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**Western Carolina University**  
 Summer Symposium  
 Cullowhee, NC  
 Monday, July 11, 2022  
 6:45 PM - 7:45 PM  
[www.DrCRJackson.com](http://www.DrCRJackson.com)

## Recruitment & Retention Strategies

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



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## Recruitment & Retention Strategies

### 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.
- ◆ Improve Retention.

(Continued on next slide)

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## Recruitment & Retention Strategies

### OVERVIEW

- ◆ Focus on the Summer Months
- ◆ Focus on the Beginning of the School Year
- ◆ Focus During the School Year
- ◆ Performances at the Feeder Schools

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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

#### INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

**Potential recruits**

- ALL students currently attending the 5<sup>th</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup> 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).



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### 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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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## Recruitment & Retention Strategies

### Improve Retention

- 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.

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## Recruitment & Retention Strategies

### SUMMER MONTHS

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



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### Recruitment & Retention Strategies SUMMER MONTHS

- 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.

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### 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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.



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### Recruitment & Retention Strategies DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR

- 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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 **Dodgen Middle School**  
**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Band** 

**The Stars of our Show**

	
<b>Adam Aaronson</b>	<b>Taylor Anderson</b>

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 **Dodgen Middle School**  
**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Band** 

**The Stars of our Show**

	
<b>Justin Bae</b>	<b>Caroline Bergwall</b>

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 **Dodgen Middle School**  
**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Band** 

**The Stars of our Show**

	
<b>Connor Bhandari</b>	<b>Eric Brosius</b>

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 **Dodgen Middle School**  
**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Band** 

**The Stars of our Show**

	
<b>Michelle Brown</b>	<b>Annique Browne</b>

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**Dodgen Middle School**  
**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Band**


**The Stars of our Show**

  
**Eric Bryant**

  
**Jack Burrows**

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**Dodgen Middle School**  
**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Band**


**The Stars of our Show**

  
**Nathaniel Castillo**

  
**Vanessa Chan**

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**Recruitment & Retention Strategies**  
DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR

- Invite guest performers to perform at winter holiday concerts...
  - Band Alumni
  - Parents
  - Family members
  - Faculty, Staff, Administrators
  - Make at least one concert each year a true P.T.S.A. event.



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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.

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## Recruitment & Retention Strategies

### STUDENT/PARENT ORIENTATION SESSIONS "INFORMATION FAIRS"

- If your school holds an information fair, set up an attractive and informative booth/table.
- Have a small ensemble perform near the booths.
- Display photos of activities
- QR Codes of concerts
- Plaques/Awards/Recognitions
- Consider a slide show projected inside a Bass Drum!
- Prepare band room for visitors...  
**CLEAN UP THE PLACE!**



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## Recruitment & Retention Strategies

### INSTRUMENTATION

- ✓ Anticipate the instrumentation demands of the literature.
- ✓ Musical understanding and development are enhanced through balanced instrumentation.
- ✓ 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.

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# ALL Students



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