

A Choral Director and an iPad go into a Bar...

Well, not really. A Choral Director and an iPad go into the App Store and purchase **ATTENDANCE2**, recommended by Dr. Christopher Russell in his e-book *iPads in Music Education*. Once mastered, this app will potentially maximize the first few minutes of your large ensemble rehearsals.

At the start of each school year, I ask my singers to complete an information sheet in two ways. The first is through a tinyurl into a Google Doc database. I gather a long list of information which includes names and addresses, cell phone numbers, emails, birthdays, and the same for their parents/step-parents/guardians. The Google Doc database is then exported into Excel. The second way I gather information is via hard copy of the same information with the addition of questions of interest...*What did you do over the summer? Do you study privately? What are your choral/vocal goals for the year?*

This year I created a CSV file from that Excel database, placed the file in my DropBox account and imported the information into the **ATTENDANCE2** app for my iPad. Created by David M. Reed, a computer science professor at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio, **ATTENDANCE2** is the new and improved update to [ATTENDANCE](#), the app which was designed and intended for teachers to take and keep classroom attendance records. [ATTENDANCE2](#) now contains additional features which include:

- The ability to create up to five fields for custom information about your students.
- The ability to sort students by first name, last name, an identifier (I used their folder number), or any other the custom fields you've created for them.
- The ability to customize the attendance status for each student; more than the standard "present, absent, excused, and late." You can also add a secondary status option, to mark student participation, if they've turned in their homework, or anything else you can imagine tracking.
- The ability to send to Dropbox.
- The ability to email students their individualized attendance reports.
- The ability to generate a QR code for every student in every class.

I generated a separate QR code for each student in each ensemble using their folder number as an identifier. I printed the codes on card stock, covered them with clear packing tape and taped them into their respective choir folders.



My singers now know they have to "scan in" for their attendance at the start of every rehearsal. Students who come into class late from lunch do the same. The entries are all time-stamped so there is no longer any discussion around arrival time or tardiness to class. My Choir Secretary enters the absences into my grade book where I can then check them against the school report that is emailed at the end of every school day.

Students are permitted to take a picture of their QR code and use their cell phone to scan in. We find the app recognizes the code just as quickly from a photo on their cell phone as from the cardstock original taped in their folder.

For \$4.99, **ATTENDANCE2** is a fantastic investment promoting a solid use of technology in the classroom! My students and I just love it!

*Barbara Retzko is the Director of Choral Activities at Ridge High School in Basking Ridge, NJ.
Contact information: Barbararetzko@hotmail.com*