Topic: Everything Plus the Kitchen Sink: Life In A Small School Music Program

Overview: All about surviving, and loving, small school music programs! Whether you are a collegiate music education student preparing to enter the profession, a beginning teacher finding your footing, or an experienced educator looking for fresh ideas, this session is for you. The reality of teaching in a small school is often overlooked, with music educators frequently wearing multiple hats, from elementary general music to secondary ensembles and everything in between.

This session will explore the unique challenges and rewards of teaching in a small school music program, including an elementary music survival guide for secondary-focused educators, lessons learned through experience, strategies for balancing multiple responsibilities, and practical tips for building and sustaining a thriving program in a small-school setting.

Participants will leave with realistic expectations, applicable strategies, fresh perspectives, and encouragement to not only survive but truly love teaching in a small school music program

Topics to Be Discussed:

- Navigating Your Role
    - What are your job titles and responsibilities?
    - You are responsible for the music education of your school; How do you handle that pressure?
    - Building a program with limited resources, time and members
        - Working with other activities and coaches
        - Advocating for your program and your students
        - Learning to compromise
- Teaching Different Age Levels and Content Areas
    - Lessons you can take with you!
        - Bouncing ball rhythms (3rd-12th)
        - Apple Tree (K-2)
        - Move-Sing-Play
        - Don't reinvent the wheel!!!
    - Elementary- Whether you thrive in the elementary classroom or not, this is the foundation and future of your program
    - Beginning band- How do I teach this noisemaker??

        - Quick strategies for beginning band
        - Benefit of being the general music teacher and incorporating band skills into class
    - Secondary
        - Getting on their level - Connection to their daily life
        - Contests, travel, and competition / Money and supplies
        - What do I do when music is required?
        - Teaching band as a vocal major/ Teaching choir as an instrumental major
            - Keep in contact with people that are the opposite of your strength area to get help when you are feeling lost. Find experienced teachers to serve as lifelines/mentors.
- Hard Lessons from our first two years
    - Navigating parents and admin
        - How to maintain a professional boundary and relationship.
    - Taking over a program
        - It is important to know if you are coming in after a rotating door of teachers or an established teacher. Different pressures that come with each.
        - Borrowing a program and making it yours
        - Concerts
        - Avoiding burnout- ask for help!
    - Being ok with not being perfect
        - Learning to teach takes time! You hear everybody say that, but it really is true.
        - Handling mistakes and growth

This will be a session FULL of ideas and advice! Please feel free to contact us for further information or resources! We are here to help!!!!

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