

Out with the Old, In with the New: It's Time to Create a 21st Century Booster Organizational Slate of Officers!

David W. Vandewalker

What does your booster board organizational chart look like? Is it modeled after corporate America, a parent-teacher organization, a fraternity officer slate, or perhaps the local chamber of commerce? Does anyone know what a “vice-president” really does? Does your booster board of directors or executive board operate more like a “meet and greet” social club than a business team of leadership and managers?

If your answer to the previous question is yes, then remember: “If you do what you have always done, you will get what you have always gotten.” Honest, self-evaluation is essential in achieving growth and now is the perfect time to make sure you set up your organization for success as you conclude the current school year and strategically prepare for next year! It is extremely important to establish your new team of booster officers because they will become the team that implements your vision, goals and aspirations for your program.

Most board of director personnel panels in the business/corporate sector have similar titles as booster clubs except the business company entities have “paid” people who become the responsible party for

the completion of action. The traditional leadership or officer board format (President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, etc.) serves as a model for parent organizations like Parent-Teacher Organizations and other volunteer organizations associated with schools and churches. Generally, in the volunteer sector, we find that a parent’s previous committee experience stems from the novice or elemental role of giving their insights and opinions, but does not rely heavily on personal sacrifice in action, time, and effort. Of course, traditional organizations take time and devotion, but do not usually require the kind of personal ownership and dedication that a large parent organization like a music booster club needs to succeed on behalf of its students. The roles of responsibility associated with creating a 21st century booster organization require one to consider roles beneficial to providing structure much like a business position—roles that develop a mindset of action, active participation, and ownership.

It is important that the teacher or band director be the vision-caster of the organization, especially the officer team. Everyone has

probably experienced the “difficult, dominant parent” who gets involved to achieve personal agendas or the greatly feared over-zealous band parent. These parents are typically well-intended individuals that become passionate about making a difference. If band directors do not provide them the vision or guide them in which “road to travel,” they will make their own decisions and march forward!

Most volunteers function better in teams rather than as individuals. Once the vision is cast, creating teams allows for joint ownership in a role as the entire team is empowered. This could subdue any potential dominant personalities while empowering all people with greater opportunities to successfully serve in their roles.

As a band director, one of the most difficult challenges is the need to “reinvent the wheel” every few years. When constructing a board of officers, look for ways to strengthen continuity and to protect against “gaps” caused by quick turnovers and transitions. Continuity can be achieved through the teaming or paring of roles. Most consider electing individuals to senior leadership positions for two-year commitments. Stage the

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years of service so that one of the co-officers serves for one year and elect a new person in a co-officer role. This plan helps minimize the transitional learning curve by having a built-in mentor. The role of treasurer is extremely important. The demands of the job are so detailed that many people find it takes a year to learn the role. If you have one person as the "lead-treasurer" in 2010, he/she has a great working knowledge of the role and can train and aid the newly elected co-treasurer in 2011.

Volunteers are essential in the success of the organization. Serving in the leadership roles can be time consuming. This fact is especially true of those who have jobs that require travel or have extreme demands at specific times of the year. Having co-officers allows the "bases to be covered" with greater success and less stress on each volunteer. Human nature creates a more willing response to take on additional responsibility if it is known there are others to help! It is significantly easier to enlist volunteer help under this structure compared to that of the more traditional committee structure.

New 21st Century Booster Officer Roles:

The use of titles that include "manager", "management", "director", and "coordinator" automatically imply more active roles and ownership from the very beginning. These titles define a volunteer as one who will direct or manage others to a common goal.

Senior Leadership (Executive Board):

Co-Presidents

Typically, the President of a booster organization is an individual who has previously been active in the organization. I have found the best presidents to be those who have business or corporate experience. Experience is helpful in that they personally understand the needs associated with "running a business." The

major duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Vision casting for the organization (under the supervision of the school music director.)
- Preside at all meetings of the organization.
- Serve as the spokesperson and cheerleader for the organization within the local and school community.
- Regularly meet with the designated campus representative regarding booster activities.
- Resolve problems in the membership.
- Regularly meet with the treasurer of the organization to review the organization's financials. This individual should be a signer on the account. Schedule annual audit of records or request an audit if the need arises during the year.

Co-Treasurers

The Treasurer is the authorized custodian of the funds of the association. The person in this role receives and disburses all monies indicated in the budget and prescribed in the local bylaws or as authorized by action of the association.

Co-Secretary/Rules and Regulations Manager

The Secretary is responsible for keeping accurate records of the proceedings of the association and reporting to the membership. The Secretary must ensure the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings, and have a thorough knowledge of parliamentary law and the organization's bylaws.

Co-Vice Presidents/Project Leadership

The Vice President acts as the President's representative in his/her absence. The Vice President must remain familiar with the organization. The major duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Serve as senior project leadership for all co-directors and project coordinators. Ultimately, the Vice

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President manages the follow-through of the project coordinators to ensure that all timelines and procedures are getting successfully implemented.

- Establish an operations calendar of all events for the calendar year.
- Supervise the collection and revision of project notebooks (standard operations manuals created for every event).

Co-Directors

Co-Directors provide supervision for all planning and preparation, facility scheduling and calendaring, technology requests, and implementation of all special events hosted or provided by the booster club. Serving as project managers, some examples of Co-Directors could be: Co-Director/Special Events, Co-Director/Equipment/Support (operations), Co-Director/Public Relations and Co-Director/Revenue (fundraising).

Board of Directors

Project Coordinators:

A Project Coordinator is a voting member of the Board of Directors of the booster organization and is the lead organizer and manager for an event or project team. Examples could be: Colorguard Coordinator, Communications Coordinator (web site, email, news, phone tree), Chaperone Coordinator and Volunteer Coordinator.

The team should consist of booster club members who are of various personalities and skill sets in order to create a full complement of team members who will be needed to successfully manage and implement the project. The project coordinator is the principle recruiter for the project team. The PC is responsible for supervision of all of the projects' planning and preparation, facility scheduling and calendaring, technology requests, solicitation of vendors, project

marketing, incentive program, and the implementation of the complete revenue project. The PC also has the responsibility of completing and submitting the post project notes and updates of the project notebook to the director of revenue within two weeks of the project completion.

Ex-officio Members (non-voting)

These members have expertise or experience with the organization, but are not official voting members of the Board of Directors. Titles could include Directors, Administrative Liaison and Immediate Past President.

David W. Vandewalker is the Director of Bands at Harrison High School in the Cobb County Public Schools (GA). He serves Cobb County and the Georgia State Board of Education as a lead curriculum writer for band as well as GMEA as Chair for the State Music Selection Committee. Additionally, he is a currently elected High School Representative on the Board of Director for the National Band Association. He is the author of Boosters to the Rescue, 101 Ways to Harmonize the Madness for Music Educators, and Foundations for Wind Band Clarity published by Vision Publications. Prior to 1996, he taught in the Klein and Belton School Districts (TX). Mr. Vandewalker was honored as the 1995 Teacher of the Year in a National Exemplary School of Excellence. A third generation band director, he received a Bachelor of Music Education degree from Baylor University, earned his Master of Arts in Education degree from Central Michigan University and his pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Boston University. David is recognized in multiple editions of Who's Who Among American Teachers, a seven-time recipient of the prestigious National Band Association's National Citation of Excellence Award, a 2006 and 2009 National Wind Band Honors Award Winner, and the 2006 recipient of the prestigious Sudler Flag of Honor presented by the Sousa Foundation. Mr. Vandewalker has conducted ensembles in numerous state and national events which include: Georgia Music Educators Association Convention, Bands of America National Concert Band Festivals, the University of Georgia High School Honor Band Festivals, and the Midwest Clinic. The Harrison Marching Band is a 2004, 2006, and 2008 Bands of America Regional Champion, a Grand Nationals Finalist, and a performing ensemble in the 2009 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. He is affiliated with professional organizations that include the NBA, Phi Beta Mu, MENC, WASBE, and GMEA. Mr. Vandewalker and his wife, Pamela, reside in Marietta, Ga. where she is Minister of Creativity and Worship Programming at Johnson Ferry Baptist Church. She has over 800 children actively involved each week in children's music.