

Empowering Music Educators Through Mentorship: Pathways to Professional Growth, Retention, and Longevity

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The Midwest Clinic: International Band & Orchestra Conference

Friday, December 19, 8:30-9:30 a.m., W185



Scan for resources

Agenda

Introduction

Background on Mentor Program

How to Implement a Mentor Program in any Situation

- Scheduling and travel
- Support models
- Identification of Topics
- Feedback
- Videoconferencing
- Purposeful engagement with peers
- Sustainability
- Funding
- Qualities of an effective mentor

Questions & Discussion



Why mentoring?

Critical for growth, development, and retention of music teachers

- Music teachers have more responsibilities than ever.
- The professional development offered by schools and school districts does not meet the needs of music teachers.
- Heightened focus on music teacher retention following the pandemic.



A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher Profession

Music Teacher Profession Initiative (MTPI) Report

**Challenges in the first 5 years related to
deficiencies around:**

- Meaningful mentoring
- Relevant professional development
- Connection(s) with other music teachers



A Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher Profession

Music Teacher Profession Initiative (MTPI) Report

Solutions:

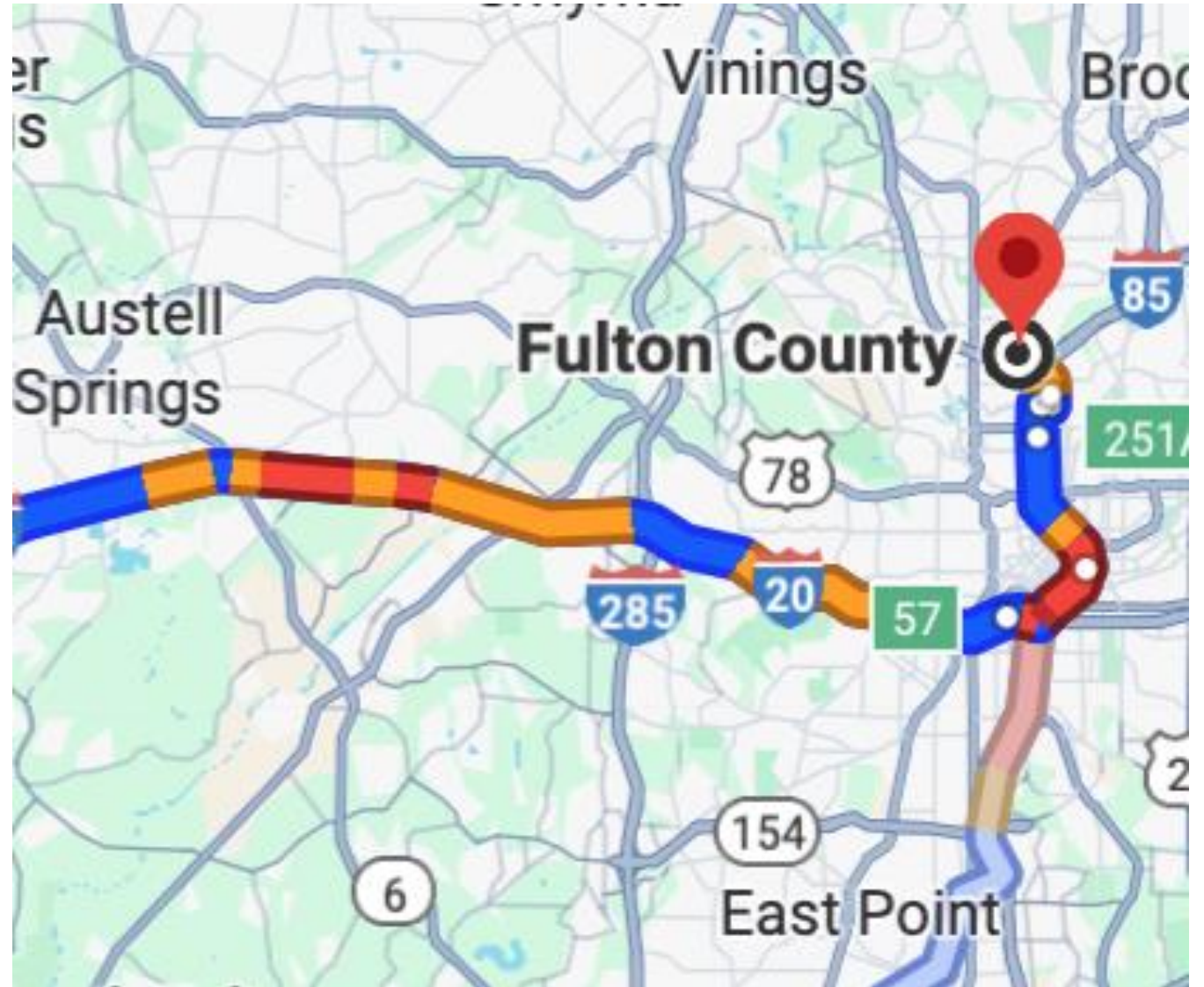
- Regularly scheduled professional development with topics germane to and valued by the novice music educator
- Establishment of support groups specific to their area of expertise
- Partners [who] take an active role in supporting new and novice teachers



Music Teacher Mentoring Program

- Large and diverse school district (88,000 students across 100 schools, including 57 Title I schools)
- Funded through Title IV-A Federal funds, currently available to public school districts across the United States
- Started with years 1-5 but quickly expanded beyond early career teachers
- Multiple mentors across disciplines

Scheduling & Travel



Scheduling & Travel

In-person vs. Face-to-face

Visiting options:

- In person
- Phone calls
- Virtual meetings
- Asynchronous



Calendars and Accountability

- Mentor (and administrator, if applicable) bears the responsibility of accountability
- Avoid the “reach out if you need anything” approach
- Topics, discussions, and ideas remain fresh on the minds of the mentee when the mentor reaches out on a consistent basis



Sample Support Models

First Year teachers

- Opening Zoom meeting/discussion on goals for the year
- Biweekly phone calls/Zoom meetings
- Recording (video or audio) reviews as needed
- Professional development session with all first year and early career teachers

Sample Support Models

Early Career (0-4 years)

- One 20-30 minute individual “meet and greet” via phone or Zoom
- One 3-hour group Zoom meeting on the morning of Wednesday, September 4th (District PD day)
- One 20-30 minute individual follow-up support call via phone or Zoom
- One 3-hour group meeting on February 16th (District PD day)

Sample Support Models

Experienced Teachers (5+ years)

- Scheduled monthly phone calls/Zoom meetings
- Scheduled monthly recording (video or audio) reviews
- Year-round availability to discuss issues, etc. that may arise



Identification of Topics

Meet & Greet

- Class and school schedule
- Teaching situation and background
- Personalities and needs

Topics Might Include

- Classroom engagement/management
- Score study
- Instrument pedagogy
- Conducting
- Assessment
- Work/Life Balance
- Leadership/Relationships in your building
- Planning and organization

Feedback

Importance of feedback

- Stimulates teacher autonomy and development
- Continues growth from student teaching experience (when feedback is typically provided on a regular basis)

Types of Feedback

- Descriptive – describe what you see/hear. Promotes conversation and autonomy.
- Evaluative – includes judgment (“Great job!”) and solutions (“do this to fix the issue”). Equips teachers with more tools in their toolkit and can build self-esteem.

Hi [REDACTED],
I enjoyed observing your classes and modeling some activities on Nov. 14, 2023. I also enjoyed having the opportunity to discuss the GMEA/ Choral LGPE process. Continue to study the performance and sightreading score sheets to help you prepare. I hope I was able to assist you in selecting appropriate repertoire with your 6th and 8th graders. Those classes have become quite engaged in the learning process! I was especially excited to hear how easily they grasped the divisi part on "Keep Your Lamps" by Gilpin. You don't have a lot of time to prepare for LGPE so make these next few weeks count! Sightread daily and quiz for understanding.

Continue to read your ENTIRE GMEA Handbook which can be found at www.gmea.org. Also register asap for the GMEA In-Service Conference which is held on January 24- 27, 2023. Almost all of the hotels are booked (so you may consider an [AirBnB/VRBO](#) with some colleagues). You also may want to consider going to the American Choral Directors Association Conference at www.acda.org which will be held in St. Louis, Missouri (April 21-24, 2024).

Your 7th Graders are showing marked improvement also. Giving them a task to do assist in helping them to focus on the lesson. Continue to work with those three or four students who are constantly off-task (out of seats, bothering other students). Contact their parents asap and set up Parent/Teacher Conferences via the 7th Grade Counselor and 7th Grade Administrator. Their behavior is unacceptable and will continue to be a hindrance if you don't nip it in the bud. Remove them from the room and place them **alone** in the lab area (I will call this your "time-out" area). They seek attention, so remove them so they don't get what they want.

I love your determination and drive to become a better teacher! I see the adjustments that you are making (in the physical classroom as well as teaching)! You're doing super fantastic! It only gets better and easier each day that you don't give up! I am very proud of you!!!! See you next month! Enjoy your Thanksgiving Break!

Symphonic Band
3/17/2023

-You're giving some reminders to the group about procedure. You can start this with the younger group (getting on the podium = silence, etc.) and move it into this group over time.

-I'm not hearing a strong breath from the group; they're just "starting" the notes and it takes a second or two for the breath support to allow pitch and tone to really lock in.

-Your pace is just a touch too fast; they're having to react to the exercise, instruction, etc. and that means their starting note is often one of the weaker than they play. How you expect them to start (and finish) is vital in terms of getting engagement and maintaining engagement throughout phrases, etc.

-Just my 2 cents, but don't feel the need to explain "why" for everything. Give buzzwords that remind the players of concepts as well as expectations.

-The first note on the "8 eighth notes" exercise was really passive in approach (front, energy, tone). If I had to give you one program-wide concept to address, it's this. I will say that, even with talented students, a lack of focus on starting can result in this a good bit of the time. You have to demand focus and effort with the first note. The great news is that if it's not good you just immediately stop and start again, wasting virtually no time but broadcasting your expectations.

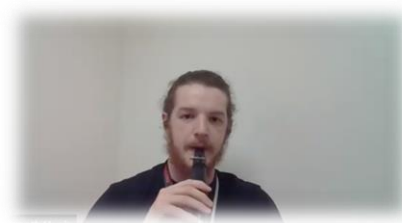
-I would use counts instead of "ta" syllables. You're singing "1, 2, 1-a 2-and" to get them ready for the march, but it can be tough for them to process this if they don't hear your first note, etc. Using counts also pushes the importance of knowing where you are in a rhythm, something that I think is vital to strong count and reading.

-The trumpet tone in the upper tessitura is really bright; it might be coming from a single player. This is a great chance to open your ears and look at that player directly/affect change.

-They played the last note of that exercise and you cut them off abruptly in order to talk about articulations. Not focusing on on beginnings and ends of phrases encourages a lack of focus save the middle of a phrase (it really is a habit).

Feedback Examples

Videoconferencing and Purposeful Engagement with Peers



Full Score

Danza de España - Chambers-MAR...
Page 1 of 12

Danza de España

Carol Britten Chambers

Lively ♩ = 120-128

Flute

Oboe (Opt. Flute 2)

Clarinet in Bb

Bass Clarinet in Bb

Alto Saxophone in Eb

Tenor Saxophone in Bb

Baritone Saxophone in Eb

Trumpet in Bb

Horn in F

Trumbone, Euphonium, Trombone

Tuba

Handwritten notes in red ink:

- F (dancer) but sounds like harmony*
- style?*
- perc in this*
- new? (with arrow pointing to a note)*

Video feed of Josh Byrd



Sustainability

Participants Feel Valued & Understood

Improved Teacher Retention

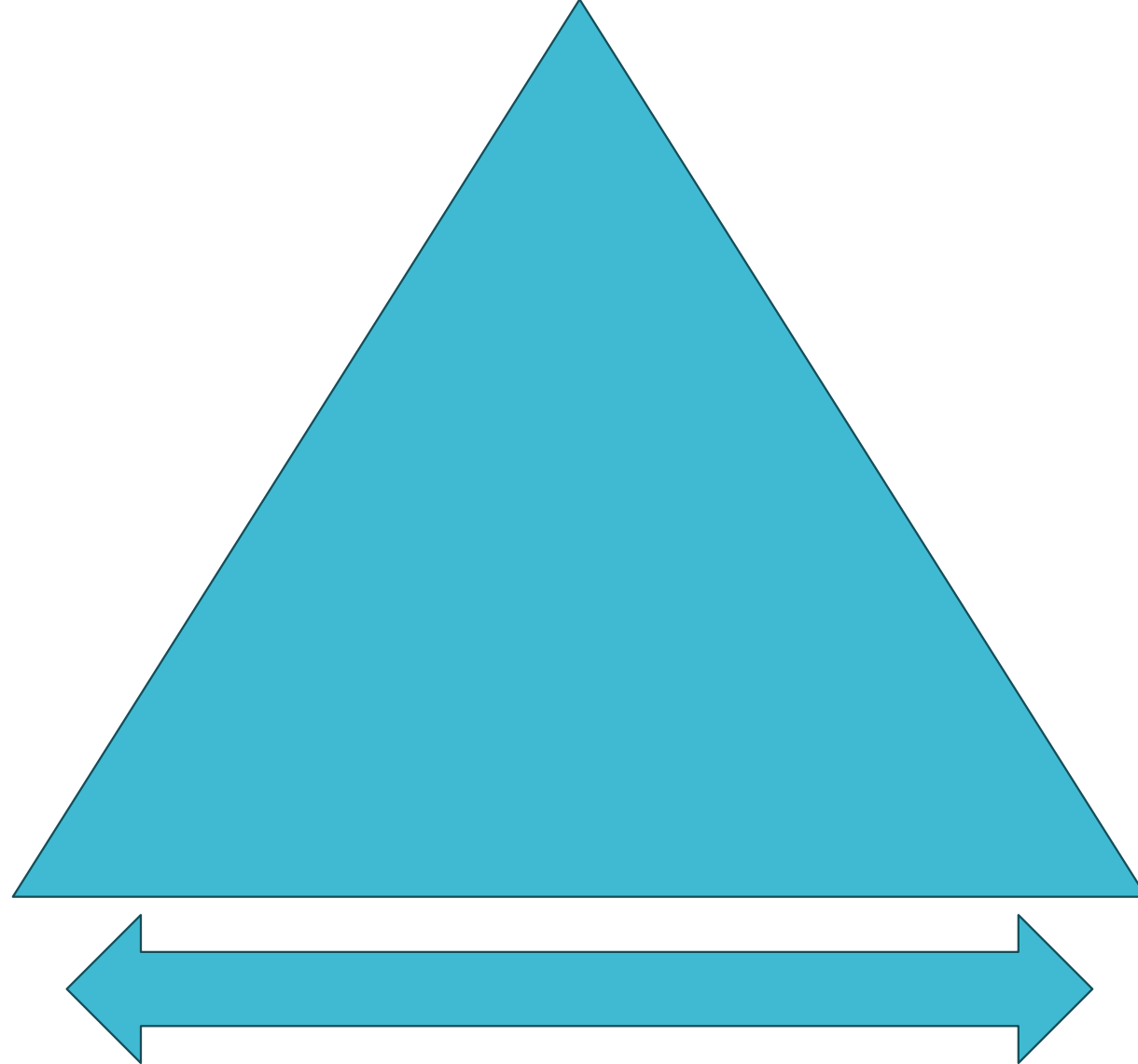
Communication & Accountability

Working Through Challenges

Teacher

Mentor

Admin



Funding

Possibilities include:

- Title II (“to improve the quality of teachers”)
- Title IV-A (“well-rounded education”)
- Grant funds (e.g., PTSA, SGC, local organizations)
- Local School Funds
- Donation of Mentor Time

5679

DATE _____

PAY TO THE ORDER OF _____ \$

_____ DOLLARS

MEMO _____

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Sample Funding Proposals available in the Midwest App

Can be tailored to fit your needs:

- Individual Teacher
- School or School District
- Variety of Funding Sources
- Proposed from teacher, administrator, or even a college professor or retired music educator

Sample Proposal for Music Teacher Mentorship Program *Individual Teacher* *Title II*

Objective: To enhance the professional development of [Teacher's Name], an early-career music teacher at [School's Name], through a structured mentorship program funded by Title II funds provided to [School District Name]. This program aims to improve instructional practices, student engagement, and overall music education quality.

Rationale: Investing in the professional growth of our educators is crucial for maintaining high educational standards. [Teacher's Name] is the only music teacher at [School's Name] and unable to collaborate with music colleagues in the same building. A mentorship program will provide [Teacher's Name] with the opportunity to learn from an experienced mentor, gain new teaching strategies, and stay updated with the latest trends in music education.

Program Details:

- 1. Mentorship Selection:**
 - o Identify and select a qualified and experienced music educator musician to serve as a mentor.
 - o Ensure the mentor has a proven track record in music education and mentorship.
- 2. Mentorship Activities:**
 - o **Observation and Feedback:** The mentor will observe [Teacher's Name]'s classes and provide constructive feedback. These observations will inform individual needs to be addressed in instructional sessions and collaborative planning.
 - o **Sessions and Training:** Conduct relevant sessions on advanced music teaching techniques, classroom management, and student engagement.
 - o **Collaborative Planning:** Jointly plan lessons and curriculum to incorporate innovative teaching methods.
 - o **Performance Reviews:** Regular reviews of student performances and progress to tailor teaching strategies.
- 3. Duration:**
 - o The mentorship program will span one academic year, with monthly meetings and continuous support.
- 4. Expected Outcomes:**
 - o Improved teaching practices and student outcomes in music education.

Sample Proposal for Music Teacher Mentorship Program *School District* *Title IV-A*

Objective: To enhance the professional development of music teachers across the district through a structured mentoring program utilizing the expertise of retired teachers and college professors, funded by Title IV-A funds. This initiative aims to improve instructional practices, student engagement, and the overall quality of music education.

Rationale: Investing in the professional growth of our music educators is essential for maintaining high educational standards. Music teachers are singletons in their school buildings without colleagues with which to collaborate in their discipline. A districtwide mentorship program will provide music teachers with the opportunity to learn from experienced mentors, gain new teaching strategies, and stay updated with the latest trends in music education.

Program Details:

- 1. Mentorship Selection:**
 - o Identify and select qualified retired music teachers and college professors with a proven track record in music education and mentorship specific to each discipline (band, chorus, elementary, music technology, orchestra).
 - o Ensure mentors have extensive experience and are well-versed in contemporary music teaching methods.
- 2. Mentorship Activities:**
 - o **Observation and Feedback:** Mentors will observe music classes and provide constructive feedback to teachers.
 - o **Workshops and Training:** Conduct districtwide workshops on advanced music teaching techniques, classroom management, and student engagement.
 - o **Collaborative Planning:** Jointly plan lessons and curriculum to incorporate innovative teaching methods.
 - o **Performance Reviews:** Regular reviews of student performances and progress to tailor teaching strategies.
- 3. Duration:**
 - o The mentorship program will span one academic year, with monthly meetings and continuous support.

Qualities of Effective Mentors



Strong Commitment to Music Teaching



Excellent Communication Skills



Reflective, Open-Minded, Honest



Supportive and Encouraging



Questions and Discussion

Thank you!

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