

Listen to the Music

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In the administrative realm where I have spent the majority of my educational days, you come across a myriad of students who are different in countless ways. One thing that is the same with all students is that they love music just like you or I.

As a school leader I have been used to sending messages be it conversations, phone calls or emails in a way that is easy to understand. Upon occasion, whether it being mad or fed up with a given individual I have had to send the message in a loud and or direct way and that usually gets anyone's attention immediately.

There are a few times in my career where a student is so obnoxious rude or belligerent that yelling at them in a manner that I am accustomed to doesn't work. In fact it may have the opposite of the intended outcome by having a student become angrier or more withdrawn from any conversation with you meaning that remedying the situation at this point is impossible.

Step in the "Doobie Brothers" are better simply music. In a couple different instances, in my history of being an administrator, I have come upon that student where yelling at them to send a point did not work. Step in music. If I was being ignored by a student, I would go to my computer and turn on a really cool song I liked. If the student happened to be listening to their own music, I would turn mine up as to allow them to annoyingly hear mine more, instead of theirs. As that would annoy them, I would ask them some of the leading questions that I may have asked them earlier when they initially came into my office.

As communication would start slightly I felt that a breakthrough might be close. When communication would begin to fade a bit, I would start singing to the song I put on. As this became more annoying to the student, ice would keep melting, as they would see I was a fellow music lover as well. They may also think that there was an interesting individual behind the suit and tie. More communication would turn into the sharing a favorite songs with videos. A musical bond was formed between two music lovers and more conversation ensued. I might buy lunch and or share my lunch with the student as we listened and shared music to continue creating a certain trust in the office. What I have found is that student may have discovered an adult that was willing to listen to them, offer advice and potentially help. This methodology has always served me well and probably should be instituted before yelling but I have always been a more direct answer collector

It makes sense to me but speaking directly has usually worked to resolve the situation. But listening to the music may be the key and most certainly may be a better option in dealing with a defiant student. Often time's students can have an impression that you don't care and that

you are just another adult authority figure put on earth to simply make them miserable. This methodology entails the administrator to take time with the student and show them that you care while instituting an unusual way of trying to break the ice. There are many students that we have come across in our career who don't have parents or other adults in their life who are willing to spend time with them and to especially listen and care.

This music methodology can slowly pull in a student and show them that you are human and that you might even have similar likes in the music realm. Making connections and building trust often happens slow and requires an investment of time into the other person to prove that you care and are willing to take the time to create a bond that just might change someone's life or at least show that you will listen and be a dependable adult where someone may have never had that connection in their life.

So the next time you have a student or adult who is ignoring you, instead of going to my mantra and yelling, Listen to the music instead and see what kind of bond and trust you can create with someone who just may need someone to talk to them and truly care.