

Glossary of Terms

One of the most intimidating things about becoming an effective music advocate is learning to understand the vocabulary of the professional educator. Gaining a basic knowledge of the language of the educator ("Educesese") is key to being able to work within the system.

Here's a *Glossary of Terms* to help de-mystify the issues you will face and many of the terms used during your interactions with your administration and school board. If you use the Search Engine (located on the home page), you'll find articles and other resources that address many of these issues in greater depth.

Please let me know if you encounter other terms and we'll add them to this *Glossary*.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

After School Programs: This Reform Movement supports the concept of educational funding for programs that are outside the regular school day. The intent, in part, is positive - to keep children off the streets - but music is often one of the curricular areas suggested for placement outside the regular curricular day, and that can mean death to the program. (See Co-Curricular and Extra-curricular)

Alternative Scheduling: This Reform Movement term includes a variety of class scheduling alternatives, including block scheduling, trimesters and "skinny" class periods. Alternative Scheduling may greatly increase potential scheduling conflicts for music courses, and daily contact time for music students may be reduced or changed to alternate days.

Appropriated Fund Balance: The portion of the fund balance assigned and restricted to a particular purpose or use.

Average: Using financial averages to create school budgets is an act of economic convenience - and could be interpreted as "no time to figure out the effect on individual programs and the students." Using averages, rather than real calculations based on concrete data, often works against the arts program. Always use

accurate, actual figures when developing your proposals to determine the real effect of administrative proposals on the arts program.

Block Scheduling: Block Scheduling is one of several alternative ways to structure a student's time. It may take many forms, and the most common is the "4 x 4 system" or four courses per semester (up to eight courses/year). Each course in such a system is considered equivalent to a (former) full-year course. In another common alternative, block scheduling is referred to as the A/B system, in which students take up to eight courses per year, with classes meeting on alternative days for the entire year.

Bond Referendum: Election held to raise taxes for building construction or other capital expenses. (See Levy Referendum)

Capital Outlay Fund: The Capital Outlay Fund refers to accounts used for and/or restricted to additions or improvements of equipment, buildings and sites. Portions of this budget are often allocated at the discretion of the local school principal. Many schools use Capital Outlay Funds to purchase musical instruments and supplies: cuts in this fund can severely affect (or even eliminate) student music participation.

Categorical Aid: Restricted funds provided to school districts for specific purposes such as transportation, special education, vocational training, etc.

Central Administration: The administrator(s) and associated responsibilities for governance at the district level. This includes the superintendent and other directors with district-wide responsibilities.

Charter Schools: This Reform Movement advocates for the development of special schools that emphasize a specific curricular focus or learning environment. Local tax base support may be diverted to these charter schools, which may lead to long term negative effects on public school budgets and lead to potential cuts (or even elimination) of music programs.

Class Size: This is the actual number of students in each teacher's classroom. Use of General Fund monies are left to the discretion of the local principal. Depending on class size, he/she may decide to make further unpublished (or "hidden") cuts in arts, particularly if "averages" are used rather than actual numbers.

Co-curricular: Curricular activities or events that occur outside the school day, but are not Extra-curricular. For example, public concerts, drama productions and art shows are a natural outcome of curricular participation in music, theater and art classes. They are an outgrowth of the arts curriculum and therefore should be considered part of the regular teacher's salary. Think of Co-curricular activities as the equivalent of a final exam for a music performance class. (See Curricular and Extra-curricular)

Column: (See Line Item)

Community Services Fund: Comprised of accounts that offer school district residents both recreational and educational community activities.

Core Requirements: Math, English and Science are the three subjects required and defined by federal, state and sometimes even regional laws. Proficiencies in these three subject areas are tested on a regular basis and funding (or cuts) may be directly affected by a district's ranking. Under federal policy, music is considered a part of the core curriculum since the 1990s.

Curricular: Normally refers to budget categories related to educational programs that occur during the regular class day. Curricular activities contribute substantially to the social, academic, intellectual, expressive and communicative development of students. Music education is curricular. It is very important to maintain performance rehearsal time within the regular class schedule, since placing music activities outside the regular schedule leaves them open to re-definition as Extra-Curricular and therefore more vulnerable to budget cuts. Examples of Curricular music activities include classroom general music, music theory & history, music appreciation, rehearsals of music organizations in preparation for Co-curricular concerts (including the content and process of learning about the music), etc. (See Co-curricular, Extra-curricular)

Debt Service Fund: Comprised of accounts related to retiring the bonds that are sold to construct the school buildings.

District-wide: A term used to describe any policy or decision that affects the entire district. For example, reductions in the district-wide budget may affect all

arts line items in the entire district's budget, even those that may not specifically identify the arts.

Electives: Any curricular option that is not a required component of the curriculum.

Enrollment Decline: A reduction in the number of students enrolled in a district. Enrollment decline is often used as one justification for budget cuts. Budget cuts to the music program on the basis of enrollment decline are not justifiable - unless the loss of participation actually occurs within the music program itself.

Extra-curricular: These are activities held outside the regular school day in which public service or public relations is a primary purpose - even though, from the students' perspective, they may be a direct outcome of Curricular activity. These activities may include any activity for which a "lump sum" stipend is made. Extra-curricular activities are often confused or interchanged with Co-curricular, but remember: their primary value is to create or nurture goodwill in the community. Each district needs to determine which activities of each organization fit into the Co-curricular or Extra-curricular category. (See Curricular, Co-curricular)

"Feeder" Programs: This term refers most commonly to programs for students in earlier grades that are designed to prepare them for higher level participation in a particular area of study. For example, students enrolled in elementary band would then "feed into" middle school or high school band programs. The elimination of such feeder programs has a detrimental effect on further music participation in the higher grades.

Food Service Fund: Comprised of accounts related to the preparation and serving of school lunches.

Foundation Aid: Funds paid by the state to school districts and permitted to be used for operating expenses. The structure of this fund varies from state to state and changes frequently.

Frill: Do NOT use this term as it implies tacit agreement with a philosophy that is dismissive of, and damaging to, the value of the arts in a well-rounded educational system. Administrators may use this term as a way of illustrating that the arts are not part of the "basics," ie, reading, writing and arithmetic. Using this term devalues the importance of the arts in students' lives.

Full Time Equivalent (FTE): FTE is a measurement used to establish the financial value of teachers as a means of developing aspects of the budget related to personnel. Since FTE applies to both positions and programs, its importance cannot be overemphasized during the budget development process.

Fund Balance: The excess of the assets of a fund over its liabilities and reserves. (See Unappropriated Fund Balance, Appropriated Fund Balance)

General Fund: Normally the largest source of revenues in the school district. These monies may be used to fund any needs within the school district, including salaries of education personnel and school district operations that do not have to be accounted for in another fund. Shortages in this fund most often lead to cuts in educational programs. The General Fund includes nearly every budgetary category that affects the music program; it is therefore the most important budgetary category to understand and monitor.

"Hidden" Cuts: This phrase is used to refer to unspecified cuts that are (or may be) made in a music program and are not detailed in a published list of cuts. These decisions may be site-based and/or centralized, and are usually made after the board has adopted the final (district-wide) budget "cut" package. Key phrases to watch for are "increase class sizes," "changes in staffing ratio," and "reduction of teaching positions." If the local administrator (principal) chooses to make the entire cut in the music curriculum, he/she has the authority to do so once the staffing ratio is determined by the school board/central administration. A classic example of a "Hidden" Cut would be a line item such as this: "Cut 3.0 FTE teaching positions" without specifying which teachers or programs would be reduced or eliminated.

Levy Referendum: An election held to raise taxes for the general operating fund. (See Bond Referendum)

Line Item: Any single category included as a separate entry in the budget. (See "Hidden" cuts for explanation of potential negative impact on music programming.)

Magnet Schools: This Reform Movement created specialized schools to emphasize a particular area, such as foreign language, mathematics or science. Music is often eliminated from these schools, particularly if music making is philosophically

perceived as only appropriate for the elite or for "gifted" students. On the other hand, districts that establish magnet schools for the arts often do so as a means of eliminating those programs for the general student population. This, in essence, may be interpreted as a breach of equal access regulations.

Middle School Movement: This Reform Movement normally consists of a shifting of grades to place students from grades 5-8 or 6-8 in the same building unit. While it is often accompanied by some changes in educational philosophy, it is usually done to move children from overcrowded buildings into buildings that have space. Negative factors for music often include the elimination of elementary instrumental "feeder" systems, the elimination of the option for full year participation in making music, and an explosion of exploratory "mini-courses" that reduce elective options for music students.

Music Administrator/Coordinator/Director: May include curriculum development, music coordinator or other administrative positions, including department heads.

Participation Fees: (See "Pay to Play")

"Pay to Play": One of the ways that school districts develop additional sources of revenue is to add participatory fees for Co-curricular or Extra-curricular activities. While a philosophical case for "pay to play" may be made with Extra-curricular music activities, these fees cannot be financially or philosophically justified for participation in Curricular or Co-curricular aspects of the music program. Costs for those activities are, and should be, funded by the regular budget that provides teachers' salaries, usually the General Fund. (See Curricular, Co-Curricular, Extra-curricular)

Pupil-Staff Ratio (PSR): The school board establishes district-wide ratios to determine staffing needs based on the number of pupils in the district. The PSR is determined by the administration and approved by the school board. This ratio is normally the number of students per each 1.0 FTE position, including all staff (as defined by the district). (See Student-Faculty Ratio/SFR, Full Time Equivalent/FTE)

Pupil Unit (PU): This figure is the equivalent of the number of full time students. For example, if kindergarten students only attend school for one-half of each day, each student is the equivalent of .5 PU. It is used to calculate staffing needs based

on the number of full time students (or 1.0 PU per student). The Pupil Unit is the student figure used in the SFR and PSR. (See Full Time Equivalent/FTE, Student-Faculty Ratio/SFR, Pupil-Staff Ratio/PSR)

Ratio Point: The central administration establishes a student-teacher ratio for each school in the district based on financial values that relate to FTE (full-time equivalent) value, SFR (student-faculty ratio) and PSR (pupil-staffing ratio). These calculations provide the amount of funding equivalent to one FTE (1.0 FTE) position, usually according to the dollar amount of the average teacher salary. The ratio point is the dollar value or cost of changing the ratio by one student. For example, a SFR of 28:1 means that the site will receive funding for 1.0 FTE position for each 28 students in the school. If the district increased the ratio to 29:1, the amount of money saved from that reduced funding is the cost of one ratio point. The district should have a figure available that indicates the financial value equivalent to any change in the ratio. This may be expressed as the financial value of 1.0 ratio point. (See Full Time Equivalent/FTE, Student-Faculty Ratio/SFR, Pupil-Staff Ratio/PSR)

Reform Movements: Historically, there have been several different approaches to student scheduling, curriculum and financing of schools; many of these have been shown to have a negative impact on the music curriculum. The most common Reform Movements are Block Scheduling, Site-Based Management, Middle School Movement, Alternative Scheduling, Tax Vouchers, Charter Schools, School-to-Work, After-School Programs and Magnet Schools.

School-to-Work: This Reform Movement suggests that all or certain students should be "forced" to make career decisions (as early as grade 8) that would place them in a learning or vocational track for the remainder of their public education. In this reform model, music is not normally one of the School-to-Work curricular areas - it is relegated to a special track reserved for "talented" students.

Secretarial/Clerical Staff: May include any designated aide, office/clerical workers and assistants, office supervisors, etc..

Site Administration: The administrator(s) and their associated responsibilities for governance at the local school level.

Site-Based Management: This Reform Movement trend moves more decision-making powers - including financial management - to the local school. The Site Administrator (or principal) bases his/her decisions on input from committees, which usually involve teachers and community members. It is crucial that committee membership represents the music program needs.

State Aid: Any grant made by a state government to another governmental unit.

Student-Faculty Ratio (SFR): This is the average number of students for each teacher. It is determined by dividing the number of pupil units (PU) by the number of teachers. Some districts may include non-teaching staff, such as guidance counselors, in the ratio.

Summer School: May include any summer arts program, including beginning instrumental music lessons. It may also include the addition of fees (see "Pay to Play") for participation.

Transportation Fund: Comprised of accounts related to the pupil transportation program. If these monies are reduced or eliminated, it can negatively affect school marching/pep band programs, musical performances at "away" games, field trips, participation in state/regional/national music competitions and so on.

Unappropriated Fund Balance: Cash reserves. (See Fund Balance, Appropriated Fund Balance)

Unemployment Fund: Comprised of accounts related to unemployment compensation benefits for staff, teachers and administrators who are unable to work (usually for health reasons) for a designated time period.