

# Beginning Band Recruiting from A to Z

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## OCTOBER

- (1) December Tour approval from your principal (A performance opportunity)
- (2) Set up December Tour with elementary music teacher. (40 min concert, during band time if possible). Stagger the TIMES of each concert so that the band will not miss the same classes.
- (3) Needed from the elementary music teacher:
  - Permission from Elementary Principal for a 40 min. performance
  - Preferential seating for the 5th graders. Any other grades that will fit in the cafeteria are fine.
  - Number of chairs needs (set-up in 5 rows)
  - Microphone and microphone stand
  - Please have the kids seated BEFORE the start time of the concert
- (4) Order the Selmer Test from music dealer (tape, enough forms, & several of the answer keys)

## NOVEMBER

- (1) Confirm day and time of concert with Elementary Music Teachers
- (2) Put in Bus requests for December tour
- (3) By Thanksgiving: Put info in your teacher's mailboxes about the December tour

## DECEMBER

- (1) HOLIDAY CONCERT TOUR of Elementary Schools
  - Literature: Holiday Concert Music plus Essential Elements Xmas Book: "Sing along" type music.
  - Show individual instruments by having 1st chair players play an 8 measure "ditty"-(Star Wars)
  - Introduce those band members who went to that elementary school.
  - Tell the kids: "I will see you in February to talk about band in middle school"
- (2) Give Selmer Tests to teachers for January administration (return deadline-last week of Jan.)
- (3) Approach your Middle School Counselors for the EXACT DATE that they will be signing up 5th graders for 6th grade. Pin them down! Your spring time-line depends on this information! You must set your instrument screening and selection nights BEFORE the 5<sup>th</sup> graders choose their 6<sup>th</sup> grade electives!!! Our counselors sign up kids at the end of February and the first week in March.**  
Based on this information, set days and times for the instrument screening/selection meetings in February.
- (4) Call Music Store(s) to arrange drive nights in February (2 days, four hours each night)
- (5) Recruit Band Directors/ Private Lesson staff to help with those days. Our Band Boosters pay 8 teachers \$85 per night for them to come screen kids for four hours (plus dinner).
- (6) Set –up Instrument Demonstrations (45 min each) on individual elementary campuses for February (before TMEA).** Only see 2 classes (44 kids maximum) at one time so you don't have to deal with discipline, and you can answer questions. Ask to use their regular music classroom and that the elementary teacher to be present during your presentations.
- (7) Finalize Recommended Instrument brands and supplies and send to local music companies.
- (8) Send THANK YOU e-mails to Elem. Music teachers for the Dec. Concerts (cc: their principals)

## JANUARY

(1) Get a list of ALL 5th grade students for each school from data clerk. The info should include their address, phone number, gender, and parent's last name.

**(2) Send a copy of the 5th grade list to each Elementary Music teacher for a CONFIDENTIAL RECOMMENDATION as to the students predicted success in music.**

This recommendation is due back to you with the Selmer tests the last week of January.

(3) If you can, get a list of the Gifted & Talented (GT) kids for Elem. schools & your current middle school's 6th grade GT list from your school's data clerk. You need to tell the 6<sup>th</sup> grade GT kids who are NOT in band, "If you ever wanted to be in band, this is your LAST chance. We take 7<sup>th</sup> grader beginners in with our 6<sup>th</sup> graders, but there is NO beginning band in 8<sup>th</sup> grade or in high school." Though 80%+ of the GT kids are already in band, we have added quality kids this way!

(4) Confirm Instrument demonstration dates and times with your Elem. Music teacher

(5) End of the month (Pre recruiting trip)

- Select current 6<sup>th</sup> grade beginners to go recruiting with you (one or two from each section)

- Use 6th graders who are alumni from that elementary if possible and who were "popular." Also try to have a gender "variety" (If you bring only girls to show woodwinds, you are going to get only girls on woodwinds).

- Students are asked to: prepare a line from the book, say something they like about band, bring their wire music stand, and wear their band shirt (tucked in!)

- Send parent permission slips home to transport beginners (via band parent vehicles) and to allow them to get them out of classes to attend.

- Send field trip list to teachers. No 6<sup>th</sup> grader misses a class more than one time.

- Get assistant band director(s) or private teachers to cover your classes missed while recruiting.

(6) Photocopy information to go home with the 5th graders after the demonstrations:

Introductory letter, pictures and descriptions of the instruments, FAQ page, & reminder letter.

## FEBRUARY "CRUNCH TIME" (FIRST WEEK)

### **Instrument demonstrations:**

- Introduction: Band is both easy and hard depending on how hard you work at it or not. The more you practice the better you will be and the better you will like it!!

- Individually, the beginning students play a short line from their Essential Elements 2000 book

- Director still plays the usual cartoon tunes and trombone "special effects"

- The physics of the instrument are explained for each instrument (the reed, crowing, pressing valves, etc.). **This is important to convey because it means you are a part of the music**

**education curriculum of the elementary school. This way you have justification for going to the elementary schools because it is not JUST a recruiting trip!!**

- Important points to get across in the demonstration:

(A) Hundreds of thousands of kids start band in 6th grade every year - You can do it too!

There is no beginning band in 8<sup>th</sup> grade or in high school. This is the best time to join!

(B) There is no such thing as a "girls" or a "boys" instrument!

(C) You CAN be in band AND be in athletics, cheer leading, GT, and the math team

(D) You DO NOT have to buy an instrument, we prefer you RENT the first year!

(E) You only have ONE ELECTIVE next year, take band next year then you can take 2 electives the following year in 7th grade.

EXTRAS: The 6<sup>th</sup> graders will tell what they like about band: trips, making music, writing music, parties, being with friends, the challenge of playing a musical instrument, being a musician, and their fun band directors!

- Hand out the Info Packet: Introductory letter, pictures and descriptions of the instruments, and FAQs. Give teacher instrument screening reminder letters for the 5<sup>th</sup> grader's "Thursday Folder"

## **FEBRUARY “CRUNCHIER TIME” (SECOND WEEK)**

**(1) CALL EVERY 5th grader PERSONALLY to set up RESERVATIONS for a 30 min time slot at the Instrument screening night.** Yes, I personally call every 5<sup>th</sup> grader (280 kids) and ask them if they want to come to our instrument screening night and play on an instrument.

**This personal touch is what makes the biggest difference.**

**If you do nothing else in recruiting than making personal contact, your numbers will improve significantly!!**

Remind them that there is NO OBLIGATION to be in band if they attend this meeting.

(2) All students MUST have an appointment to attend the meeting! (Schedule 10-12 kids per 1/2 hour). Pin the parents down to make an appointment and they will show up 9 out of 10 times!

(3) On the phone I tell them either, their Selmer test score (if it is high or above average) and/or that they were recommended to me by their music teacher as someone who would be a very successful in band.

(4) Be sure to tell the parents that it is a come-and-go meeting and that you will not be meeting with them personally until AFTER their child has tried all the instruments that they are interested in trying. Be sure that you tell them that even though their appointment is on the half-hour that it will take an hour to try out 3-4 instruments and longer if they want to try all the instruments. If you don't explain this, they will think that they will be in-and-out in 30 min. and will be irate when they are there an hour plus!

- If you get them to the screening meeting 96% end up signing up for band. This is because (1) they see that making a sound on the instrument is not that hard, (2) they see their classmates excited, (3) the 5<sup>th</sup> parents become comfortable with the band program because current band parents are at the meeting to meet and greet and answer their “parent” questions.

(5) Set MAX instrumentation for each instrument class.

(6) Secure proper AC/Heating for the cafeteria during the screening/selection nights.

(7) Secure 15 long tables for the drive: 8 for instrument booths, 2 for registration, 1 for check out (where I sit and “close the deal”), 3 for the music company (if applicable).

(8) Send THANK YOU e-mails to Elem. Music teachers for their help! (cc: their principals)

## **FEBRUARY “CRUCHIEST TIME” (THIRD & FOURTH WEEK)**

### **Instrument screening/selection nights (4:30pm-8:30pm)**

- Information sheet (contact information, previous musical exp, 3 choices of instruments)

- Band directors/private teachers man the following booths: flute, double reed, clarinet, and a woodwind overflow screener, high brass, low brass, an overflow brass screener, & percussion.

We do not have them try saxophone, we recommend sax. based on their clarinet screening.

- The students can try as many instruments as they would like, but they MUST try at least THREE instruments (either two woodwinds and one brass, or two brass and one woodwind, or more!)

- Percussion test: Piano experience, steady pulse, hand coordination.

- We have a LOTTERY for students wanting to play Saxophone, Percussion, and Double Reeds.

We allow only 10% of the beginning class to play saxophone and 10% of the beginning class to play percussion. We start about 4 oboes and 4 bassoons per year, max. We post the lottery results on our website the next morning. If your name is not drawn for these instruments, you get your second choice of instrument. Because the kids are a bit intimidated by the lottery, only the die-hard kids even decide to try for the sax & percussion lottery. About half of the kids who tests well gets to play those instruments. We only have about 4 kids who don't take band at all because they did not get saxophone or percussion. Sorry.

- Select an instrument (circle on the Information sheet) or go into the lottery.

- You can now meet with a music company representative who is here (No obligation!)

- Remind them: Sign-up for band as your FIRST ELECTIVE and WRITE IN the name of your instrument on your 6<sup>th</sup> grade choice card so the counselor knows what band class to put them.

## MARCH

- (1) Go through the 5th grader's FALL CHOICE CARDS:
  - Did the kids you screened sign-up for band? Correct instrument choice?
  - There will be a few kids that were screened that decide NOT to be in band. Find out who they are so you can "free up" a school instrument for someone else.
  - There will be some kids that signed up for band that NEVER contacted you or came to be screened. You must get their contact information and screen them by May to balance classes and order any additional school instruments. Very few of these kids will work out.
- (2) Send a roll sheet to your counselors with which kids you want in which periods.

## APRIL

UIL!!! No recruiting tasks in April.

## MAY

Send out first letter confirming their instrument, getting their equipment, and introducing them to the private lessons program. Let them know that a professional musician will be contacting them this month to invite them to take summer private lessons.

## JULY

Final letter regarding fall supplies, etc.

## Other Recruiting Tips

- **Can't take kids off campus?** Go to the elementary schools by yourself and show the instruments. Make a 20 min. video of your kids playing their horns, having fun, and talking about what they love about band. If your school has a Video Production department, they would love work on this for you as a class project.
- **Don't have time to make phone calls?** Have a professional brochure made up and go to the elementary school(s) during their lunch a few days. Pass out info and schmooze.
- **Bring the kids to your campus?** Caution: Having a recruiting day at your school will allow ALL your school's fine arts to recruit. Theatre Arts will REALLY cut into your "haul."

**NOW GET OUT THERE AND FIND  
YOUR FIRST CHAIR PLAYERS!**

**THEY ARE WAITING FOR YOU!**