

Over the past few years we have developed a Band Department Philosophy that we refer to daily in the Band Room, as they are painted on the walls and the main entrance. We have distilled it down to eight simple quotes that speak to the direction that we wish students to go. Although these are Band Philosophies, they apply to everyday life and students can use them long after they leave the world of "Band" at Westwood Collegiate.

1. "Let Anyone who quits striving for excellence, move over for those who will not." This was one of the first quotes that was put up in the band room and it is painted across the double doors as you enter as sort of an invisible force field that students walk through everyday. The quote came to Mr. Edwards after reading a wonderful book called MOTIVATION, CONFRONTATION AND INSPIRATION by a band director from the states named Dr. Shirley Mullins. She has this quote on a huge sign in her band room..... we just took it one step further.
2. "Failure is a Choice!" About seven years ago our school division brought in a wonderful guest speaker and this quote was one of the many that we jotted down over the course of his address. We painted it on the wall above our display of photos of the various bands at festivals and student awards. It implies the obvious, that Success is also a choice and the people on this wall have chosen to succeed.
3. "Let your Performance do the Talking." In 1998 Mr. Edwards had the pleasure of having one of his former students come to Bruce Middle School as a Student Teacher. In parting she thanked him by giving him a book by H. Jackson Brown Jr. and Robyn Spizman called A HERO IN EVERY HEART. It is a book of quotations compiled by the authors after interviewing hundreds of famous Champions from all walks of life, "to inspire the hero in each of us." Mr. Edwards read the book so many times over the years that it is falling apart, but the sentiments enclosed ring true to this day. The quote is by the author.
4. "Individuals play the game, but TEAMS win championships!" This example also comes from A HERO IN EVERY HEART. This quote is attributed to a sign that was posted in the New England Patriots' locker room. We decided to paint it on the wall in the band room behind the director so the students are constantly reminded that they must be responsible for their own part, yet they must be aware that there is a higher responsibility for them to work within their section and ultimately work together as a group.
5. "Jazz [Music] wipes the dust off of everyday life!" - Art Blakey Each year the Band Major program studies the ten DVD series on the history of Jazz by Ken Burns. We are sure that the quote has been around for a long time, but it came to our attention during a review of this work. We added in the word MUSIC, as we felt the sentiment of the quote applied to music in all its forms.

6. **"It's Never Too Early for Greatness!"** - this quote originally was "It's never too late for greatness;" however, it didn't seem to reach kids. So Mr. Edwards modified it to its present form. Basically it reminds us to stop thinking that "someday" we're going to achieve success. Why wait? Start now. There are scads of examples of young people from: Britney Spears to Johnny Lang to Anna Kornikova to Tiger Woods to Mozart that did some pretty amazing things while they were still in their teens. So, we remind our students not to wait, but to rise up to the challenge today.

7. **"Jazz [Music] is a verb!"** - This is originally a Pat Metheny quote. It speaks for itself.... You can read all the books in the world, but in order to really get music, you must participate in its creation. It is an action, a verb.

8. **"Band is food for the soul!"** - When asked to deal with the idea of "Why is Band?" I often reflect on what purpose my class may serve. Ultimately there are many reasons that are bandied about: Team skills, music appreciation, fine motor-skill development, activates a part of your brain otherwise untouched, intrinsic cognitive development, fun, a release from the day to day drudgery which is fast becoming the norm for a high school student. Whatever the reason, if you approach music with one common goal and everyone is on board, you class and the lives of the people it affects (effects) will ultimately have a deeper and richer meaning. If you play and approach band class as "food for the soul" you simply go about it in a different more meaningful manner.