Getting and Keeping Students: Some Ideas That Work
Prepared for the KU Choral Methods Class
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Understanding why students enroll in choir classes
1. Their friends are in choir / it is an acceptably cool thing to do
2. They see it as a break from heavy academic courses or an easy “A”
3. They need a fine arts credit to graduate
4. They want to go on a group trip (i.e. Disney World, getting out of school to perform, etc.)
5. They like the identity of belonging to a group (i.e. uniforms, social events)
6. They love to sing and want to study music (only a few)

Begin By Motivating and Retaining Your Current Students
I. Rehearsals must be a QUALITY EXPERIENCE
   A. Rehearsals require structure and organization
      1. Develop efficient routines for tasks (attendance, passing out music, etc.)
      2. List a rehearsal order on the board
      3. Plan to use every minute, stick to your schedule as much as possible
   B. Include opportunities for learning
      1. Vocal technique
      2. Choral technique
      3. Sight-Singing (both individual and group)
      4. Worthwhile music
   C. Remain pleasant and productive (choir rehearsal is business, but also should be fun)

II. Establish what it means to be a “CHOIR MEMBER” at your school
   A. Rehearsal and performance expectations
   B. Pride & traditions
   C. Uniforms
   D. Ice breaker games and social events

III. Provide RECOGNITION and opportunities for LEADERSHIP
   A. Choir awards
   B. Publicity
      1. Attractive concert programs with student names
      2. Intercom announcements for group and individual successes
      3. School and community newspapers/radio/TV
   C. Choir officers
      1. Must have meaningful duties
      2. Meet somewhat regularly to plan and communicate
      3. Use them to get feedback and look for ways to improve
   D. Special performing opportunities
      1. Solos and small ensembles featured on concerts
      2. Performances at school events (assemblies, banquets, etc.)
      3. Community performances
   E. Maintain a history
      1. Group photos from past years
      2. Scrapbooks
      3. Wills and legacies

IV. Special Motivators
   A. Types of performances (Musical, Pops Concert, Community Events, Professional Conferences)
   B. Choir retreat
   C. Making a professional recording
   D. Invite a guest clinician to work with your choirs (Record and Self-Critique)
   E. Include a guest artist, celebrity, administrator, area choir on your concert
   F. Choir trip
Look for Opportunities to Recruit New Choir Students

I. First – Establish a Quality Product
   A. Develop and be able to articulate a solid philosophy about teaching in general, and teaching music in particular
   B. Create clear-cut goals for your program and students, and communicate them effectively
   C. Maintain a good rapport with your administration, faculty, staff, and parents
   D. Put your current students in position to be successful

II. Make Yourself Visible
   A. In school – athletic events, clubs, morning or lunch duty, assemblies
   B. At your feeder schools
      1. Arrange to visit as a guest, listen to them perform, look for things to praise
      2. Arrange a joint concert by inviting them over, or better yet – taking your group to them
      3. Write a recruitment letter that touts the wonderful things about your program and invites them to join
   C. In your community – church choir, community theater, community choirs, civic groups

III. Target Boys
   A. You must understand the male changing voice stages thoroughly!!!
      1. Make time to work with adolescent boys
      2. Provide them lots of information about where they are and where they are going next
      3. Separate choir by gender if possible (7th – 10th grades)
   B. Feature a boys choir or ensemble on concerts and when recruiting (choose music carefully)
   C. Consider developing barbershop quartets, doo-wop, a cappella, rap, etc.
   D. Host a District Men’s Festival to include all the men from 7th – 12th grade

IV. Structure Your Program So There Is A Place for All
   A. Auditioned groups and non-auditioned groups
   B. Avoid conflicts with sports, student government, honors classes, etc. when possible
   C. Become an expert at your school’s schedule (know what meets when)
   D. Consider starting a faculty chorus, quartet, etc.

V. See Out the Type of Students You Need
   A. Referrals by other students
   B. Referrals by teachers, feeder school colleagues
   C. Befriend coaches, sponsors, counselors
   D. Look for talent at the school musical