



Effective Board Communication with Your Director

By Lisa Harbour, Carmel Band Booster President, 2012

A concern expressed around the country (by both directors and booster officers) is a lack of effective communication. Booster officers complain that it is hard to support a program well if communication with their director is only sporadic. Directors complain that booster officers withhold information, (typically financial information) from them. To be a truly effective partnership, there must first be a relationship of mutual respect and trust. At Carmel, we work to ensure all parents know that we volunteer in support of the program and its goals **as determined by the director**. No personal or hidden agendas are accepted or tolerated. In a nutshell, it is about the kids (note that “kids” is plural, meaning the entire band not an individual’s own child). In turn, our director respects our board and ensures we know his current and long range plans for our program as soon as possible.

Once that type of relationship is in place, the mechanics of effective communication are easy to establish. First, **communication must be on a frequent and regular basis!** Here’s what we do at Carmel to ensure frequent, effective communication:

1. To the extent possible, the Board President meets with the Director in person in his office on a weekly basis. Meeting date floats based on the Director’s travel schedule, but is typically mid week and lasts about an hour. Based on that meeting, additional meetings might be scheduled with other board members. (For example, President and Treasurer might meet with Director regarding a financial or budget issue.)
2. As necessary, (weekly during marching season), the President emails the Director a status report of all outstanding issues, proposed resolution and/or open points that require his input/decision. This report is considered informational only, and the Director does not respond unless his input is required. This report, typically sent on Sunday evening, serves as the basis/outline for the weekly meeting mentioned in item one.
3. The Board holds monthly meetings with the Director to discuss in detail all current business and long-term planning/projects. Each board member makes a report on their area of responsibility. Detailed up-to-date financial reporting is presented by the Board Treasurer at each meeting so that our Director knows our program’s financial status.
4. The Director emails the Board as necessary with any issue requiring immediate attention. A plan of action will be determined via group response to the email, and action confirmed by formal board vote at the next monthly board meeting as necessary.
5. Board members meet with the Director on an informal basis after practice as necessary to address any issue that arose during that day’s rehearsal.
6. Director calls President or appropriate Board member to obtain information whenever necessary. Director responds promptly to any call, text or email received from a board member.

In sum, we communicate a lot! It is our board’s goal to ensure that we never hear our Director say, “I was not aware of that”, and our Director knows that when we ask him for input or a decision, we need to hear from him right away. We all understand that to provide an outstanding program for our students, we must all work together to ensure its success.