Road Map

To Strategic Planning

ABOUT MUSIC FOR ALL

Music for All believes that music and arts education is core to a student's well-rounded education and must be available to all students. As one of the largest and most influential music education organizations in support of active music-making, Music for All is able to combine its programming with advocacy for music and arts education at a national level.

Our Mission   Music for All's mission is to create, provide and expand positively life-changing experiences through music for all.

Our Vision   Music for All will be a catalyst to ensure that every child across America has access and opportunity to participate in active music-making in his or her scholastic environment.

Our Core Values

People	Innovation	Diversity	Lifelong Learning
Passion	Integrity	Leadership	

Additional Resources and Information

Music for All – musicforall.org

Strategic Plan – musicforall.org/who-we-are/strategic-plan

Advocacy in Action – advocacy.musicforall.org

Educational Resources – education.musicforall.org

THE STRATEGIC PLAN PROJECT

The development of this resource, *Music for All's Road Map To Strategic Planning*, resulted from work with the I-65 Corridor Collaborative. Launched in 2018, Music for All's I-65 Corridor Collaborative is an initiative designed to empower students and teachers to engage in collaborative planning and action to foster support by constructing a model for the advancement of scholastic music-making within core urban school communities along the I-65 Corridor (from Gary, Indiana to Mobile, Alabama).

The focus for the I-65 Corridor Collaborative is guided by the belief that collaboration between students and teachers is the best method for creating and developing a comprehensive music program that can sustain itself through the support and investment of its most important groups of constituents. When developing strategic plans, students and teachers should collaborate together to create a mission, vision, and core values for their music program to influence goal setting and future decision-making for their programs.

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What is a Strategic Plan?

The word planning might seem intimidating, but we plan things every day of our lives. Deciding when to wake up, what to wear, what to eat, and what to do after school are all great examples of plans that we make daily. At this point in your life, planning is easy and natural – something you do simply because you are human.

> A *Strategic Plan* determines where your organization is going over the next few years and how it's going to get there.

Sometimes, circumstances can make planning a bit more challenging. Whenever we make plans that require the involvement, coordination, and investment of others, this can complicate the planning process. The most complex plans, however, are often the plans that do the most good.

By nature, ensemble music requires planning, coordination, collaboration, and a common vision. Becoming a great ensemble requires planning that involves the ensemble's most important stakeholders – directors and students. As the student and/or director of your ensemble, your role in the planning process is vital, as you will be the ones executing the plan once it has been designed.

> A *Strategic Plan* is a coordinated and systematic way to develop a course and direction for your organization.

If you are committed to having a great band, choir, or orchestra, you must have a plan

This plan should be a clear and detailed summary of the students' and directors' common vision of **where the ensemble wants to go** and **how they want to get there.**

Where you want to go	How you want to get there
Common Vision	Specific
Strengths	Measurable
Weaknesses	Attainable
Opportunities	Relevant
Threats	Time-Based

In business, we call this a *Strategic Plan.*

STRATEGIC PLAN - A *road map* that leads to a common destination, a destination sought by and agreed upon by all involved. This "road map" provides directions, common terminology, and checkpoints to measure your progress and success along the way.

Being "All In"

The successfull development and execution of a strategic plan requires every participant to be "All In." Before we can being the planning process, we need to affirm that everyone involved in the plan *wants* to be involved and is *committed* to its success. For the purpose of this document, success means having the best band, choir, or orchestra experience possible and achieving all that is possible in your collaboration as students and teachers.

Let's begin by answering some questions about your involvement in your program. Carefully read each of the statements below, and ask yourself if you agree with each one. Please a checkmark in the box next to every statement that you feel accurately represents your commitment to music and your program. This is the time to to be honest with yourself!

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1. "All In" Student Survey

I enjoy (or want to enjoy) making music.

I want to be better at making music with my instrument or voice.

I want our ensemble to be great and to keep getting better every day.

I want our community to know our ensemble exists and to be proud of it.

I support my director as the leader of our program; they can count on me.

I respect that my director has the final say, but I am ready to offer input on the plan for our ensemble's success.

I am ready to make a commitment to achieving for our program.

I understand that the reward of working hard to achieve these goals will be watching our program grow and thrive. I make my commitment without expectation of special reward or recognition.

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2. "All In" Director Survey

I enjoy (or want to enjoy) making music, teaching music, and sharing the joy of music with my students.

I want to be better at making and teaching music with my ensemble(s) and students.

I want our ensemble to be great and to keep getting better every day.

I want our community to know our ensemble exists and to be proud of it.

I will be a supportive leader for students in our program; they can count on me to offer my best.

I believe that my students are important in helping achieve our ensemble's goals, and I want their help.

I am ready to make a commitment to achieving for our program.

I understand that the reward of working hard to achieve these goals will be watching my students succeed and watching our program grow and thrive. I make my commitment without expectation of special reward or recognition.

Did you all check every box? If not, take a moment to discuss with your team which statements you didn't feel like you could check. Discuss what needs to happen so that every statement is true for both the director and the students. Until every member of the team can check every box, you are not yet "All In."

What Else?

What else do you believe is essential to ensuring that everyone in your ensemble is "All In?" In other words, what factors will be important in ensuring that your ensemble achieves its goals?

At Music for All, our mission is "to create, provide, and expand positively life-changing experiences through music for all." Our vision is to "be a catalyst to ensure that every child across America has access and opportunity to participate in active music-making in his or her scholastic environment." If we believe in music for all and envision every child having access and opportunity, then we cannot afford to leave any community, program, or child behind, and this belief drives every decision we make for our organization.

Mission

It's important to be as clear as possible about what you set out to accomplish in your program. Does your program develop well-rounded musicians who can play with both lyrical and technical proficiency? Does your program connect with your school and local community by providing fun and engaging performances?

Your program's mission should be a concise statement that represents your team's common understanding of what gives your program purpose.

Vision

Your program's vision statement should clearly summarize your program's goals and intentions. In order to ensure that everyone is on the same page, it is imperative that your vision considers the priorities and input of all of your stakeholders, *especially* the students and teachers in the program.

Core Values

Core values are principles that guide an organization's internal conduct as well as its external relationships. In some cases, your school or district may have already established some of these, but you may want to discuss these during the planning process and create a list of core values specific to your program. See **Appendix 1** for an example of core values published by the National Parks Service.

Where Are We?

The first step in the strategic planning process is establishing your starting point. In order to do this, you will have to spend some time reflecting on your program and answering some questions about what you are currently doing and where you should direct your focus.

Focus Areas

Focus areas are the "big picture" concepts that will help you realize your program's vision. Focus areas can very widely between programs based on the concepts that they identify as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Before you dive into addressing these strengths and opportunities for improvement, think about what the ideal situation for your program looks like. If all of the different components of your program were working togehter in the most effective and efficient way possible, what would your program be doing? What would your enrollment/instrumentation look like? What kinds of relationships would you be building or maintaining in your community?

Here are a few examples of common focus areas for scholastic music programs:

- Recruitment & Retention
- Community Engagement
- Marketing & Promotion
- Parent & Booster Involvement
- Fundraising & Sponsorship
- Decision-Maker Interaction

The SWOT Method

One type of analysis that can inform your planning is called "The SWOT Method." SWOT stands for Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats.

Let's begin by talking about your program's **strengths** and **weaknesses**. Defining these can help with the planning process by giving you a clear and concise summary of what your program is doing well and what things could be better. Your program's strengths and weaknesses can create a snapshot of where the program currently is, including its accomplishments, its unique characteristics, and its challenges.

> **Use the prompts on the next two pages to identify some of your program's specific strengths and weaknesses.**

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Example Strengths

- Our program's staff is highly qualifies and committed.
- Our community members value adn appreciate our program's performance and events.
- Our program is sufficiently funded by the school and/or district budget(s)

Strengths	
Recruitment & Retention	
Community Engagement	
Marketing & Promotion	
Parent & Booster Involvement	
Fundraising & Sponsorship	
Decision-Maker Interaction	
Other Strengths	

Example Weaknesses

- The cost to participate in our program is higher than other schools in our district and/or area.
- Enrollment in our program is, on average, 20% lower than other programs in our district and/or area.
- Our program struggles to develop and maintain mutually supportive relationships with our building and/or district administration.

Weaknesses	
Recruitment & Retention	
Community Engagement	
Marketing & Promotion	
Parent & Booster Involvement	
Fundraising & Sponsorship	
Decision-Maker Interaction	
Other Weaknesses	

The next step in the planning process is to define where you want your program to go.

The SWOT Method, Continued

Now that you have defined some of your program's important strengths and weaknesses, let's consider the **opportunities** and **threats** facing your program. It's important to set goals based on intrinsic motivations and the current status of the program, but it can be equally important to consider external factors and trends that might impact the wellness or success of your ensemble. Identifying opportunities and threats for your program can help you make informed decisions about the future and account for things that may be outside your program's control.

Below, we have listed some examples of opportunities and threats that music programs commonly face.

Example Opportunities

- Population trends predict that the district enrollment will increase over the next five years.
- A new music business (retail, instruction, etc.) is opening a location in our area.
- A local community organization is developing a brand-new arts festival for members of the community.

Example Threats

- The school district is facing budget restrictions and intends to reduce funding for the music and arts programs in the district.
- The school district is re-zoning this year, and our program will lose at least one of its feeder schools.
- A major partner of our program is re-locating and will no longer be present in our community.

> **Use the tables on the next page to identify some of the opportunities and threats facing your community.**

Opportunities

Threats

How Are We Going to Get There?

Now that you have identified your target focus areas, as well as the current strengths and weaknesses of your program, it's time to start setting your strategic goals. Before you begin this process, compare your list of target focus areas to your lists of strengths and weaknesses. The target focus areas you identified should support your program's strengths and help address your weaknesses.

During this process, we will use each of your identified focus areas to create relevant strategic goals and set objectives for each goal.

> **Goal**: a general guideline that explains what you want to achieve in your community. They are usually long-term and represent global visions, such as "increase our program's visibility in the community"
>
> **Objective**: a specific process, strategy, or project that will help you achieve your goal. They outline the "who, what, when, where, and how" of reaching your goals.

To put this in context: One of your program's **goals** might be to create a new extra-curricular ensemble, such as a pep band or chamber ensemble. To support this goal, you might choose an **objective** such as "Recruit and enroll 15 students in the ensemble during the 2019 fall semester."

Throughout this step of the process, we will be creating **S.M.A.R.T.** objectives:

> **Specific**: Your objective should provide a clear description of what needs to be achieved.
>
> **Measurable**: Your objective should include a metric with a target that indicates success.
>
> **Achievable/Actionable**: Your objective should be challenging but realistic. Your objective should also make it clear what steps need to be taken in order to successfully achieve it.
>
> **Realistic/Relevant**: Your objective should make sense in the context of your program and support your program's vision.
>
> **Timely**: Your objective should indicate the time frame in which it will be

Choose any one of the target focus areas identified earlier to practice writing a strategic goal and some objectives below.

Focus Area:

Our goal in this area is to:

In order to achieve this goal, we will:

Objective 1:

What is your objective?

How will you accomplish this objective?

How will you measure the success of this objective?

When will you accomplish this object?

Objective 2:

What is your objective?

How will you accomplish this objective?

How will you measure the success of this objective?

When will you accomplish this object?

Now that you have created a strategic goal and some objectives to help you achieve it, it's time to put all of the pieces together and create your program's strategic plan. Using the space below and the format from the previous page, create goals and objectives in the other focus areas you identified. As a general rule, you should have one or two goals per focus area and three to five objectives per goal.

Once you have fleshed out the details of these goals and objectives, you can combine both components below and within **Appendix 2** to create your full strategic plan.

What Are Core Values?

The core values of an organization are those values we hold which form the foundation on which we perform work and conduct ourselves. We have an entire universe of values, but some of them are so primary, so important to us that through out the changes in society, government, politics, and technology they are STILL the core values we will abide by. In an ever-changing world, core values are constant. Core values are not descriptions of the work we do or the strategies we employ to accomplish our mission. The values underlie our work, how they interact with each other, and which strategies we employ to fulfill our mission. The core values are the basic elements of how we go about our work. They are the practices we use (or should be using) every day in everything we do.

CORE VALUES DO:

- Govern personal relationships
- Guide business processess
- Clarify who we are
- Articulate what we stand for
- Help explain why we do business the way we do
- Guide us on how to teach
- Inform us on how to reward
- Guide us in making decisions
- Underpin the whole organization
- Require no external justification
- Essential tenets.

CORE VALUES ARE NOT:

- Operating practices
- Business strategies
- Cultural norms
- Competencies
- Changed in response to market/administration changes
- Used individually

Strategic Plan

Academic Year: _____–_____

School:	City:	State:
Program:	Director:	

Our ensemble wants to:			
In order to achieve this, we will:			Completed (Y/N)
1:	in	Weeks Months Semesters	
2:	in	Weeks Months Semesters	
3:	in	Weeks Months Semesters	
Our ensemble wants to:			
In order to achieve this, we will:			Completed (Y/N)
1:	in	Weeks Months Semesters	
2:	in	Weeks Months Semesters	
3:	in	Weeks Months Semesters	

Strategic Plan - Continued

Academic Year: _____ –_____

Our ensemble wants to:			
In order to achieve this, we will:			**Completed (Y/N)**
1:	in	Weeks Months Semesters	
2:	in	Weeks Months Semesters	
3:	in	Weeks Months Semesters	
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