

## Telling the Story: Advocating for Music

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*A majority of **those outside the fields of music and arts** do not understand the whys or the hows concerning the process of arts education. **Provided with a clear understanding** of those whys and hows, and supported by quality arts education in practice, **people begin to realize the value of music and arts education.***

*If a district school board and its administrators are **adequately informed** of the **arts' unique benefit to children**, and if this information is supported by sound classroom practices, chances are the decisions regarding **music's and art's status** in the district will favor **strengthening the programs** rather than weakening or eliminating them.*

### **Influencing the Realities in Arts Education**

- ▶ **Shifting educational priorities and budgeting priorities** mean no music or arts educator can afford to consider his or her program immune to cutbacks. When arts educators fail to prepare for potential problems, or deny the potential threat to every music or art program of being seriously diminished or eliminated, the stage is set for disaster.

### **Fifty Ways to Build the Music Program**

#### **Ignorance Isn't Bliss**

- ▶ **Inform yourself**
- ▶ **Collect information**
- ▶ **Know what is happening** outside the classroom
- ▶ **Join an arts advocacy organization**

#### **You Gotta Have Friends**

- ▶ **Everyone in your community is a constituent**
- ▶ **Constituents** include students
- ▶ **Know how to reach** your friends
- ▶ **Make sure your constituents know how to reach you**



## Simon Says...

- ▶ **Be prepared**
- ▶ **Set up a phone tree and e-mail tree**
- ▶ **Inform** your constituents
- ▶ **Send them information** regularly
- ▶ **Initiate dialogue**
- ▶ **Establish** a fine arts booster group
- ▶ **Personally invite all constituents** to attend arts events, informances and performances
- ▶ **Thank constituents** for attending
- ▶ **Invite constituents** into the classroom
- ▶ **Provide opportunities to learn** about the process of making music

## Get Real!

- ▶ **Talk with students about the value** of arts education
- ▶ **Discuss with students** what you are teaching
- ▶ **Discuss with students** what they are learning
- ▶ **Discuss with students** how these skills relate to their real world of school, work and life

## Birds of a Feather

- ▶ **Treat your friends** as allies
- ▶ **Discuss issues** of mutual concern
- ▶ **United we stand, divided we fall**
- ▶ **Become a unit:** “the fine arts people”
- ▶ **Interdisciplinary links** are critical
- ▶ **Offer to collaborate**

## Rules of the Game

- ▶ **Know the environment**
- ▶ **Get the arts** on your school board agenda
- ▶ **Know the budget process**
- ▶ **Get the school board agenda** several days before every meeting. Look to see what items may potentially impact your program.

## Start with a Single Step

- ▶ **You can't assume** everyone agrees kids need what the arts teach
- ▶ **Advocacy is nothing more** than public relations

- ▶ **Advocacy is a positive endeavor**
- ▶ **Advocate daily**
- ▶ **Advocate daily** with students
- ▶ **“Partnerships” and “collaboration”** are more than educational jargon
- ▶ **Advocacy: everyone's responsibility, including students**
- ▶ **Students can be a program's best advocates**

## Nothing is Carved in Stone

- ▶ **Don't assume anything**—you never have all the information.
- ▶ **Fatal Assumption #1:** Those you assume are decision-makers really are decision-makers.
- ▶ **Fatal Assumption #2:** The decision-makers will never change their minds.
- ▶ **Fatal Assumption #3:** The decision-makers will always stay the same.
- ▶ **Fatal Assumption #4:** The environment your program exists in will always be the same.
- ▶ **Fatal Assumption #5:** The rationale you believe in has universal acceptance.

## An Apple a Day

- ▶ **Identify your vulnerabilities**
- ▶ **Address those vulnerabilities**

## Just a Reminder

- ▶ **The real issues are about** power and the allocation of resources: that spells politics.

## Keep the Focus

- ▶ **Arts-education advocacy is about kids.** It is not about adult issues like jobs. It's about whether kids have the arts programs they need and deserve.