



# 5 S.M.A.R.T. Ideas to Retain THIS YEAR'S BEGINNERS: *A Primer for High School and Middle School Directors*

Marcia Neel

Dec 2, 2023: 9:30 AM  
*Hyatt Frederick Douglass*



**Lucille and Jack  
Yellen Foundation**

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# *The Facts about **Retaining Beginners***

THE  
MUSIC PARENTS'  GUIDE

A SURVIVAL KIT FOR THE  
NEW MUSIC PARENT

ANTHONY MAZZOCCHI

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**NEW:**

**A 15-minute New Music Parent Course is now available via NFHS. Share this info with your “newbie” parents: <https://bit.ly/NFHSNewMusicParent>**

[musicconsultants.net/](https://musicconsultants.net/conference-materials)  
conference-materials





Success



Have students **PERFORM EARLY AND OFTEN**  
to show them the pathway to Success.

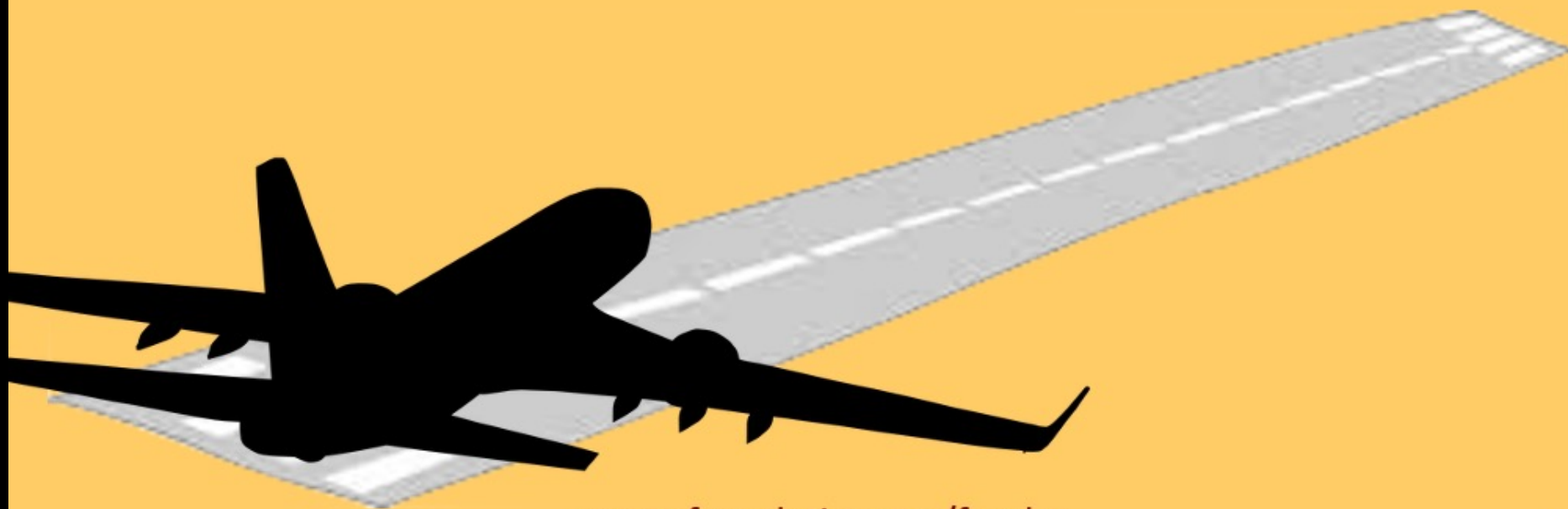


Taking Off This Fall in a  
School Near You!



# **FIRST PERFORMANCE**

## NATIONAL DAY OF CELEBRATION



[nammfoundation.org/fpndoc](http://nammfoundation.org/fpndoc)





# Have Students Perform Early and Often

## First Performance National Day of Celebration

View Video at: <https://youtu.be/lk0xiAjwaGU>



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# The Results Are In!!!!



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- Provides Short-Range Goals and Recognition
- Encourages Early Engagement with Parents
- Strengthens Administrative Support through Direct Involvement





**FIRST PERFORMANCE**  
NATIONAL DAY OF CELEBRATION  
Celebrate Your Beginning Students

Presented By  
**MUSIC ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL**  
Music Teacher's Professional Development

#FPCelebration

MusicAchievementCouncil.org

# First Performance Toolkit

[nammfoundation.org  
/fpndoc](http://nammfoundation.org/fpndoc)



# What's Included?

## a. Director Letter



### FIRST PERFORMANCE NATIONAL DAY OF CELEBRATION

Dear Director:

SUBJECT: FIRST PERFORMANCE National Day of Celebration—A Beginner  
Demonstration Concert

We can all remember the excitement of our FIRST PERFORMANCE—dressing uniformly; being the center of attention yet within the security of a group setting; and especially hearing the rousing applause of an excited and supportive audience. These are all memories that last a lifetime. Certainly, a fully programmed concert is desirable from the director's musical standpoint but with beginners, there will never be a more enthusiastic group of performers and audience members than these young musicians and their family and friends. A demonstration concert at this stage in their development can help ensure a strong program overall.

The objectives of FIRST PERFORMANCE are:

- To reduce beginner dropout rate.
- To provide short-range incentive goals.
- To encourage communication with parents.
- To further strengthen administrative support and
- To celebrate the musical accomplishments of the students.

The FIRST PERFORMANCE kit contains all of the concert support you will need including:

- A sample letter/invitation to parents.
- A sample letter/invitation to administration.
- A fillable PDF Certificate of Advancement.
- A complete 20-minute concert with scripted narration.

All you will need to supply is:

- Appropriate performance material to play during the performance, likely either from your beginning band method book or from Music Achievement Council's own "First Performance – A Demonstration Concert" publication.
- A representative from your school administration, parent organization or the high school director to serve as the narrator.
- Advance publicity across the school and community including posters and school-wide announcements. (You may want to have a contest to design an appropriate cover.)
- Light refreshments to be provided following the performance
- Printed certificates for each student musician celebrating this major achievement.

It is recommended that the date of the FIRST PERFORMANCE gets announced at the first parent meeting to ensure that it is recorded in the parents' calendars. A simple statement such as, "On \_\_\_\_\_ (date and time), we will be back together to hear the progress of this year's group of young musicians, so mark your calendars for our FIRST PERFORMANCE. You won't want to miss it."

Remember, FIRST PERFORMANCE NATIONAL DAY OF CELEBRATION has been designed as a demonstration of progress. Many of the materials referenced above are also posted online at [www.musicachievementcouncil.org](http://www.musicachievementcouncil.org) so that they may be downloaded and personalized for your particular situation.

The Music Achievement Council and your local music dealer hope that this event will help in your efforts to bring the joy of instrumental music-making to many children in your school.

Best wishes!

THE MUSIC ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL  
[www.musicachievementcouncil.org](http://www.musicachievementcouncil.org)

*The Music Achievement Council (MAC) is an action-oriented 501 (c)(6) nonprofit organization sponsored by the National Association of School Music Dealers (NASMD) and NAMM, the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM). MAC's sole purpose is to enable more students to begin and remain in instrumental music programs and to share real-world, successful strategies developed by instrumental music teachers.*



# What's Included?

## b. Customizable Letter of Invitation to Parents



### FIRST PERFORMANCE NATIONAL DAY OF CELEBRATION

Mozart Middle School Music Department  
1234 Lyrical Lane  
City, State, ZIP  
(000) 000-0000, x000

Dear Parents:

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO OUR FIRST PERFORMANCE NATIONAL DAY OF CELEBRATION!

It gives us (me) great pleasure to announce our FIRST PERFORMANCE NATIONAL DAY OF CELEBRATION, a short demonstration concert featuring this year's Beginning (Band, Orchestra, Strings) Class, scheduled for (date). This is an exciting event that you won't want to miss. Students will demonstrate what has been learned up to this point and your attendance will help motivate them to perform at their very best.

We also want to look our best for our FIRST PERFORMANCE so we are requesting that the boys wear dark pants with white shirts and the girls wear dark skirts or pants with white blouses. Students must arrive by (time) for seating, tuning and warm-ups and should meet (location).

Our FIRST PERFORMANCE will begin promptly at (time) and the entire presentation should last approximately 20-30 minutes. Refreshments will be served immediately following the program and certificates will be presented to each student musician to celebrate this major achievement.

Please join us and bring all of your friends and family members. Also, be sure that your device is fully-charged as there will be many opportunities to take photos and record videos so that you and your child can enjoy this special moment for many years to come.

We are looking forward to seeing you at our FIRST PERFORMANCE NATIONAL DAY OF CELEBRATION.

Sincerely,

Name of Director  
director@mozartms.edu

# What's Included?

## c. Customizable Letter of Invitation to Principal



### FIRST PERFORMANCE NATIONAL DAY OF CELEBRATION

Mozart Middle School Music Department  
1234 Lyrical Lane  
City, State, ZIP  
(000) 000-0000, x000

Dear Mr./Mrs. Principal:

It gives us (me) great pleasure to announce our FIRST PERFORMANCE NATIONAL DAY OF CELEBRATION, a short demonstration concert scheduled for \_\_\_(date)\_\_\_ featuring this year's Beginning Band (Orchestra, Strings) Class. We (I) would like to invite you to serve as host by announcing the program. A script is being provided or you could certainly feel free to use your own words for this impactful 20-minute program.

FIRST PERFORMANCE is part of a National Day of Celebration designated for recognizing beginning music students. It will give you an opportunity to see first-hand what is being accomplished in the band (orchestra, strings) program. Students will demonstrate what has been learned up to this point and your participation will help motivate them to perform at their very best. Your presence will also show our students and their parents that you support (name of school)'s Music Program and are interested in seeing how they progress. We expect to have (number) parents and friends in attendance.

Our FIRST PERFORMANCE will begin promptly at (time). We are encouraging families to take photos and record videos so that they may enjoy this special moment for years to come. Refreshments will be served immediately following the performance and we would be grateful if you could also assist in the handing out of the Certificates of Achievement to each of the student musicians at this post-concert celebration.

This is an exciting event that you won't want to miss. Please join us so that we may celebrate this FIRST PERFORMANCE NATIONAL DAY OF CELEBRATION together.

Sincerely,

Name of Director

# What's Included?

## d. Customizable Script to Make It Your Own!



### SCRIPT

#### OPTIONAL INTRODUCTION: (Industry Spokesperson)

Good Evening/Afternoon,

Welcome to (name of school)'s FIRST PERFORMANCE NATIONAL DAY OF CELEBRATION. I'm (name) representing (name of business). I appreciate (director) inviting me to make a few comments about this exciting event! We have found that young people are motivated to learn to play a musical instrument for a number of reasons but many times, it's because it just looks like fun—and it is!

We are pleased to be a part of this FIRST PERFORMANCE NATIONAL DAY OF CELEBRATION and are here representing the Music Achievement Council, a 501(c)(6) nonprofit organization which believes in the important and value of music education in our schools. Your child will not only have an experience that will lead to a path of enjoyable, life-long music-making, but will also accumulate many great memories that will last for a lifetime.

I am personally proud to support the work of the Music Achievement Council and this FIRST PERFORMANCE program to keep music in our schools and communities so that your children will be able to take advantage of the many benefits that will come along inherently as a direct result of their active music-making.

As a prelude to this evening's performance, the (band, orchestra, strings, et.al.) will now play a composition they like to use as a warm-up, (title).

#### Musicians perform

#### ANNOUNCER'S SCRIPT: (Principal, Supervisor, Booster Parent, HS Band or Orchestra Director)

Good evening, Moms and Dads, brothers and sisters, grandmas and grandpas, aunts and uncles, friends and neighbors! It is a thrill for us to present these young musicians in the (year) FIRST PERFORMANCE NATIONAL DAY OF CELEBRATION—a day that has been designated for recognizing the achievements of beginning music students! We know that you will be pleasantly surprised at their many accomplishments over these first several weeks.

[www.musicachievementcouncil.org](http://www.musicachievementcouncil.org)  
@MusicAchCouncil

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fortunate enough to have the opportunity to play a music instrument through an in-school event at (school) value music education and know that it is programs like these that also led for our students to succeed throughout their school careers. Playing an instrument takes time and mental concentration. It also takes regular practice time at home and your child makes all the difference. All of the musicians here tonight have demonstrated the value of the play and have thus earned membership in the (school) (band orchestra, strings, et.al.)

(director)'s performance, the students will demonstrate what they have learned up to this point in their musical careers. After learning how to take the instrument out of the case, they finally got to do what they had been wanting to do—produce their first sound. It was like this.

#### most awful sound possible with great enthusiasm!

(director) had some challenges facing them for the next few days and (director) had to wonder

how they would be quite eventful. (director) worked patiently with the students until they could play their first note. Now they sounded like this.

#### first hole note in unison with their very best sound.

(director) knew that, but they needed a lot more work to be ready for our performance.

(director) knew that note allowed them to continue through those first few lessons where they also learned to play together. This is important to help them learn to play together as a team.

#### of their first exercises but not a recognizable tune.

(director) knew how to count, they added different rhythms to those first notes and the music began to

#### of their rhythmic exercises but not a recognizable tune.

(director) knew that it was more interesting than the first note, but it is still not a complete tune that you might identify. After more new notes and discovered they could link them together to play a tune you could tell that they might have been the moment at home when you felt, for the first time, that the music was something to take hold. This is what they sounded like at school that day.

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#### recognizable tune.

(director) knew that following this step-by-step process and as they completed each step, everyone was able to be one of our finest beginning (band, orchestras, string groups, et.al.) ever! They played the pieces.

#### write tune.

(director) knew that where you ask for volunteers to play as an individual, a group or a complete band, students perform as you wish. This allows parents to hear a variety of musical styles. Be sure to have extra stands and music up front.

(director) knew that to let us have each student perform individually, we have asked a few volunteers to play in a small group.

(are) who will perform (title) on the (instrument/s).

#### individual or group)

(director) knew that (group, et.al.) has come a long way since that first note and they have worked hard on their FIRST PERFORMANCE in such a short time. This has certainly been an exciting and we're glad that you were here to help celebrate this important milestone. Your son or daughter is going to continue to progress at this quick pace so please (director) for ideas on how to support your child's practice schedule. You can be sure (director) forward to communicating with you as your child advances.

(director) will be presented on (date) at (time) and will be held (location). Please plan to join us on this special journey.

(director) final selection, (title).

(director) knew that you have just witnessed (name of school)'s (year) FIRST PERFORMANCE DAY and what they did they do?  
(applause.)

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# Dr. Keith Wood

## Principal

### Brooks Middle School



# What's Included?

## e. Press Release Template

<Insert Name of School> Hosts Inaugural First Performance National Day of Celebration Concert

<Town/community name> participates in national event celebrating young students' very first performance and transformational power of music making

<CITY>, <State> - <Date> — <Name of school> is hosting the inaugural First Performance National Day of Celebration concert event with a <insert brief event description (eg, "a beginning band concert" or "a beginning orchestra concert")> on <date>. The Music Achievement Council (MAC) created First Performance National Day of Celebration (FPNDoC) to celebrate, honor and encourage the early achievements of music students across the United States, providing a platform for budding musicians to showcase their newly-acquired musical skills in a public venue.

<Name of school> invites parents and community members to attend the First Performance National Day of Celebration concert on <Insert date of event and details about event, including place, time it begins and ends, and what participants can expect to see/hear.>

<Insert "QUOTE" from band director about school's participation in FPNDoC and how making music positively affects their school, students and community.>

<Company contact information>

About <school>

About The Music Achievement Council:

The Music Achievement Council (MAC) was founded in 1983 to enable more students to begin and stay in instrumental music programs, to share real-world, successful strategies developed by instrumental music teachers. The council reorganized in 1990, forming a nonprofit 501(c)(6) organization.

###

# What's Included?

## f. Ideas to Enhance the Experience with HS Students



### **FIRST PERFORMANCE**

NATIONAL DAY OF CELEBRATION

**Ideas to Enhance the Experience of the  
*FIRST PERFORMANCE*  
*NATIONAL DAY OF CELEBRATION*  
by Involving High School Band/Orchestra Students**

It is important to remember that students of this age look up to their older peers so involving high school band/orchestra students can serve to motivate the beginners and their parents to stick with it. Reach out to your high school directors to become involved by:

- Asking high school students (in uniform) to serve as ushers to distribute programs as people enter.
- Asking high school students (in uniform) to “meet and greet” the parents/students as they begin to show up to the warm-up area.
- Asking like-instrument high school students (in uniform) to assist in tuning the instruments for the beginners.
- For band, arranging for the entire high school marching band to burst into the performance area (as a surprise) playing the high school fight song just prior to the final selection. After students play their final selection, ask the high school band students to congratulate (i.e. high-five) the beginners.
- Arranging for a high school student combo (or several soloists) to perform at the post-performance reception.
- Asking high school students to send a congratulatory note to a beginner who played a like-instrument being sure to write something like, “looking forward to seeing you in our high school band/orchestra!”



g. Certificate of Advancement for  
Student Participants



# h. Certificate of **Music Ed Leadership** for High School Student Participants



# Response from LIVE SESSION at Midwest *Poll Everywhere* via Smart Phone

Parents, what one word would you use to describe  
your reaction to today's performance?

# Response from LIVE SESSION at Midwest

Parents, what one word would you use to describe your reaction to today's performance?

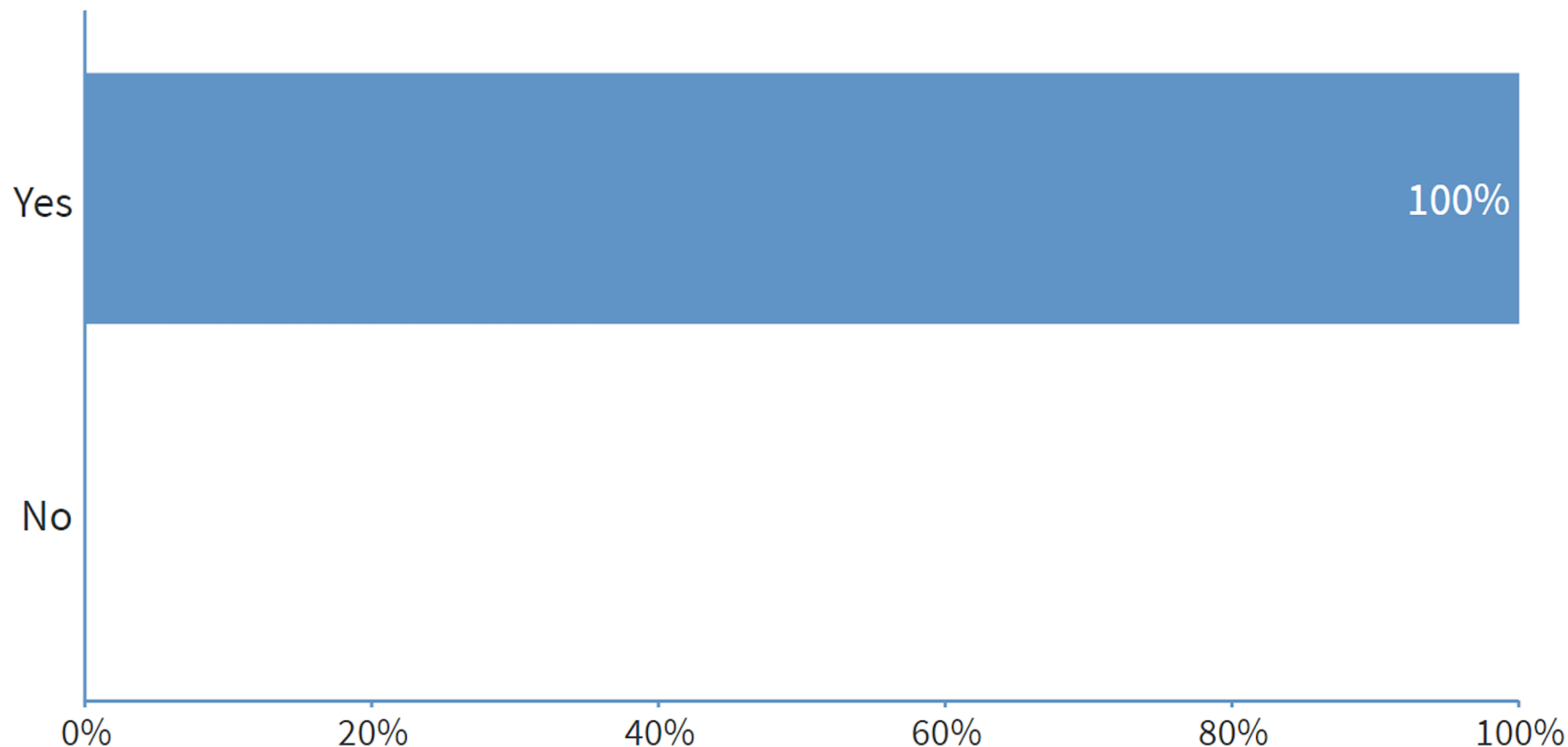


# Response from LIVE SESSION at Midwest

**Parents, now that you have seen your child perform, are you more likely to encourage your child to stick with band?**

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# It's all FREE to Download!

[nammfoundation.org/fpndoc](http://nammfoundation.org/fpndoc)



“Success”

Engage the Parents EARLY!

View Video here: [https://youtu.be/zeo\\_VwHdsDE](https://youtu.be/zeo_VwHdsDE)



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“Success”  
Engage the Parents EARLY!







# Modeling



# *The S.M.A.R.T. Approach to Retention*

## *“Modeling”...What Research Tells Us*

- After family members, young teens emulate those they know best.
- Young teens seek to maintain connections and friendships with **older peers** who they often choose to imitate.
- High school music students develop leadership skills by **mentoring younger students**.



# “Modeling”

Demonstrate what is in THEIR futures!  
*High school students can help. . .*



- Teach Private Lessons
- Coach Sectionals
- Serve as Leaders for MS/ES Band Activities/Events



# “Modeling”

## *Free Summer Camp for Beginners Coached by High School Students*



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## “Modeling”

Show that “We Care About You!”

*Congratulations on  
your performance in  
the Winter Concert!  
Can't wait for you to  
join us in the  
middle/high school  
program!*





# “Modeling”



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# “Modeling”

Find a Way for your Beginners to hear and see Live Music  
*They have no idea that their instrument can do what they will hear!*







# Activities





*Keeping “Activities” in Mind*  
Students thrive from rewarding experiences.  
Keep them engaged!



[musicedconsultants.net/  
conference-materials](http://musicedconsultants.net/conference-materials)

# Have Students Perform Early and Often

## The “2-Note” Partnership Halftime Show





# Have Students Perform Early and Often

## The “2-Note” Partnership Halftime Show



## The Partnership Halftime Show: *Pre-game “Activities”*

- a. Have your high school students host the middle school beginners for a pre-game pizza party.



# The Partnership Halftime Show:

## *Pre-game “Activities”*

- b. Have the beginner band/s sit with the HS band at the game and make it a “thing!”



T-Shirts  
Face-painting  
Spirit Games

- Sectional Cheering
- Instrument Decorating





# The Partnership Halftime Show:

## *Pre-game “Activities”*

- c. Have high school boosters host a beginner parent reception and invite BOTH principals to speak.



# The Partnership Halftime Show:

## *Pre-game “Activities”*

- d. Provide VIP seating in the stands for beginner parents and treat them like GOLD because THEY ARE.



# “Activities”

## Organize a Service Project

### Food Pantry Drive



### Thank You Notes to a Favorite Teacher

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*“Activities”*

Have Beginners Participate in Signing Day!

**Elective Season**



*“Activities”*

Have Beginners Participate in Signing Day!

# Signing Day 2020





## “Activities”

# Sign Up for Band!



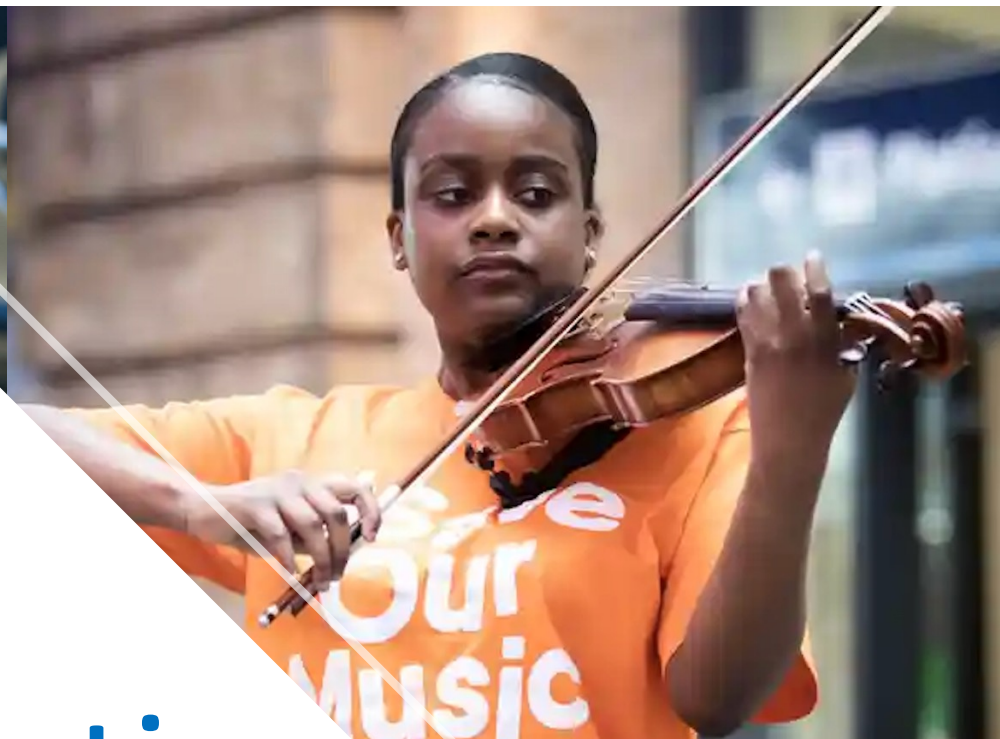
Tony Wright  
Mozart MS Band



*“I like to make  
friends and  
perform for my  
family. Just do it!”*

*See your music teacher or  
guidance counselor*





# Reflection





# *Keeping “Reflection” in Mind*

What am I really  
getting out of all  
of this?



# *Keeping “Reflection” in Mind Music Makes the Difference Because...*



Students need to  
realize how  
music-making  
**IMPACTS** their  
lives and  
**ENRICHES** them.



*Music Makes the Difference Because...*  
Build Word Clouds



# *Reflection*

## Making New Friends



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# *Reflection*

## Experiencing the Joy of Music-Making



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# “Reflection”

*It Gives Us a Unified Purpose!*

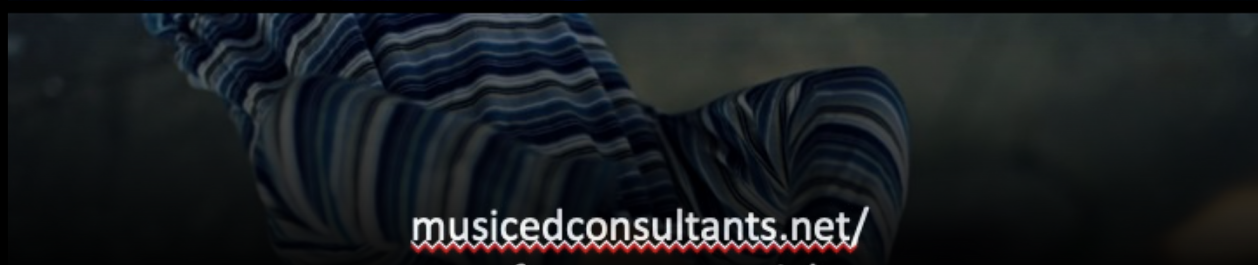


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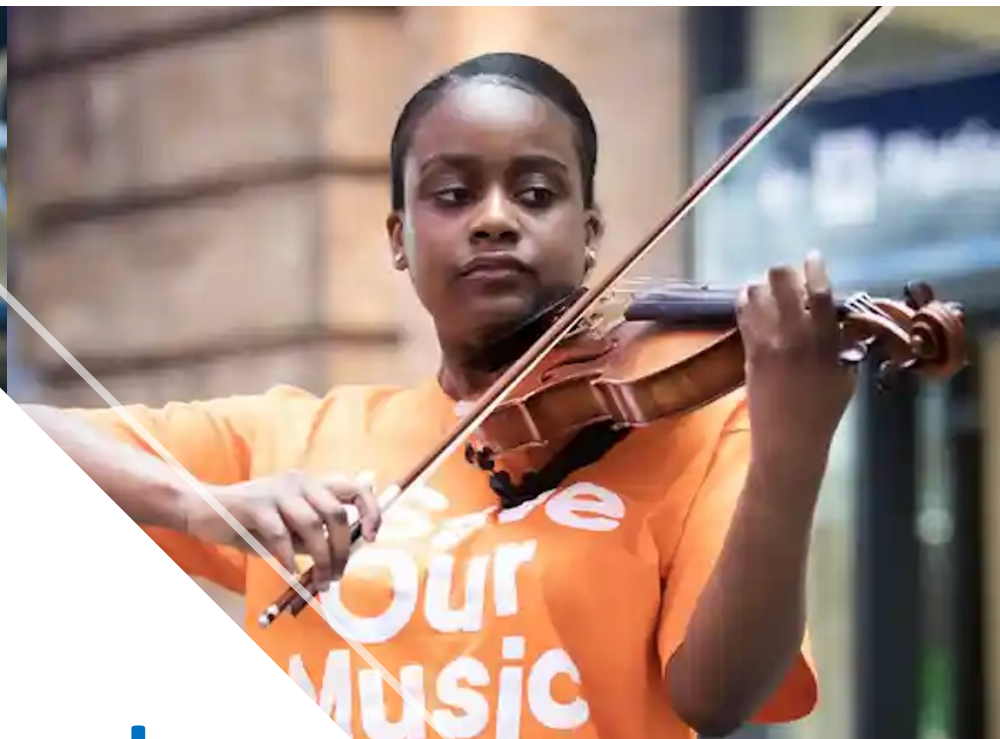
*Reflection*

It's Fun!



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Trust





## *Establishing “Trust”*

Maintaining **Integrity** and **Confidence** by keeping our word and following through on promises made.

Communicating our **Vision** and **Values** so that everyone understands our purpose and core beliefs. Why teach music?

Showing **Respect** and demonstrating **Compassion** through servant leadership. Know your why.

# *The **S.M.A.R.T.** Approach to Retention*

Success

Modeling

Activities

Reflection

Trust

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Receive FREE  
student  
recruiting,  
retention,  
advocacy, and  
teacher support  
tips monthly





[MSFQ.org/guide](https://MSFQ.org/guide)

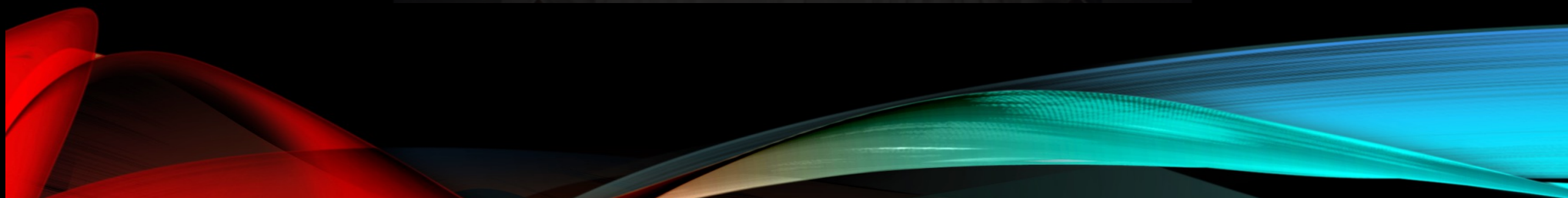


# Additional M.A.C. Resources

## MusicAchievementCouncil.org



# Your Enthusiasm is What Matters!





# Thanks to Our Sustaining Industry Sponsors



MusicAchievementCouncil.org

# Thank You!



Contact Information:

Marcia Neel

[marcia@musicedconsultants.net](mailto:marcia@musicedconsultants.net)

Will be posted:

[musicedconsultants.net/  
conference-materials](http://musicedconsultants.net/conference-materials)

