
August's MSFQ — tips to help grow your music program

2 messages

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This month's MSFQ tips come from Senior Director of Education at Yamaha and president of Music Education Consultants, Inc. [Marcia Neel](#).

MUSIC ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL

MSFQ Tips

AUGUST 2022

RECRUITMENT TIPS

The best recruitment tool is a large, highly visible program where the quality performances of the current students are what encourage new students to join! The goal is to make it a program that everyone wants to participate in when they come to your school.

However, there are always students who slip through the cracks during registration or those who are brand new to the school, so we also encourage the following:

1. Confirm your class lists.

If you haven't already, contact the music educators who taught your incoming beginners last year to reconfirm the names of students who should be enrolled in your program. Make personal contact with those students and/or the parents of any who have not yet appeared on your roster to get them registered.

2. Communicate with your counselors and supervising administrator.

Provide a list of your courses and their meeting times to the counselors and copy your supervisor. If you have a list of those students who should be in each class, attach it to the list. Keep in mind that the counselors may not know which courses are designated for specific levels of students (e.g. brass, woodwinds, percussion, etc.) so be sure to also include descriptions for each class and ensure that new students are placed appropriately.

RETENTION TIPS

1. Get your First Performance National Day of Celebration kit.

Now is the time to schedule your First Performance Concert to take place in the 6th - 7th week of school! There is nothing so exciting as this first concert experience, so take part in the [First Performance National Day of Celebration](#) (FPNDOC) celebrated no later than the third Thursday of November (or whenever the timing is best for your program). Don't wait to get the students pumped up about performing!



Materials provided in the FPNDOC Toolkit include:

- Instructional Letter to Director
- Modifiable Invitation to Parents
- Modifiable Invitation to Principal
- Modifiable **Certificate of Advancement** for Beginners
- Ideas to Involve High School Students to serve as Music Education Leaders
- Modifiable **Certificate of Music Education Leadership** for High School Students who serve in support of the event by becoming involved directly
- Template Script to Use or Modify
- Modifiable Press Release Kit

Get Your FPNDOC Kit

2. Choose several very simple exercises from your beginning method book and have your “newbies” teach these exercises to a parent or other adult within their family unit. Invite all the parents to perform these musical snippets in the final concert with their child standing right next to them. This provides a fun and rewarding experience where parents will have gained a better idea of how much their child is learning along the way, not to mention how much the beginners themselves will learn over the course of the year in teaching their instrument to another.

SUCCESS TIPS

Communicate! Communicate! Communicate!

Make it a PRIORITY to enhance your level of communication with all stakeholders this year! This not only includes the students but also parents, administration,

counselors, peer educators and staff.

1. Spread the word about how much the students are getting out of the program by developing a music e-news to showcase information about them and their accomplishments. Even the smallest thing can make the biggest difference to a child. Make posters of each beginner then post them around the school and on social media (secure permission). After the FPNDOC, ask each student to reflect on the experience by writing about it. Pull something from their individual writings to use on the poster along with a photo of that student. Create a mock-up to be used and ask your experienced students/student leaders to help in this effort. Here's an example:



2. Visit with your principal about the possibility of hosting a special event for your peer educators and staff. The purpose of this type of activity is to thank your peer teachers and staff (don't forget the counselors!) for supporting your students and the program overall. Giving back is essential and this is one way of showing your appreciation. Your principal will also be grateful for the morale-boost that will about as a result of this type of activity.

Below are two ideas to help you get started:

A. For those with marching bands, prior to the final home football game of the season, rally the entire Performing Arts Department to hold a chili supper for educators and staff just before the game. It can be held in the school cafeteria or even at a designated space near the field. Simply ask students to prepare their very favorite chili recipe to bring to school and mix all of the chilis into one big pot and heat through. You can't believe how all of these various recipes combine into the best chili you have ever tasted! Serve with a big chunk of bread and you're all set! Engage your parents by asking them to help serve and clean up afterward, but be sure they are finished in enough time to catch the final home game performance at halftime! (Be sure they get in for free!) You might consider asking several of the performing groups to perform or ask the cheerleaders to come by and lead some spirit-building cheers with everyone.

B. Consider hosting a Valentine's Day Spaghetti and Salad Appreciation Luncheon for your peer teachers and staff. Even though it's months away, start planning now! It may seem like a huge endeavor, but it is a wonderful way to bolster support for the program within the school. Use the red and white theme to decorate the tables. The key to the success of such an event is to have student performers during the lunches so plan to highlight your more advanced students who may be preparing for Solo & Ensemble Festival. You might also want to choose student emcees to keep the program running.

A Final Comment: Just remember, your program can become the centerpiece of your school but it is up to you to build your kingdom so that all of these activities can come to fruition successfully. You don't have to do everything yourself. Parents and others are eager to help so let them do it by showing them the way.

Best wishes for a successful 2022-23 school year!

Sincerely,

Marcia M. Neel

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