



TOUCHPOINT

The Division of Education Newsletter

Conn-Selmer
DIVISION of EDUCATION

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A Note from Dr. Tim

Greetings. In this edition of *Touchpoint*, Dr. Charles T. Menghini, President of the VanderCook School of Music, discusses the importance of fostering relations today that will positively impact your program in the future.



By Dr. Charles T. Menghini

Now's the Time To Plant the Seeds

As the school year ends, it is time to begin to plant the seeds for future harvest. Too often we just can't wait for that final bell to ring so we can be paroled for a couple of days, weeks, or months. This is the time of the year when we re-introduce ourselves to our families and friends. This is the time for us to re-charge our personal batteries. And one great way to get re-charged to begin next fall is by carefully planting a few seeds now.

The planting to which I refer will not be found in your front yard or flowerbox. The seeds that need to be planted take the form a letter, a letter that you are encouraged to write to your administrator.

Writing a well-crafted letter to your administrator where you extend thanks for the support you received this past year is a great start. And though we can always use more support, we need to be thankful for what we received, no matter how large or small. In your message, offer some positive highlights you recall from the year. Write a reflection about that special performance, music festival, or contest. Include a quote or two from that student or parent who wrote you a thank you note during the year. Make it a point to articulate your pride for your school, your position, and your students. This is an opportunity for you to show that you appreciate being a member of the team. It is important for you to be honest, so if you find yourself in a situation that is not to your liking, don't lie. Just go deep within, drop the ego for a few minutes, and give some honest thanks. Somewhere, somebody has it a whole lot worse than you do! Look for and focus on the positives.

Next, take a look at the upcoming year. Try to describe your goals and aspirations for the year or the program. Don't be afraid to identify the challenges that will be faced and when you do, include some thoughts on how you plan to address them. If you are facing a situation where you may need another instrument or two, more money for repair, or would like to get some additional

professional development by attending the Midwest Clinic, this a great place to plant the seeds.

You will also want to wish your administrator an enjoyable summer. Trust me when I say they are as ready for a break as you are! Devote a few sentences that focus your words on their work and all they do for your program, the school at large, and all the students who attend. As music teachers we work a lot of hours but those hours are often pale in comparison to those logged by most administrators.

Administrators rarely receive positive, upbeat communications from anyone. By letting them know you are committed to your students and job, and by letting them know you realize the important role they play in the overall success of your program and the school in total, you have planted the first seeds to improving your relationship and increasing your level of support.

Once you write your letter, sit on it for 72 hours and read it three times a day. Remember, you are composing a letter not improvising one. By re-reading your letter you will discover grammatical or spelling errors, and you will also find better ways to share your thoughts and opinions. Above all, be sure the letter is totally positive. Avoid any negativity or anything that could be perceived as being negative. This is not the forum for you to complain or share your frustrations.

Writing this letter will be time well spent. If you happen to drop by your school this summer, don't be afraid to stop by your administrator's office to say hello. Once you plant the seeds it's important to keep them nourished because in our relationships, just like nature, the tree always grows to the sunshine!



Registration is now open for Conn-Selmer Institute 2015

June 7—10, 2015

Bethel College

Mishawaka, IN

VIP Discount code: 15csi08

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