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Recruitment & Retention Strategies

Developing a Band Program that Welcomes, Encourages, and Supports ALL Students



OVERVIEW

- The importance of a comprehensive recruitment strategy.
- Potential recruits.
- Important considerations during the recruitment process.
- Obstacles that can discourage enrollment in band.
- Optimal time to recruit.
- Resources to assist in the recruitment process.
- **♦** Things to avoid.

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Improve Retention.

(Continued on next slide)

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Recruitment & Retention Strategies

The importance of a comprehensive recruitment strategy

- Inform students and parents in the feeder school that a band program exists.
- Inform students and parents of the opportunities available in the band.
- > Band is usually not a required course of study.



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Recruitment & Retention Strategies <u>INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS</u>

Potential recruits

- > ALL students currently attending the 5th grade in the feeder schools.
- ALL siblings of current students who will attend the feeder schools in the future.
- All new students moving into the attendance zone for your school.



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Recruitment & Retention Strategies

Important considerations during the recruitment process

- **Students AND Parents are the target audience of recruitment efforts.**
- Balanced instrumentation is required for meaningful music study from the 6th through the 12th grades.
- Inventory must be sufficient to allow students to study tuba, baritone sax, bass clarinet, bassoon, horn, oboe, and other highly-priced instruments.

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Recruitment & Retention Strategies

Obstacles that can discourage enrollment in band

- Purchase/Rental cost for a band instrument.
- Demands placed on the family calendar by MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND rehearsals, concerts, and/or other activities taking place outside the school day.
- Eventual expense and demands placed on the family calendar by HIGH SCHOOL BAND rehearsals, concerts, and/or other activities taking place outside the school day.
- > Peer pressure not to join the band.
- Unethical recruitment practices of other school groups (music and/or sports).



Recruitment & Retention Strategies

Optimal time to recruit

- Throughout the entire school year (Remember: You are always recruiting CURRENT band members to remain in band)
 - Every class rehearsal
 - Every concert
 - Every PTSA meeting
 - Every Open House
- Final weeks of the school year
- Throughout the summer months
- Final weeks of summer
- First days of the school year

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Recruitment & Retention Strategies

Resources to assist in the recruitment process

- Current band members
- Current band parents and family members
- Databases of names and contact information maintained by the school system for current 5th grade students.
- > Automated phone calling services available through the school system.
- > PTSA meetings at the feeder schools
- > Fall and spring festivals at the elementary schools.
- Local news media
- Social media
 - Band website (useful for those moving into the attendance zone)
- Facebook
- Many more!

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Recruitment & Retention Strategies

Things to avoid

- > Avoid any questionable or unethical recruitment practices.
- Never recruit active members in other school music ensembles.
- Never communicate false advertisement about the band program.
- Never withhold information about time commitment or expenses.
- Never publish an incomplete band calendar for the year. Calendar should show August through May.
- Never discourage any student due to disability, gender, race, or religion.



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Improve Retention Strategies

Treat ALL students with respect and recognize their human dignity.

- > Help each student become the best musician they can be.
- > Build a band with a fine sound built on strong fundamentals.
- Adopt the philosophy that the band director SERVES the students... the students do not SERVE the band director.
- Respect the family calendar of each student by publishing a COMPLETE and HONEST calendar of ALL band obligations PRIOR to the start of each school year.
- NEVER make attendance MANDATORY for unexpected rehearsals and/or performances added to the calendar AFTER the students and parents have made the commitment to participate for the school year.
- **>** Run efficient, productive, and positive rehearsals.

Recruitment & Retention Strategies

- Work with the middle school band director to gather a database of 5th grade students
 - Name
 - Phone Numbers
 - E-Mail addresses
 - USPS mailing address
- Use existing social media
 - Websites
 - Blogs
 - PTSA Electronic Newsletters
 - Automated phone calling systems

Recruitment & Retention Strategies <u>SUMMER MONTHS</u>

- Contact your local school secretary for names of students moving into your attendance zone who did not attend a feeder school.
- Post a highly visible recruitment link on your band website for use by families planning to move into your attendance zone.
- Distribute your own band newsletter along with an informative video with video testimonials recorded by current band parents and students.
 Include information to encourage parents to contact YOU.
- > Not all parents attend parent information meetings.
- > Use ALL available methods of communication.

Recruitment & Retention Strategies BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

- > Orientation meeting with all parents (7:00 PM-ish) prior to the first day of school.
 - Explain the guided instrument selection process.
 - Explain required forms for scheduling students into the band.
- Orientation assembly during the school day with ALL 6th grade students during the first week of school.
 - Include Chorus, Orchestra, and Band directors.
 - Provide information letter for students to take home to parents.
 - Provide live demonstration of all instruments offered.
 - Avoid gender bias for specific instruments.

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Recruitment & Retention Strategies BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

> Hold follow-up meetings with students in smaller groups.

- Provide detailed discussion of the various instruments.
- Guide students on the instrument selection process.
- Distribute registration forms to be submitted for joining the band.
 - Require a parent signature to confirm instrument selection and permission to join band.



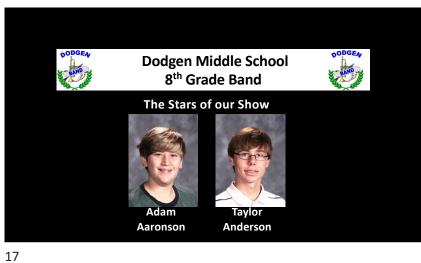
Recruitment & Retention Strategies

- > All concerts throughout the year serve as a recruitment tool.
 - Each concert program should Include:
 - Names of every student performer
 - ✓ If you don't place student names in the program, then leave your name off of the cover! THEY are the stars!
 - ✓ Pre-concert slide show highlighting performers (demo sample)
 - Student successes, recognition, and awards
 - Future band performances and activities
 - Statistics supporting participation in band.

NOTE

If a band photo is made, make sure the director is NOT front and center.

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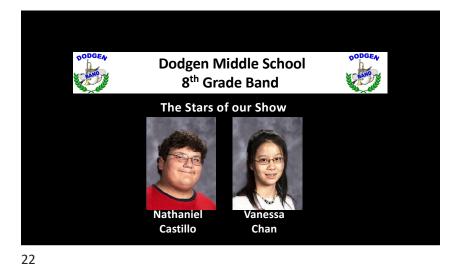












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Recruitment & Retention Strategies

PERFORMANCES AT THE FEEDER SCHOOLS

- Have small ensembles, or full band, perform at PTA meetings at the elementary schools.
- Have small ensembles or full band perform at Fall or Spring Festivals sponsored by the elementary schools.

NOTE

Don't be so consumed with performances out-of-state that you forget to perform frequently in your home community.



Recruitment & Retention Strategies INSTRUMENTATION

Anticipate the instrumentation demands of the literature.

 Musical understanding and development are enhanced through balanced instrumentation.

- **V** The middle school director is responsible for setting up proper instrumentation for continued study in the high school band program.
- ✓ Plan/anticipate that a certain number of students will move away or drop band. Don't start 4 tubas thinking the high school will have those same 4 tubas 4 years later.



