

More to Start Fewer to Quit



Transition Toolkit

More to Start. Fewer to Quit.

This Transition Toolkit supports instrumental music educators in strengthening recruitment and retention at critical transition points—elementary to middle school and middle school to high school. Centered on student voice, these strategies reduce fear, build belonging, and create continuity across feeder patterns.

Core Belief

Students are more likely to start—and more likely to stay—when they can see themselves in the program before they arrive.

Elementary to Middle School Strategies

- Beginner-to-beginner feeder school visits led by current students
- Student-led Q&A; panels addressing common fears and questions
- Welcome notes attached to course selection or registration materials
- Short video tours filmed by students in the rehearsal space
- Personal invitations to concerts and music events

Middle School to High School Strategies

- Freshman-to-8th-grade transition talks during rehearsals or assemblies
- Shadow-a-high-schooler music days
- Section-to-section mentoring across feeder schools
- High school concerts intentionally framed as recruitment events
- “What I Wish I Knew” student messaging campaigns

Why This Works

Peer-to-peer messaging builds trust, reduces anxiety, and creates early relationships that support long-term participation. Recruitment and retention become a single, unified effort.

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