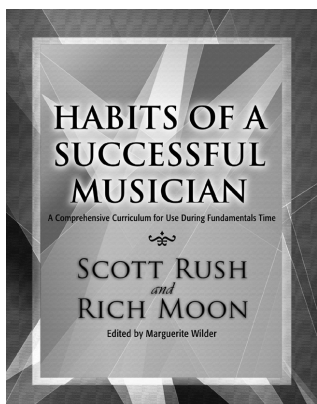
Building on the successful *Habits* series, Scott Rush and his team have created a practical guide to all aspects of the middle school band program, including:

- Recruiting for beginners
- Mouthpiece testing and instrumentation
- Running an effective middle school rehearsal
- Teaching strategies for middle school Repertoire suggestions
- Warm-ups for beginner, intermediate, and advanced middle school players.

Additional sections address musicianship, classroom management, working with parents and colleagues, assessment, technology, the middle school mind, minor instrument repair, private lessons...even traveling with middle school students.

Habits of a Successful Middle School Band Director is a resource to turn to time and again for ideas and inspiration. This is a comprehensive book that will grow as teaching skills grow, a book that will serve as a constant and essential companion throughout the career of any middle school band director.

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Habits of a Successful Musician

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- Provides material for use during fundamentals time that would promote a comprehensive approach to developing skills necessary to fill the musical toolbox.
- Promotes the idea that fundamentals time should transfer directly into the performance of great literature.
- Includes a sequential format that leads to the mastery of reading rhythms and, ultimately, to musical sight-reading.
- Provides chorales for the development of tone quality, ensemble sonority, and musicianship.
- Presents rhythm charts in a new format to allow transfer from timing and rhythm to pitches in a musical context.
- Provides audition etude sight-reading in a full-band format that is well thought out in scope and sequence.
- Presents exercises in various keys, tonalities, and modes to aid in the development of the complete musician.
- Creates a mindset intent on establishing a culture of excellence for both the full band program and individual players.

Habits of a Successful Musician

is the answer to the very simple question, “What should I be learning during fundamentals time?”

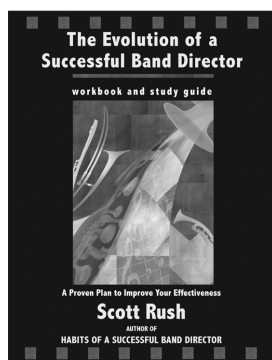
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Workbook and Study Guide

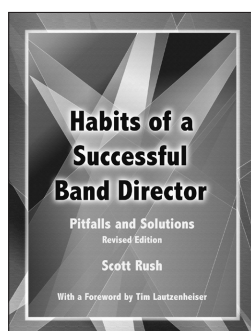
A Proven Plan to Improve Your Effectiveness

Scott Rush

Intended for both novice and experienced band directors, this companion to Scott Rush's bestselling book *Habits of a Successful Band Director* is designed to: Present effective teaching principles with more depth and understanding • Challenge readers to look deep within themselves to find solutions that will lead to more effective teaching • Pose questions and suggest activities to put these solutions into action and cause readers to set goals through self-discovery • Establish the classroom as a true laboratory for making music • Provide a study guide for college methods classes using *Habits of a Successful Band Director*.

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Habits of a Successful Band Director

Pitfalls and Solutions

Scott Rush

Foreword by

Tim Lautzenheiser

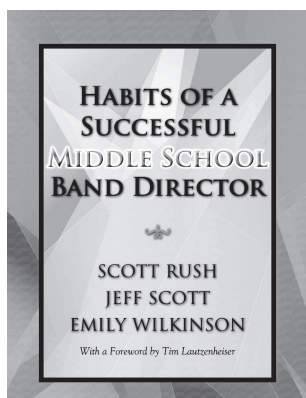
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Habits of a Successful Middle School Musician

One of the most important concepts in developing a fundamentals program is the ability of the group to *transfer* what is done during fundamentals time directly into the performance of music.

Habits of a Successful Middle School Musician provides an effective daily routine that will ultimately lead to artistic music-making.

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- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
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| V. Basic Sightreading by Level | VI. Audition Sightreading by Time Signature. | 11. Releases |
| VII. Music-Making Exercises | | 12. Duration of notes |
| | | 13. Range |
| | | 14. Technique |
| | | 15. Tone Color |
| | | 16. Consistency /Accuracy |

Sight-Reading Component Check List:

1. Tone
2. Timing
3. Tuning
4. Dynamics
5. Phrasing
6. Articulations
7. Rhythm
8. Balance*

Components of Playing Four T's:

- Timing
- Tuning
- Tone
- Technique

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