

## All-State: Recruit More String Students

presented by Kirk Moss — reported by Brenda Radloff

Since I teach beginners, I was very excited to learn what Kirk Moss had to say on this topic of recruiting more students.

The first idea presented is that recruiting should start 2 years before they will be starting. One way to do this is to have the general music teacher start planting the seeds in their class. I am very lucky that our general music teachers do this very thing! The kids learn about all of the instruments in the orchestra. They even get to come to a symphony concert in the fall of fourth grade. A lot of focus is placed on encouraging the students to be thinking about which instrument they want to play.

Once you have done the recruiting, it is crucial to keep them from quitting. I know all too well that students get discouraged and want to quit. One suggestion was to have high school students perform for the

middle school students. They can see what these older students have accomplished.



When our high school students perform for us, they encourage them to stick with it, and the reasons why. Kirk also mentioned that his students could earn a jersey in fifth

grade. He said that they do a concert where every student who has earned a jersey gets to wear it for the concert. I can't imagine that if they get it in fifth grade, it would still fit in high school!

One other topic covered was encouraging kids to switch to a different instrument if it seems appropriate. This really works! I had a student this year who wasn't happy playing the violin. When I suggested that she try the bass, she got very excited. So, instead of quitting orchestra, she is still in for next year, just on a different instrument.

Of all of the sessions, this one was the most helpful to me.

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