

## **“Feeding Frenzy”**

**Colorado Music Educators Association Clinic/Conference 2017**

**Thursday, January 26 2 PM Jones Room**

*Helpful tips on how to build, coordinate, and maintain a successful secondary (6-12) music program.*

David Saccardi, Orchestra Director from Loveland High School & Bill Reed Middle School  
Daniel Smith, Orchestra Director from Lucile Erwin Middle School  
Thompson School District R2-J, Loveland, CO

This session explores helpful tips and strategies that we have utilized over the past five years to grow our string programs to over five hundred string students between our three schools. Anyone who teaches secondary band, orchestra, or choir can apply the principles being discussed, as many of our ideas have come from band and choir teachers, as well as successful orchestra directors. Topics addressed today will include:

- How to work together with your feeder middle schools to matriculate 8th grade students into your high school program (we have a 98% retention rate between our two middle schools for 8th grade orchestra students going into Loveland High School)
- Tips and strategies on how a high school director can support their middle school feeders, such as joint concerts, guest conductor opportunities, etc.
- How to set up a positive and respectful relationship between middle school and high school directors, including strategies on conflict resolution.
- What to do if your feeder program is struggling or if your feeder program is not taught by someone in that content area (i.e. a vocalist teaching strings, etc.)

In the time that we have worked together, we have created a large and successful string program. Neither of us began with more than fifteen students in a class, and our groups number between 40-60 per class now, and our advanced ensembles consistently receive superior marks at large group festival.

Much of this success is due to a coordinated effort on both our parts at the middle school level in terms of what skills we have agreed to teach our kids, what type of repertoire we perform, and orienting our middle school students with the high school orchestra environment prior to 9th grade registration. We have modeled our techniques off of other successful feeder systems in Colorado, Texas, Michigan, and elsewhere across the country.

For further information, please contact us at:

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## **Part One - Establishing Positive Relationships**

- How to set up a positive and respectful relationship between middle school and high school directors, including strategies on conflict resolution.
  - Setting up a relationship with someone you know
    - Friendship: School vs. Life- Keeping it professional when you need to
  - Setting up a relationship with someone you don't know
    - Who initiates the conversation first? MS or HS teacher? How should one approach this?
- Tips and strategies on how a high school director can support their middle school feeders, such as joint concerts, guest conductor opportunities, etc.
  - Establishing a presence with 6th graders from the beginning
    - 8th Grade - Too Late!
  - Collaborative concerts - The 8th Grade Orchestra Festival
    - How can you get your incoming 8th graders to the HS **BEFORE** they register for classes? How can you show them that HS music is cool?

## **Part Two - Middle School to High School**

- How to work together with your feeder middle schools to matriculate 8th grade students into your high school program
  - Getting to know your incoming students
    - Discussing strengths and areas for improvement of incoming students
  - Know important dates
    - Concert dates
      - Attend feeder concerts!
      - Co-plan concert dates with the ES/MS/HS
    - Registration deadlines
    - Curriculum nights-be present
- What to do if your feeder program is struggling or if your feeder program is not taught by someone in that content area (i.e. a vocalist teaching strings, etc.)
  - Addressing the feeder relationship
    - What to do if things aren't going well?
    - What to do if they teaching outside their primary content area
    - Establishing a common vision
  - Establishing vertical curricular alignment
    - What do 8th graders need to know?
    - Creating a common assessment
    - Literature selection

## **Part Three - Questions / Share Out**