



**NYSSMA**  
NEW YORK STATE SCHOOL MUSIC ASSOCIATION

# **Public Relations and Music Education Work Hand in Hand**

Midwest Clinic  
Chicago, IL

December 14, 2016  
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## *You are the Expert*

The use of public relations techniques to garner public support of music education and a willingness to take advantage of every opportunity to advance support for music across various target audiences is important.

In reality, music educators and administrators should have a working knowledge of who their audiences are and have an effective knowledge and use of public relations and advocacy materials to reach those audiences.

# Advocate vs. Lobbyist

Research shows that it seems important to make a clear distinction between efforts to promote music education and legislation in support of music in the schools, and the more formal work of lobbyists.

Many music educators are unable to distinguish between their professional advocacy roles in music education and the registered work of lobbyists.

# Advocate vs. Lobbyist

To be an Advocate is to...

plead in favor of a cause or proposal (Morris, 1991); advocacy is a task that encompasses a wide range of activities, including building familiarity and trust between an individual and elected officials, and providing reliable information to them (Birch, 2006, p. 2).

In New York State, the term *Lobbyist* means:

Every person or organization retained, employed or designated by any client to engage in lobbying. The term "lobbyist" shall not include any officer, director, trustee, employee, counsel or agent of the state, or any municipality or subdivision thereof of New York when discharging their official duties; except those officers, directors, trustees, employees, counsels, or agents of colleges, as defined by section two of the education law. (New York State Government, 2007)

# What is Public Relations?

A Free Tool that Uses the Media to Disseminate  
Information to:

Public & Community

“The proper term for the desired outcomes of public relations practice is public relationships.

An organization with effective public relations will attain positive public relationships”

Ledingham, J.A.; Bruning, S.D. (2000). *Public Relations as Relationship Management: A Relational Approach to the Study and Practice of Public Relations.*

# Why do I need to be an Advocate?

- Threats to Cuts in Arts Education
- Music & Art Department Events
- All County/All State/All Eastern/All National Students
- Marching Band Championships
- Concerts
- Out-of-State Performances

*“It can help make your job easier”*

Neiman and Thoms give a description to the music educator on what public relations is and how it could be far-reaching in its efforts:

“Public relations involves more than publicizing one event; the latter is promotion. Instead, we must be concerned with an ongoing public relations effort. Our PR work must be continuous, and it must reach further than promotion for a single event.”

Neiman, M. & Thoms, P. E. (1992). *Countdown to Curtain: A marketing timetable*. Music Educators Journal, (78), 36-40.

# What needs to be Publicized?



# What Can We Do to Market our Programs?

## Perform and Exhibit!

Days for Tuba, Percussion, Horn

Tuba Christmas

Senior Citizen Centers

Hospitals

Town Hall Arts Partnerships

Local Art Galleries



# Media Relations

- Information is reported to the media as news and only used if they feel it is of importance to their audience.
- Effective use of the Media will Gain Coverage for Your Events and Ideas.

# Media Relations

It shouldn't be "Us vs. Them"

Working with reporters has often been viewed negatively by school administrators.

They are careful not to give too much information to a reporter for fear of unfair or biased coverage of a story in the effort to build public attention to it, while media officials feel that public school officials often hide information to protect their reputation.

Effective media relations serves to satisfy the public's demands for accurate, complete, and timely information; permit administrators to introduce ideas for school improvement; and provide a mechanism for building public confidence and support.

Kowalski, T.J. (2000). *Public Relations In Schools*

# Media Relations

“I Don’t Know How...”

If there is a general weakness in the use of public relations in school music programs, it lies in actual relationships with the media. Because communication between the schools and the media is often viewed negatively – due to the occurrence of problems or conflict – a double-edged sword exists.

“A perceived negative reputation of public relations lies with the influences of journalists’ bias against practitioners, resulting in pejorative press coverage, and a few, unethical, unprofessional practitioners who usurp the term ‘public relations’”.

Sallot, L. M. (1993). *The effects of motive, communication style, and licensing on the reputation of public relations: An impression management perspective*. (p. vi).

# Media Relations

Having a meeting?

Need an Idea for Professional Development?

Contact a local reporter to present a session to your group on dealing directly with them, their deadlines, etc.

He/She will tell you exactly what they need and when their deadlines are. This will enhance *your* relationship with *them*.

# Target Audiences

- A group of individuals with common interests in an activity.
  - Students
  - Administrators
  - Community Representatives
  - Legislators
  - Parents

# Who Are My Media Contacts?

- Assignment Editors
- Education Editors
- Photography Editors
- Reporters
- Talk Show Producers

# Writing a News Release

- Write it as you want to Read it
- Keep it Student-Centered
- Be Precise
- Use Present Tense
- Editors Cut from Bottom Up

# Writing a News Release

- Use Short Quotes to Add Impact
- Double, Triple, Quadruple Check Spelling
- Get Permission from Subject before Quoting
- Send One Month before Event

# Social Media

Official NYSSMA – General Site; Members Only Site



@Official NYSSMA  
@NYSCAME



**ADJUST MARGINS FOR LETTERHEAD**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT:**

( *Your Name/Title* )  
631-555-1212

**(Number of students) from (Name of District) Selected to  
All-Eastern Ensemble(s)**

***Student(s) selected to represent District's Music Program in (location of festival)***

(Date, Location) – (Name of School District) is proud to announce the selection of (number of students) from its music program that will perform at the Eastern Division Honors Festival held in (location). The event - held from (insert dates) - is sponsored by the National Association for Music Education (NAfME).

(He/She/They) will be among one hundred and fifty (150) students selected from school music programs across the state. Six hundred (600) students will participate from schools across the east coast.

Students will rehearse and perform with renowned conductors of the All National Concert Band (name of conductor); All National Orchestra (name of conductor); All National Mixed Choir (name of conductor), or All National Jazz Band (name of conductor).

"This is a wonderful opportunity for our students," said (Superintendent, Principal, Arts Administrator, Teacher). "We are very proud of these students who will learn collaboratively with other musicians from schools outside of New York. The experience they will get by working with renown master conductors is a great opportunity."

NYSSMA, the New York State School Music Association, is the largest state affiliate of the National Association for Music Education. The mission of NYSSMA is to advocate and improve the education in music of all people by promoting appropriate music activities and programs in the schools and communities throughout New York State.

# News Tip Idea Sheet

Who is Involved

(Students, teachers, administrators, parents, members of Board of Education)

Who is the Contact Person?

(Include phone number, e-mail and cell phone number for on-site contact)

What is the Event?

Where will the Event be Located

(School Building, District Office, Community Library)?

When will the Event take place

(During the school day, After School, Weekend)?

# News Tip Idea Sheet

Why are you holding the Event

(Is it related to the Curriculum? Are you hosting an out-of-district artist or performer)?

Have approvals been obtained

(Superintendent, Principal, Director)?

Have legal releases been obtained for use of minors in photographs?

Will you supply digital photographs?

Will supplementary materials be distributed at the Event?



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## Contact Me

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