

Introduction

The following document presents the findings of a select committee which was formed to describe a band program at the High School level that represents policies, procedures, and fundamentals that can be defined as **Best Practices** in Florida school band programs. A primary goal of the committee was to base its findings not only on what would represent the best practices, but also, what would incorporate common practice, wherever possible. In this sense, the findings represent a realistic model of what a high school band in Florida should look like. These findings should serve as a model against which band programs can measure their own policies, practices, and fundamentals.

The committee fully realizes that each band program in Florida is unique, and must respond to the many variables that are in effect in its own community. **It therefore, cautions readers of this document to NOT use these findings as mandates.** Instead, the committee presents the individuals who are in charge of a high school band program in Florida with “goals” for which they can strive. In this regard, the committee hopes that the findings presented herein may help band directors, administrators, and parents to achieve a comprehensive and well balanced band program that places its emphasis on student learning within a structure of carefully planned performance activities. Above all else, an intelligent and purposeful use of **student time** must guide the activities of any successful band program. And so, these guidelines should serve as benchmarks for high school bands to use as they plan their courses of study and performance activities.

The findings presented in the following sections describe the “ideal” high school band program. Some of the items may not apply to each and every high school band program in Florida, but serve as an indicator of what the complete band program looks like, and how it engages in the business of educating its students.

Findings

Overall Band Program

The high school band program in Florida that engages in Best Practices will:

- Be part of a comprehensive MUSIC program which may include chorus, orchestra, general music, music theory, piano classes, guitar classes, world music, music technology, and eurhythmics and dance.
- Be comprehensive and balanced, and will include Concert Band at the advanced level, Concert Band at the intermediate level, Beginning Band instruction, Marching Band, Jazz Band, Chamber Music instruction (solo and ensemble), private and small group instruction, instruction in Music Theory, Music History, and Conducting, and instruction for auxiliaries which may include eurhythmics, dance techniques, and dance repertoire.

- Be led by a full-time, certified band director.
- Have a second certified band director to assist with the instruction of the students if more than 150 students are enrolled in the band program.
- Have a third certified band director to assist with the instruction of the students if more than 300 students are enrolled in the band program.
- Have an association of parents, which is under the guidance and supervision of the lead band director, to assist the band program in achieving its goals and objectives.
- Recruit students for the high school band program through a planned schedule of procedures which may include: direct and frequent communication and interaction between the high school band directors and the middle school directors and students; recruiting events coordinated by the high school band directors; joint performances with middle school bands; and, side-by-side rehearsals with middle school bands
- Maintain close communications and working relationships with the Middle School programs which feed it via: joint planning for performance scheduling and other activities; curriculum planning, so that the program of studies is structured from grades six through twelve; band directors at both levels attend each others MPA's; high school hosts middle school concerts and pre-MPA events; high school students assist middle school students with preparations for solo and ensemble MPA; high school directors engage in frequent and continuous personal contact with middle school students; directors at both levels engage in creative planning for recruitment events.
- Receive funding from the School District that is sufficient to accomplish its **instructional*** goals.

**All materials, equipment, and services needed to provide quality instruction in all facets of the band program (e.g. music, instruments, repairs, recordings, method books, classroom equipment, part-time specialists for percussion, auxiliaries, etc.)*

- Receive additional funding for its **co-curricular*** activities from school internal sources, the athletic department, and special School District allocations.

**Activities which are part of the instructional goals of the band program, but which take place outside of the regular school day. Also includes events and activities in which the band is expected or required to participate. For example: football games, evening concerts, Music Performance Evaluations, performances for the community, educational workshops and festivals, Honor Band events, All-State participation by students, etc.*

- Receive supplemental funding for its **extra-curricular*** activities from student fund-raising, parent fund-raising, performance fees (tickets, fees charged to performance sponsors, etc.), donations, sponsors, and other self-generated funding.

**Activities which are extra enhancements to the instructional program. Examples include: marching band competitions, music related trips, concert band and/or jazz band festivals and competitions, extra staffing needed to accomplish extra-curricular activities, etc.*

- Allow student fees (if needed) to represent no more than 15% of the total amount raised for extra-curricular activities.
- Provide options for students to raise the necessary funds to pay the student fees (if needed) through a fund raising program.
- Provide procedures for waiving student fees (if needed) for students who are financially unable to pay them.
- Limit fund raising events which involve students, to no more than three per school year.
- Distribute funding received (*total band budget*) in the following manner:
45% for instructional purposes
40% for co-curricular purposes
15% for extra-curricular purposes
- Allocate funding in the following manner for the instructional areas:
55% concert bands*
35% marching band
10% jazz bands

**The concert bands instructional program includes chamber music, small group and private instruction, music theory, music history, and conducting.*

- Engage in a major band trip (i.e. at least 3 days and 2 nights, involving travel outside of the home county) every 3 to 4 years.

Advanced Level Concert Band

The high school band program in Florida that engages in Best Practices will observe the following in regards to its Advanced Level Concert Band:

- The ratio of in-school instruction time per week compared to out-of-school instruction is 2.29 to 1 (i.e. there are 2.29 minutes of in-school instruction for each

1 minute of out-of-school instruction; or, 5 days of 55 minute classes would allow 2 hours of after school rehearsal time)

- Students are required to perform a formal audition in order to be placed in the Advanced Level Concert band.
- Students are required to perform a formal audition for seating placement in the Advanced Level Concert Band.
- The band director is continually assessing the performance levels of the students, and rotates or adjusts seating/part assignments for proper balance.
- Students in the Advanced Level Concert Band earn their grades based on more than just participation/attendance. Criteria used in assigning grades include *individual performance assessment, group performance assessment, student self-assessment, and written tests.*
- The Advanced Level Concert Band participates in the FBA District Concert Band MPA each year.
- The Advanced Level Concert Band participates in the FBA State Concert Band MPA at least 3 out of every 5 years.
- On average, the Advanced Level Concert Band performs 3 to 4 formal public concerts during the regular school year. (excluding FBA MPA's and festival/competitions).
- On average, the Advanced Level Concert Band performs 1 to 2 community events* each school year.
**(civic functions, public ceremonies, commercially sponsored events. Etc.)*
- On average, the Advanced Level Concert Band participates in 0 to 1 non-FBA sponsored festival/competitions each year.
- Approximately 100% of the students in the Advanced Level Concert Band participate in the FBA District Solo and Ensemble MPA each year.
- Approximately 100% of the eligible students in the Advanced Level Concert Band participate in the FBA State Solo and Ensemble MPA each year.
- All students in the Advanced Level Concert Band are encouraged to take private lessons from professional teachers who are specialists on the students' instruments.

- Percussionists in the Advanced Level Concert Band are scheduled in the same class period as the rest of the band, with provisions being made for specialized percussion instruction throughout the school year.

Intermediate Level Concert Band

The high school band program in Florida that engages in Best Practices will observe the following in regards to its Intermediate Level Concert Band:

**Note: There may be more than one intermediate level concert band in the program.*

- The ratio of in-school instruction time per week compared to out-of-school instruction is 5 to 1 (i.e. there are 5 minutes of in-school instruction for each 1 minute of out-of-school instruction; or, 5 days of 55 minute classes would allow approximately 1 hour of after school rehearsal time)
- Students are required to perform a formal audition in order to be placed in the Intermediate Level Concert Band.
- Students are required to perform a formal audition for seating placement in the Intermediate Level Concert Band.
- The band director is continually assessing the performance levels of the students, and rotates or adjusts seating/part assignments for proper balance.
- Students in the Intermediate Level Concert Band are allowed to participate in the marching band.
- Students in the Intermediate Level Concert Band earn their grades based on more than just participation/attendance. Criteria used in assigning grades include *individual performance assessment, group performance assessment, student self-assessment, and written tests.*
- The Intermediate Level Concert Band participates in the FBA District Concert Band MPA each year.
- The Intermediate Level Concert Band participates in the FBA State Concert Band MPA when conditions are appropriate.
- On average, the Intermediate Level Concert Band performs 2 to 4 formal public concerts during the regular school year. (excluding FBA MPA's and festival/competitions).

- On average, the Intermediate Level Concert Band performs 0 to 1 community events* each school year.
**(civic functions, public ceremonies, commercially sponsored events. Etc.)*
- On average, the Intermediate Level Concert Band participates in 0 to 1 non-FBA sponsored festival/competitions each year.
- Approximately 75% of the students in the Intermediate Level Concert Band participate in the FBA District Solo and Ensemble MPA each year.
- Approximately 100% of the eligible students in the Intermediate Level Concert Band participate in the FBA State Solo and Ensemble MPA each year.
- All students in the Intermediate Level Concert Band are encouraged to take private lessons from professional teachers who are specialists on the students' instruments.
- Percussionists in the Intermediate Level Concert Band are scheduled in the same class period as the rest of the band, with provisions being made for specialized percussion instruction throughout the school year.

Beginning Band

The high school band program in Florida that engages in Best Practices will observe the following in regards to its Beginning Band:

- The Beginning Band does not usually have after-school rehearsals.
- Students are not required to perform a formal audition in order to be placed in the Beginning Band.
- Students are not required to perform a formal audition for seating placement in the Beginning Band.
- Students in the Beginning Band are not normally allowed to participate in the marching band.
- The band director is continually assessing the performance levels of the students, and rotates or adjusts seating/part assignments for proper balance.
- Students in the Beginning Band earn their grades based on more than just participation/attendance. Criteria used in assigning grades include *individual performance assessment, group performance assessment, student self-assessment, and written tests.*

- The Beginning Band does not participate in the FBA District Concert Band MPA each year.
- On average, the Beginning Band performs 1 to 2 formal public concerts during the regular school year.
- The Beginning Band does not perform for community events.
- The Beginning Band does not participate in non-FBA sponsored festival/competitions.
- All students in the Beginning Band are encouraged to take private lessons from professional teachers who are specialists on the students' instruments.
- Percussionists in the Beginning Band are scheduled in the same class period as the rest of the band, with provisions being made for specialized percussion instruction throughout the school year.

Jazz Band

The high school band program in Florida that engages in Best Practices will observe the following in regards to its Jazz Band:

- If numbers allow, there are two or more Jazz Bands in the band program.
- The top Jazz Band is scheduled during the regular school day.
- When possible, the other Jazz Bands are also scheduled during the regular school day.
- Students are required to perform a formal audition in order to be placed in a Jazz Band.
- Students are required to perform a formal audition for seating placement within the Jazz Bands.
- Students participating in a Jazz Band are also members of a concert band (or chorus or orchestra) which is a part of the school music program.
- The band director is continually assessing the performance levels of the students, and rotates or adjusts seating/part assignments for proper balance.
- Students in the Jazz Bands earn their grades based on more than just participation/attendance. Criteria used in assigning grades include *individual*

performance assessment, group performance assessment, student self-assessment, and written tests.

- The top Jazz Band participates in the FBA District Jazz Band MPA each year.
- The top Jazz Band participates in the FBA State Jazz Band MPA at least 3 out of every 5 years.
- On average, the top Jazz Band performs from 3 to 5 formal public concerts during the regular school year, excluding MPA's and festival/competitions.
- On average, the top Jazz Band performs in 2 to 4 community events each year.
- On average, the top Jazz Band participates in 0 to 2 non-FBA sponsored festival/competitions.
- All students in the Jazz Bands are encouraged to take private lessons from professional teachers who specialize in Jazz, and are specialists on the students' instruments.
- Improvisation is taught in the Jazz Bands through use of method books, instructional recordings, instruction and modeling by the teacher, guest clinicians, private lessons, and guided listening to professional recordings.

Marching Band

The high school band program in Florida that engages in Best Practices will observe the following in regards to its Marching Band:

- All students in the band program are required to participate in the marching band, with provisions for waivers where deemed appropriate by the band directors. Waivers might include physical disabilities, health exemptions, sports conflicts, and religious concerns.
- Limits the marching band "season" so that it begins in August, and ends on the date of the last regular season school football game, or the FBA Marching Band MPA, which ever occurs later. Exceptions are made when the school football team is involved in post-season playoffs and the band is expected to participate.
- Spends the following maximum percentages of in-school class time on marching band instruction and administration during the marching band season: Advanced level = 25%; Intermediate level = 50%; Remedial level = 75%.

- The amount of time per week spent in out-of-school rehearsals for the marching band does not exceed the amount of time per week spent in in-school class instruction.
- The marching band performs at all home football games.
- On average, the marching band performs at 50% of the away football games each season.
- The marching band performs at the FBA Marching Band MPA each year.
- The marching band performs in no more than 3 community* events each year. **(parades, civic events, charity functions, commercially sponsored events, etc.)*
- The marching band performs in 0-2 non-FBA marching band festival/competitions each year.
- The marching band typically prepares 1 complete field show for the marching band season. A pre-game show, homecoming show, and/or combined shows with other bands, would be additional.
- The head band director and/or the associate directors write the marching band drills for the field shows where possible and practical. If drill must be purchased, costs should be incurred in consideration of the healthy and balanced total band budget.
- Music for the marching band field shows is obtained from published sources when possible, arranged specifically for the band by a hired composer/arranger as needed, and/or arranged by the head band director and/or associate directors if capable.
- Specialists are hired to assist with the instruction of percussionists and auxiliaries for the marching band season. Other specialists may be hired to assist with the training of band members during the annual band camp.

Auxiliaries

The high school band program in Florida that engages in Best Practices will observe the following in regards to its Auxiliaries:

- Students engaged in auxiliaries will be scheduled in a class during the regular school day. Course codes that may be used are Eurhythmics, Dance Techniques, and/or Dance Repertory.
- A highly qualified auxiliary instructor(s) is hired to instruct auxiliary classes.

- The auxiliary units perform as an integral component of the marching band.
- Activities which take place after the end of the regular marching band season are planned and implemented with regard to the healthy and balanced total band budget.
- Participation in FBA District and State MPA's is required.
- Additional student assessments may be incurred for participation in dance competitions, winter guard circuits, and other non-FBA events.
- The total number of events in which auxiliary units may participate does not exceed 7, which includes FBA District and State MPA's.

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