

## Negotiating with the Principal

For your program to be a success you will need the support of your school administration. When it comes to show selection, field trips, or special events, negotiating with your principal will be the key to unlocking the many opportunities you want to have with your drama club!

Here are a few important tips for negotiating with your principal.

- **COMMUNICATION IS KEY.** Ideally, principals and drama advisors/directors will have regular conversations to share ideas and information. This might be a monthly meeting or occasional email updates. Ask the principal what works best for them and remember that principals have busy schedules; show you value their time by preparing a list of what you'd like to cover, and be prepared to answer questions about your club's plans.
- **BE A GOOD PARTNER.** Chances are, your principal has worked with many advisors through the years, and the memories may not all be good. If this is your first year, make sure you're aware of school policies and procedures for scheduling events and using the building—and follow them. They're in place for a reason. If you need the principal's approval for your activities, ask for it as far in advance as possible and keep the principal informed about your developing plans.
- **CONSIDER THE PRINCIPAL'S POINT OF VIEW.** If you take an idea to the principal and they're not as enthusiastic as you'd hoped, keep in mind that they have to consider many more factors than you do. The theatre-game night you want to hold is a good idea, just not during testing week. Try not to take a "no" from the principal personally. Ask them to explain their concerns so you'll have a better chance of getting future requests approved.

When proposing a play or musical for your school to produce keep the following in mind:

- Always seek approval on your show selection from your principal before you announce to your students what the play/musical will be.
- Be prepared to speak about what excites the students about each project, as well as what challenges each show will present for you students.
- Speak about the educational value of each project and how it can relate with what students might be learning in their other classes. Many plays and musicals have opportunities for cross curricular teaching. The following are just a few examples of plays and musicals that have cross over into other subjects being taught at school. While we are not suggesting you have to produce these plays, you will gain more support from your administration if you are able to outline your selections added curricular value.

**PLAY:** *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller

A Tragedy about the Salem witch trials that took place in the Massachusetts Bay Colony during 1692-93.

**Cross Curricular Fields:** History, Political Science, English

**MUSICAL:** *Ragtime*

book by Terrence McNally, music by Stephen Flaherty, lyrics by Lynn Ahrens, based on the book by E. L. Doctorow

Ragtime tells the story of African Americans, upper-class suburbanites, and Eastern European immigrants in early 20th century America. Both fictional and historical characters navigate various challenges of race, ethnicity, and survival.

**Cross Curricular Fields:** History, English