**The Line in the Sand**

A guide to the roles and duties of the band boosters and band director

To communicate the roles and relationship of the band director and band boosters, it is important that the director make a clear statement several times a year. Several veteran directors call this “the Line in the Sand” speech. It should be presented *diplomatically* at the first board meeting and first general meeting with rookie parents and referred to later as the need arises. The philosophy is *mutually supportive* of the director and boosters and outlines their respective roles and duties to alleviate problems before they arise.

In a nutshell, the “Line in the Sand” philosophy states that the band director is in charge of all **music and performance** related activities and decisions. The boosters are to provide **moral, logistical and financial** support to the band program. *No one is to cross “the line.”*

**How does this help the director?**

The boosters are not involved in discussions about the *band’s performance*. Things like flag colors, choices of music or soloists or comments regarding problems in the band are not appropriate for booster meetings. The budget, for example, is *decided collectively*, with the director giving input on needs of the program and the boosters working on income and booster expenses. It is the boosters’ job to raise the funds and the director’s job to stay within budget on his/her line items. These are clear expectations. The boosters’ concern is the bottom line of the budget and not the priority or choice. Of course, the band director must not be excessive or extreme in decisions or the boosters do have the right and responsibility to question those choices.

Problems with individual students should not be discussed in booster meetings. If there is a concern regarding their own child, the parents are free to contact the director to discuss the matter, but not in the band booster setting. Further *the director does not have to worry* about the areas that are the responsibility of the boosters. For example, he/she should be minimally involved as far as fundraising goes other than being supportive and communicating to the students. The band director is free to concentrate on the band, the members and performances.

**How does this help the band boosters?**

Band boosters can “have a lot on their plates” for parents who are helping the band as part time volunteers. They greatly appreciate knowing what are their concerns and what are not. Booster board members are often approached by other parents about performance issues. They are relieved to be able to say *“that is a performance issue, you should talk to the director.”* The boosters also appreciate *the director not trying to micro-manage them*. Many boosters are business professionals and they understand finances, fundraising, marketing or equipment management. They don't need to be told by a band director how to run what is basically a small business. The “Line in the Sand” also minimizes the otherwise inevitable topic of director’s “politics.”

**Communicating** the goals of the band program and everyone’s role is the key to a successful and pleasant relationship between the band director and the boosters. It can and should be an enjoyable association working for a common goal.