

PMEA 2024 ANNUAL IN-SERVICE CONFERENCE

ERIE BAYFRONT CONVENTION CENTER, ERIE PA

Seton Hill
UNIVERSITY

School of Visual &
Performing Arts

Many Hands Make Light Work: Cultivating and Sustaining a Healthy Music Booster Program

Christopher M. Marra, Ph.D.
Seton Hill University





Today's Session

- The Roles of a Music Booster Program
- How to start (or restart) a program
- The Music Director's Role
- Finances
 - Budgeting
 - Taxes
 - Fundraisers
- Parent Participation
 - Logistical Support
 - Advocacy Support

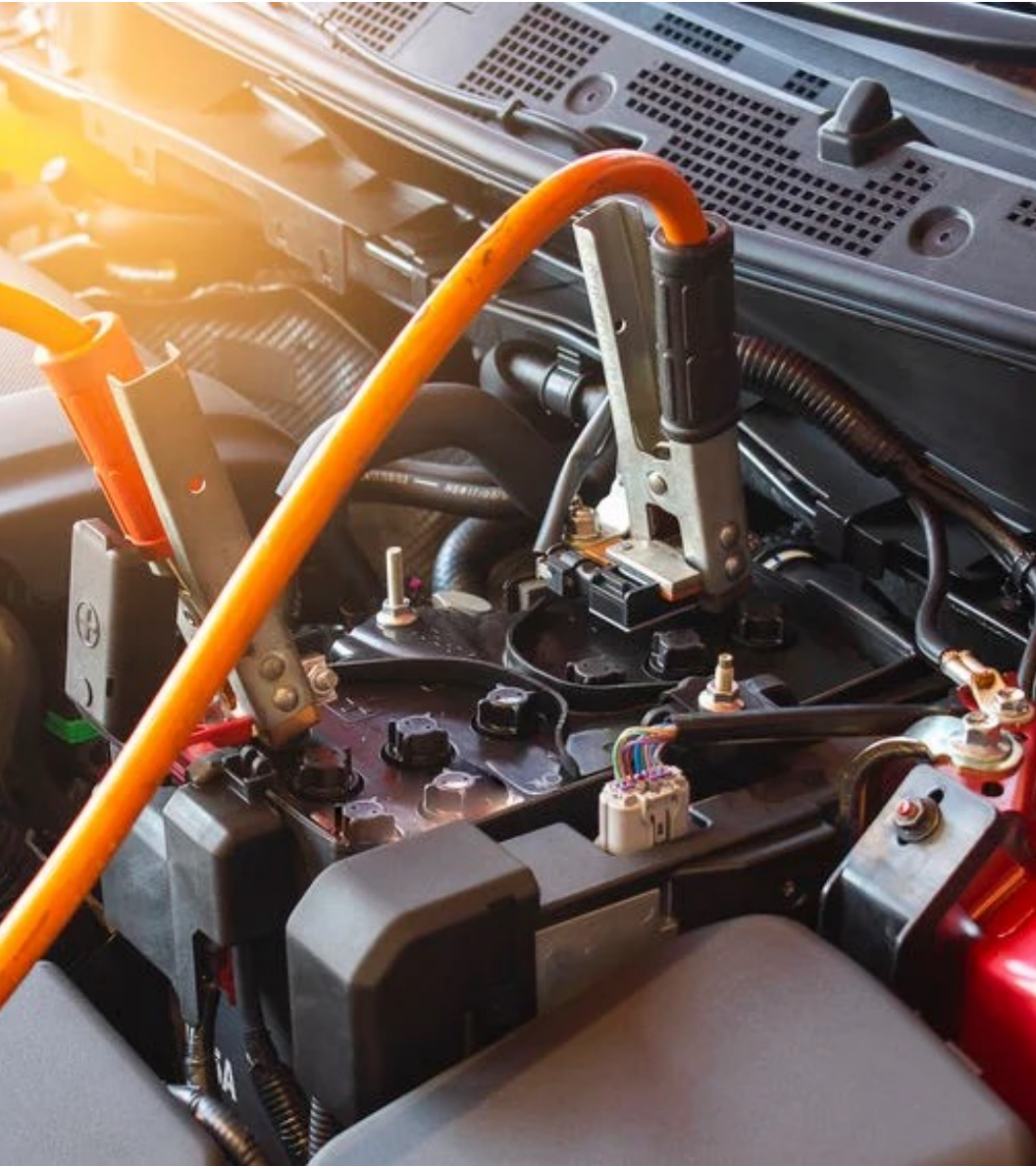
The role of the booster program?

A music booster organization can be defined as “a school-supporting nonprofit organized to benefit the music program”

(Elpus & Gris , 2019, p. 9).

Benefit in what way?

Financially	Logistically
Advocacy	Culturally



Getting a group started (or restarted)

What is the mission of the group?

Establish or revise the bylaws

Formally incorporated as a nonprofit

Getting a group started (or restarted)

Establishing the Executive Board

Minimum Board = President, Secretary, Treasurer

This is a
"recruitment"
process

Shares the vision
of the music
teachers

Search for specific skills such as:
Lawyer, Accountant, and "social capital"

Getting a group started (or restarted)

Establishing the Executive Board

Minimum Board = President, Secretary, Treasurer

Consider Vice-President and Past-President

Other board-type positions:

Transportation, Volunteer coordinator, Fundraising Chair,
Food Chair, Chairs for Band Camp or other large events.

The role of the music teacher(s)

- Provide the overall vision (Articulated in bylaws)
- Have a presence in meetings
- Articulate annual priorities needed to support the students' musical success.
- Larger-level schedule and budget needs
- Providing the best possible music education and membership experience to students.

What should *not* be a part of the music teacher's role?

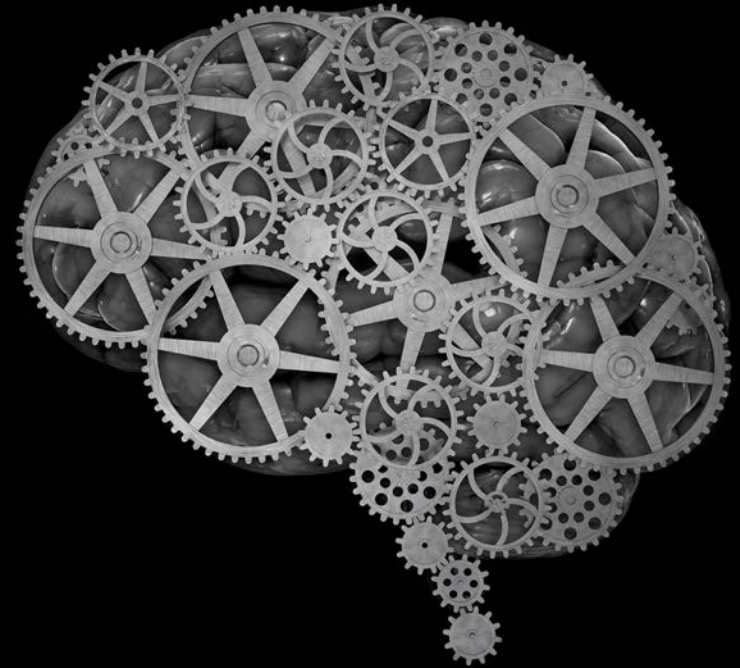
Most things that do not require a music degree.

Should not be a voting member of the board

Micromanagement of logistical items

Activity

What are some non-music related tasks that you do (but could be completed by someone else)?



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Financial Support: Budgeting

Use reverse engineering

Start with your musical priorities first

What is needed for student success?

What items will have the greatest impact on the most students?

What can (should) be a part of the school budget?

Other sources of funding (grants, foundations).

Develop a 1, 5, and 10 year projection plan for capital expenses,

Non-Profit Status

Tax-exempted status

- 501(c)3 status (See IRS and state standards)
 - This allows the boosters to be exempt from paying sales tax.
 - Does allow for some advocacy efforts
- 501(h) election
 - This allows organization to spend up to 20% in direct lobbying.
 - School Boards are not consider legislative bodies.
 - Boosters can not “endorse” a candidate for school board

(Elpus, 2008)



Financial Support: Fundraising

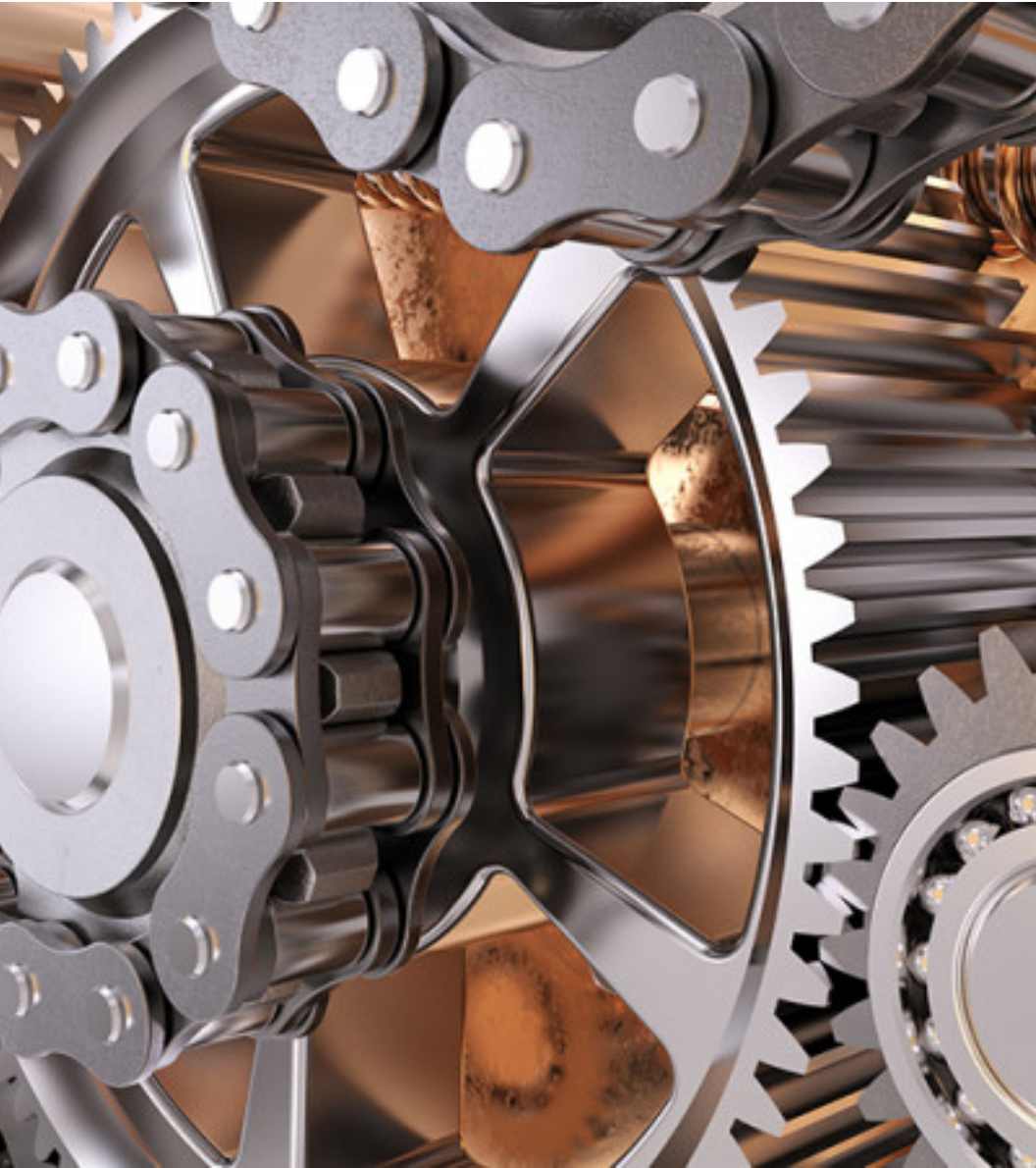
What are the most efficient and effective ways to raise funds?

- Consider what your community values?
 - Consider larger more concentrated events
 - > Hosting festivals, car washes, social gatherings
 - > It's a bonus if the music program can also provide some time of music too.
- Donation program
 - > Check matching programs
- Budget for families who cannot pay



Activity:
What was the most effective and efficient fundraiser you've experienced?





Logistical Support

Messaging comes best in the form of parent-to-parent communication.

Asking for a minimum amount of hours or events?

A “buy back” program - volunteer up to a certain level of hours, earn credit off costs?

Consider posting all needed events during registration.

Remind parents that these are some of the last opportunities they have to come behind the scenes and watch their children at their best.



Advocacy Support

Proactive support is always more effective than reactive “one shot” efforts.

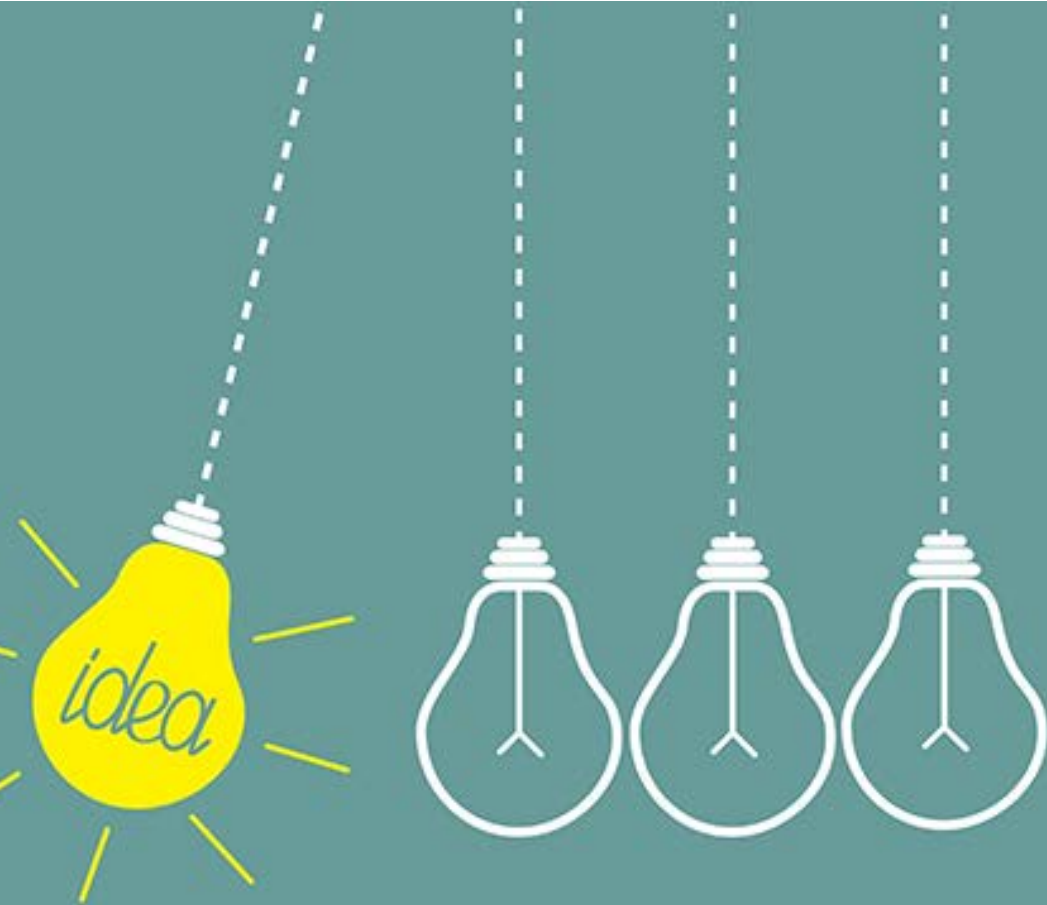
- **Proactive**

- What does the music program provide for students on a consistent basis (that is unique from any other subject).
- Avoid “cookie cutter cliché” statements, instead tailor your message to your the values present in your specific schools and community
- Keep a constant positive presence in school and local media. (Could be a position in the boosters to attend school board meetings)
- Give public thank-you notes when appropriate.

- **Call to Action**

- Schedule issues (often unintended consequences of well-meaning admin)
- Staffing reductions in elementary-level music classes.
- The proactive message remains intact, but paired clear reasoning as to why this is bad for student and a proposed positive solution.
- This is best done “in-person” (telephone, email, board meeting, editorials)
- Must maintain a united “on-message” front to be effective

(Elpus, 2008)



Closing Thoughts

- Clear Vision and Bylaws are vital
- Do not leave important roles up to chance
- What requires a music degree, what does not?
- Develop short and long range financial needs.
- Consider the most efficient, effective, and culturally relevant funding tools (remove others).
- Advocacy is proactive and constant. You help shape the narrative.
- Take time to say thanks (individually and publicly)

References

Elpus, K. (2008). Organizing your parents for effective advocacy. *Music Educators Journal*, 95(2), 56-61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432108325688>

Elpus, K., & Gris , A. (2019). Music booster groups: Alleviating or exacerbating funding inequality in American public school music education?. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 67(1), 6-22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429418812433>



Questions or Comments?

Christopher M. Marra
Seton Hill University
cmarra@setonhill.edu