# Education Support

American Dance

## Organizing and Preparing for Officer Tryouts

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One of the most important things you can do for your officer candidates is to make sure that they are properly trained and informed. Sometimes we assume that the underclassmen have observed the leadership skills of previous officers and have just absorbed this knowledge on their own.

As a director, you need to have several sessions with them to ensure that they know how to select music, scale music, implement choreography phrasing and then be able to deliver effective teaching skills with proper terminology. All of this should take place over several seminars with the officer candidates, handing them plenty of printed material and offering an opportunity to implement these skills.

Following the seminars with your officer candidates, it is important for them to now apply the skills that they have learned. In order to rate or judge the candidate's skills level in choreography, dance terminology and teaching, have them role play as officers with the current team members or dance/drill team classes for you to evaluate. By taking the time to properly instruct your officer candidates, you will find that they are better prepared as leaders. In addition to the previously mentioned seminars and skills tests, it is recommended to have a personal interview with each candidate to allow them to express some of their personal philosophies or to clear any questionable issues or reservations for them as a leader. These interviews may not necessarily be scored, but allow you as their director to personally evaluate their potential as a leader.

If you feel that it is important for candidates to make notebooks as part of their evaluation of their creative skills, they could be given subjects such as, "Ideas for Spring Show" (plan theme, routine and music ideas), "Ideas for Contest Routines" (including music, props and costumes), or planning a "Team Building" activity. Before the tryout day itself, make sure that each candidate is aware of exactly what is required of them. Have one former officer in charge of being the "backstage manager" to coordinate the candidates to enter and exit the gym so you can focus your attentions on the judging panel and any questions they may have. Make sure to have a school administrator or another teacher present to do tallying of scores and to be a witness of the procedures of tryouts.

Give your judges a short, written overview of the tryout procedures and what they should expect to see. Try to stay on schedule so that no one will be rushed.

To announce the results, you can use several methods. It is important to make a personal announcement to the candidates. It is a courtesy to allow the candidates' families, friends and other team members to be present for the announcement. Invite them to be a part of your prayer or spirit circle before the announcement. Each officer is presented one at a time with their baton, hat, pin or whistle by one of the outgoing officers. Leave the group in suspense about the captain until all officers are all recognized. Then, after all of the elation of making officer has died down, announce the officer that is selected captain. This gives each candidate the joy of being selected as an officer and a second surprise for captain. Some teams will hold the announcement of captain until after summer camp to see which officer has taken the best leadership role.

<u>Sample Requirements for Drill Team Officer Candidates</u>

- Has completed at least one/two years of varsity drill team
- Has an overall grade average of at least 85 or above
- Has good or perfect attendance records at school
- Has good organizational skills and is a "team player"
- Is physically fit and in good health
- Has good knowledge of dance terminology
- Shows proficiency in dance, music and choreography skills
- Has a good attitude towards themself, respects the director and team members
- Must choreograph an original routine
- Must perform a jazz and kick routine with other candidates
- Must be emotionally balanced
- Must be willing to accept criticism and offer constructive criticism when needed
- Must make a notebook that develops an idea for a contest routine