

# HOMETOWN ADVOCACY

## Create a Community Performance Program

WMEA Advocacy Strategy



One of the most powerful ways to advocate for music education is to have students share their learning throughout the community. This might include performing at events like a school board meeting, at a local senior care facility or craft fair. In this WMEA Advocacy Strategy, materials are offered to help you put together a variety of options so that student-led ensembles can perform in your community.

### Outcomes

- Students learn how to be independent learners and performers.
- Students learn how to be leaders at public events.
- Students learn how to choose, prepare and present music in small groups.
- Community gets to experience what students are learning.
- Students and the community they live in gain connections.
- Students provide live music to community members who might not have access to these events otherwise.

### Important Steps in the Process

1. Secure school district administrative support for the program.
  - a. Use outcomes list (above).
2. Secure usable resources – see list below for some starters.
3. Consider how this will fit into your curriculum for the course, or whether it will be something that is made available to students as an “enrichment” activity outside of class time. If it is curricular (completed during class), think about these topics:
  - a. How do the goals of this unit fit the curriculum of the course? Be able to provide a written description of that (perhaps use the outcomes list above as part of it).
  - b. What time of the year would this unit fit best into the course?
  - c. Is there an assessment for this instructional unit?
4. Decide how students will learn materials.
  - a. If everyone learns the same group of songs, does that happen during class time? If not, when?
  - b. If students will be able to choose from among a group of materials, when will learning time be made available and how will it be structured?
  - c. Consider having all students learn all the parts to the songs. This would enable greater flexibility in who can be part of each small ensemble for any given performance.
  - d. Include assistance on topics such as: how to set up the physical space for the best results; how to start and end each piece without a conductor; how to choose which songs to play at an event and create an order of songs that works well.

5. Consider creating a gateway moment where student ensembles demonstrate their ability to perform well enough that they will be confident and successful on their own. Once a group has passed the “gateway,” they are ready to start booking events. This could be during class or at another time that works for all involved.
6. Create a sign-up system where potential performance opportunities are matched with available performers.
7. Set up parameters – how will transportation to events be handled, equipment considerations, length of performances, decide if performances during school day are acceptable or if they must all occur outside the school day; decide if it matters if the event students are performing at charges a fee to attend (for instance, should student performances become a way for groups to generate income).
8. Make the program availability known to the community – have a process for securing student and/or faculty performances that can be shared with district administrators, principals, school board members, community groups so they know HOW best to ask and what time frame is reasonable for this type of request.
9. You could also contact potential performance venues to gauge interest in having student performers.

## Resources

- **WSMA Festival Music List or Websites:** Search the keyword or terms below. (When searching for multiple words in the PDF music list, use quotes around the term. (i.e. "Master duets")
  - Master duets
  - Songs for two
  - Duets/trios/quartets for all
  - Compatible
  - Flex
  - Movie/holiday/patriotic favorites
- **Sacred sources:**
  - Hymnals
  - Zemirot
  - Other religious musics
- **Public domain:**
  - IMSLP - <https://imslp.org>
  - MusOpen - [musopen.org](https://musopen.org)
  - ChoralWiki - <https://www.cpd.org/wiki>
- **Look for “Ensembles with Flexible Instrumentation”:** Many music publishers have put together collections of materials that work in any grouping of two, three and/or four performers. The collections are published for every instrument so creating groups is easily accommodated. Additionally, collections are often grouped by thematic ideas – holidays, patriotic, festival music and so on.
- **Consider Public Domain Arrangements:** Music that is in the public domain could be arranged by adults and/or students for their ensembles.
- **Ask colleagues for suggestions.**

### **Potential Performance Opportunities**

- School board meetings – students could perform prior to the start of the meeting or have a spot on the agenda to present something
- Craft fairs
- At “bridging” events within a school district where families are learning about opportunities and experiences that will be available at the next building or grade level their children will be part of
- Care facilities in the community
- Community festivals – for example, high school students performing at elementary schools.
- Adult performing ensemble concerts might provide a time before their performance for student ensembles to perform
- Community civic group meetings (Lions, Rotary, etc.)

### **Other Considerations**

- Consider having students take a moment within their performances to share why they love music or find music important.
- Have materials that relate to a variety of seasons and/or holidays. For instance, love songs for Valentine’s Day or patriotic songs for the time around Veterans’ Day and Memorial Day might be helpful.
- These groups could be part of an ‘open mic’ night at your school that your music program hosts. This could be open to the whole school as a way to bring that community together. Music students could recruit their friends who aren’t currently in a music course but are musicians to participate.
- These groups could be part of a “recital night” at your school where multiple students each perform one or two songs. The recitals could be at school, a local library or other locations that provide more community connections.

### **Example in Action:**

I arranged some Christmas quartets from hymn books and other places into four parts, giving every instrument all four parts. I give each student the full song book, ask them to select the parts they’d like to learn, give each student two parts, yet organize the group so I have an even number of each part throughout the ensemble. We work a few pieces each day as warm up chorales throughout the November–December season so I know they sound good. In November, I reach out to all area churches and nursing homes as far as 15 miles away from school by email or mail and I “advertise” the desire to play places/events during the season on Facebook and in the paper. (Each year I keep my contact list of each place so I can reach out the next year to see if we can play there again.) Once I have gigs and dates/times lined up, I will ask the students to sign up for gigs. Everyone is required to do at least one. I also make sure there is a driver in each group OR that I can drive a school vehicle to get them there. Most of the gigs are student led and student run. Great for leadership and self-motivation.

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