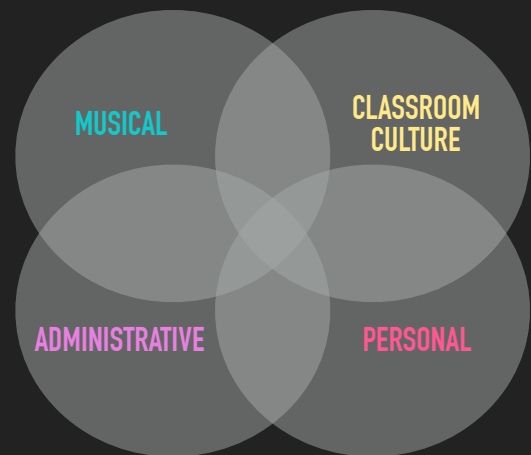# THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

A PLANNING & SURVIVAL GUIDE

A BIT ABOUT US

- Alyssa
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- Becky
  - Ph.D. Candidate, Michigan State University

- Why this session?

MUSICAL

CLASSROOM CULTURE

ADMINISTRATIVE

PERSONAL

TOP 5 FOR YOUR FIRST FIVE

Know Your Students

Manage Your Program

Build Students' Skills & Voices

Pick Rep, Prep, & Plan

Prioritize Self-Care

KNOW YOUR STUDENTS

- Names
  - You know theirs, they know each others'
  - Pronunciation matters
    - Check out: *Cult of Pedagogy* article & podcast

- Lives outside of your classroom
  - What music are they listening to?
  - Do they play any instruments or create music/mixes using technology?
  - Hobbies, interests, sports, jobs, etc.?
    - Check out: Music Profile Interview Project

KNOW YOUR STUDENTS

- As musical beings
  - Why chorus?
  - What do they like about their voice? About singing?
  - What do they want to do better this [timeframe]? (short-term & long-term)
    - Consider: No-Shame Singing
    - Consider: Notecard Goals

- …and foster an environment that gets them to know one another.
  - Community Building
  - Get them involved

KNOW YOUR STUDENTS

Plan for Day 1
- Check out: Student Info Sheet
  - Ready to go "bell ringer"
- Community Building
  - Musical (rote) & Non-Musical (names)

Long-Term Considerations
- "Yearbooks"/Scrapbooks
  - Student historian(s)
- Posters on the wall from concerts
  - Make your room a place where students can return
- Traditions
  - Consider: Banquet, Slideshow, Circle, Alumni Song, etc.

MANAGE YOUR PROGRAM

- Handbook
  - Check out: Handbook Content Suggestions

- Grades & Attendance
  - Have a system
    - Check out: ClassDojo
  - Be sure to align with school/district if necessary
  - Consider: Are you "double dipping" discipline & grades?

- Establishing Classroom Expectations
  - Routine
  - Consistency
  - Check out: Alfie Kohn's books

MANAGE YOUR PROGRAM

- Budget Questions
  - What is the current balance? Does the program receive any funding?
  - Does the chorus account run through the school? Is there a Booster Club, and does it have NPO status and its own account?
  - How do I make purchases or purchase requests?

- Organization Must-Haves
  - Planner or Online Calendar
  - Designated Workspace (off-limits to students)
  - Choral Library Database
  - Clean Chorus Room

MANAGE YOUR PROGRAM

Plan for Day 1
- Handbook (with set calendar)
- Attendance (Remember: Ask about pronunciation!)
- Over-plan for day 1 (extra can be moved to day 2)

Long-Term Considerations
- Fundraising
- Boosters
  - Pros & Cons
- Student Leaders
  - Musically & Non-Musically

BUILD STUDENTS' SKILLS & VOICES

Warm-Ups

Sight Reading

BUILD STUDENTS' SKILLS & VOICES
Warm-Ups

▸ Warm-ups = Voice Lesson
▸ Listening & Making Corrections
▸ Strategies for "Avoiding Autopilot "
   ▸ …and the same 5 warm-ups
▸ Designing warm-ups from your repertoire

▸ Check out:
   ▸ The First Ten Minutes: Re-Imagining the Role of Warm-up Activities in the Choral Rehearsal

BUILD STUDENTS' SKILLS & VOICES
Sight Reading

▸ Have a rhythmic system. Have a tonal system.
   ▸ Use these systematically
      ▸ Spiral Curriculum
      ▸ Scaffolding

▸ Check out:
   ▸ Blobs (Pitch Matching, H/L, Audiation, Pre-Reading)
   ▸ www.sightreadingfactory.com ($34.99/yr)
   ▸ *Progressive Sight Singing* book & companion website

▸ Connect Sight Reading to the repertoire

BUILD STUDENTS' SKILLS & VOICES

Plan for Day 1
   ▸ Success!
   ▸ Teach them so they leave class with something new
   ▸ 3-5 minutes of echoing patterns (rhythmic & tonal)
      ▸ introduce hand signs
      ▸ informal assessment

Long-Term Considerations
   ▸ Constantly vary & up the level of challenge w/ warm-ups
   ▸ Gradual accountability
      ▸ Track Progress (G & I)
         ▸ cell phones (iPhone - Voice Memo)
         ▸ Google drive
         ▸ Rotate which students record

PICK REP, PREP, & PLAN

▸ Programming Considerations
   ▸ Themes
   ▸ Representation
   ▸ Music with Meaning
   ▸ Level of Music (Challenge)
      ▸ "Easy" music is your friend
      ▸ Variety

▸ Free Resources
   ▸ IMSLP
   ▸ CPDL
   ▸ Justice Choir
   ▸ ChoralNet
   ▸ Facebook Groups

PICK REP, PREP, & PLAN

Plan for Day 1
   ▸ Rote Song &/or Round
      ▸ Consider: "Love is Love" or "Yonder Come Day"
      ▸ Check out: *150 Rounds for Singing & Teaching*

Long-Term Considerations
   ▸ Score prep
   ▸ Building up to bigger works
      ▸ Variety of styles/time periods
   ▸ Programming
      ▸ First gain your community's trust

PRIORITIZE SELF-CARE

▸ The person who knows you best is YOU!
▸ There is life outside your work
   ▸ Make time, find way to be mindful & recharge
▸ Continue your own Professional Development
▸ Find your people!
   ▸ Share resources, collaborate, do non-musical things together
▸ Don't be afraid to:
   ▸ ask for help (musical, teaching, mental health)
   ▸ say "no"
▸ Manage *your* and *others'* expectations for the first 5 years

PRIORITIZE SELF-CARE

Plan for Day 1
- ▸ SLEEP! Drink water. Don't talk over students.
- ▸ Leave before the sun goes down.
- ▸ Plan something fun for the end of the day/week.

Long-Term Considerations
- ▸ Support system
- ▸ Attending conferences
- ▸ Continuing education
- ▸ It gets better (every single year)!

THANK YOU!

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