

Telling the Story: Great Ways to Get Your Message Out

Regularly scheduled arts events open doors to community education. Concert audiences appreciate informative printed program notes or a presentation offering information about the particular compositions to be performed. Ask your music dealer for assistance with preparation and printing. How about sponsoring a lecture/demonstration on certain pieces or styles of music prior to, or during, a performance? A parent or faculty rhythm band accompanying your school group on an appropriate piece during a concert provides an *engaging experience for all*. Why not ask an audience member to “conduct” a piece that the performers know and can execute quite well?

Ideas to Implement

- **Put facts that support music education** on marquees and community bulletin boards, such as those at banks or grocery stores.
- **Put mailers in monthly credit card statements** from a local department store, or insert with monthly utility bills.
- **Provide recordings of school performance groups** to be played when callers are on hold on the school phone system (obtain all required copyright permissions).
- **Provide music-related statements on “table tents” for restaurants.**
- **Have students write letters inviting community members** to school music programs; program information can accompany the students’ invitation.
- **Stage a “music open house”** in which community members are invited to attend regularly scheduled classes.

Broadcast Your Act

Performing Wonders: Kids and the Arts, A Broadcaster Guide to Teaching Children About the Arts offers ideas to help radio or television stations give arts education visibility.

- **Special Report: Arts Education.** For a special news report or series, interview school officials and teachers to learn how schools use the arts as a learning tool.
- **On with the Show.** Follow a student music, dance or drama performance through casting and rehearsals to opening night.
- **Profile Student Artists.** Stations regularly produce “Student Athlete of the Week” features. Why not give the same kind of visibility to student artists?

To Get the Creative Juices Flowing, Consider the Following:

- A performance where a student or history teacher dresses like the composer of the piece and interjects stories of their inspiration or reasons for writing the

piece. Students love to see their teachers participate in these types of activities, plus it involves your faculty directly (thus allowing them to see the benefits of your program firsthand). And it involves student research—an interdisciplinary approach! Your administrators will see you as a real team leader.

- **Another performance for children and parents** could be an informal rehearsal of a quartet staged to demonstrate the collaborative process and exchange of ideas in bringing music to life. Building value for music also means sharing the process, not just the product!
- **Give a presentation on the nature of sound and demonstrate the ways** in which the various instruments create their own unique voice. The activities could include allowing children and parents to “test” each of the instruments. A connection to science!

- **Beginner-of-the-Month Awards.** Music teachers identify one beginning music student each month who has demonstrated significant effort, improvement or collegiality. A traveling trophy goes to the student’s school for display. The newspaper runs the student’s photo, providing public recognition and increased community awareness. Initially the trophy could be sponsored by the school music dealer.

To assist in recruiting and to help the visual arts and music teachers work together, hold a poster contest each fall and spring. Over a 2–3 week period, students create posters around the theme “Join Band!” or “Join Orchestra!” or “Join Choir!” Teachers select a poster to be displayed in the school. The school music dealer could provide an ice cream party for that student’s class. Later, display all the posters at a local bank. Local TV stations love covering this event!



Want more tips for keeping music strong in your schools?
Visit the site devoted to all things music advocacy: www.supportmusic.com

TIP 10