

Youth In Harmony Outreach Guidelines

Back-to-school is just around the corner within the M-AD (and has already occurred in some jurisdictions), and many of our chapters, quartets and choruses are eager to engage music educators to get involved in a barbershop outreach program at their local schools. This is a good thing! That said, it's critical to the success of our outreach efforts that we always leave the music educator with the best possible impression of the barbershop art form and how it can enhance/augment the teacher's music education program.

Music educators serving in schools in the M-AD (and across the world) are predominantly smart, well-educated teachers AND musicians. They know good quality music and performance skills when they experience them. To enhance/augment their music education programs they are often eager to expose their students to music-based performances from various genres of music (rock, a cappella, classical, barbershop, etc.) that demonstrate good quality singing and performance skills. Quality musical performances by outside groups can serve as valuable role-model experiences for new, young musicians who are just building their skills through their school's music program.

With this in mind, below are some guidelines for ensuring a positive experience for the music educators and the students that leaves them with a very good impression of barbershop whenever they are serving as "visiting artists" to the school music program. For additional information and guidelines about building/enhancing a strong chapter- or quartet-based YIH program please check out the BHS Youth In Harmony Resource Guide (available at this link: <http://www.barbershop.org/resources/document-center/youth/>).

Mid-Atlantic District Guidelines:

- Only groups (quartets, ensembles, choruses) that perform/score in the 65% or above range at our BHS contests should be visiting schools. Why? See paragraphs 1 and 2, above. Teachers know what's good and what's not. If we show them weak performances that would score less than a 65% in a BHS contest it is likely they will not be interested in having that group coach the school groups OR even trying barbershop in the first place. Many music educators have told me this over the 20 years I've been working with them and their groups.
- If your chorus, quartet or ensemble does not perform at or above a 65% level, either use DVD's of quartets that DO (the BHS International quartet and chorus contest DVD's meet this criterion) as examples of good barbershop or secure a quartet or ensemble that does perform at that level and take them with you to the meeting with the music educator. There are also many such performances available on YouTube.

Thanks for following these guidelines as you head out to do your "cathedral building" work of sharing what barbershop can do to enhance and augment a school vocal music program. If you have any additional question, please let me know.

Gary Plaag
VP Youth In Harmony