

## All-State: What are We Really Doing to put an Orchestra in Every School?

presented by Sandra Dackow; reported by Sarah Chelgren

In this session, Dr. Sandra Dackow suggested ways for the world of string education to expand.

First, she discussed the problem by using some statistics. Currently, 18% of schools in the U.S. offer strings. This is the same proportion that existed in 1983, which means that while the existing programs are getting bigger and better, no new programs are developing.

One way to deal with the problem and reach the remaining 80% of the population is to find parents and private teachers in communities without string programs and ask them to approach the school board and community leaders. This “approach from within” tactic works especially well if parents have knowledge on the costs of starting a program, any statistics on families who locate to other school districts because of the lack of strings in their district, and any movies or other related media items related to the issue. Many journals provide solid

information on the positive impact music has on total education programs.

Another approach is to change the way band and orchestra teachers are trained at the college or university level. If the focus is changed from simply band or orchestra to more of an overall emphasis on an instrumental program, more band teachers could be empowered to begin string programs in their own district. A well-rounded music department in a high school should offer band, orchestra, and choir to meet the needs of the student population.

Dr. Dackow’s final suggestion is to lobby professional organizations, such as MENC, about starting a dialogue about the issue. These groups could in turn lobby higher education about changing curriculum and provide support for band teachers who would like to start a string program. The music industry could also be approached for assistance with books and instruments to help get a program up and

running.

By using the ideas presented in the workshop related to lobbying school boards, other teachers, colleges, universities and professional organizations, teachers can start a dialogue that could bring about significant and positive change for the string education profession.

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