

Problem Solving Example

Let's All Band Together

It's half time of the season's first big game. The Middleton Middle School Band proudly takes the field. The drum major blows her whistle and raises her baton. The drums beat, and the band begins to play. As the band starts to form an M-shape, suddenly two clarinets and a trumpet head left instead of right. The tuba marches straight ahead, leaving the rest of the band behind. The result is comedy.

Our band members are talented. The problem is they do not get to practice marching on the field. They have to practice in a small courtyard. This means they cannot practice their moves correctly. Mr. Halls, the band director, explains, "The middle school shares the same football field with the high school. Before school, the high school band uses the field for practice. After school, the practice time is shared between the middle school and high school football teams." The only time the field is not used is between 12:15 and 1:15, lunchtime. Middle school band members, however, have different lunch schedules. They cannot all be together then.

There are several solutions to this problem. One is to build a separate field for the middle school. This would be expensive, however. It would mean buying land and building bleachers. School funds are tight in this county. The school board would not approve the cost.

A better solution is to have the middle school band keep their present schedule but add a practice on the field Saturday mornings. School band members could enjoy their lunches and practice their moves on the field. Though this is a workable solution, students may not want to give up their Saturday mornings to practice.

The best solution is to change the schedules of beginner band students. First, schedule all these students for first lunch at 12:00. Then, schedule band practice at 12:15. Let students be first in line, so they can be finished. This way students would have an hour to practice marching on the field without giving up their free Saturday mornings.

This solution might cause some scheduling problems. Some students already have special schedules. Football players and cheerleaders, for example, have fourth period physical education. Also, other students would have to let band students eat first. Band students would have a short lunch. The students I have talked to say they would not mind. This is an inexpensive solution. It is also the one the band members and director support.

The band needs the support of the students and the administration. Wouldn't it be worth a little extra effort to have a band we can feel proud of? Let's work together to build a band for our future!