

# Ten MORE Strategies for an Effective Middle School Band Rehearsal

By Keith Ozsvath

1. Use a [Daily Rehearsal Slide](#) with a countdown timer to plan for focused and productive rehearsals. Read [5 Reasons to Use a Daily Rehearsal Slide](#).
2. Start the rehearsal with sound. No talking, no announcements. Instead, play some call and response patterns on various pitches and rhythms. These patterns could even be from the students' band music.
3. Set rehearsal goals or decide on a focus for each piece you are rehearsing. Be sure to share these goals with your students. **BONUS** - Ask your students what the goals should be for the week. Engaging your students and incorporating their ideas promotes ownership and responsibility.
4. Sing. Start by simply having students sing (or hum) a concert F or B flat. Then gradually move toward singing long tone exercises, scales, chorales, and sections of band pieces. You'll be encouraged when your students play with better pitch, tone, and intonation.
5. SIZZLE! Sizzling rhythms and articulations internalize the note lengths and rhythmic feel of the music. Have students SIZZLE a passage while fingering their part to make it even more effective.
6. Rotate seats. Move the low brass to the first row and move the flutes to the back row. Generally the students in the first row, while unintentional, can receive more attention just by their proximity to the podium. Create a schedule that places instrument sections in a different row each day or even for the week.
7. Use a Hoberman sphere to reinforce good breathing skills. Increase the size to *show* the breath. It also works well for teaching dynamic contrast and control. Increase the size gradually for a crescendo and decrease the size for a diminuendo.
8. Don't conduct the warm-up. Instead, use a metronome, [step-off the podium](#), listen, and give verbal feedback to your students. The warm-up is the ideal time to develop critical ensemble skills like breathing, listening, tone production, intonation, attacks, releases, balance, blend, time, and precision.
9. Notice and recognize the students that are always on-time, prepared and work hard. Their positive contributions can easily go unnoticed if we're not careful.
10. Be the teacher that inspires your students. Talk **less**, play **more**. Be consistent, caring, have fun, and set high expectations.

Check out the [original Ten Strategies for an Effective Middle School Band Rehearsal](#)

Keith Ozsvath teaches at Rotolo Middle School in Batavia, IL, a five-time *NAMM Best Community for Music Education*. He teaches Eighth Grade Band, Jazz Ensemble, and the Symphonic Band. His website, [TeachingMusicandMore.com](#), provides practical teaching ideas and technology integration tips for the music educator. Keith also leads graduate courses at VanderCook College of Music and has presented numerous professional development sessions for music educators.