



Music Ed Insights

Three Key Takeaways for Music Educators from... Our Conversation with Stacey Ryan, School of Rock

1. Community > Individual Lessons

- School of Rock's model shows that ensemble-based learning (bands, groups) builds skills beyond musicianship.
- Their social impact study found:
 - 95% of parents reported improved teamwork skills.
 - Students grow in tolerance for peers who are different from them and feel freer to be their authentic selves.
- Classroom implication: Treat community-building as core curriculum, not an "extra." Intentionally design structures where students help, coach, and support one another.

2. Time in the Program Deepens Impact

- Data showed that the longer students stayed with School of Rock, the greater the gains in:
 - Confidence
 - Motivation
- Some measures increased by over 150% for students who stayed multiple years.
- Classroom implication:
- Advocate for long-term participation in music (stay in band/choir/orchestra multiple years).
- Use this type of data to explain to administrators and parents that the full benefits accumulate over time, not in a single semester.

3. Design for Student-Led Belonging and Peer Leadership

- A key throughline in Stacey's stories was how students themselves are expected to carry the culture:
 - Welcoming new students immediately
 - Helping peers fix gear, learn parts, and navigate tricky passages
 - Understanding that they "fail and succeed together" on stage
- Programs like House Band and All Stars embed expectations that strong musicians are also strong community contributors.
- Classroom implication:
 - Make peer leadership and belonging explicit outcomes, not happy accidents.
 - Build structures where:
 - Veterans are responsible for orienting new members
 - Section leaders own some of the musical and social support
 - "Being an all-star" is defined as both musical excellence and lifting others up