



# MUSIC ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL

Music Teacher's Professional Development

With the coronavirus pandemic continuing to surge across the country, you undoubtedly have questions about how school will look when the new year begins. But regardless of how your district intends to start, there are important things you can do to welcome and prepare your students when the time comes.



One of the first things to do before the new school year begins is to make sure you have all of the students you are expecting on your incoming rosters. As we know, there are times when students fall through the cracks for one reason or another, and it is better to deal with this now to avoid delays once school starts. For beginning programs, contact the students' previous music teachers from the various schools the students are coming from to confirm the list of students who should have enrolled.

Next, contact your administrator or guidance department to get a copy of the official roster of students who are enrolled, and compare this list with the ones provided by the previous music teachers. If you are missing students, go find them and reach out to them (or their parents) to reconfirm their enrollment. The conversation can go something like this: "We are looking forward to having Susie in band this coming year but her name has not yet appeared on the roster. I'm calling to assist with making those arrangements for you." Most parents would probably be thrilled to get a helpful call like this from you. Be sure to do the same for returning students.

Once you have the official roster of beginning students, divide up their names among your leaders and have them write a "Welcome to Band / Orchestra" email or snail mail note to each of your beginners. If instruments have already been selected, divide up the names accordingly so that current students are writing to a beginner of their same instrument type. You may need to write out the actual content of the brief note (and how the note should be addressed and signed), but that's part of the learning process and it helps to ensure that the message that you want to get out is actually sent. It would be extra special if you could provide the note cards (and stamps) to your leaders for this purpose. You can try using VistaPrint — the prices are reasonable and your own design can be printed right on the front. The school's return address can even be printed right on the envelopes. Think of how excited the beginning students will be to get such a note from one of their peer leaders! This is money well-spent. (VistaPrint just launched their semi-annual sale. More info at [www.vistaprint.com](http://www.vistaprint.com))

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## **Retention Tip**

The activity above that asks current leaders to send notes to incoming students should also be considered a retention tip. Any time students are engaged actively in the inner-workings of the organization of the ensemble, it increases buy-in and

In addition, have a meeting with your leaders to describe the setting of the course for the reopening of school and ask them to host a Zoom meeting or Google chat with the returning students in their section to share these plans with the others. You might consider asking your leaders to share out parts for music (and a recording of their part, if possible) that you will be rehearsing upon return. The key here is to lean on your leaders to help generate excitement with their peers. They will accept the challenge and will be inspired by your faith in them to take up this responsibility.

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### **Success Tip**

If you haven't already done so, contact your principal to ask how you can help with the reopening process or offer a couple of new ideas of your own to create a positive and healthy school climate. How can your students serve as models for the younger, incoming students? How can you and your students help celebrate the reopening of school? How can you and your students help with starting new traditions this year? What projects can you and your students take on to serve the greater good (e.g. food drives, etc.)? Whatever it is, you and your students have so much to offer and there is so much more to being involved in music beyond playing the notes. We are a family and helping others makes us better as individuals and the family even stronger. The music-making is the icing on the cake!

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We know these are trying times for everyone, but the future will be brighter. Thank you for all you do as a music educator.

Better days are ahead,