



Kevin Miller

Schaumburg, IL
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The Schaumburg Band has always had the good fortune of many students participating in our trips. The trips sell themselves. If it's an interesting destination, the students will be hooked. I believe that the way the director pitches the trip definitely adds to that interest. I always pitch the trip in a way that shows how it will benefit the band's musical reputation. We also go over the proposed itinerary so the students see all the fun perks that are included. For every trip, I have a "magic" number in mind of how many kids need to attend for us to represent Schaumburg Band the best. This number must take both musical and visual balance issues into account.

At this point, it's a pretty easy sell. Word-of-mouth from past alums and older siblings are strong recommendations for the quality of our band trip experiences. I wish paying for the trips could be that simple.

I asked my students why they sign up for trips. "No other groups in the school travel like we do", "It's a good learning experience", "How else can you travel with 230 of your closest friends", "It makes me feel independent", "There's a nice balance of fun and serious", "Our band has such a strong family vibe", "Band cohesiveness", "We're pretty darn good!"

I really don't have any magic tricks to get the kids to participate. My teaching philosophy has always been an inclusive one. Everyone plays. Make the kids know that they are important. How often do you tell your kids that they are "the best in the school"? They are, you know. But you need to tell them that often. Greet every kid, everyday by name and with a business handshake. Work hard at your job. The kids need to see how passionate you are about your work. They, in turn, will emulate that. Be fun. If you're having fun, the kids will have fun.

The bottom line, our kids enjoy band and each other. The trips are just another way that they can do that.

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