

RESOURCES FOR STUDENT RETENTION

Keeping students involved in music education all the way through high school involves early planning and action. Gain access to invaluable materials online.

BY MARCIA NEEL

One of the hallmarks of highly successful instrumental music educators is their desire to continually seek out new ways to “build a better mousetrap.” For example, they look for new rehearsal and conducting techniques, innovative ideas to reach others through advocacy and more effective strategies to enhance recruitment and retention. These and a plethora of other topics have been addressed in resources provided by the Music Achievement Council (MAC), a not-for-profit organization sponsored by the National Association of School Music Dealers (NASMD) and the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM).

The MAC resources presented below have been created by teachers for teachers to help with recruitment and retention. They are available on the MAC website at www.musicachievementcouncil.org. “First Performance Concert” book costs \$45 while the rest are available as free downloads.

1 First Performance: A Demonstration Concert for Beginning Instrumental Music

For Band: http://4wrd.it/MAC_Band

For Orchestra: http://4wrd.it/MAC_Orchestra



Available for beginning band or orchestra, the “First Performance” materials help students demonstrate what they have learned in a short 30-minute concert to be presented within the first six to eight weeks after picking up their instruments. The package features sheet music, programs and a script that can be read by the school principal, a band parent or other invited emcee.

The timing of “First Performance Concert” creates excitement for parents and students alike, inspiring young musicians to practice more because they have quickly learned the satisfaction of a well-prepared show.

To further encourage retention, you can involve high school students as ushers, hosts or guest performers. In the case of band, a surprise appearance by the high school marching ensemble just prior to the conclusion of the show might be an impactful way to provide beginners and their parents with the “long view” of the music education program.

2 A Practical Guide to Recruitment and Retention

http://4wrd.it/MAC_RecruitRetention

One of MAC’s most successful resources, “A Practical Guide to Recruitment and Retention,” compiles ideas and practices of music teachers, music dealers and the music products industry.

Here are two key concepts discussed in the booklet:

- Don’t miss any prospective students
- Don’t try to avoid dropouts—rather, strive to improve retention



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marcia Neel is senior director of education for the Yamaha Corporation of America Band and Orchestral Division. She is president of Music Education Consultants Inc., and serves as the education advisor to the Music Achievement Council. In this capacity, she presents sessions with practical success strategies for music educators at state music conferences, district in-service days and dealer workshops. To inquire about hosting or attending a session in your area, contact marcia@musiceducationconsultants.net.

3 Tips for Success: Guide for Instrumental Music Teachers

http://4wrd.it/MAC_TipsForSuccess

This guide covers 24 topics that fall under four general areas—The Classroom, The Business Side of Teaching, Telling the Story and Supporting Music Education. Many tips include supplemental videos from directors who explain how they have implemented the specific concepts.

4 Bridging the Gap Between Middle School and High School

http://4wrd.it/MAC_BridgingTheGap

The transition from middle school to high school has been repeatedly identified as being the most crucial period in retaining students. The key to successful retention is action. This publication provides strategies that directors, parents, principals, music supervisors and even the students themselves can implement to create a more seamless changeover as musicians advance from middle school to high school programs.

5 Bonus: Be Part of the Music

<http://4wrd.it/BePartOfTheMusic>

In addition to the tools provided by MAC, check out the website Be Part of the Music, created by Scott Lang. This collection of written content and video materials provides information for students and educators segmented by band and orchestra as well as by middle school and high school. 