



Conducting Change: Collaborative Advocacy for Music Programs

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Overview

- San Antonio ISD
- Current budget issues in San Antonio and across the state
- Thoughts on Principal Relationships
- Advocacy Recommendations
- Questions, thoughts, comments
- Questions throughout are welcome

My Background

- San Antonio ISD, Sr. Executive Director for Fine Arts
 - My team
 - 90 schools
 - 260+ teachers and contractors
- Ector County ISD, Director for Fine Arts
- University of Mary, Saxophone, Flute and Athletic Bands
- Odessa High School, Orchestra Director
- Midland High School & Goddard Junior High, Assistant Band Director

7 Years in San Antonio

- Year 1 (17-18): “Go see what you see and come back in a month.”
 - 75% Fine Arts Participation
 - Fine Arts Redesign Submitted/Implemented
 - 35 Elementary Art Programs Started
- Year 2 (18-19): Fine Arts Redesign Implemented
 - 4.7 Million in positions and funding added
 - 79% Fine Arts Participation
- Year 3 (19-20): Academy Expansion, eternal spring break
 - 36 Secondary Programs Started
 - 82% Fine Arts Participation

- Year 4 (20-21): COVID-19
 - 83% Fine Arts Participation
 - CSP Planning
- Year 5 (21-22): Rebuilding, Budget flip-flop
 - 82% Fine Arts Participation
 - CSP Implemented
 - Uniform, Instrument and Equipment Budget Added, then cut
 - Attendance dropped, causing a budget shortfall
- Year 6 (22-23): Program Cuts
 - 82% Fine Arts Participation
 - Attendance improved, but not enough
 - Several smaller programs cut
- Year 7 (23-24): School Closures, many program closures
 - 86% Participation
 - 13 Campuses closed
 - Significant Cuts

5 Issues leading to current financial struggles

- End of ESSER
- Increased Inflation
- Declining Enrollment
- Post-COVID
Attendance is Lower
- No Increase in
per-pupil funding

Communication & Relationships

- I typically get involved when something is wrong
- Skews my perspective
- Conflict resolution between teachers and principals
 - Also prepping teachers for conversations with principals

Case Study

- HS Band Director
 - Upset w/lack of support
 - He sends multiple, lengthy emails, with no response
 - Principal: I hear about everything second hand, from Loudenback, parents...he talks about me negatively to others
 - He gets frustrated and quits for another district
 - The next director comes in and has regular conversations with the principal gets everything that the previous director asked for

Conclusion

- Both directors were great teachers and understood what they needed
- Only difference: Principal felt disconnected
- Once she became part of the program, she became far more supportive
- All about relationships
- Develop a relationship before you need anything
- Do you only visit when you need something?
- Have things to ask for that DON'T require funds
- When they see you, what will their emotional response be?

Principal's Perspective

- Important to remember, we all came to education for the same reason:
 - A love for children
 - A desire to prepare them for life
- They love it when they collaborate
- Examples:
 - Highlands combined holiday concert (CTE advertising)
 - Cluster Art Shows working with the enrollment team (enrollment a priority)

Principal's Perspective

- What is important to your principal?
 - Trustees
 - Superintendent
- If you pay attention, they'll tell you
 - Check meeting agenda, communication from their offices
 - In SAISD: Rightsizing, district enrolment, social-emotional learning, enrollment, community partnerships, limited access to programing
 - I find where department priorities and district priorities intersect

Principal's Perspective

- See yourself as an extension of the campus/district
 - My quote
 - Charles Nail
- That means sometimes a principal or fine arts administrator will need to say or do something with which they disagree

When there's a problem...

- Learn as much as you can beforehand
- Conversation, not inquisition
- Principal may not know
- Most common problem: Teachers don't talk with principals
- Second-most common problem: Teachers talk with principals, but accusingly

Looking for Ways to Support?

- How can you help your principal?
- What's your currency?
 - Mariachi and Folklorico performances
 - Joe, my coordinator
- Find ways to piggyback on other district initiatives
 - ECISD: Dual Credit Applied
- SAISD Board Goals
 - AP Studio Art
- ESSER
 - Rounding up partial allocations
 - After-school programs to pull kids back

Our Perspective

- Do we treat music (fine arts) like a subject or an activity?
- If you want to be taken seriously, to be treated like math & english, we need to do what they do?
- If we don't take our craft seriously, how can we expect others to?
 - Drummer drawing the sound out of the drum
- Art exhibit with TEKS
- Use academic language when you talk about your program
 - Kids aren't practicing for the next contest, they are rehearsing for their next assessment and pulling them will cause them to fall behind according to the district's YAG
 - Adopt the language of your curriculum department
 - Concert or contest = assessment
 - Teaching a concept = implementing your curriculum
 - Method book = Textbook
 - Instrument = equipment needed for curriculum implementation

YAG & Curriculum

- Do you have a YAG (Year at a Glance)
- If not, develop one
 - You probably do this already. By calling it a YAG (or whatever your curriculum department calls it) makes it more legitimate
 - Should be considered a living document that can be revisited on your PD days
 - They understand it...should include anything that falls on a timeline
- What about curriculum documents

Advocacy Recommendations

- When you do get around to asking for money:
 - all money and staff requests need to flow from the curriculum/standards/priorities
 - Connect it to a specific need...don't just ask for a large sum of money
 - Example: ECISD Equipment Rotation
 - Example SAISD Obsolescence Plan
 - ALWAYS, make every goal, request or objective ALL ABOUT THE KIDS!!
 - Instead of: We need another teacher because I need help. I can't do this all by myself.
 - Use: The students would be more successful if we had a brass expert. Our brass students are having a difficult time keeping up with our YAG.

The End

Questions, comments, concerns, etc.