

Traits and Characteristics of a Successful Secondary Music Teacher

**Observations after 41 years teaching in a rural community.
Identifying the non-musical skills music teachers need.**

ANYONE can present the material, anyone can pick out decent pageantry shows, anyone can program a concert at some level.

TALENTED people can pick out great material and shows and program great concerts.

NONE of that will matter if you cannot inspire, connect with and lead your students, staff and parents.

1. Put the students first!

Define what matters on a day to day basis.

Why do your students walk in the door each day?

Manage the expectations and pressures.

2. Students and Parents are watching. Your group culture starts here.

Work ethic, commitment and getting your hands dirty.

Having your act together.

You are always on display.

3. Don't let the everyday things within your school get you down

They must not want me to do my job.

Welcome the problem to your room.

Learn how to vent.

4. Use all of those “extras” on the schedule to build your band

Connect with the community.

Connect with the school.

Connect with your students.

5. Think outside the box for your students

Spontaneous is often genius.

The unexpected can become a time-honored tradition.

6. There is not time to feel sorry for yourself

There is no championship awarded for finding the excuse.

“Woe is me” sends people scattering.

7. Find your own leadership inspiration

No one follows boring, blah, sterile or fake.

Understand your default personality.

We are entertainers and it is a competition.

Summary

For most of us the musical skills needed to be a successful music teacher came rather easily and we have been refining those talents since 6th or 7th grade. Combine those with organization, inspiration and charisma and you can be a truly effective and memorable director

One closing thought from Dr. Tim –
“Give the kids what they want and you will get what you want.”

