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Recruitment & Retention Strategies

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

Jacksonville State University
 Jacksonville, AL

Spirit Camp
 Director's Track
 Thursday, June 13, 2019
www.DrCRJackson.com



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.

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

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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INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

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.



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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 high-price instruments.



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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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Optimal time to recruit

- Throughout the entire school year
(Remember: You are always recruiting CURRENT band members to remain)
 - 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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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



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Things to avoid

- Avoid any questionable or unethical recruitment practices.
 - Never recruit active members in others 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
 - Never discourage any student due to disability, gender, race, or religion.



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Improve Retention

- Treat ALL students with respect and recognize their human dignity.
- Help each student become the best musician they can be.
- Build an 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 student has made the commitment to participate for the school year
- Run efficient, productive, and positive class rehearsals.

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SUMMER MONTHS

- 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



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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 DVD with video testimonials recorded by current band parents and students.
 - Include information so that parents can contact YOU.
- Not all parents attend parent information meetings.
- Use ALL available methods of communication.

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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.

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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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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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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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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**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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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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