

Dear GPOC Folks,

I'm so excited for this school year! Below are a few Helpful Hints and highlights of some things I'm doing in my classroom this year to re-build community that was lost during the pandemic years. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions or need help brainstorming additional ideas for your classroom.

Take Care,
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Helpful Hints to Build Community
September 2022

- Instead of only rehearsals and performances, consider adding social events to your building's choir calendar! Each fall we schedule a trip to a local pumpkin patch for choir members and their friends in October, and each spring my choir partners with PTO to have dinner together at one of the local restaurants that's having a "Montclair Elementary PTO Night" where our school is getting a portion of the sales of that evening. Focusing on community is a valuable time investment, and I can't wait to bring these things back this year!
- New to a building? Consider creating a little space in your classroom (I used to call it "Alswager's Corner") where you'll have items that intentionally convey your life to your students such as family photos, favorite color, quotes or affirmations you like, sports team memorabilia, artwork, or posters that show what you like. This can be a great jumping off point for conversations and it's a quick way for students to learn who you are so they can start forming connections with you.
- Informances are a GREAT way to invite students' friends and family into your space! One example of an "Informance" or "Open Music Class" is a low-key performance model where students put together a list of their favorite music activities and songs they'd like to show their loved ones. Then they perform some things alone, while also including music games and folk dances that have options for ALL friends and families to join in the fun! Just as students can learn through musical play, loved ones can have fun bonding together with their students and learning about the music classroom. Friends and families will see what students have been learning AND how much fun their students are having in your room, with a chance to join in the fun.