

Sam Fettig

Sam Fettig graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater with a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education in 1999. He later earned his Master's Degree in Music Education from VanderCook College of Music in Chicago, Illinois. His experiences include teaching band at Washington Junior High in Manitowoc, Wisconsin from 2000-2002. In 2002 he was appointed Band Director at Fort Atkinson Middle School.

Sam's philosophy of education is that students need and deserve an education that gives them the maximum opportunity to discover themselves and succeed in life. All other beliefs held, research considered, tools used, and strategies employed are driven by this belief. Sam pays attention to the individual learner.

For Sam, Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences underscores the importance of differentiation in education. Thankfully, science and research have done a good job in identifying the diverse ways in which we learn. He believes it is

his responsibility to appeal to this diversity in order to reach all students.

This philosophy is in tandem with another governing principle--relationships! Empirical data and formal assessments are necessary and vital, but altogether ineffective if one does not know his students and engage them on a human level. Sam believes that a healthy and respectful relationship between the teacher and the student is the fertile ground upon which differentiated instruction cultivates and grows the student into what he/she can truly be.

Sam believes the students who are often marginalized in our culture are those who thrive in our school's music programs. Under his watch, economically disadvantaged students shall never be denied the same music education as their peers. This is because music is a conduit for expression, passion, and creativity – the very forces that draw out the best in students and call them to a life of meaning and purpose. Sam believes that hard work and the pursuit of a common goal, peer relationships, and

organization are a few of the life skills that students learn through music. These factor coalesce into an experience that Sam has seen inspire students towards a greatness previously unrealized in their life circumstances.

When asked about innovative projects, Sam launched a new jazz curriculum through a performing ensemble at our middle school. In the jazz ensemble, students are invited to let go of the fear of making mistakes. When a student plays an improvised jazz solo, the process of creative expression is an incredible and unparalleled dynamic in their academic experience. It is the stuff of inspiration!

From a parent, “I have known Mr. Fettig for three years while our son was in the middle school band – both regular and jazz band. Both my wife and I could not have been happier with the music program and the transformational experience that our son experienced under Mr. Fettig. On a very personal not, I cannot thank Mr. Fettig enough for the influence he has had on my son with respect to music. Our son has become a very

accomplished musician for his age because of Mr. Fettig's effort to push him gently to keep improving."

From Glenn Hayes, Director of Bands at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, "I know for a fact that Sam inspires the love of learning-he was my daughter's band director. I assign students to him every fall. I want our students to work with the best and that is Sam Fettig."

With pleasure, we forward the nomination of Sam Fettig for the Kohl Teacher Fellowship Award.