

EDUCATION PANEL

Thursday, 10:00 a.m.

Building a Powerhouse Percussion Program

BY PAUL BUYER

Have you ever wondered what it takes to build a championship team, a great company, or a powerhouse percussion program? For years I have been fascinated with how certain sports teams achieve and sustain a culture of excellence. Some programs that come to mind are Duke and Arizona basketball, Ohio State and Southern California football, and professional franchises like the New England Patriots and San Antonio Spurs. It is particularly interesting to watch mediocre teams turn around and become excellent programs, such as Rutgers football, the Detroit Tigers, and the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Building a successful percussion program is an enormous task, and one that requires a large and varied skill set. Among

other things, patience, persistence, passion, and vision are essential as well as having an inner circle of supportive colleagues and dedicated students to make the dream a reality. Building a program also takes significant funding, resources, and support from principals and administrators who can make things happen. But most of all, it takes leadership and the ability to adapt to your own situation. As Colin Powell said, "The performance of an organization is the ultimate measure of its leader."

On Thursday, November 1 at 10:00 A.M., the PAS Education Committee will host a panel discussion titled "Building a Powerhouse Percussion Program." The purpose of the discussion is to focus on the resources, support, talent, and skills needed in today's

educational climate to build a powerhouse percussion program at both the high school and college levels.

The discussion will begin with opening remarks from the panel describing the essential skills needed to build a powerhouse percussion program. In addition to leadership, these skills include communication (written and verbal), motivation, retention, relationship-building, teamwork, administration, collaboration, recruiting, and visibility. Issues such as staffing, equipment, facilities, space, alumni, and grant writing will also be discussed as well as advice for new percussion teachers on starting a new program, rebuilding an old one, and implementing change.

The panelists will then respond to questions followed by a question-and-answer session with the audience. Some of the questions being considered are:

- How can I take my program from good to great?
- How can I get my students/colleagues/principal/chair/dean to buy into my vision?
- What are some effective methods for recruiting talented players so I can "keep the cupboard full"?
- How do I build a top program when I do not have top facilities?
- How do you deal with students who are not or cannot keep up when you are trying to make your program successful?
- What strategies are effective when implementing change?
- What are the secrets to turning around a struggling program?

Throughout the discussion, the panel will focus on three main areas of leadership when building a program: casting a vision, building a culture, and defining standards.

CASTING A VISION

Building a quality program, first and foremost, requires vision. What do you want your program to look like? What is your plan to make it happen? What is it going to take? In addition to having a vision, a key factor in building a program is getting everyone to buy into your program's philosophy. According to author and speaker

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John Maxwell, "The question is not, 'Do you have a vision?' The question is, 'Have people bought into the vision?' Your ability to lead is not in the fact that you have the picture of what the future of your organization should be; your ability as a leader is the fact that you have the ability to get people to buy into that picture—to join that team."

BUILDING A CULTURE

According to Duke University head basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski, "Developing a culture means having a tradition that maintains the standards you want to define your program. A successful development of culture means that you hear different voices echoing the same message throughout the organization—now, through the history of your program, and into its future. But you cannot merely expect culture to be a natural occurrence; it has to be taught and made part of your everyday routine. Teaching culture is not just the leader's task; everyone on the team is responsible for passing on the values, standards, and traditions on to the next generation."

DEFINING STANDARDS

Standards define what is and is not acceptable in your program. Standards can be many things such as performing at a high level, showing up on time, practicing and being prepared, or treating others with respect. Standards set the bar for your program and act as a guide for making decisions. They influence behavior and instill discipline. Your standards will define your philosophy and your philosophy will define your standards.

PANELISTS

The distinguished panelists for "Building a Powerhouse Percussion Program" are **John Brennan**, Associate Director of Bands and Director of Percussion at Plano East Senior High School (TX); **Mark Ford**, Coordinator of Percussion at the University of North Texas; **Rich Holly**, Professor of Percussion and Associate Dean in the College of Visual and Performing Arts at Northern Illinois University; **John Parks**, Assistant Professor of Percussion at The Florida State University; and **Jim Royle**, Director of the Jim Royle Drum Studio (CT).

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- Harari, Oren. *The Leadership Secrets of Colin Powell*. McGraw-Hill. 2002.
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 Maxwell, John. *What Leaders Do. Maximum Impact Leadership Lesson*. INJOY Electronic Newsletter. 2001.

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