

Advocacy

Basics & Process

Is your music program vulnerable to cuts?

○ YES!

- We are in competition with other programs during budget deliberations.
- Cuts are perceived as being made with no outside opportunity for input.
- Many times we feel that there is no way to prevent.
- #1 reason that music programs are vulnerable....?

COMPLACENCY!

- Denial:
- It can't/won't happen in our school district because.....
 - Supportive administration
 - History of strong arts programs
 - Showing growth
 - Our admin have children in our program
 - The community places a high value on the arts

COMPLACENCY!

- Helplessness:
 - Admin won't listen. They just let us vent.
 - It's too late now. The decision is already made.
 - There really is an enormous shortage of funding
 - Well, our enrollment is down.
 - Graduation rates are increasing.

COMPLACENCY!

- Apathy:
 - I will retire in another two years.
 - My job won't be cut because I have seniority.
 - I don't have time to get involved.
 - I'll just find another job.
 - If I get involved they will cut my program out of revenge.

So, what can we do?

Music Coalition

- Most effective way to ensure equal education opportunities for all students.
- Holds a school district accountable for its decisions.

Who is a Music Coalition?

- **Music Teachers**
- **Teachers in other subject areas**
- **Stakeholders:**
 - **Parents**
 - **Local music merchants**
 - **Community members**
 - **Business owners**
 - **Higher Education**
- **Clergy**

What does a Music Coalition do?

- A local coalition..... places the student at the center of the decision making process
-identifies the music program as an integral part of the community.
-affirms the music program as a unified district wide curriculum.
-promotes music education, not just band, choir or orchestra or general music.
-is a community organization that incorporates all of its constituents in the support of music making.
-puts the *public* in *public education!*

Structure:

- ❑ **Central Executive committee representative of all schools in the district.**
- ❑ **Provide a balanced representation of all components of the music curriculum: band, choir, orchestra, and general music (K-12)**
- ❑ **Committees:**
 - ❑ **Communications**
 - ❑ **Administrative liaison**
 - ❑ **Statistics and finance**
 - ❑ **Philosophy and Curriculum**

Communications

- Provides opportunities for membership at all music functions.
- Mailing lists
- Email, telephone, contacts
- Visible presence at all music activities within the district.
- Maintains a music coalition website.

Administration Liaison

- ❑ Represent the community as the primary advocacy body in support of music for all children in the district.
- ❑ Is a means of communication between the music faculty, administration, school board, and community in matters related to policy.
- ❑ Represents the music department in presenting proposals.
- ❑ Attend school board meetings.
- ❑ Holds public officials accountable for decisions related to music education. (city officials, state representatives....)

Statistics and Finance

- ❑ Works with faculty, district.... to develop and influence adequate budgets for curricular aspects of the music program.
- ❑ Works..... to establish policies that restrict fund-raising for extracurricular aspects not regular funded line items of curricular budgets.
- ❑ Works..... to establish and uphold policies that prohibit extra fees for curricular music.
- ❑ Develops and annual status report on the state of music in the school district.

Philosophy and Curriculum

- ❑ Works to establish policies that facilitate music participation for all children.
- ❑ Advocates for a sequential written curriculum for K-12 music learning outcomes.
- ❑ Advocate for a system of assessment that clearly delineates student achievement in music.
- ❑ Advocates for faculty evaluation that is based on musical outcomes and student achievement.

**The Music Coalition
should be structured so
that it does not
micromanage the
faculty, the curriculum
or any component of the
educational process.**

Putting students first is key!!

- **We must shift our perspective from “teaching” to “learning.”**
- **Music Advocacy is most effective when:**
 - **Proactive and collaborative.**
 - **About Learning. (Music education is not about what adults teach it’s about what students learn.)**
 - **Focused on Students.**

Ineffective Advocacy is:

- ❖ Reactive or adversarial.
- ❖ About money and raising taxes.
- ❖ About conflict and power – teachers vs. board; community vs. administration.
- ❖ About teachers – job conditions, pay, or benefits
- ❖ About saving jobs – losing individuals, not positions.
- ❖ About adults, or anything other than learning.

Myth and Fact

- Myth #1: Increasing requirements in a particular curriculum area will result in higher test score results.
- Fact: In some cases the ever-increasing emphasis on the basics seems to have the opposite result.
- Myth #2: Participation in nonessential course such as music is detrimental to student achievement.
- Fact: Research indicates student participating in the arts seem to be achieving the highest results.
- Myth #3: Music is just entertainment and not really important to students.
- Fact: Research reveals strong correlations between quality music education and academic achievement and healthy social development.

Reverse economics!

- **Low enrollment or loss of performance program has long term economic ramifications.**
- **The primary cost factor in education is personnel.**
- **The most cost-efficient personnel are those who provide instruction to the largest number of students in a given class period or who carry the largest student loads.**

Dangers of fund raising

- Historically Booster organizations are primarily fund-raisers.
- This is the primary difference between a music coalition and booster organization.
- Restrict fund raising to extracurricular aspects of your program.
- By funding curricular or co-curricular aspects of your program you demonstrate your acceptance of music education as extracurricular.

○ Sources:

○ NAFME: Grassroots Advocacy

○ Benham, John L., *Music Advocacy, Moving from Survival to Vision*. 2011. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

○ NAMM, National Association of Music Merchants