



Off Beat Music Festival
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Ninth Grade Humanities and Physics
High Tech High

Students designed, planned, performed in, and produced a music festival at Liberty Station in San Diego, CA, attended by approximately 200 people, including students, families, educators, peers, and community members. Students took on roles modeled after relevant jobs, including creative directors, event planners, marketing, food services, talent booking, stage crew, box office sales and management, and documentarians. The festival included local musical acts and food trucks that were booked by students—and the students in our classes performed, as well.

In addition to designing and producing the event, the students were assigned to play and practice with student bands according to their music tastes and instrument preferences. They learned their instrument (guitar, bass, drums, or keyboard) and performed cover songs of their choice with their bands. Students also wrote “Genius Lyric” style songs in their humanities class reflecting on Africa’s vibrant culture and history, and how it was affected by European imperialism.

Teacher Reflection

This project turned out to be more transformative than I anticipated. The relationships that grew within the bands and team in the process of putting on this music festival was the true gem of this project, on top of the shift in mindsets of what they are capable of doing. In this iteration, students only performed covers, and in the following iteration I will have them perform their original songs.

—Oscar Carrion

Student Reflections

“This project gave me a reason to want to come to school.”

“Music taught me that you can’t cheat your way.”

“Music helped me improve my work ethic and become more patient.”

“This project has made me more open minded, empathetic, and a lot happier.”

“It’s allowed me to connect with a group of individuals, my band. We’ve learned to play, and play with each other.”

“Because I gave myself a chance and I believed in myself and that brought me closer to my community.”

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