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**University of Michigan**

**Marching Band**

**2019-2020**

**Student Leader Handbook**

**Michigan Marching and Athletic Bands**

# Dr. John Pasquale, Director

# Dr. Richard Frey, Associate Director

# Revelli Hall

**350 East Hoover Street**

**Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104-3707**

**734.764.0582 | Fax: 734.763.2018**

**http://mmb.music.umich.edu**

The University of Michigan Marching and Athletic Bands are ensembles of the

School of Music, Theatre & Dance, David Gier, Dean.

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Introduction

One of the greatest aspects of the Michigan Marching Band is its continuing pursuit of **Excellence** and a **High** **Standard**. This pursuit has helped to establish the **History** and **Tradition** that makes the MMB unique and the measure by which others are compared. The expectations and responsibilities that are placed upon the students in the Michigan Marching Band have been developed over the 100 years of this rich history. As leaders within the MMB, we all have a duty not only to maintain, but continue to raise these **standards** through our individual and collective efforts.

While our storied **traditions** may be the remembrance of many that have come before us, it is the current members of the Michigan Marching Band that remain the heart and soul of its continuing success. It is their belief in the standards, acceptance of the responsibilities, and sharing in the camaraderie that allows the MMB to continue to function at such a progressive level. Therefore, the **leadership** of the Michigan Marching Band provides its framework and comprises a key element in the success of the band.

Responsibilities of a Michigan Marching Band Leader include:

* Pursuing the highest levels of MMB performance standards
* Continuing the spirit, pride, and reputation of the MMB
* Leading through demonstration and performance
* Assisting in the teaching and reinforcement of marching/playing skills in rehearsals and

sectionals

* Assisting in the maintenance of visual appearance (uniforms) and instrument care (inspection

and cleanliness) of MMB members

* Evaluating, both formally (rank evaluations) and informally the performance of MMB block

and reserve members

“I didn’t achieve perfection often, but the uncompromising search for it has been the greatest journey of my life.”

Dr. William D. Revelli

Effective Leadership

*We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit. -* Aristotle

I. Characteristics

Great leaders are independent thinkers who take the initiative to get things done.

**Stephen Covey’s *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*…at a glance**

Habits = the intersection of knowledge (the *what to do* and the *why*), skill (*the how to do*), and desire (the *want to do*). In order to make something a habit in our lives, we have to do all three.

Habit 1 – Be Proactive

Focus your energy on your circle of influence; as your energy increases, your circle of influence will increase as well. If you wait to be acted upon, you *will* be acted upon.

Reactive Language Proactive Language

There’s nothing I can do. Let’s look at our alternatives

That’s just the way I am. I can choose a different approach.

I can’t I choose.

If only. I will.

Habit 2 – Begin With The End In Mind

Start with a clear understanding of your destination and the path to get there. Leadership is not management. Management is efficiency in climbing the ladder of success; leadership determines whether the ladder is leaning against the right wall. Leadership deals with the top line: What are the things I want to accomplish? Realize and visualize the steps necessary in accomplishing that goal.

Habit 3 – Put First Things First

Understand your priorities on a day-to-day and weekly basis.

Habit 4 – Think Win/Win

Win/Win is a frame of mind and heart that constantly seeks mutual benefits and satisfaction in all human interactions.

Habit 5 – Seek First To Understand, Then To Be Understood

Empathetic listening and understanding takes time, but less than it takes to back up and correct misunderstandings. *Show acceptance; people want to be understood*.

Habit 6 – Synergize

The whole is greater that the sum of its parts. Working together sometimes requires an acceptance of differences.

Habit 7 – Sharpen The Saw

Make a personal investment in yourself. We are the only instruments we have with which to deal with life and to contribute. We are the instruments of our own performance, and to be effective, we need to recognize the importance of taking time regularly to sharpen the saw that is ourselves, whether it is physically, mentally, socially, or emotionally.

II. Following

Before one may become a leader, one must learn to follow.

* Be a critical thinker
* Be consistent and dependable
* Be humble and patient
* Be able to receive and offer constructive criticism
* Be a tireless worker
* Be a disciplined student of study and work (theory and practice)
* Be persistent and consistent at developing leadership skills

III. Motivation

THE GOAL IS TO MOTIVATE PEOPLE TO MOTIVATE THEMSELVES!!!

* Lead with enthusiasm
* Give people a sense of purpose and direction
* Plan for success
* Give praise and encouragement
* Create opportunities for people to get attention
* Demonstrate confidence and faith in people’s abilities
* Give people a sense of history and hope
* Develop a collective vision for the future

*Leaders empower others to translate intention into reality and sustain it. This does not mean that leaders must relinquish power, or that followers must continually challenge authority. It does mean that power must become a unit of exchange – an active, changing token in creative, productive, and communicative transactions. Effective leaders will ultimately reap the human harvest of their efforts by the simple action of power’s reciprocal: empowerment.*

Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus. *Leaders,* p.80.

IV. Hazards of Leadership

* Becoming egotistical
* Spreading oneself too thin
* Failing to listen to the advice of experienced others: peers, colleagues and mentors
* Failing to listen to the concerns of others
* Disregarding one’s academic studies
* Finding it difficult to follow rather than lead
* Thinking of others as being inferior
* Using power to control people; using people for your ends, not for their benefits
* Becoming overly concerned with your popularity
* Losing your sense of organizational direction

V. A Michigan Marching Band leader is a:

* Positive Role Model
* Teacher
* Motivator
* Problem Solver
* Quick Thinker
* Evaluator

VI. A Michigan Marching Band Leader should:

* Arrive early, stay late
* Be prepared for all rehearsals and performances with proper attire and equipment
* Be prepared to teach through advance planning
* Continue to pursue the definitive musical and marching standard
* Be prepared to give 100%; to be the hardest worker in the section/rank
* Exhibit self-confidence and demonstrate a high level of integrity
* Be positive! Cynicism and skepticism can destroy a program
* Be willing to accept constructive criticism
* Be a sensitive and caring listener (“we” or “us” as opposed to “I” or “me”)
* Have a sense of humor, and develop an instinct for using it properly
* Be prepared to demand what is right for yourself and expect what is right from others
* Be an unlimited resource for block members and reserves alike
* Make daily assessments of rank members
* Communicate openly and effectively with Band members and staff

Leadership is often a lonely occupation. Not all leadership tasks are glamorous nor do they yield instant gratification. Gratification is not in the form of adulation from other Band members, but in the realization that there is value in one’s personal contribution. Great leaders must develop a strong sense of self-worth. (*Appropriate when considering the responsibility of rank evaluations!)*

Effective Teaching

*The three elements of good teaching: Observe, Diagnose, Prescribe*

Dr. William D. Revelli

1. Characteristics of Good Teaching

Teaching is more than communicating information to band members. Although a variety of material can be easily grasped through simple methods (explanation, demonstration), a primary goal for the MMB members is to understand how the music and drill take effect, and what actions are necessary to achieve a high level of performance.

Specific qualifications of an MMB student leader:

1. has the ability to communicate well
2. serves as a positive role model
3. functions as a superior performance model
4. is able to teach band members to teach themselves
5. serves as a highly effective motivator
6. gives freely of one’s time to help others

A good teacher possesses the knowledge of the subject matter (drill and music), the ability to motivate students (see prior discussion on motivation), and the ability to affect the students in highly positive ways (performance standards and others). A good teacher also has the insight and sense to know what should be addressed and reinforced, as well as *what should be left alone*.

It is acceptable to make honest mistakes! This is as much a learning process for you as it is for other MMB members. As leaders in the MMB you have our support and patience, as well as an understanding of the responsibilities placed before you.

2. Using Critical and Creative Thinking

Development and use of critical and creative thinking is a powerful attribute of many successful teachers. The development of these skills should be encouraged among all members of the band.

Critical and creative thinking should be considered as groupings within the problem solving process:

Critical Thinking: awareness of problem

identification of problem

recognizing the source of the problem

Creative Thinking: generating solutions to the problem

selection of a one possible solution

execution of solution

repeat, with critical thinking

These techniques, though familiar to many, are too often not used to their maximum effectiveness in marching band techniques. Of course, there are always situations where multiple problems exist, and a hierarchy has to be (quickly) determined. Remember not to overload the members with too many details of the mistake and too many “fix-it” suggestions. The clarity, tone, and concise nature of your response can be a powerful ally in correcting problems in their learning. When identifying problems to students, don’t always say the first thing that comes to mind.

*That thought is often the most obvious problem, and will usually be recognized by the alert student.*

-H. Robert Reynolds

3. Feedback

All people have the right to know where they stand. This means you’re caring enough to let people know in a timely fashion when their performance is off track. It takes self-confidence and skill to lead people to recognize problems, as well as successes, in a constructive way. But, as a veteran manager said, “*It’s downright cruel to allow people to flounder when you can see what’s happening and you don’t do anything to turn it around. There’s no excuse for that kind of insensitivity. None*.”

Tom Peters and Nancy Austin, *A Passion for Excellence,* p.3.

Rank Leaders

**Application Process**

Students interested in becoming an MMB Rank Leader must fill out an application, available online when you receive the email about the January Uniform Turn-in. The deadline for submitting your application is in early March. Rank Leader candidates (also called “Band Week Rank Leaders”) are announced by e-mail around the time of the Spring Meeting (which occurs on the last day of classes).

Permanent rank leaders are chosen during Band Week by the MMB Staff, based on each leader’s marching ability, teaching ability, and leadership. Students in each section also make written comments for the staff that are pivotal in the selection of the permanent Rank Leaders. The final selections are emailed to the entire band on the Monday after First Look before the morning music rehearsal. This list is also posted in Revelli.

**Expectations of Rank Leaders**

**Rank leaders are expected to be the best marchers in the band:** Rank leaders should be able to demonstrate flawlessly each fundamental and be sound drill marchers. This is a very important element in the selection process. Rank leader candidates should read and practice thoroughly the information contained in the “MMB Marching Fundamentals Handbook” and the Marching Fundamentals Video (on the Members Only website) if they hope to be competitive when vying for a Rank Leader position. Rank leaders’ marching ability is assessed during the Student Leader Retreat by the directors and staff.

**Physical conditioning:** Rank leaders must be in excellent physical shape in order to perform marching fundamentals soundly and have the stamina to endure Pregame with ease. This means the prospective Rank Leader must engage in an exercise program during the off-season.

**Rank leaders are expected to understand comprehensively how to teach the marching fundamentals and drill maneuvers:** Having practiced the material in the MMB Marching Fundamentals Handbook and the Marching Fundamentals Video, the rank leader should now focus on his or her ability to teach this material. Material below is designed to help prospective Rank Leaders with this task. Remember, staff will be evaluating Rank Leaders’ teaching styles during the Student Leader Retreat. At that time, prospective Rank Leaders will have an opportunity to practice teaching the marching fundamentals to their peers. **Do not wait until the Student Leader Retreat to start thinking about teaching these skills;** it will be too late by then. Prospective Rank Leaders will begin to be evaluated on the first day of the Student Leader Retreat. Just reviewing this material may not be enough; it is best to actually practice teaching with a friend or peer, or do so alone with hypothetical scenarios.

**The Rank Leader should be able to:**

* Demonstrate, describe, and troubleshoot all elements of each fundamental
* Predict common tendencies and pitfalls
* Design/use drills that help the person work on parts of each step
* Identify short and long term goals for each marcher (see below for more details)
* Suggest areas for physical conditioning when necessary

**Rank leaders are expected to be able to give effective feedback** to students regarding their marching technique and their status in the performing block or reserves. Efforts should be made to focus comments on objective, improvement-oriented information that covers all of the aspects of that person’s performance in the MMB, not just their challenge. Rank leaders will avoid discussing differences between members and their competitors. Please see “The Feedback Process,” below, for more details. It is also expected that rank leaders will gladly spend time with MMB members who need help with their marching before or after rehearsals.

**Rank leaders are expected to encourage sound rehearsal etiquette:** The flow of an MMB rehearsal depends largely on the cooperation and strong leadership of the rank leaders. It is imperative that rank leaders remain focused during rehearsals, exemplifying sound rehearsal etiquette by leading the way on vocal commands and cueing, as well as following directions from the tower. It is up to the Rank Leaders to ensure that no extraneous talking occurs during rehearsal.

**Rank leaders are expected to work alongside MMB Staff to improve drill:** Rank leaders and staff share the responsibility of working with the directors to clean drill. There are times when Rank Leaders are marching “in” the drill and may not be able to address the issues around them. As such, it is important that staff and Rank Leaders cooperate and interact in a respectful way.

**Be prepared to teach Pregame and Rank Moves:** During Band Week, the Band Week Rank Leaders are charged with teaching many of the details of Pregame on the field. Rank Leaders are given drill charts and coordinate sheets in advance of the Monday after First Look (when Pregame is taught) so that they are prepared for this rehearsal.

The Rank Leaders are also called upon to devise and demonstrate the Rank Moves that accompany the drumline cadences. In years when these cadences change, any Band Week Rank Leaders are called upon to revise these moves and teach them to the band with the help of the drumline and the Drumline Instructor. This usually occurs on the Tuesday night before the first football game.

**Teaching Marching Fundamentals**

Below are some important aspects of the prospective Rank Leader’s role as a teacher of Michigan Marching Band marching fundamentals. **Rank leader candidates are expected to learn this material in advance of the Student Leader Retreat.** This preparation should make the Rank Leader more comfortable when teaching fellow Rank Leaders, incoming members, and returning members during Student Leader Retreat, Band Week and throughout the season.

**Note on teaching during Student Leader Retreat:**

Beginning at the Student Leader Retreat, the Rank Leader’s primary role is that of a **teacher.** This retreat is the time to continue developing teaching skills that have been learned over the summer.

Be prepared to teach friends and even your former Rank Leaders during the Student Leader Retreat. This is often a difficult task. Approach teaching them as if they are new students, **with the intent of practicing your own teaching;** avoid simply saying “that was good that time,” even when they seem to be performing flawlessly! Rather, have them do supplemental exercises and break down steps to practice these teaching skills. In short, be proactive—do not simply wait for them to make obvious mistakes that you can then point out. Imagine that you are trying to make that person into the best marcher in the marching band and determine what might help them achieve that goal. Below are some specific strategies that should be practiced prior to the Student Leader Retreat.

**Important things to consider when teaching fundamentals and drill:**

1. Talk about things to do, not just things not to do. Elicit answers by asking questions first, before instructing directly.

One pitfall of teaching a highly detailed technique is the tendency focus on errors, without pointing out steps that can be taken to **improve** the skill. Of course, one’s awareness that something could be better is the first step to improvement; pointing out what they did wrong is acceptable. However, it is important to take the next step.

One strategy is to first ask if they noticed that they made the mistake. This improves self-awareness and builds rapport—and it avoids you telling them something they already know. “Did you notice what happened that time?” or “What did you notice about your step size?” are potential approaches. If they do not seem to have noticed what they did, it is important to tell them what you noticed, and give them a statement about what to do to fix the problem. You could first elicit this by asking them what they might need to do themselves to fix it. If they still do not have an answer, a direct instruction may be necessary.

**Example of an incomplete comment:**

“That time you missed the yardline. Try not to do that.”

**A more complete comment:** “I noticed that you missed the yardline. Did you notice what

happened in between yard lines?”…… “What can you do to prevent that next time?”…..

**If they need more help, add a directive statement:**

“I noticed that you took a big first step and then had to take smaller steps toward the end. Perhaps you could think about taking a smaller step at the beginning.”

Remember eliciting positive responses and improvement has as much to do with how you say something as what you say. This is why working with them to come up with possible solutions to problems can be very powerful. People learn best when they arrive at answers themselves, instead of having them dictated to them. Of course, sometimes this is necessary, so long as the other methods have been tried already and have not worked.

2. Use devices that make it easy to remember how to do something:

Try to use vivid language and analogies when describing desired responses. An example is using the term “explode” to describe the motion of the High Step and the description of pushing a box down the field with the shins during the Traditional Step.

Also, give the student quick references that will facilitate correct responses. For example, encourage the student to notice how it feels when his High Step angles are at 90 degrees. This can involve noticing the stretching in the groin, the distance between the leg and the horn, and the feeling of the toe point. This feeling will be the most accurate guide for the student, as he or she are not able to see what they are doing when performing it as a whole. Another example is the mnemonic device used when teaching the glide step: “1-lift-cross-point-2-lift-cross-point,” etc. Have them actually say these words as they perform the exercise; these words help remind them, over and over, of what the desired outcome is, as they are doing it.

3. Distinguish between short and long term goals.

Some problems have short-term solutions. These could be taking a bigger step size, learning the exact position of 2 steps from a yardline, and other, more cognitive tasks. Other problems are inevitably longer-term investments, as they will require physical or motor training that cannot be assimilated in a short amount of time. It is important to distinguish between these two when making comments.

For example, you notice that a student consistently misses a spot that is supposed to be two steps from the line. This may be as simple as showing the student where two steps is, using a reference. While showing the student what it looks like, you might explain that “when you are two steps from the yardline, the edge of the foot rests up against the tick mark, like this.” This may be an easy fix, as it simply takes awareness to do it correctly.

In contrast, imagine that a student is having trouble hitting yard lines during Pregame. This student consistently ends up short of the yardline, even though he or she perceives that the middle of the foot is hitting the line. This could be an example of a slightly longer-term goal, as it is possible that this student’s faulty frame of reference has ingrained an undesirable habit in his or her motor memory. Simply telling this student to move forward may do the trick; more likely, it may be necessary to spend time with this student to show him or her what it actually feels like to be on the line (in this case, one should feel like they are slightly ahead of the line, in order to be on), and then encourage them to practice this with someone watching after rehearsal, until they can match up the desired response consistently with what feels good to them.

Furthermore, some issues are purely physical and as such will not be fixed until the student engages in an exercise program that will develop the needed strength. Examples are angles on entries, speed on the lock step, and toe point on the glide step. In the “MMB Marching Fundamentals Manual” there is more information on this topic. Sufficed to say it is important to determine whether what is holding the person back is a physical issue and give instruction along these lines. Be sure to emphasize that these concerns can only be addressed over a longer period of time through consistent work.

When addressing long-term goals and the reversal of bad habits, remember that repetition is necessary. Explain to students that performing something right one time is not sufficient to ensure that they will perform it this way every time, especially if it is a new skill or an altered approach from what was done previously. Take a scientific approach: what are the odds that they will perform the maneuver correctly? If they can do it 3 times right out of 10 in practice, this means they will have about a 3 in 10 shot of getting it right in the performance. If they can do it 9 out of 10 times right, they have a great shot at getting it in the performance. A good aphorism for this is “We perform how we practice,” which encapsulates the simple truth that people rarely perform better than they practice. Emphasize consistency, which can only be developed through consistent practice of the desired actions.

When determining short and long term goals, consider the following points:

* First determine if it is a short- or long-term goal. If it is a short-term goal, elicit the proper responses with methods described above. Focus on their awareness and give directed feedback if necessary.
* If it appears to be a physical issue, coordination issue, or bad habit, discuss with the student the methods they may need to use to develop these desired skills over time. This could involve conditioning, practice lining up music with the beat (and therefore the feet), or reversing the tendency to kick out on the lock step. Go through the necessary steps to reverse this habit (see #4, “Break down maneuvers into smaller parts” for details) or ingrain the desired individual elements of the maneuver.

4. Break down maneuvers into smaller parts.

The most important principle in this regard is that, when practicing, it is important to do something right, even if that means you must take away other elements or slow it down. Practicing the whole step wrong over and over does not lead to a better product, or if it does, it takes much longer than necessary. It is much more efficient to break the step down into smaller parts, allowing for many small successes. For example, you might address the High Step as follows:

Scenario: A student seems to be having trouble with their High Step speed, even though the angles and balance are solid.

1. Remember that speed is the goal. It may be useful to see if they even understand how it feels

to execute a quick transition. Have them put their instrument down and ask them to do the High Step transitions at about 45 degrees (or less, if necessary!), in place. If they are slow, encourage them to explode from the ground to 45 degrees, with more “still time” in between steps. Encourage them to think about the muscles they need to use to make this happen. Think logically: if their motion is slow at 45 degrees, will they be able to have a quicker motion while playing, marching at 90-degree angles, and taking 8-to-5 steps? Probably not.

2. Once they have gotten the right feel and speed at 45 degrees, have them raise to about 60 degrees. Encourage the same process. If they have trouble with this, encourage them to keep practicing this until they can do it satisfactorily.

3. Add other elements in slowly. If it is good at 60 degrees, go to 90, but still in place, with horns down.

4. If correct, have them do the same thing with the horns up, but with no playing.

5. If correct, have them march straight down a yardline with small steps, and still with no playing. This way they can get used to marching, without worrying about step size.

6. If correct, have them do 8-to-5, no playing

7. Add in the playing. Often technique suffers as soon as the playing is added in. If this is a problem, have them add playing in with one of the earlier steps (i.e. play while marching in place at 45 degrees). Then add the other elements gradually.

At any point, one may need to work on a previous step for a while before moving on. Remember: “Perfect practice makes perfect.” Breaking the step down into smaller exercises can allow one to have achievable goals and move toward the end product more quickly.

**Other general tips:**

* Always assume the person can do it, with the right instruction and practice techniques. Give them concrete advice on how they can practice in order to improve.
* Avoid speaking to students with a condescending tone. Assume that these are smart people that can achieve the desired goals. It is your responsibility as a teacher to give them the right information to succeed. If they are not succeeding, consider that you may be missing something and revise the plan.
* Comment on things that have been done well, before addressing something that needs to improve. This is called positive reinforcement; often the best teaching we can do involves making successes more likely to recur by reinforcing them.
* When working with individuals, make comments as they are doing the maneuver as much as possible.
* Think about different ways to explain the same concepts. Remember that each individual is unique and will understand instructions and comments in different ways. The greater the variety of teaching methods, the more flexible one is in their ability to teach a variety of students.
* Rank Leaders should practice giving the vocal commands and running exercises so they are prepared to teach groups during Band Week. See the “MMB Marching Fundamentals Handbook” for detailed information on vocal commands and drills for specific steps.
* Remember:

-People typically don’t like to be bossed around, talked down to, or patronized.

-People usually don’t like hearing things they already know.

-People like to be given information that can help them improve, as long as it is delivered in a respectful way.

* Lead by example! Your own ability to execute fundamentals influences your ability to teach them. Practice and refine your own technique.

**Questions to consider when analyzing students’ performance of fundamentals:**

1. Physical conditioning—can they do it physically? Is this person injured or have they injured their legs in the past? Are they working out? Are they strong enough? Do they feel weak after completing the maneuver? What exercises might help them?

2. Do they understand each element of the step?

3. Do they understand how it should feel?

4. Are they aware of what they are doing? (Have them just “notice” different elements of the step)

5. What smaller elements are preventing them from getting the step as a whole?

6. Is coordination an issue?

7. Does playing change their physical technique?

**Teaching Drill Marching**

Learn and be prepared to teach the material in **Part II** of the **MMB Marching Fundamentals Manual.**

Reserve and Challenge Information

**Note: Please read the “Reserve and Challenge Procedures” in the “MMB Rules and Procedures” document. This information is meant to supplement what exists there.**

**Rank Evaluations and Challenging Block Members**

* Each week, normally on Wednesday nights, Rank/Section leaders are responsible for filling out rank evaluations. These evaluations will help determine which block members will be challenged for that week.
* Evaluation forms are available for submission via the website. **When submitting on-line, the evaluations are completed on Wednesday following rehearsal and are due before 12:00 midnight that night (unless announced otherwise).** This task takes from fifteen to thirty minutes; please plan accordingly.
* If you are unable to fill out evaluation forms by the designated due date and time, it is your responsibility to notify the Associate Director so that other arrangements can be made. The option of filling out a paper form immediately following rehearsal is available if needed. However, arrangements must be made with the Associate Director 24 hours prior to that day’s rehearsal.
* It is imperative that Rank and Section Leaders do not discuss these evaluations with each other either before or during their completion; this is to ensure unbiased evaluations of block members. Please take these evaluations seriously and fill them out as completely as possible even if it is time consuming; remember, a valid, detailed comment will help a band member much more than just a checkmark or a “good job.” Furthermore, the more detailed are one’s comments, the more information is available to the staff as the block is being set. For example, if one is very concerned about a student’s ability to learn and perform drill, one’s detailed comments about this in the rank evaluation will inform staff that a “red flag” exists regarding the ability of this person to march successfully in the block that week.
* Staff members have the right to challenge block members or Rank/Section leaders.
* Rank leaders should only challenge rank members based on their marching performance and work ethic during the week. “Attitude” problems (i.e. interpersonal conflicts, negative disposition, etc.) should be notated in the comment section of the rank evaluation or discussed with the staff; they are not valid reasons to challenge someone in your rank.
* Attempt to make decisions about challenges based on the person’s performance, regardless of their age or status in their section.
* If a circumstance arises during the week in which you need a spot filled for Pregame or for a permanent half-time position, you must talk to the MMB staff to ensure that the proper shadow reserve is selected to fill the spot.

**Teaching Block Members and Reserves**

* One important fact to remember is that as a Rank Leader, your responsibility is to help members of your individual rank **and** members of the reserves as well. Make them feel as involved as possible. For example, one day you could go over to the reserve ‘M’ during Pregame rehearsal and march with them. Offer your time after rehearsal to work with anyone in your rank or section who would like help with marching or playing. This should occur especially during Band Week and on Thursday night to get ready for challenges each week, but you should be available for your rank or section as much as possible. Little details like this can go a long way in building morale.
* Keep an eye on your shadow reserve throughout the week. The shadow reserve will appear on the rank evaluation and should be treated as one of the rank. Make sure that the shadow is learning the spots and is actively participating in the rehearsals.

**The Feedback Process**

As noted in the **“**MMB Rules and Procedures” document, MMB Staff are available to give comments to challenged block members, shadows, and reserves following the posting of the block. Rank leaders are also an important part of the feedback process. The goal of this feedback is **improvement.** While rank leaders are often close to those they are charged with leading, attempts should be made to assume the role of teacher while remaining faithful to the guidelines delineated below.

The following guidelines are used in delivering feedback to students about their status, whether in the block or out:

* Comments should be as objective as possible and focus on areas of improvement:

1. Suggest that the student spend a few minutes marching for a Rank Leader or MMB Staff to get detailed information about the student’s marching and playing tendencies.

2. Discuss areas of improvement with them. Elicit responses from the student by asking questions like “Are there areas that you think you need more work?” or “What are your strengths and weaknesses?” Having them consider their own marching is a great way to facilitate improvement.

3. Discuss with the student their performance during the week. For example, one may ask “How did you feel you were able to pick up the drill this week?” or “Did you feel you were motivated to work while in the reserves?” Offer them your observations of their work, if you have any knowledge of it.

4. Be sure to emphasize that the actual “challenge” portion is only one small part of the

process that contributes to setting the block. Be sure to discuss all areas, as described in the “MMB Rules and Procedures” document.

* Often students confide in their peers for support when they do not make it into the block. Under such circumstances, do not tell someone that, based on their challenge, they should have been chosen for the performance block. If you feel strongly that someone should or should not be in the performance block, discuss this with the staff.

* Students that come to Rank Leaders for help immediately after the results are posted may be emotional and want assurance that you support them; they may even want you to tell them they should be in the block. Avoid discussing this with them when they are in that state. As emotions become more stabile it is easier to focus on objective ways to help this person improve for the next week.
* If a member of your rank or section comes to you and asks if you challenged them or gave them a negative comment, please tell them the truth. Explain to them in a positive way which areas they should work on to improve, and offer to help them in those areas.
* Attend and watch challenges in order to give the best possible feedback to your rank. However, be sure to make objective comments about specific parts of the person’s performance. Stay away from blanket comments that may suggest whether a person should be in or out of the block.

**Section Leaders**

**Auditions**

Auditions for section leaders will take place in April. The exact dates will be specified before the end of the preceding band season. The auditions will consist of a prepared piece, a sight-reading piece, and a short interview. Section leaders are chosen based on musical and leadership abilities. The results of these auditions are announced at the Spring Meeting.

**Expectations of Section Leaders**

* Section leaders are responsible for assuring that their section members adhere to rules of instrument care. Instrument care forms are available from the Equipment Staff and should be passed out and explained during the first sectional of the year.
* Section leaders are expected to communicate with their sections in mid-June to encourage practice of their instruments, practice of marching fundamentals, and physical conditioning.
* Section leaders are responsible for assuring that their members have memorized their show music by the established deadlines.
* Section leaders are expected to fill out section evaluations each week (see below for details).
* Section leaders are expected to schedule a weekly sectional outside of normal band time.
* Section leaders should send an e-mail to their section in early August after their sections have been established to introduce themselves, discuss equipment particular to their sections, and deliver other helpful information. Section leaders should send an e-mail to Maggie St. Clair with the content of the section e-mail and she will send it to the section members.

Section Evaluations

* Section leaders are responsible for providing weekly evaluations of their sections. These evaluations consist of comments about individuals’ music memorization, sound, and technique. It is not necessary to make comments on every member of the section—only those that are either not performing capably or are exceeding your expectations. Be specific about your concerns.
* Each week, normally on Wednesday nights, Rank/Section leaders are responsible for filling out rank evaluations. These evaluations will help determine which block members will be challenged for that week.
* Evaluation forms are available for submission via the website. **When submitting on-line, the evaluations are completed on Wednesday following rehearsal and are due before 12:00 midnight that night (unless announced otherwise).** This task takes from fifteen to thirty minutes; please plan accordingly.

Conducting Sectionals

Among their many duties, a Michigan Marching Band Section Leader is to give clear and accurate musical instructions and demonstrate proper musical practices for his/her section. Doing so requires the Section Leader to be prepared in the areas of instrumental pedagogy and proficiency, rehearsal techniques, and time management. Listed below is information in these areas to better assist the Section Leader. In addition to the information provided, each section leader is welcome and encouraged to ask the Directors for help in conducting sectionals, dealing with specific problems, and/or asking for feedback.

**a Vision**

Crucial to any rehearsal is having a clear vision and an effective method(s) for reaching the vision. A Section Leader must be able to effectively communicate the objective(s) to the ensemble, thus establishing trust, solidify ideals, and produce the desired results.

**Pedagogy**

Many recurring issues may be remedied by reinforcing sound pedagogical information and practices in the areas of tone, air (support), and embouchure. When developing skills within the section, the Section Leader must provide clear instruction(s) on *how* and *why* a certain exercise is being practiced.

It is recommended to begin each sectional with warm-ups. Lasting anywhere from three to ten minutes (depending on the sectional time allotment), this time may be used in a variety of ways. The Section Leader should create a musically stimulating atmosphere from the beginning of each rehearsal, including the warm-up. Listed below are some key areas to constantly reinforce followed by some suggested variations for each area.

**Air: The Foundation**—Many musical issues and problems are related to insufficient air supply and weak air support. Because performing music requires the use of many muscles and varying parts of the body (e.g. hands, mouth, diaphragm, tongue, and ears), it is imperative to continually instruct members to maintain a full, steady air stream while playing their instruments.

**Long Tones and Lip Slurs**—Develops embouchure strength & endurance, breath support & focused air stream, and allows members to listen to one another to match pitch. *Dynamic Contrasts* (e.g. piano-crescendo-forte; forte-decrescendo-piano) and/or *Articulations* (e.g. four quarter notes per each pitch; eight eighth notes per pitch; varying articulations).

**Articulation Exercises**—Develops articulation vocabulary, ability, and clarity.

Scales and Arpeggios: Develops mechanical fluidity, control, and technique. Knowing all twelve major scales and arpeggios will benefit in the areas of the previously mentioned as well as music memorization.

**Recommended Variations**—Varying dynamics, articulations, rhythms, and tempi are excellent ways to make warm-ups effective and challenging. Allow your rehearsal objectives to determine the variations. For example, if the musical passage to be rehearsed requires a specific articulation pattern, incorporate that pattern into the warm-up.

Rehearsal concerns and Methodology

**General Thoughts**

* Establish a tuning procedure, using the best notes for your instrument. Do not accept poor intonation
* Avoid spending too much time on passages that are easily played on the first read-through
* Aural awareness and self-assessment from each section member will greatly assist in correcting problems

**Balance**

* Isolate melody and harmony
* Remember that the lower voices require more sound in proportion to higher voices.

**Intonation**

* Proper tone quality is a must
* Singing parts encourage aural acuity
* Establish a pitch and have section members correctly match the pitch
* Start with one player who has a characteristic tone and gradually add players while maintaining the pitch
* Investigate alternate fingerings and slide positions
* Use a tuner as an aid, but not as a replacement for the ears
* Check for proper instrument maintenance (reeds, leaks, clean leadpipes, mouthpieces, and slides)

**Music Memorization**

* Teach music in phrases, focusing on the score’s overall structure
* Effective repetition
* Individual practice

**Rhythmic Precision**

Section Leader: Focus your ears to clarity and be able to count all rhythms in the music

* Chant/Count rhythms (e.g. 1-e-and-uh; 4-and; etc.)
* Know where strong beats are in the music (agogic accents)
* Practice syncopation slowly and increase tempo
* Sizzle (or clap), focusing on clarity and air support

**Technique**

* Practice technically-demanding passages and gradually increase tempo
* Choose small portions and eventually piece them together
* Change rhythms and articulations (variation method)
* Additive method: gradually add notes to a small fragment

**Tone**

* See *air*, *long* *tones*, and *lip slurs* (above)