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The Success of Instrumental Music Programs in Public Schools in Rural Communities: A Guide in Organization and Instruction for the Development of Successful Student Musicians

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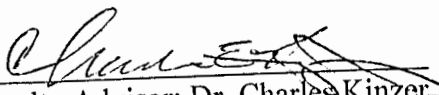
The Success of Instrumental Music Programs in Public Schools in Rural Communities:
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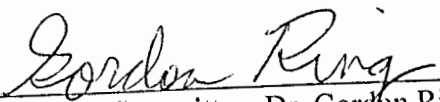
Submitted to the Faculty of the Department of Music at Longwood University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Science in Education

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Teacher Research Option

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	3
HISTORY OF GREENSVILLE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL.....	5
DEMOGRAPHICS.....	14
Table 1.....	14
Table 2.....	15
Table 3.....	16
Table 4	17
OVERVIEW.....	18
OBSERVATION.....	19
Table 5.....	20
STRATEGIES	25
CONCLUSION.....	31
APPENDICES.....	33
Appendix A.....	33
Appendix B.....	34
Appendix C.....	35
Appendix D.....	36
Appendix E.....	37-38
WORKS CITED PAGE.....	39

INTRODUCTION

Administrators in rural school systems generally believe that elective programs in their schools can be just as successful as programs in urban or more affluent areas of the state. The success of music programs can be gauged by their scope of curricula, quality of performances, community involvement and longevity. The definition of rural is “large isolated areas of a county often with low populations” (*Encyclopedia Britannica* 2006). A large portion of Virginia is considered rural; however, a majority of the schools have a music program (whether it is choral or instrumental). The characteristics of rural music programs often reflect the socio-economic demographics of the area, as can be seen in the school population, the economic composition of the town, and even the religious denominations of the people. As unique as the social fabric of a given location may be, most rural communities have common issues quite different from those found in centers of high population. Factors that affect a student’s educational process when it comes to musical training often include availability of equipment, parental support, and an understanding of musical aesthetics. Rural schools generally have a limited percentage of students who participate in extra-curricular activities. This is due, in part, to school enrollment, student interests and transportation issues. Factors that affect the success of activities include availability, continuity, structure and the ability. There are other factors as well, some of which occurred years ago throughout the United States (more so the South including Virginia) but still are being felt today.

What can a rural band director do to develop and maintain an efficient, healthy band program in a low-income area with limited enrollment and little retention from middle school to high school? This thesis will outline a number of strategies concerned

with goal-setting and organization, scheduling, and working to help middle and high school band programs function together for the unified purpose of improving the entire music program.

One historical factor that has left ramifications to the present is segregation. “Schools being separated along racial lines affected every part of the educational process. Laws were passed to create a lack of equality that oppressed minorities. This caused minorities to have only musical opportunities and exposure at home or church” (*Schools of the 1930s: A Historical Look Back*). This often resulted in students who could perform, but lacked the formal training of an educated musician. In some public schools, music was not offered. It was thought that minorities needed training for the workforce, not recreation. Music would not be as educationally based as in the Caucasian schools. Schools were separated, and so were cultures and band programs, and were able to choose musical styles that were determined by the cultural differences. Even in current schools, there are choices of what styles to perform and types of events in which to participate. This is mostly influenced by the area’s demographics and style of the director. Due to two sets of history for most band programs that are rural, the Caucasian high school and the minority high school (which may have been called a training school at the time) maintained separate band programs.

The decision of the *Brown vs. Board of Education* case of 1954 changed the educational system of the United States forever. Words such as “equality” and “opportunity” were commonly used, and as a result band programs thrived in the 1960s. Rural counties had integrated high schools with united enrollment, allowing for choirs, sporting teams and bands to have increased enrollment.

“This adjustment began over forty years ago and while children were learning to matriculate together, communities began to change and grow, due to unrest, development, industrial growth, and the mobility to move into communities of choice. This change meant more schools would develop, spreading out the population not just in suburban, developing urban areas as well as rural areas (Kysilko).

The second factor is that music programs across the state of Virginia are continually dealing with low enrollment, budget issues, and ensembles with incomplete instrumentation. Band directors must also deal with the issue of building a reputation of the program that will be accepted by the school’s student body, administrators and community. In this teacher research project, I will discuss what teaching strategies a band director can use to address specific problems, based on my own experiences and data collected from other directors who currently teach in rural school systems.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As times have changed the technology and information age has grown, which has benefited all aspects of education including instrumental music. Teachers do not have to search as hard as before the days of the internet to find information that will aid in most teaching situations. The National Association for Music Education has one of the greatest resources a band director can use, the *Music Educators’ Journal*. This monthly periodical consists of interviews, technology advances, music samples and a plethora of information that can be dissected and used to aid any music teachers with their programs. There are many articles that focus on struggling music programs. Within the articles there are

discussions on small enrollment and small programs. An excellent example is the article “Music Education in Rural Area: A Few Keys to Success: the rewards of Teaching at a Small School in a Rural Community Outweigh the Challenges If You Think Creatively and Take Advantage of the Many Resources Available” (Isbell 2005). The author discusses the many challenges that link small programs together as well as the desire to understand how to find success within them. Isbell gives examples of her trial and errors to reach a point where she felt rewarded. The Music Educators’ Journal and its programs such as “Music Around the World” provide resources for music and opportunities to participate in multi-school events. Students from small band programs can take advantage of the large-ensemble experience when their group is combined with those from other schools. This tells the educators in all areas whether rural, suburban or urban areas that the NAFME is aware of all types of programs. The NAFME constantly uses terms such as “advocacy,” “standards,” and “support” to reassure all readers that they are not alone in the fight to maintain music programs in all regions of the United States. The NAFME website informs its readers of new information and guidelines that will help in the teaching process. Currently on the website the following book titles are listed: *Getting Started with High School Band* and *Strategies for Teaching Beginning and Intermediate Band*. The VBODA (Virginia Band and Orchestra Directors Association) website also provides similar information, providing current information for your specified district as well as reports of music productivity.

The problem of maintaining band programs in rural schools is definitely not a new situation. Paul Lindsay wrote an article for the *Music Educators Journal* in 1982 entitled “The Effect of High School Size on Student Participation, Satisfaction and

Attendance.” The article contends that demographics are very important and are constantly changing. Michael Wohlfield wrote the article “Characteristics of Effective Rural School Music Teachers” in 1989. This encouraged for teachers to ask themselves whether they are equipped with the necessary tools to teach in a rural area. This topic was also featured in a special edition of the *Music Educators’ Journal* that was titled “Journal of Rural and Small Schools.”

As with any profession, it is the responsibility of the teacher to keep up with changes in education regardless of the circumstances, and more specifically their area of expertise. A true professional constantly reads professional literature and attends workshops and conferences such as their state music conferences and the national music conferences, embracing the information instead of bracing for the fight, which will help create the successful program any band director desires.

HISTORY OF GREENSVILLE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

Greensville County High School has a long history of education that reflects the changes in society as history progressed. This includes the issues of segregation. In the 1950s and 1960s, there were two high schools within the county, E. W. Wyatt High School (the African-American high school) and Greensville County High School (the Caucasian high school). There are pictures of the Greensville County High School Marching band with the American and confederate flags being held and a banner with the school name that the current band still uses to this day. No pictures of the Wyatt High School band are displayed in either building. Recently, the Wyatt Middle School (previously the African-American high school) was rededicated after renovations, but

only pictures of E. W. Wyatt, the educator were displayed. In the current Greenville County High School music library most of the music is stamped with “GCHS Music.” There are no selections with an E. W. Wyatt High School stamp. This is evidence that more funding for music and equipment was provided for the Caucasian high school than the other. Greenville County High School is located in an upper class neighborhood almost in the center of town, with stylish brick homes and sidewalks. Wyatt is located at the opposite end of the community, surrounded by mostly fields and a few houses. The schools were combined in 1968 with the ending of segregation.

Following segregation, Mr. Wilson (a Caucasian music teacher) directed the band for many years. His daughter recalled, “He wanted to make sure music was not removed from the Greenville County school system, even though all extra-curricular activities were going through changes. He taught all students equally and wanted them to enjoy band as he did” (Ms. Michelle Wilson, 2008). As times changed, so did the demographics of the school. More minorities were hired within the school system, including teachers who had backgrounds in sports and music. Minority students also began joining clubs, sporting teams and the band. Rachel P. Young, formerly an assistant principal of Greenville County High School, began teaching in the county in the early 1960s and at that time she was the only female, African-American basketball coach. She won many titles in her position and openly discusses the difficulties she experienced with prejudice and the difficulties for the community to adjust to integration. The music program did not have an African-American band director until the 1980s. Teachers such as Mrs. Young paved the way for all teachers to work in localities that experienced changes due to social change and politics by standing their ground and helping to establish policies that affect

the current learning environment of school systems. Slowly, the color of the students' skin began not to be the issue for extra-curricular activities. The issue now, is how to keep all students motivated and working together. Segregation in education allowed the students to receive certain educational tools (depending on race). Segregation allowed all children in America a right to an education but it did state the quality they would receive. Rural schools with large black populations did not receive equipment or music as the Caucasian schools. The behavior created a mindset that students were not equal or were not good enough to play the same music as the students at their counterpart. This belief may have been passed down to the next two generations, because it did not change when integration was implemented. Therefore, students may choose another elective they feel more comfortable with, maintaining low enrollment in band.

I have held the position of band director of Greenville County High School for eleven years. I also held the position of choir director and jazz band director. When I interviewed for the position, I met with the assistant superintendent (Dr. Angela Wilson) and the high school principal (Dr. Alvera Parrish). I was told that I had creative freedom and I would be rebuilding a program that had an excellent reputation. The vision for the high school band program was not clear, however, and expectations for events such as district band and festivals were left to me. I inherited a position that had been occupied by four band directors in five years; all had left the position for various reasons, resulting in a very small program. The band director (Mr. Kenneth Woodley) who had had the greatest influence on the program was teaching middle school band at Wyatt Middle School (the only middle school in the county). This director did not volunteer any assistance or information to aid in my transition into the position.

There were no band records of students, inventory, music uniforms or band parent information. I began cleaning out the band director's office hoping to discover any information. I found an old grade book with about twenty-seven names, but ironically, no grades. I took the names to the guidance office to locate phone numbers and began calling immediately. Most of the students on the list had graduated or were in the band class and did not play an instrument. One student had heard that there was a new band director and came to the high school and introduced himself as the drum major. By the end of my first week I had two band members. This was prior to the start of the school year, and at that point I had no indication of class sizes or the student's playing ability. I realized the problems I was encountering had not been presented in the interview process; therefore I did not understand what I was supposed to teach. The size of the marching band in the previous years had been an average of fifty members, which included auxiliary squads. The concert band contained between thirty and forty members. Under my leadership those numbers have been about the same. During the school years of 2007 and 2008 the marching band numbers increased to seventy and eighty-five. The concert band has maintained forty-five members. The last students taught by the previous middle school director graduated in 2007. During the first five years, the middle school band program consisted of fifteen to twenty members. Since I began directing the middle school program, the numbers for beginning band students have increased to thirty members in beginning band and twenty to thirty in the intermediate band. The growth is evident during spring concerts because of the number of audience members that attend. Also, there are three performance groups instead of two. Greenville County hosted joint concerts from 2003-2007 within the fine arts department consisting of art, dance, chorus

and band. What I experienced in Greenville Co. was not uncommon according to Sussex Central High School or Franklin, but I had a desire to show the students they could be successful despite their size. Since that time, the increased numbers in the band program have caused the middle school and high school bands to host separate programs to accommodate the audience sizes and the length of the programs.

Greenville County High School contains in its published academic requirements, curricula for instrumental and choral music programs. Their programs have been well established in Greenville County through out the history of the school system currently and before integration. The main purpose of these fine arts classes is to meet state mandated requirements for high school graduation:

“In order to graduate from Greenville County Public Schools, a student must meet all applicable requirements set forth in the Standards of Accreditation and the Standards of Quality as stated in the Greenville County High School Program of Studies manual. The requirements for a student to earn a diploma are those in effect when he or she enters the ninth grade.” (*Greenville County High School Program of Studies Manual*)

With this being said, whether it is the general diploma, advanced studies diploma, a modified standard diploma, or a special diploma, there are required fine arts credits. However, in the policy, there are no specific descriptions of the fine arts courses or what the proficiency must be achieved by graduation.

Both the choral and instrumental music programs were under my direction until 2004. I was responsible for all ensembles including chorus. 4x4 block scheduling, which allows a student to take only four courses each semester, did not guarantee that band

students who participated in the middle school music programs would be the same students who enrolled in the high school classes. The various performance levels were not separated at the high school level. According to the program of studies, the grouping of students within individual schools for instructional purposes shall be based on:

1. The best interest of the student
2. The educational level, or achievement level of the student
3. The availability
4. The best educational climate for learning and
5. The student's best chance for success

Grouping shall remain flexible in order to take advantage of the best educational research currently available.

The current Program of Studies manual only provides for two courses of band. The first is beginning instrumental music and the second course is for students who have studied music for at least two years and requires participation in the marching and concert band for that length of time. This was put into place to guarantee student participation in the performing ensembles. The course descriptions do not list the requirement for students to stay after school. In previous program studies publications, it was stated that marching band would be taught in a class during the school day. The school was then on a period schedule, not a block schedule, which meant approximately fifty-five minutes of instruction compared to the eighty-five minutes students currently receive. The school transitioned to a 4x4 block schedule in 1999, which meant students did not have the same classes year round as they did on the period schedule. Students would begin a new set of classes at the semester's change of the school year. This caused enrollment to be unstable

with class sizes less than ten. Therefore, practicing marching band during school was not possible. This began my process of developing the strategies for rebuilding the band program.

There were many problems that I identified at the beginning of my tenure at Greenville County High School. The problems consisted of the following information that was missing or unavailable:

- Missing list of band students
 - Underclassmen that were current band members were not available.
 - Class rolls for the upcoming semester were not prepared by the beginning of the fall band season.
- Missing list of inventory
 - Music
 - The number and condition of band uniforms
 - Musical instruments
- Parent/ Booster information not available
 - Band booster cabinet
 - Parent meeting schedule
 - Band booster bi-laws
- Missing list of events the band participated in:
 - Local events the band were required to perform
 - Festivals, parades, convocation
 - Competitions
 - Rival football games
 - Travel limitations
- Missing list of successful fund raisers
 - Established past fund raisers
 - Procedures for fundraising
 - Procedures for handling money

- No current band practice schedule
 - After school practice days and hours
 - After school tutorial schedule

- No administrative guidance
 - Setting of goals and expectations
 - Procedures for paperwork
 - Department or area meeting

During my first year, I put together programs based on my own band experiences from high school and college. I maintained this format for three years. Therefore, the yearly schedule was as follows:

Summer (month of August)	Marching Band Camp
Fall (September through October)	Marching Band (football games & Parades)
Winter (November through January)	Jazz Band & Concert Band
Winter/ Spring (February through May)	Concert Band
Spring (May)	Spring Marching Band Camp
Pre-spring (June)	Graduation (concert band)

As the band program evolved, ensemble size and the number of performances increased:

Summer (June & July)	Summer band camps at various colleges
Summer (August)	Marching Band Camp
Fall (September though October)	Marching Band (football games, parades, competitions)
Fall (November)	National marching band competition
Winter (November & December)	Holiday Parades, concert band, small

	Ensemble, pep band
Winter/Spring (January April)	Pep band, concert band, percussion competitions, auxiliary training
Spring (May)	Spring band camp, small ensemble Tri-County Band
Pre-summer (June)	Graduation (concert band)

Currently, I require that all instrument players who are members of the marching band participate in the concert band. I encourage auxiliary members to learn an instrument so they can participate in the concert band during the marching band's off-season.

During my tenure at Greenville County High School, I have had a very good working relationship with my principal, and for eight years, one of my best strategies I have presented a layout so she could understand the goals of each event in order to keep her involved with the program. I provide follow-ups of the events in case she could not attend. Currently, a new principal has been put into place at both schools (high school and the middle school). Neither principals came in making changes to the band program; rather, both approved of how the programs were structured. I discussed with both principals the goals I had for the programs to ensure continued growth and continued to present layouts and follow-ups with them to show that the band programs in Greenville County are run just as efficiently as the core subjects.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The population of any area affects many aspects of its school system. Total enrollment of a school determines how much state and local funding a school system

receives. Therefore, the amount of funding for rural school in Southern Virginia has not changed through the years due to small population changes. From the limited percentage of growth funding has not changed from 2000 to 2008. The table below shows the changes in population for the eight schools considered in this study:

Table 1: Population Comparison Chart

School	Area population 2000	Area population 2008	Amount of Growth	Percentage Of Change
GCHS City of Emporia	11,560	11,955	+395	1.03%
Sussex Central	12,504	12,148	-356	0.97%
Middlesex	9,932	10,585	+648	1.07%
Surry Co.	6,829	7,128	+299	1.04%
Brunswick Sr.	18,419	14,580	-3839	-.079%
Franklin	8,346	8,811	+465	1.06%
I. C. Norcom	100,565	100,577	-12	1.0%
Southampton	17,482	18,480	+998	1.06%

Greensville County High School consists of students that reside in the City of Emporia that is located within the county. I. C. Norcom High School is located in the City of Portsmouth and Franklin is a City as well. Just as for the county schools, the cities had fluctuations in population that were similar to those counties listed.

The figure below shows all the counties and cities located in the Commonwealth of Virginia. All of the localities mentioned in table 1. are located along the southern end of the I-95 corridor, in the south-central portion of the map.

Table 2: Commonwealth of Virginia Map

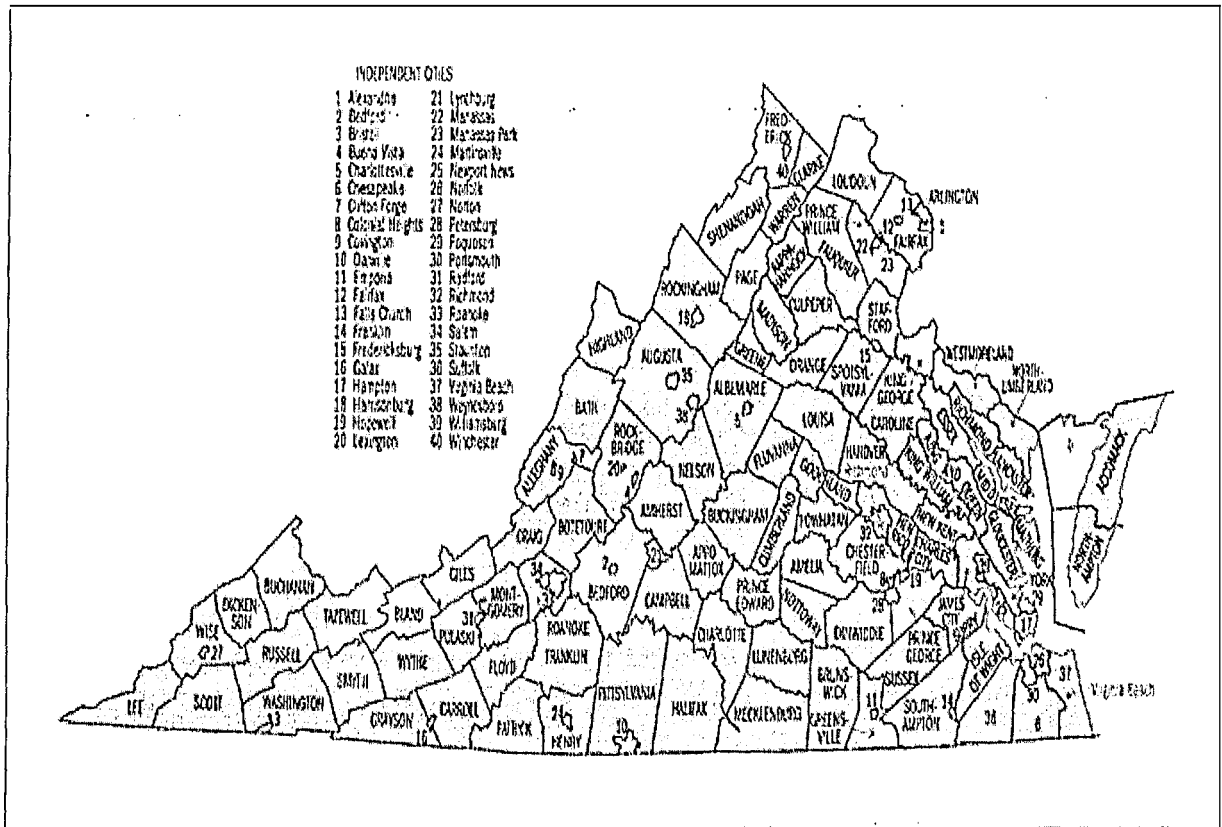
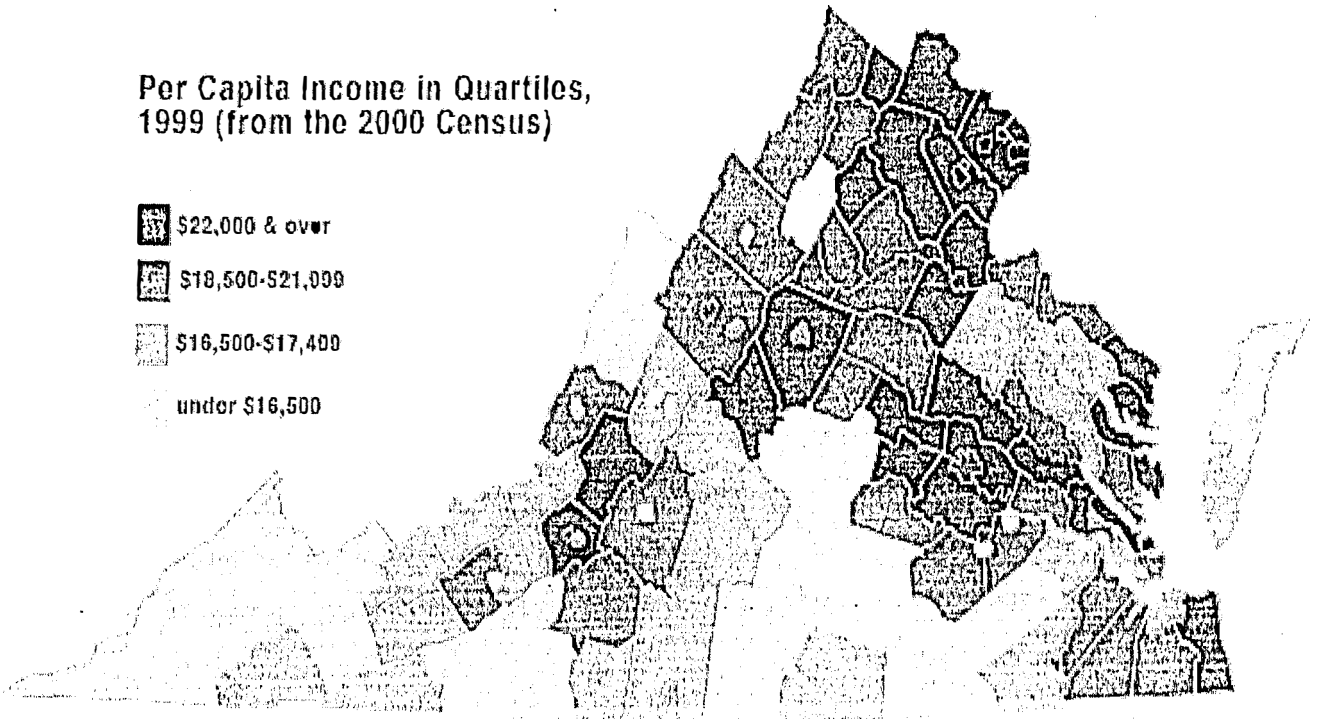
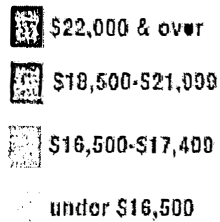


Table 3 shows the income per capita of the Commonwealth of Virginia. School systems with more revenue have been documented to have a larger number of high school graduates and a higher number of college graduates (Virginia Census) in 2000. Lower income areas, which often have shortages in health and dental care contain a higher number of people living in poverty. Students may have a desire to participate in extra-curricular activities throughout the state but due to socio-economical constraints those in poor, rural areas are limited.

Table 3: Per Capita table of the Commonwealth of Virginia

Per Capita Income in Quartiles, 1999 (from the 2000 Census)



Source: 2000 Census of Population & Housing

There are many factors that can affect a program throughout the school year. The enrollment in a band program can fluctuate, because of various factors such as academic performance, availability of equipment and transportation. School systems required are not to provide transportation for students that stay after school. After-school transportation was removed from Sussex Central High School in 2006 because the administration felt the parents were not being held accountable for children.

Table 4 shows some of the results from a survey regarding demographic issues faced by band directors at the eight schools.

Table 4: Band Director Program Demographics Survey

School	Does your school provide an activity bus for after school activities?	How many students in the current H. S. band program play school owned instruments?	How many students were removed from the band program due to not having an instrument? High school or Middle school	How many students did you lose to other after school activities?	How many students were removed from the band program due to academics?	What grade are students allowed to participate in the high school band programs?
GCHS	No	38	4	4	2	8 th
Sussex Central	No	N/A	N/A	Over half	N/A	7 th
Middlesex	No	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	9 th
Surry Co.	Yes	8	0	30	2	8 th
Brunswick Sr.	No	15	0	N/A	N/A	6 th
Franklin	Yes	12	1	40	0	8 th
I. C. Norcom	No	60	0	N/A	N/A	9 th
Southampton	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	8 th
Ranked percentages	75%	63%	25%	50%	37%	

Each program shown in table 4 has various issues which affect their individual success.

75% answered that transportation was not provided to students participating in the program. 63% depend on having students played school owned instruments. 25%, experienced students being removed from the band programs due to not having an instrument. 50% lost students to other after school activities and finally, 37% had students who were removed due to low academic performance. Most allowed students to participate in their programs beginning in 8th grade except for Brunswick High School, which allowed students to participate in the 6th grade. Please note the two city schools findings did not fluctuate differently than the county schools.

OVERVIEW

My survey of band directors from eight rural schools in Southern Central Virginia revealed a number of common issues that teachers in such programs normally must deal with. The following discussion highlights a few of these issues and offers insights as to how they might be addressed. Conversing with band directors from eight high schools,

Sussex Central High School (Jamal Butler), Middlesex County High School (Daphne Guill), Surry County High School (Tomisha Brock), Brunswick Senior High School (Allen Green), Franklin High School (Justin Thomas), I. C. Norcom (Anthony Washington), Southampton High School (Stafford Claude), Smithfield High School (Aaron Hill), along with my own experiences at County High School made each director feel that they were not in this musical struggle alone. I have discovered that all but three band directors were not directing the middle school bands which feed their own high school programs. The communication with the middle school band directors is not consistent throughout the school year. And because of busy schedules, high school band directors cannot always allot time to develop relationships with middle school director or attend middle school events develop relationships with middle school band students. Brunswick Senior High School's middle school band instructor is also the assistant high school band director. This has been a helpful tool considering the assistant band director can promote the high school band program and use the strategies that are being used in the high school program.

All of the surveyed high schools except I. C. Norcom High School are considered rural schools, but one common factor that all the directors agreed on is that it is good to teach students from the beginning of their band careers until they graduate. This is an asset for all types of music programs because the consistency can begin in the early stages of band training. Also, the size of the middle school band will determine the number of students that feed into the high school band program. According to the data, Greenville County, Sussex and Middlesex High Schools allow students to participate with the high school band beginning in eighth grade. Brunswick Senior High School

allows students to participate in sixth grade and Sussex Central High School allows students to join beginning band in the seventh grade and they are able to participate in the high school programs in the same year.

OBSERVATIONS

A problem with depending on players who have only one year of experience is a director has to remember that the playing ability of the students will vary. High school groups' performance level may be limited. Frustration among older band students and the band director may change the attitude of the group and create pressure on younger players that they have never experienced. These students may not understand the pressure, therefore creating a negative musical experience. The band director must also encourage young students to remain interested in the band program upon entering the high school. Students will have many choices of other after school activities. The number of students joining may be great, but the circumstances are very delicate and fragile; fragile enough that enrollment will vary from year to year. Middle school band students who are urged to participate in the high school programs prior to entering the high school may not get to attend district band or festival on the middle school level due to the structure of the middle school band program.

The development of musicianship among of these students is greatly altered since the learning process is rushed. These students may miss some important experiences in instrumental music, such as concert band, jazz band and solo and ensemble playing. Southampton and Brunswick High Schools practice marching band the entire school year along with their other ensembles. The logic is that the marching band is the most visible

ensemble of the high school. This may be good for morale but may hinder the band student who intends to perform collegiately and compete for scholarship money. Most colleges and universities are interested in well-rounded band students that have at least a basic understanding of marching band and concert band. Students who can sight-read and even play more than one instrument are looked upon as an asset or an investment. The director of bands of Hampton University and Virginia State University recently stated this to students of Greenville County High School.

Table 5: Band Director Survey of School Enrollment, Years of Service and Styles

High School Names	School enrollment	Beginning Band entrance	High School band eligibility	Marching band style	Number of Band directors the past 10 years	Current band director age group	Itinerate Band Director
Greenville Co.	780	7 th	8 th	High step	1	30-40	Yes
Sussex Central	493	7 th	7 th	High step	4	20-30	Yes
Middlesex High	350-375	6 th	8 th	Combination	4	40-50	Yes
Surry County	322	6 th	8 th	High step	9	20-30	Yes
Brunswick Sr.	654	6 th	6 th	High step	1	40-50	No
Franklin	350	6 th	8 th	High step	10	20-30	Yes
I. C. Norcom	1400	6 th	9 th	High step	4	20-30	No
Southampton	850	6 th	9 th	High step	1	50-60	No

Demographics play a major role in what happens in area high schools. Most rural Communities in Virginia, such as the counties listed in Table 5, have the general format of one or two elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. This is the case in Surry County, Middlesex, Brunswick County, Southampton County, Sussex County and Greenville County. Franklin has the same format as the county schools and students in the City of Portsmouth may choose between two other high schools in the

city. This creates a fragile program for I. C. Norcom High School; despite the large population of the school, students may favor one high school over the other.

In all the counties surveyed, students are allowed to take chorus up to the sixth grade. In middle school grades seven and eight, students are given an option to continue singing or learn an instrument. For recruitment, the high school band director must develop a relationship with the fine arts instructors at the lower grades and possibly volunteer at those grades to establish a trust and bond. One must remember that rural communities have smaller populations than cities; therefore teachers are sometimes regarded as family or put in the same social category as law enforcement and clergy. Rural communities appreciate programs where students can shine; this is a result of placing a large emphasis on school activities. This may be due in part to a lack of quality social outlets, e.g., malls, community centers, or civic events. Band directors that are not from a rural community experience difficulty when they decide to teach music in this type of environment. They either have to adjust to the area or make a decision to leave and try a different area. It is evident that rural Virginia counties give young graduates a chance to teach and direct various activities. The school systems think the younger perspective will increase productivity or candidates from non-rural areas may not be as willing to stay and be a part of the community, especially if the candidates are from large schools with an abundance of students. This is not to say that rural communities cannot get the most highly qualified teachers but these areas have to work a little harder to make teaching in the fine arts more appealing. In Greensville County, the school system offered new teacher incentives and signing bonuses to attract highly qualified teachers.

Despite variations in demographics all school systems in the Commonwealth of Virginia have state mandated Standards of Learning to guide students through their instructional progress. Currently, it is not required that students in music and art take a standardized test for the information being taught, but the SOLs do provide a stable foundation and a framework that will help students in fine arts be able to compete with those from larger, more urbanized school systems.

Standards are provided for beginning, intermediate and advanced band. These are the guidelines that the state has put into place for instruction that all band directors should, be able to show that their students have received upon graduation. Also, the NAfME provides current publications and conferences to help with teaching music in all states. The Virginia Music Educators' Association (VMEA) highlights music instructors from all regions. It is the job of the music educator, especially in rural school systems, to constantly explore the field to keep the momentum to create success, no matter the size or scope of the program. The VMEA suggests maintaining membership and participating in its events to receive the benefits of the organization.

“MENC has recently, recapitulated its vision of “Music for All” in its strategic plan, which warns that 30 to 50 percent of new teachers who work in urban areas leave the field in their first three years of service. This undoubtedly affects instrumental music instruction for urban children. Collegial sharing is one solution to problems confronting educators and the principle behind the mentoring programs that are so crucial in retaining teachers.”(Isbell)

This article noted that urban communities were experiencing similar issues to the rural programs. It went on to say that

“The National Association for Music Education introduced “The Child’s Bill of Rights in Music” in 1950. A revision adopted in 1991 stated that ‘the quality and quantity of children’s music instruction must not depend upon their geographical location, social status, racial or ethnic status, urban/suburban/rural residence, or parental or community wealth.” (Isbell)

This profound statement means so much to the life of any school music program. It means that accountability is not just the responsibility of the music instructor but the school itself. The music teacher must be given adequate equipment, instructional time, and a classroom to establish and maintain the foundational goals. The problem with this, as reflected in my survey, is that a rural system may not have the funds to hire a choral instructor and an instrumental instructor, making the search more difficult to locate a candidate that can teach both vocal and instrumental areas or a candidate that has a desire to teach both entities.

All surveyed band directors (Table 6) spoke of increasing or maintaining school spirit. This was a goal that each band director wanted to achieve. Is this considered an educational expectation? Yes, it is because it is a tool that is conducive for learning. That means creating an atmosphere that children can and want to adapt. It also allows students to express themselves through the arts. Music does more than teach the basics of theory and the history of music. Music stirs emotion allowing students to develop pride. This happens for students in the band on a daily basis through preparation for school and non-school events. An increase in school pride allows students to feel ownership in their educational community, resulting in positive behavior at events and assemblies.

Mr. Emery Fears, Jr. contributed to the *ASBDA Curriculum Guide* during his tenure at I. C. Norcom High School,

“it is difficult to determine what is meant altogether when you speak of success. However, my situation here (Portsmouth) has its own particular problems, especially in the last two years, wherein many of my better performers zoned to other schools. We received very little in return from the other schools! This school is predominantly black; therefore one must deal with those problems that are brought on by generations of discrimination and neglect. This situation breeds a particular type of individual, but if you help this individual to see the worth of any educational opportunity, the problem of distrust or authority is replaced by love, or at least cooperation. We, therefore, work on the whole child, his music, his outlook, his ambition or lack of it. Hard work is the answer both on the part of the director and the students. Pride in accomplishment is the outcome. “Better you” is our hope and aim. Do whatever there is to be done in band, in English, in mathematics, do it right, make it perfect. We feel that the results are well worth the effort. We win a few, lose a few, but we try; for the ghetto is a state of mind, not a particular area of housing! As far as a band director’s family is concerned, my wife and daughter (who is in the band) understand the extra hours and efforts put forth by me, and live with it!”

Mr. Fears did not speak of just teaching music in a rural or urban community he spoke of the expectations one should have for each student.

All of the band directors surveyed teach their bands the marching styles they are most accustomed to. Middlesex High School was the only school that currently uses a

combination of a high step and a corps style of marching for the band. This band director Daphne Guill, also expressed “difficulty in finding competitions that judge combination styled bands” (Guill 2007). This caused frustration for the director because she did not feel her band was judged fairly if they participated in a competition that only focused on a particular style.

STRATEGIES

Organization in a small music program is just as important as in a music program of substantial numbers. One must use planning tools such as forms deemed appropriate for the program that are clear and precise and that are required by the administration. The director must plan the events for the music program for the entire school year.

If the director is new in the position, one must gather as much information about the current program as possible. Time may not be on the director’s side and a lack of information may affect the performance quality of the program for several months of the school year. A new director will need student names, instrumentation of the program, inventory, band booster organization history, budgeting information, and a list of administrative expectations. Approval of events is also important because the director has to secure transportation and make sure funds are available to cover any trip expenses.

The band director will have duties such as trip coordinator, classroom teacher, tutor, and event planner. Effective time management may be the most important skill that

a band director can acquire. There are so many elements of the band program that depend on the time allotted for practices, events, meetings and performances. This is especially important in a rural high school where students are often a part of more than one extra-curricular activity. Success will also come with communication between the director, the student, the parent, and other members of the school staff.

The band director must learn how to be flexible by scheduling around set elements in the school calendar. Communication must be constant to develop a good relationship with other groups whose activities inadvertently affect the music program. This may include (1) coaches of various sports, (2) directors of programs enrichment programs and remediation, tutorial programs and (3) organizers of community events.

Small communities are sometimes called “school-based” communities. It makes it easy to understand why the African proverb, “it takes a village to raise a child” was so welcomed when Hillary Rodham Clinton presented it in her book entitled, *It Takes a Village: And Other Lessons Children Teach*, in 1996.

Communities thrive on organizations that are successful as the “center piece” of the community. The school system is the one element of the small community that every member has in common. The band director must embrace the spotlight and make sure the community is on his or her side. He or she must be careful to allow the community to feel pride and ownership in the musical organization and view them as ambassadors of the community.

A new director must learn which events are important to the community and plan the band calendar around them. This task can be made easier with various resources that are specifically designed to aid the band director. The American School Band Directors

Association formed a reference guide in 1953 that had the goal of advancing music education in America's schools. The guide provided band directors seventeen chapters of information to help organize, develop and maintain a thriving band program. Chapter twelve discusses "teaching in disadvantaged areas." Not all rural areas are disadvantaged but there are traits that often overlap, such as socioeconomic factors, lack of self-respect, and a lack of parent interest. These factors may cause the job of a band director to be more than eight hours a day. A director must remain objective to achieve success. Supplemental salaries may be provided to help with the time given, but as stated in the reference guide, "regardless of how pressed for time the director may be, he should make a special effort to attend and support PTA drives, performances put on by other school departments, special meetings and assemblies" (The American School Band Directors Association).

It is not until the director has divided the school year up into the major sections (by ensemble) that a clear picture appears. This will help set up a practice schedule for each ensemble. When preparing for marching band, many groups begin preparation during the summer. This time is very important because it is usually uninterrupted by other school functions. The band director has students for a set number of continuous practice hours each day. Factors such as student transportation, meals and student employment may affect how long the practices are held. If a summer band camp is organized and well managed, this time becomes a priceless asset to the program later on in the year. Technique and motivation can be set into place that will help offset the lost time during the regular school year. Students will give large amounts of time if they see how diligent practice pays off.

Students may also benefit from attending summer camps held by colleges and universities that offer an accelerated approach to instrument playing. Such programs offer a complete focus on musicianship that creates a stronger player. This experience can build confidence in playing and an increase in playing ability.

If a school has a band program that has difficulty maintaining a concert band ensemble and is not able to participate in festival, it is important for the director to find opportunities that involve the student body to spark the interest of other students. Possibilities may include performing with literary clubs and drama presentations. Also, it may be possible to perform for the school's SOL celebration and at presentations to the lower grades. The latter will serve as a recruitment opportunity for new members. Award ceremonies and graduations are wonderful opportunities for ensembles to perform. The audience will be engaged if they hear familiar tunes such as "Pomp and Circumstance" by Edward Elgar. The current students will develop a sense of pride in participating in prestigious events. There are times when the daily classroom schedule must be amended. Unexpected situations, such as extended testing schedules, or expected situations, such as scheduled half-days, may cause a band director's teaching agenda to change. This should not be looked upon as a negative situation but as an opportunity to reinforce theory and basic musical knowledge. Use the techniques acquired for general teaching during this limited class time.

Students should be aware of the practice expectation prior to the beginning of the school year. This should be communicated also with the school administration and parents. A monthly practice calendar is an easy reminder that can be posted in the band room and sent home with each student. The calendar should include the current ensemble

practices, the times, any upcoming performances, locations and admission fees if the information is available. Also, band parent meeting and fundraising events can also be posted on the calendar. A copy of the monthly band event calendar should also be sent to the school administration. Administrators often will attend events if they are kept informed.

Donovan Wells, director of bands at Bethune Cookman University, Daytona Beach, Florida, told students attending the university's summer marching band camp: "It's what you get accomplished in the allotted time. Being efficient is very important. Your job as student leaders is to uplift your band directors through good musicianship, leadership and discipline. If you do not have good band members, you cannot have a good band. At halftime, I am a fan just like the rest of the crowd. At show time, my job is done."

In my work at Greenville County High School, I submitted a rehearsal document to the administration to show the format for band rehearsal. This form resembled a lesson plan, which is a normal tool in the classroom, but was designed for the administration to understand the time needed for daily rehearsal. This form also showed how the staff needs were met. In a rural band program, a director usually has a limited staff. The director must be careful to make sure that all volunteers and extra band staff meet administrative approval and that those volunteers share the same vision as the band director. Knowing that Greenville County's band staff is limited, I organized a leadership team consisting of section leaders, chosen upper classman and drum majors. Their purpose is to complete reasonable duties that aid the director, such as:

1. Warm up and tuning of the musicians before each rehearsal

- a. Each section leader has a tuner to tune their section prior to the drum major or director taking the podium.
 - b. The section leader disseminates music.
2. Issuing of uniforms and uniform items
3. Straightening the classroom before and after each rehearsal
 - a. Duties included putting up music stands, straightening chairs, picking up trash, emptying trash cans, bathroom cleaning
4. Mentoring and tutoring younger band members
 - a. Sectionals to help students through difficult passages in the music
 - b. With various social situations.

I have found this organization's assistance to be of great use in the improvement of the program over the past several years. The strategy that has made the biggest impact on the Greenville County band program was to provide continuity by teaching the county's middle school beginning and intermediate school band program. This was not a new strategy in the music education profession or in the music programs of rural music schools. Yes, there is an increase in the workload but the long-term benefits are great. I have complete control over recruitment and enrollment, which is always based on the program's needs. Also, I teach these students from their first note until they graduate. This has created outstanding musicians and outstanding student/teacher relationships.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this project, I have discussed the factors that can hinder a rural music program, such as low enrollment, community needs, band director turnover, budget needs, and administrative concerns. In many conversations with directors from the rural schools used in this project there was one thread we all have in common: we all need and

want a sense of support and a sense of stability. To create a successful program in the rural areas the directors must first demonstrate a solid competency that demonstrates their own confidence in their music and students, and will show the school's administration the sincere effort set forth.

Next, directors should learn the history of the school's music program. Learning the background of the program will help one; make decisions that will move the program forward. If the director wants to incorporate new ideas, he or she must communicate with the administration, band staff (if any), and band parents and of course the music students in the program.

Finally, in the rural setting, one should embrace the family atmosphere and use it to an advantage. Get to know the community and figure out how the band can be a part of the community. Play music that audiences can relate to. And no matter the size of the program find performances that will make the students feel a pride in their musical ability and performance. Help the students develop a love for music that you share. Remember, you are a teacher first.

Therefore, all the training and skills one has learned as a classroom teacher should be used not just in theory but also in band rehearsals and performances. You wear many hats such as teacher, mentor, guidance counselor and even parent, but, at the end of the day, you are the band director, who happens to be in a rural area.

APPENDICES

Appendix A- Survey to Selected Band Directors

I am working on my thesis about rural music programs and I would really like your help. If you would just take a couple of minutes and respond to a few questions that would really help me out. Thanks

1. What is the total number of students in your school?
2. What type of marching band does your school use? (Corps., high step marching or strictly military)?
3. What grade are students allowed to begin beginning band?
4. What the grades that are allowed to participate in high school band?
5. What is the closest college to your high school?
6. How many directors' have been in the band director position prior to you within the last ten years?
7. Do you have an after school band program? Please give a brief description of the afternoon routine and the schedule.
8. What events does you band perform each year? Such as football, basketball games ect.
9. Estimate the number of band members the band has had over the past five years.

Appendix B- Communication to Parents of student removal in after school ensembles.

Greensville County High School

Band Program

**403 Harding Street
Emporia, Va 23847**

Date _____

The student _____ will not be allowed to participate in the _____, performing ensemble of the GCHS Marching Eagles Band or the GCHS pep band. If the student is enrolled in any band course the student may participate in the concert band to fulfill course requirements. Once removed for the ensemble the student may not return unless given permission by the band director.

The student must turn in all school equipment and uniforms by the designated date. If the student is not in compliance the price for the property will be turned in to the school accountant and added to the fines owed list.

Thank you,

Miss S. Batten
Band director

Appendix C- Band Football Game Itinerary

**Dinwiddie@ GCHS Home Football Game
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2008**

Due to the threat of Hurricane Hannah the Friday night game has been changed to Thursday evening at 7:30 p.m. Band students are to follow the following schedule for tomorrow evening.

2:08 P.M.	STUDENTS RELEASED FROM
5:00 P.M.	STUDENTS REPORT TO THE BANDROOM
5:15-6:00 P.M.	SECTIONALS (TIGHTEN UP MUSIC AND WORK FANFARES)
6:00 P.M.	FULL WARM-UP
6:40 P.M.	BLOCK FOR PRE-GAME
7:10 P.M.	PERFORMANCE OF THE NATIONAL ANTHEM
7:30 P.M.	GAME BEGINS
9:30 P.M.	GAME ENDS AND BAND RETURNS TO THE BAND ROOM

STUDENTS WILL WEAR EMBROIDERED BAND SHORTS AND PLAIN WHITE TEES

Appendix D- Tri-County Band Clinic Parent Communication

March 30, 2010

Dear Band Parents and Students:

This is the time of year the band programs of Wyatt Middle School and Greenville County High School are preparing for their spring events. Students are being sized for the tuxedo shirts, cummerbunds and bow ties on Wednesday, March 31, 2010 during class. The price for the items is \$35.00. All checks are payable to "Originals by Randi". Mrs. Kei's shop is located on Halifax Street in Emporia. Parents are responsible for picking up the ordered items from her shop upon their arrival. Students are required to wear the tuxedo items with black pants (ladies may wear long black skirts), black shoes and darks socks and hosiery for the spring concert, which will be held on Wednesday, May 15, 2010 at 6 p.m. in the GCHS cafeteria. All family and friends are urged to attend.

Students will participate in the Tri-County Band Conference to be held at Greenville County High School on Friday and Saturday, May 14th and 15th. This two-day event will host band students from various parts of the state of Virginia. The first day will consist of rehearsals held at the high school and the second day will be a short rehearsal and the performance (which students will wear the tuxedo attire). Registration fee for this event is \$20.00. This fee must be paid by May 3, 2010. We urge all band students to participate. This performance will also be open to the public.

Students are reminded that there is beginning band after school rehearsal will be held on each Tuesday and Thursday for 2:30 p.m.-4:00 p.m. (This schedule will change when spring band camp started).

Beginning band students that make the high school band audition will be allowed to perform with high school band for graduation. Details for this will begin at a later date.

Musically yours,

Miss S. Batten
Band Director, Wyatt/GCHS

Appendix E- Greenville County High School Band Class Course Outline

GREENSVILLE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL Instrumental Music Course Outline Grades 9-12

Instructor: Miss S. Batten

Goals:

1. The students will develop musical ability according to their current level.
2. The student will increase music reading ability.
3. The students will increase knowledge and appreciation of the repertoire performed.
4. The band will perform quality literature of various styles grades III-VI.
5. The student will have the opportunity to perform within the school, and throughout the community.

Course Materials:

1. All students will need a three-ring binder and pencils. (Remember in music we use pencils to notate music and math).
 - a. The binder will house music and notes for music theory.
 - b. The notebook will be use to keep scales and musical exercises.
2. Wind players
 - a. All students except for baritone and tuba players must provide their own instrument.
 - i. Woodwind players must have a supply of reeds.
 - ii. A folder will be given to musicians to house their music.
3. Percussion players are required to have a pair of drumsticks a pair of mallets and a practice pad.
4. Brass players are required to have their own mouthpieces. SHARING OF MOUTHPIECES IS NOT PERMITTED.
5. Students will be required to wear the appropriate attire for performances and ensemble rehearsals.

Student Expectations:

1. Attendance must be followed as stated in the Greenville County High School handbook.
2. Students participating in the marching band, concert band, pep band and small ensembles are required to attend all after-school scheduled rehearsals.
3. Attend all required performances. (If you are in marching band all performances are graded. If a student is a concert band participant or not in a current ensemble,

but enrolled in the class, THEY MUST ATTEND THE HOLIDAY CONCERT IN THE FALL OR THE SPRING CONCERT IN THE SPRING).

4. Percussion students are to play with is assigned to them in each ensemble. This is only changeable by the band director. Percussion students are to understand the rotation on various percussion instruments may be required to cover all parts during concert band.
5. Wind players are to play the equipment only assigned to them. Wind players may only switch to another instrument if given permission by the band director.

Performance attendance:

Music students are required to perform a minimum of two times a semester. If the band director decides to require only one performance a project or paper will replace the second performance.

Excused absences from performances are only accepted by the band director with: parent contact to the director due to family emergency or written permission from a parent or guardian at least seven school days before the performance. Confirmation conference will occur between the director and the parent.

Discipline:

Refer to the student handbook and code of conduct manual.

Evaluation:

***Class Participation* 40%**

1. Coming to class prepared
2. Complete all required assignments.
3. Maintain appropriate behavior.
4. PARTICIPATE IN CLASS.

***Performance* 20%**

1. Concert Band (Holiday concert, Spring Concert, Recital, Graduation and community performances.
2. Marching Band (Football games, competitions and parades)
3. Pep band and jazz band (All home basketball games, district, regional and state performances and community events).
- 4.

Quizzes & Evaluations 20%

1. Playing tests consisting of musical exercises, scales and repertoire.
2. Written test consisting of theory and history.

Exams 20%

1. Major performances or a written exam, or research paper may be given by the band director to be counted as the final exam.

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