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### Teaching Philosophy – Jacob Shoener

I believe that every student deserves access to a meaningful, high-quality music education—one that fosters creativity, discipline, leadership, and self-expression. As Director of Bands at North Schuylkill Junior–Senior High School, I strive to provide my students with a diverse range of musical opportunities that prepare them not only as performers, but as confident, capable individuals in and out of the ensemble.

My teaching is rooted in student-centered learning and real-world musicianship. Whether leading Wind Ensemble, Jazz Band, or Marching Band, I work to create an environment that is structured, encouraging, and musically rich. Our band program embraces a wide spectrum of styles—from concert repertoire to jazz to competitive field shows—giving students the chance to grow through different musical lenses.

A key part of my philosophy is the belief that excellence comes from high expectations, teamwork, and consistency. Under my direction, the North Schuylkill Competition Marching Band has won **three consecutive Tournament of Bands Region 2 Group 1-A Chapter Championships**, a testament to our students' dedication and the power of a shared vision. I challenge my students to strive for personal and collective growth while building a culture of respect, accountability, and pride.

My background in jazz has also shaped my approach to teaching. I regularly write and arrange charts tailored to the strengths of my students—providing them with opportunities to solo, explore improvisation, and connect to the music in meaningful, personal ways. Jazz teaches us to take risks, to listen deeply, and to celebrate individuality—lessons that translate far beyond the band room.

I believe music is a lifelong pursuit, and that our ensembles should reflect not just technical achievement, but joy, purpose, and creativity. I'm passionate about honoring our country's musical heritage—from Sousa marches to big band jazz—and helping students understand music as a cultural force that connects generations, communities, and ideas.

Ultimately, my goal is to instill in my students a lasting appreciation for music and the arts, along with the confidence to use their voices—musically and otherwise—with courage and authenticity. I am proud to lead a program where students feel inspired, empowered, and equipped to achieve something greater than themselves—together, through music.