

Public Relations
Al Wright
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The maintenance of good public relations is essential to the success of the band program. It is an obligation which is the primary responsibility of the band director. To operate an effective public relations program, the band director must be familiar with accepted "P. R." techniques. Measuring the effectiveness of the public relations program is not a difficult task. If the general public shows a lively interest in the band and its activities, it can be assumed that public relations program is successful, at least at the local level. Public relations is not only newspaper publicity. It also includes communication with the students, the parents, the school administration and the general public. In general, the band director must:

1. Communicate with students to keep them informed as to the goals and objectives of the band program. This can be accomplished by announcements in the daily rehearsal and by good use of the band room bulletin board.
2. Communicate with band parents, fellow teachers, and administrators to keep them advised as to the activities of the program, the objectives of the program and how they are being accomplished. This can be accomplished by means of parent's letters, periodic bulletins of progress and other written communication.
3. Make a practice of providing accurate and timely information of the band's activities to the local media. These include the local newspaper, radio station, and television station. Carefully prepared news releases are the best way to accomplish this.
4. Participate in local civic activities. Membership in one of the local civic clubs which could be Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, etc. Participation in community chest fund-raising drives and church activities will do much to establish good public relations with the local community.

Specific Techniques of Publication Relations

The basic maxim of the newspaper world is "names make news." Always use names. Students doing things, students performing solos, students being promoted, students winning honors. Don't forget the instructional staff.

The band director should not shy away from advising the newspapers about his own professional activities.

The real test of news is timeliness, proximity, and human interest. Any news item that meets just one of these tests will be of value to the local news media. An item that meets more than one of these tests is sure to be accepted.

The famous five W's and an H, WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHY, WHERE, and HOW, must always be included in every news story.

Of prime importance is the WHO. Who is performing, who may attend, who is conducting, who wrote the music, etc. After the who has been well covered then the detailed facts of WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, and HOW must be included to satisfy the editor.

Most newspapers, radio stations, and television stations rely on professional writers to reword the submitted material and rewrite it for actual use. The band director should only be concerned with supplying the basic facts; the five W's and an H. The professional news writers will then put the facts into an acceptable form for the media in which it is to appear.

By following these suggestions the director will greatly increase the chances of his material being used.

1. Always use 8 1/2 x 11 (letter size) paper. Odd sized paper often gets lost in the shuffle.
2. Material should always be typed. No editor will risk making errors because of his inability to read your long-hand script.
3. Always double space. Triple spacing is better. Leave plenty of room at the top and bottom. News writers need lots of room to add penciled notes and changes.
4. Type on one side of the paper only. Number the pages at the bottom. Include the word "more" if there are additional pages. Include the word "end" if it is the last page.
5. In upper right hand corner of the first sheet include the following in all capital letters:
 - a. Name of group - MIDDLETOWN HIGH SCHOOL BAND
 - b. Your name - JOE MUSICMAN
 - c. Date - JANUARY 15, 19—
 - d. Release date - IMMEDIATE RELEASE (or date you want material to appear).
6. On the left side of the first sheet and just above the opening paragraph give a four- or six-word description of the material. This should be all caps and in two lines. The editors call it the "slug" i.e. LOCAL BAND SCHEDULES CANDY SALE.
7. Never include information regarding more than a single story in a press release no matter how brief the item.
8. Avoid strike-over or blurred erasures in the typing. "X" out the material if necessary and retype the word immediately following.
9. Before you send the story in check it carefully for accuracy. Avoid errors in:
 - a. Facts - names, dates, times, room numbers, etc.
 - b. Spelling - names and special words.
 - c. Check again for completeness of the five W's and an H.

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