



Recruiting and Retention

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Recruiting Difficulties



- Declining school enrollment in many areas
- Increasing demands on students' time
 - Jobs
 - After School Activities
- Decreasing student interest
 - Video Games
- Decreasing support from home
 - Increasing number of working parents and single parents
- Decreasing emphasis on music by academic testing

Factors Contributing To Recruiting Success



- The director is energetic and enthusiastic
- The program is successful
- The program is fun
- Friends participate
- Parents are supportive
- The community is supportive
- The program is visible

Recruiting “To Do”s



- Establish and continue communications with students, parents, administrators, teachers, etc.
- Survey students (who is interested)
- Survey teachers (who has talent)
- Build interest (concerts, programs)
- Help students select appropriate instruments.
- Setup and explain rental programs
- Engage parental support in student practice and success.
- Provide satisfying musical experiences

Recruiting Calendar

http://www.msconcepts.com/fanfare/FANFARE_Winter2006.pdf

- Sometime in the fall, set up your annual schedule. Include a recruiting meeting with students, a parent meeting and a “First Performance Demonstration Concert.”
- February – March: Visit with general music teachers and observe and speak with recorder classes.
- April – May: Recruiting instrument demonstration and instrument try-out with students. (Many like to have the recruiting meeting as soon as students come back to school in the fall rather than before school is dismissed the previous year.)
- 1 week later: Parent meeting and instrument rental
- 1 week after that: Follow up on top students who did not sign up
- 1 week after that: Send a letter to parents describing beginning instrumental music program.
- Program begins. (If the cycle begins at the end of the prior school year, the program begins when school begins.)
- 6 to 8 weeks: A concert should take place
- April – May: A Mass Band/Parade of Bands Concert with the middle and high school bands should be performed.

Follow Through



- Follow up on promising students who didn't sign up.
- Follow up with letters, e-mails, and phone calls reminding parents of the meeting date.
- Ease concerns about being stuck with a costly instrument and long hours of practice.
- Reinforce the benefits of music for their child
- Immediately after the parent meeting:
 - Have a plan for parents who had a schedule conflict with the meeting time
 - Make it simple and convenient for them to sign up.
 - Your music dealer can help with follow-up.

Keys To Student Success



- Realize time conflicts with sports, other classes, school activities and jobs
- Understand each student as an individual
- Build appreciation for the musical group
- Give recognition for their effort and accomplishments —badges, medals, guest clinicians, printed certificates, attendance at special events
- Know that everyone has a fear of failure — constantly praise and reinforce that there is no failure in music. Give formal awards, informal praise and constant encouragement

An Instrumental Recruiting Plan

- Arrange to teach the recorder classes for six weeks.
- Prepare a concert – every child gets a solo – even if just two measures of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star. Invite parents and family.
- During six weeks, do instrument demonstrations and try-outs. Keep notes on natural successes. Ask students what their top three instruments would be, if they were to play in the band.
- During six weeks, give a music aptitude test.
- Ask teachers to identify students with musical talent and who are taking piano lessons.
- At recorder concert include one of your best ensembles. Have students give testimonials about being in recorder class – and now a soloist in the ensemble.
- At concert, announce rental plan (\$50 a month for small instruments, \$75 a month for large instruments, you can turn it in any time with no further cost, after two years it's yours.)
- Announce sign-up night (as soon thereafter as possible).
- After concert, and before sign-up, call parents and share music aptitude test, and students top three choices, your recommendation for the student, review rental plan, get a commitment to come to the meeting if possible.
- At the meeting, have the dealer have instruments to give to students that night. Have the dealer have sufficient personnel to keep lines short. Greet parents, and let them try and rent instruments. Answer questions. Dealer should include books, extra reeds and maintenance items in rental.
- Start band class the next day.
- Follow up with parents and students who could not come to the meeting.
- Give a band concert in another six weeks – teach parents and students about the value of practice.

Benefits of Musical Study



- Social skills
- Responsibility
- Self-confidence
- Self-discipline
- Coordination
- Teamwork
- Historical and cultural understanding
- Connections to other disciplines
- Academic success for challenged students.
- Improves health
- Provides recreation
- Makes students well-rounded
- Appreciation of music
- Creativity
- Self-Expression
- Aesthetic Understanding
- An area of human intelligence (Gardner)
- Universal language
- Right-Brain/Left-Brain

Retention - Difficulties



- Maintaining student interest
- Not over-burdening students with extra rehearsals
- Maintaining participation each time students change buildings
- Maintaining participation each time program demands increase (marching band, for example)

Retention - Tips



- Make the aesthetic pleasure one derives from music the most compelling reason to participate
- Foster pride and group recognition
- Give credit to individual accomplishments
- Don't include fear in your teaching approach
- Show interest in the music they like (even if you don't like it)
- Make sure all instruments are in excellent playing condition
- Remind parents that repair services are included in most rental contracts
- Make instrument care an important part of the beginner class
- Provide aids — charts, booklets, etc., many of which are provided by manufacturers and publishers
- Seek help when you have a problem—talk to other directors, music dealers, manufacturer and publisher representatives, and attend conventions and clinics

Retention – PERSONAL:

Reasons Students Leave the Program

- Failure in academic classes
- Poor practice habits
- Wrong choice of instrument
- Laziness
- Involved in too many other activities
- Problems in transporting larger instruments

Retention – Home:

Reasons Students Leave the Program

- Family moves away
- Broken or unplayable instrument
- Problems in transporting larger instruments
- Poor home environment
- Lack of suitable practice area
- Lack of parental support

Retention – School:

Reasons Students Leave the Program

- Not enough class meetings to sustain progress
- Frequent interruptions in class schedule
- Difficulty in academic subjects
- Disciplinary problems
- Lack of administrative support

Retention – Teacher:

Reasons Students Leave the Program

- Inappropriate instructional methods and materials
- Teacher moves too rapidly
- Teacher does not make goals clear
- Teacher talks too much
- Classes are too large
- Teacher is not enthusiastic
- Teacher is too negative and sarcastic

Retention – Things that Help



- Developing personal and group pride
- Putting on a concert as soon as possible
- Improving communication with parents
- Being creative — incorporate audio-visual materials, new music, recording/playback, student conductors, solos and ensembles, clinics and other tools and techniques to keep the experience interesting
- Evaluating yourself continually
- Understanding each student as an individual
- Periodically checking student instruments
- Honing your recruitment techniques
- Teaching instrument care and maintenance
- Communicating your needs to administrators
- Being positive and enthusiastic
- Not canceling classes because you are busy—beginners can't afford it