

## Case Study: Music Program of Distinction Lancaster Catholic High School

### the program

At Lancaster Catholic High School (LCHS), school leaders believe that through the arts, students can express themselves, acquire an understanding of cultures past and present, and learn to work independently and collaboratively.

Music is a key component of a broad fine and performing arts curriculum that includes more than 40 courses and performance opportunities throughout the year and engages 30 percent of the student population.

The music program caters to individual interests by providing opportunities for students who simply want to take an occasional music class to students interested in pursuing extensive music education and performance.

Classes include music theory, music history, guitar lessons and music composition. Students can participate in a range of performance ensembles that include:

- Concert Band
- Jazz Band
- Marching Band and Color Guard
- Rock Band
- Guitar Ensemble
- Percussion Ensemble
- Woodwind Ensemble
- Concert Choir
- Mixed Chorus
- Mass Choir
- VoxPop Acapella Singers

Students who want a deeper understanding of music and the performing arts can pursue the Fine & Performing Arts Certificate, which offers a credential and the opportunity to complete a portfolio, attend field trips and participate in recitals.

Additionally, through its community outreach program, LCHS partners with six schools to provide free instrumental music lessons to more than 250 students in third through eighth grade. Monthly, LCHS faculty, students, alumni and special guest performers put on a free concert for community members.



### the process

To provide students an opportunity to showcase their talents, staff and alumni look for opportunities for students to perform in the school's local community and beyond. In recent years, students have performed locally in Lancaster, at statewide competitions, and across Europe.

During the 2003-2004 school year, LCHS received a grant to host a Catholic Music Festival. This inspired the launch of the Friends of the Music Department Campaign aimed at raising funds specifically to support the music program at LCHS.

To date, more than \$400,000 has been raised to support music classes and related activities. Securing funding beyond what is available in the regular school budget has enabled LCHS to offer more robust programming and opportunities for students.

Key to LCHS' success is its talented and committed faculty and staff. Music educators, who are versed in a variety of disciplines, develop lesson plans with a goal to provide something for every student at LCHS.

LCHS also collaborates with the community through its monthly concert and lecture series and is active in the Lancaster-Lebanon Music Educators Association and the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association. Expanding the school's network by engaging with professional musicians has enhanced the program.

## lessons learned

- A successful music program usually requires financial support outside of a school's regular budget. Enlist help from people within and outside of your school community, such as parents or alumni who have an interest in the arts and are willing to fundraise. Launch a "Friends of Music" group to help support fundraising activities like concerts or mail appeals.
- Put feelers out through word of mouth, social media or in a school newsletter for professional musicians in your community who are willing to volunteer their time to instruct ensembles or provide private music lessons. Consider offering private instrumental and vocal instruction during the school day for a fee. You will find that for some students, this may be the only private music instruction they receive.
- Diversify and extend music offerings to provide opportunities for the entire school population to experience music education. Examples of unique classes offered at LCHS include AP Music Theory, History of Rock, World Drumming, American Pop Music and instrumental and vocal music lessons.
- Invite faculty, staff, school board members and community leaders to performances and events to raise awareness of your program.
- Advertise your program, concerts and other events in local newspapers, church bulletins, through social media and other channels to raise awareness of your program outside of your regular school community.
- Look into starting a Tri-M Music Honor Society Chapter if you do not already have one. Students in this group are excellent at promoting their program and establishing an environment within your school that is supportive of music education.

## program of distinction benefits

LCHS applied to become a Middle States Program of Distinction recipient in part to enhance its already strong Fine & Performing Arts Program.

By far the greatest benefit to earning a Program of Distinction was the Middle States evaluation process itself. It enabled the school to analyze its program, set realistic goals and unite around long-range plans that they are now focused on carrying out.

In addition, earning the Music Program of Distinction elevated the school's profile by increasing awareness of the music program in the community and enhancing the reputation of LCHS as a leader in the arts.



### for more information

For more information about the Music Program of Distinction at Lancaster Catholic High School contact:

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To learn more about Middle States Programs of Distinction, visit [www.msa-cess.org](http://www.msa-cess.org).



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