



# Mills E. Godwin Marching Eagles Leadership Handbook

The **Drum Major(s)** will serve as conductor; be called upon to teach drill and marching fundamentals; warm-up the band; provide individual help to members; and assist the director on a daily basis. Contact with the directors and student leadership is vital to the success of this program. The Drum Major(s) will be the link between the director and the membership of the band. Although showmanship and professionalism are two important aspects of this position, musicianship, leadership, cooperation, communication, responsibility, and integrity will be essential to be successful in this role. The Drum Major(s) is to be a role model for the band members and ambassador for the Band Program and School.

The **Captains (Guard, Brass, Drumline, Woodwind)** are responsible for all aspects of rehearsal and performance within their instrument/equipment section of the marching band. They have oversight over Section Leaders within their section, and are responsible for ensuring an effective rehearsal and performance atmosphere. All captains work closely together to enhance the *Esprit de Corps* of the band. Captains are highly encouraged to attend a summer band camp together with the drum majors.

The **Section Leaders** work with their fellow Section Leader and report directly to the Captain, as needed, of their particular section. Their responsibilities include coordinating extra sectional rehearsals and ensuring that the members of their section know all of their music, basic marching techniques, and drill. The Section Leader is responsible for regular tests of music for members of their section, in addition to making sure that all students are prepared for rehearsal with music, pencils, coordinate sheets, and instruments. Section Leaders are to give individual attention to each of the members of their section to ensure the greatest performance level for the group.

*"In order to carry a positive action we must develop here a positive vision." -Dalai Lama*

## **Daily Responsibilities of Student Leadership**

- Communicate with other leadership and staff
- Coordinate with other Student Leaders to create a plan for rehearsal – this could be done prior to rehearsal, but recommended for after rehearsal to plan for the next day.
- Attendance will be taken by the section leaders and given to the drum majors
- Rehearse Music
- Memorize Music
- BE PREPARED
- BE POSITIVE

*"Leadership is not about a title or a designation. It's about impact, influence and inspiration. Impact involves getting results, influence is about spreading the passion you have for your work, and you have to inspire team-mates and customers." -Robin S. Sharma*

## Travel Responsibilities

For all travel events, the following is expected of all student leaders in order to ensure an organized and successful trip:

In Preparation:

- Speak with your section about the usual trip process.
- Make sure that all section members are aware of what needs to happen upon arrival.
- Review the report times and locations with all members.
- Establish a system of communication that can be used when contacting individuals who may be late or not at the report location.

Upon Returning to GHS:

- Make sure that all trash and equipment is removed from the bus; check above the seats and under the seats. Trash bags will be provided. Place trash bags outside the band door.
- **Make sure everybody thanks your bus driver!!!**
- Any equipment/items left on the bus should be returned to the band staff.
- Await dismissal, and note any members that leave/sneak out early.

## Rehearsals / Sectionals

*“Teach by doing whenever you can, and only fall back upon words when doing is absolutely out of the question.” -Jean-Jacques Rousseau*

1. ALWAYS have a plan for rehearsal - as a leadership team (Captains and section leaders), plan ahead and communicate with each other BEFORE the rehearsal begins, or establish this plan immediately following the previous rehearsal.

- Discuss what needs to be worked on and how to fix it.
- Discuss who is going to be responsible for each part of the rehearsal.
- Section leadership (Brass, Woodwind, Percussion, and Guard) should plan to meet at the conclusion of each rehearsal to discuss the next day.
- Arrive 10 minutes early to discuss plans for the beginning of rehearsal.
- Always plan for more than you can accomplish, then re-group following the rehearsal or segment.
- Communicate with other Captains/Section Leaders to share ideas or questions, and plan to work together when the schedule permits.

2. Always SET GOALS – (no matter how big or small) for each rehearsal/sectional, and share these with your section at the beginning of each meeting.

- Set goals for the season, for the show, and for the section.
- Goals should include music, marching, social, individual, and group.
- Goals should be shared with the section (daily), as well as be created by the section (if section goals).
- If goals are ‘Big Picture’ or concepts, work out the ‘how’ it will be accomplished with more immediate goals.

3. Always SHARE GOALS with your section – This should help create and maintain a sense of order and focus (hopefully). In order for progress to be made and recognized as a group, the whole group must be aware of the goals.
4. AVOID the urge to work on music or marching that you already know! – Always start with the ‘hardest’ content and work from there.
5. ASSESS your accomplishments each day!
6. Make an effort to GET TO KNOW EVERYBODY – plan on making an individual contact with somebody you don’t know everyday.
7. Include other sections during sectionals – when planning, consider involving other sections at the beginning or end of sectionals. This will not only allow the members to work together with different individuals, but can also create a more diversified mix of instruments so that other parts can be heard and rehearsed.

### Music Rehearsals

Sectionals: Rehearsals at times will include individual sectionals. This will happen after the warm up block. The time should be used efficiently to address music review, memorization, or marching fundamentals – depending on the needs of the section.

Concert Arcs: Concert arcs will be set at the beginning of the season (based on instrumentation) and will remain throughout the season – unless otherwise directed. Section Leaders will be responsible for ensuring that the form is set as quickly as possible. When in concert arcs, proper posture and horn angles should be addressed, and focus maintained.

*IMPORTANT NOTE: when using a tuner, don’t let the individual SEE it first. Allow them to create the most natural and warm tone first, THEN turn the tuner to them so they can adjust. Too often, we sacrifice our tone for intonation – or worse yet, think of intonation before tone. The reality is, without a good tone, there can be no good intonation.*

Rehearsal Posture: It is expected that all individuals stand with good posture and horn angles during each rehearsal/sectional. There should be no sitting during sectionals – unless circumstances permit and the director is consulted. Always rehearsing with proper posture and emphasizing correct horn angles will only enhance our performances. **Practice how we perform!**

Stagger Breathing and Marking Time: In order to create a more unified, full, and seamless sound from our ensemble, we will incorporate stagger breathing in all rehearsals and performances. No two individuals (standing next to each other) should breathe at the same time (most commonly at the end of the measure). Breathing after every 4 beats, or after every long note is a HARD HABIT TO BREAK. However, by introducing and enforcing the following step-out technique, an awareness of section and ensemble breathing will become a habit.

Music and Marking Time: It is recommended that section leaders and captains introduce marking time during music (and marching) rehearsals. Marking time during sections in the

music that correspond to a drill move, holding when there isn't. This will help create a connection between the music and movement – drill moves (step offs) will then become more natural on the field when sequencing the music and drill moves. Section leaders should be proactive during music rehearsals when relating the music to the drill moves.

Rehearsal Formations: It is up to the Captain and section leaders to decide what type of formation will be effective for that rehearsal's goals.

- The typical half moon concert arc focuses on uniformity of drill and visual sequences while at a standstill. The arc establishes an ensemble-like setting that is good for directors, staff, and student leaders.
- The circle allows all members of the section or ensemble to visually see when other members 'step out' to take a breath. The benefits of the circle include: listening around and across the section or ensemble; places section leaders, captains, and director in the center; encourages better communication and easier visual access for comparing & contrasting; often creates a more collaborative environment.

### Memorization

- It is essential that our show music (and selected stand tunes) be memorized in a timely and musical manner.
- It is the responsibility of each section leader to teach the memorization process (acknowledging that individuals memorize differently) and focus on this during each meeting.
- It is the responsibility of each member to make sure his/her music is memorized by the specific due dates. Do not rush into memorization until the music has been thoroughly rehearsed. Memorizing Incorrectly, for the sake of time, is counterproductive

### Memorization Tips:

1. Review/rehearse the music thoroughly before memorizing.
  - Address the musical concepts: articulation, dynamics, style, etc.
  - Make sure there are no wrong notes or articulations
  - Practice the technically challenging areas first
2. Memorization should always include style, dynamics, and articulations
  - Make sure to address these during the memorization process – don't just talk about memorizing, talk about making music.
3. Memorize in small segments – phrases that make sense.
4. Split the section by part when memorizing.
  - If there are divided parts, take time to memorize these separately.
  - If some members of your section memorize quickly, and others slowly, divide them – or pair up individuals who are struggling with individuals who are thriving.
5. Take time to work with individuals who are having trouble with memorization.
6. Work ahead – although we may not be working on future show music or stand tunes in full rehearsal, it doesn't hurt to begin rehearsing and memorizing the music with your section.

### Memorizing Backwards

1. Rehearse the entire piece, focusing on both the musically and technically challenging sections.

2. Begin memorizing the ending – the last 12-8 bars.
3. Back up one phrase – run these measures with music, then without – addressing the musical concepts as you go.
4. Run the last 2 sections together.
5. Back up one more phrase, and repeat the process.

By memorizing from the end, one always knows what is coming up – unlike memorizing from the beginning, when every 4 or 8 bars there is an automatic ‘hiccup’ in the pattern because you reach music that has not yet been memorized. By memorizing from the end, a more natural and seamless process is the result (for most).

## **Marching Rehearsals**

### Teaching Drill

Take time to explain to all members how to properly read their coordinate sheets. All section leaders will receive a book with the drill charts inside. These charts will be with you at every rehearsal in case we need to check forms. A few things to keep in mind:

1. The SYMBOL marks the position, not the number.
2. Each grid box is four steps.
3. There are 28 steps between the hashes and each sideline.

### Drill on the Field

It is necessary to stay focused while learning drill. This keeps the pacing up and prevents the ensemble from getting too distracted. Learning drill should be done while at attention. The only people who should be moving from their dot should be section leaders or captains. The learning process is as follows:

1. Director(s) provide instruction
2. Individuals set their spots
3. Section leaders and Captains help as needed, double check end points, midpoints, reference points
4. Come to attention when in spot - adjust the form as needed
5. When marching to a set- freeze at the end of the move (do not adjust, regardless of whether in your spot or not)
6. It is important to remember that it is better to make a mistake and know how to adjust rather than take incorrect step size to get to a spot.
7. Section leaders and Captains assist with setting and cleaning.

IF MORE TIME IS NEEDED – hold up your drill chart book! Do not hesitate to ask for help from other student leaders.

“BUT I’M IN MY SPOT!” When first learning and cleaning drill, ALWAYS see the exact chart position on the field. Do not encourage individuals to simply follow or fill in the form when learning drill sets – this is how formations are learned incorrectly. **HOWEVER**, once the spot is set and learned, an awareness of the overall form must be addressed.

*“ There is a grandeur in the uniformity of the mass. When art, drama, dance, and music sweeps like wildfire from one end of the continent to the other, and millions roar with applause, sway their bodies in unison, or sing along with a song, there is the overpowering feeling that we have come nearer the brotherhood of man than ever before.” -Eric Hoffer*