Make a Difference!
As a music educator, you have been demonstrating your professional leadership. Share the best of your teaching technique with the next generation of music educators. Mentor your best and brightest students and launch them into a career in which you have found fulfillment. Work with a college music education coordinator and take a student teacher under your wing. Be a faculty mentor to a new teacher. Perpetuate music education for every American child.

MENC Resources
This brochure (stock #4009) and the following publications are available from MENC.

Careers in Music
(online brochure) This informative brochure provides an overview of over fifty careers in the field of music. 2000.

Exploring Careers in Music
An indispensable guide for those eager to embark on a rewarding career path. 2000. 144 pages. #1051.

Why Teach? Why Music? Why Me?
(online brochure) Describes the rewards and challenges of music teaching, addressing the questions that young people have as they consider a career in music education. 1992.

Performance Standards for Music: Strategies and Benchmarks for Assessing Progress Toward the National Standards, Grades PreK–12
Model assessment strategies and descriptions of basic, proficient, and advanced student responses. 1996. 136 pages. #1633.

Opportunity-to-Learn Standards for Music Instruction: Grades PreK–12
Recommends the conditions schools should provide in order to help students achieve both the MENC standards for music education in prekindergarten and the National Standards for Music Education in grades K–12. 1994. 32 pages. #1619.

The School Music Program: A New Vision
Contains the K–12 national standards and MENC prekindergarten standards. 1994. 48 pages. #1618.

Other Resources


Special thanks to Donna Stark Fox, Tri-M Music Honor Society, immediate past chairperson
Promoting the Profession

Recruiting and Retaining Music Teachers
Will there be enough music teachers in the coming years to ensure that every American child is guaranteed access to a sound music education?

Only if you, as a music teacher, encourage your promising students to consider a career in music education!

The facts say it all. By the year 2008, it is estimated that over two million new teachers will be needed in the U.S. Already, school districts across the country are experiencing a shortage of qualified music teachers. The shortage is felt more in some parts of the country than others, but essentially it is a nationwide issue. The problem can be attributed to

- the “baby boom echo” and the resultant increase in the student population
- the fact that the average teacher will be reaching retirement age within the next 10 to 15 years
- an insufficient number of students majoring in music education

These trends have serious implications for music programs across the country. Many districts that are rein-stating or expanding their music programs are forced to hire people who have not completed a degree in music education. Other districts opt to cut programs when they cannot find qualified teachers to fill open positions.

You can help alleviate these problems. Studies have shown that music teachers are the most influential people in the career decision-making process for those who decide to major in music education.

A Rewarding Profession

For many individuals, the rewards of being a music educator cannot be beat. It is important to frequently point out the benefits of the profession to prospective music educators. Mention that a career in music education offers

- an opportunity to share one’s passion for music with others (and get paid for it!)
- a higher entry-level salary than that of many performance positions
- a career in a field in which graduates will find a great number of job openings after completing college
- a career that will allow those interested in pursuing performance opportunities to do so in addition to working as educators
- a career in a field that is consistently being held in higher esteem as an essential subject, since music has been recognized as one of the “multiple intelligences”

Winning Characteristics

Of course, not every musician will make a good music educator. Students who possess the important qualities of a good music teacher should be encouraged. Focus on students who

- demonstrate a high level of musicianship
- demonstrate a high level of scholarship
- show strong leadership qualities
work well with peers
have good mentoring skills
are eager to learn and focus on self-improvement

What You Can Do
There are numerous things that you can do to encourage your promising students to consider a career in music education.

Be an Inspiration
- Set a positive example as a music educator by demonstrating musical proficiency and community leadership.
- Speak passionately about your chosen work at all levels.

Teach Career-Oriented Skills
- Give students responsibilities such as taking attendance, setting up for rehearsals and performances, or organizing music.
- Begin a mentoring program in which older students act as mentors to younger students.
- Provide opportunities for students to conduct or accompany an ensemble.
- Well in advance of college application, encourage private instruction in the student’s major performance area, development of advanced aural skills, and mastery of music fundamentals.
- Encourage development of vocal and keyboard skills regardless of intended major focus.
- Discuss the National Standards for Music Education to help future music educators develop an understanding of what they must know and be able to do to meet the standards.
- Help students focus on the musical and nonmusical skills needed for a successful career in music education.

- Encourage potential music education majors to start now to develop a portfolio of their experiences and achievements.

Enlist the Help of Others
- Facilitate discussions with college representatives.
- Create and sponsor an active Tri-M chapter.
- Give schedules of state festivals and Tri-M events, along with a list of participants, to music education college recruiters.

New Teacher Retention
Music teachers need support during their first years in the field. According to the U.S. Department of Education, 22 percent of new public school teachers leave the profession within three years. New teachers need professional support and friendship to get them through those rough initial years.

- Act as a mentor to a new teacher in your school or district.
- Get colleagues involved in MENC in your state.
- Be an advocate for adequate planning time and reasonable student-to-teacher ratios for new teachers.
- Share lesson plans, teaching materials, and helpful resources with new teachers.
- Help new teachers incorporate available technology into their teaching.