

Recruiting and Retention Ideas for Beginning High School Choral Directors

Lorraine Lynch

(Used with permission of New Jersey ACDA)

I hope the following outline gives you ideas for recruiting and retention in your choral program. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at lorrainealynch@gmail.com.

Basic goals/concepts at all levels:

Good quality builds numbers

- High tone quality and solid vocal technique
- Solid intonation
- Excellent phrasing and musicianship
- Quality literature appropriate for the level of singers
- Consistent rehearsal discipline and concert etiquette
- Solid and consistent warm-up regimen

Connections from school to school:

Communication builds numbers

- Teacher connection with elementary and middle grades
- Teacher connection with middle to high school grades

- Teacher connection between high school levels
- Communication between vocal teachers

Teaching concepts through performance literature

- Make sure the music you choose is appropriate for age and level, varied in style, and is of high quality.

Importance of balance in choirs

- The recruitment of and maintenance of both TB singers and SA singers in your SATB choir is important.
- Work at getting to know all the eighth graders in the school.
- Look for new eighth graders who might enjoy a music elective.
- Work for balance at select levels.
- The emphasis on curricular choirs is first.

Identify goals to school principal

- Explain why you need quantity and quality to develop excellence.
- Identify how he or she can help you. Ask for help!
- Identify if there is a fine arts requirement.
- Identify if the choral program meets state core curriculum requirements.

Role of student leadership

- Leaders insure continued choral enrollment from level to level. Place ownership on leaders to keep students signed up.
- Recruitment push from eighth to ninth grade and from sixth to seventh, fifth to sixth including visits, letters, concerts, promoting attendance at concerts at different levels plus sibling and friend connections.
- Create a legacy and traditions with alumni e-mails, opportunities to serve, MC concerts.

Emphasis on excellence in curricular choirs first

- All students must be in a curricular choir in order to participate in the extras: jazz, show, men's and women's choir plus madrigals.
- If a student is singing well in curricular choirs, all extra-curricular extensions will benefit as a by-product.
- If vocal technique is taught thoroughly in curricular choirs, a change in style for extra-curricular jazz and show choir music will be an easier task. Solid vocal technique should transfer through all styles.

Publicize each success as the choral program grows

- Keep track of and publicize how many students you attract and enroll each year.
- Work at getting news articles in local newspapers.
- Have students sing at public events, community meetings, and board meetings.
- Have a parent assigned to publicize the choral program and its concerts. 