

Student Retention Info Sheet

I've been thinking about how concerned many of you are over the future of band and orchestra offerings in our schools. While reflecting on the need for change is important, I want to remind you that "you got this". One of the hallmarks of our customers is their desire to continually seek out ways to "build a better mousetrap." For example, they look for new rehearsal and conducting techniques, innovative ideas to reach others through advocacy and more effective strategies to enhance recruitment and retention for their school's music education programs. This is what makes you both special and successful!

As a member of the [National Association of School Music Dealers](#) (NASMD) I'd like to share with you that these and other topics have been addressed in resources provided by the [Music Achievement Council](#) (MAC), a not-for-profit organization sponsored by the NASMD and the [National Association of Music Merchants](#) (NAMM). The MAC resources presented below have been created by teachers for teachers to help with recruitment and retention. They are available on the [NAMM Foundation Resources for Educators website](#). The "First Performance Concert" book costs \$45 online, but contact your A & G Representative for a free copy. The rest of the listed materials are available as free downloads:

1. [First Performance: A Demonstration Concert for Beginning Instrumental Music](#)

Available for [beginning band](#) or [orchestra](#), these "First Performance" materials help students demonstrate what they have learned in a short 30-minute concert to be presented within the first six to eight weeks after picking up their instruments. The package features sheet music, programs and a script that can be read by the school principal, a band parent or other invited emcee.

The timing of "First Performance Concert" creates excitement for parents and students alike, inspiring young musicians to practice more because they have quickly learned the satisfaction of a well-prepared show.

To further encourage retention, you can involve high school students as ushers, hosts or guest performers. In the case of band, a surprise appearance by the high school marching ensemble just prior to the conclusion of the show might be an impactful way to provide beginners and their parents with the "long view" of the music education program.

2. [A Practical Guide to Recruitment and Retention](#)

One of MAC's most successful resources, this booklet compiles ideas and practices of music teachers, music dealers and the music products industry, including the following two key concepts:

- Don't miss any prospective students
- Don't try to avoid dropouts — rather, strive to improve retention

3. [Tips for Success: Guide for Instrumental Music Teachers](#)

This guide covers 24 topics that fall under four general areas: The Classroom, The Business Side of Teaching, Telling the Story and Supporting Music Education. Many tips include supplemental videos from directors who explain how they have implemented the specific concepts.

4. [Bridging the Gap Between Middle School and High School](#)

The transition from middle school to high school has been repeatedly identified as being the most crucial period in retaining students. The key to successful retention is action.

This publication provides strategies that directors, parents, principals, music supervisors and even the students themselves can implement to create a more seamless changeover as musicians advance from middle school to high school programs.

5. Bonus: Be Part of the Music

In addition to the tools provided by MAC, check out the [Be Part of the Music website](#) created by Scott Lang. This collection of written content and video materials provides information for students and educators segmented by band and orchestra as well as by middle school and high school.