Weaver Boosters – “Big Ideas Subcommittee” (working title) 9/24/17 Meeting

**PROJECT: Weaver Musical Theater (WMT) Fundraising Plan**

**Mission**: Create strategic plan to raise funds for Weaver Academy Musical Theater department outside of traditional fundraisers.

Goals:

Long Term goals:

1. Reduce parental involvement by seeking larger monetary support
2. Create a framework of sustainability to reduce future time and energy investment of booster volunteers
3. Regularly review fundraising actions to determine current and future success and feasibility.
4. Avoid small projects requiring high time and energy investment for low return

Short Term goals:

* + - * 1. Annual MT budget: $10,500.
        2. NCTC ‘17
        3. Nebraska ‘18
        4. London ‘19
        5. Update and repair theater, audio, lighting
        6. Funds for Professional Development of the teachers

1. **History and Background**:
   1. **Tell Weaver’s MT story** (**SWOT** = Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)
      1. **S:** For any fundraising ideas, clarify the history and current story of WMT
         1. Outline awards and accolades (ex. U.S. News and World Report ranking Weaver #1 in NC and #39 in U.S), identify famous and successful alumni, how WMT adds value to the community, and how WMT can reciprocally help local businesses, groups,etc., tax deductible donation status
         2. How we tell the story: video presentation, Power Point presentation, speaker presentation
      2. **W:** Why WMT struggles financially:
         1. Lack of federal, state, local govt. funding despite being a curricular program
         2. Small size of PVA therefore small parental support for budget needs
         3. GCS school board limitations to obtain more funds for the school (eg. Raising property taxes, cut other programs, etc.)
         4. Not having Title 1 status to obtain special federal grant funds
         5. Old and decrepit theater, lighting, and audio equipment
         6. Poor modern marketing and advertising, including aged website and minimal social media
         7. No significant alumni association, no significant professional theater, college, or business partnerships
         8. Budget goals only partially outlined without a clear plan to obtain funds outside of existing small return fundraisers, primarily born on the responsibility of parents
         9. No corporate sponsorship despite shown to be successful in larger school extracurriculars such as sports, marching bands, etc.
      3. **O:** leveraging WMT’s previous success and future with strong outside investment to present and expand Weaver as the flagship public school of North Carolina
         1. **I**ncorporating local businesses as partners in WMT’s success
         2. Deriving a strong alumni association for donations, reunion events, and networking,
         3. Obtain foundation grants supportive of the arts, selling advertisement
         4. Consider creating a Weaver MT endowment fund for sustainability through grants, corporate sponsorship, Alumni association, wills
         5. Sell advertisement through the website, playbills, swag (t-shirts, mugs, hats, etc.)
         6. Obtain the non-financial personal visibility support of our local leaders: school board member, city councilman, congressman, mayor
         7. Create small goals for businesses to invest in a show, Nebraska, London
         8. Obtain non-financial support of local media: tv news, print, bloggers
         9. Comarketing with other boosters, businesses, arts
         10. leveraging our parents’ network of employers, churches, membership organizations, or businesses to provide free or low cost support for our projects (eg. Videographers, grant writers, introductions to arts-friendly contributors, donating products and services)
      4. **T:** Inherent challenges to the Big Ideas
         1. Taylor and Kraak’s concerns
         2. School Board obstructionism
         3. Competition from other boosters of other schools, other theater programs,
         4. Our own boosters and parents limitations of time and money
2. **IDEAS**
   1. **Social:**
      1. **Website:** needs updating. All fundraising should funnel towards a strong website.
         1. Mobile optimization
         2. Videos with YouTube links of student performances, interviews with kids, famous alumni, teachers, principal, local leaders, colleges who have acquires our kids
         3. Ability to donate online (is the current site optimized now and is it monitored?)
         4. SEO and social media links
         5. Links to other arts organizations
         6. Alumni section with newsletter
         7. Menu of sponsors with links to their sites, coupons for smaller businesses
         8. Email blasts linked to the page
      2. **Facebook**
         1. Needs weekly to biweekly updates
         2. Incorporate stories about individual students
         3. Stories about teachers, families
         4. Updates on productions with small videos of rehearsals
         5. Links to the website for donation and sponsorship
         6. Updates on alumni
      3. **Twitter**
         1. Regular updates for students about shows, fundraisers partnered with other businesses
         2. Links to the website
   2. **Grants**:
      1. Will need to create a message to obtain grants with the following:
         1. Convince the organization in the mission of WMT
         2. Convince the organization that our goals are attainable and realistic
         3. Show that our plans are sustainable and able to perpetuate itself
         4. Does their participation make a noticeable difference in our goals
         5. How does our program fit in with their own goals
      2. Every Student Succeeds Act: local and state funds for the arts
      3. College Development Heads:
         1. Refer K-12 programs
         2. Form relationship as a feeder for them
      4. Professional Development: funds specific for Taylor and Kraak
      5. Foundations: determine each funding cycle
         1. **Local**: per Nathan Street
            1. **Community Foundation for Greater Greensboro (CFGG)**

They may be able to help us set up our own endowment fund and manage it for us as a fiduciary agent

* + - * 1. Greensboro Cultural Arts Master Plan
        2. Arts Greensboro
        3. Tannenbaum-Sternberger Foundation
        4. Betty Cone Foundation – recently gave Carolina Theater $50k
        5. Weaver Foundation – Kevin Gray, CEO (daughter Weaver alum?)
        6. Cemala
        7. The Bryan Foudnation
        8. Z. Smith Reynolds
        9. Lincoln Financial Foundation
        10. Downtown Greensboro
        11. Academy of Country Music Lifting Lives Grant, Arts Greensboro Teacher Arts Grant -- per Dr. Amy Holcombe, Executive Director of GCS Office of Grants and Opportunities 712 N. Eugene st 27401, 336-370-8100 x 5012. [holcoma@gcsnc.com](mailto:holcoma@gcsnc.com), www.gcsnc.com/pages/gcsnc/Departments/Grant\_Partnerships\_and\_Opportu
        12. Donors Choose – website open to teachers’ grants only
        13. Organizations who may be interested in the content of our shows (eg. Autism for “The Curious Incident…”. Owner of the Greensboro Swarm has an autistic child
      1. **Outside Foundations**
         1. Explore the Arts: Tony Bennett foundation and school with a network of other schools in NY and LA explorethearts.org
  1. **Sponsorship:** Investors, donors, partnerships
     1. **Corporate**: what can we offer in exchange for small and large investments?   
        Budgets typically occur for giving are done in October after fiscal year
        1. Levels of sponsorship for individual shows: each level providing tickets, ad space / location in the show’s program, website and Social Media acknowledgement and links, presentation at the beginning of the show,
        2. Contribute to an ongoing foundation
        3. Naming rights of the theater, individual classrooms etc (there is precedent of this around the country)
        4. Tax deduction contribution
        5. Offer up a product or service we can auction eg. Car raffle by a dealership
     2. **Small Business:** 
        1. Buy ad space in programs
        2. Provide coupons for their business in exchange
        3. Tax deductible contribution
     3. Assited Living Communities
        1. Give them their own matinee to fill seats and sponsorship
     4. Law firms, Dental, -- offer either funds or provide products or service for auction

**Task List:**  Individuals will need to volunteer to take action on a subset of these tasks

1. Clarify our Mission and short/long term Goals to focus our strategies.
2. Research the MT program’s history of specific awards, accolades, and academic excellence in our 100% graduation rate and AP exam passes in comparison to other public and private schools, finding previous recognition on tv, print, and online to be used to support our pitch. Discover our famous and successful alumni and obtain their contact information. Design talking points showing the value of investing in and contributing to Weaver for the sponsor beyond charitable giving and tax deductible contribution. We need this information to create a presentation for sponsorship
3. Research the struggles Weaver’s arts have in obtaining public funds. Describe the financial stress of the state in education and how it compares nationally as well as GCS specifically. Research what Weaver actually gets in funds towards education per student in comparision to private schools or other schools and other districts (help should be obtained from Tresha Layne and Nathan Street, director of Fine Arts for GCS).
4. Find a videographer willing to create a 2 minute promo video to incorporate 1), 2), and 3)
5. Outline the specific itemized budget for annual expenses for MT shows, NCTC, theater and equipment upgrades, teacher professional development, Nebraska and London trips. Our goal should be 100% fundraising without parental contribution.
6. Create a professional looking program for shows – find a decent printer
7. Modernize the website – needs listed above
8. Need someone to regular manage the social media updates
9. Develop an alumni association, find alumni contacts through social media and the school. Develop an endowment for alumni contribution
10. Develop partnerships with colleges and businesses for funding, donation of products and services, networking for other professional funding sources
11. Reach out to CCFG and other foundations to help set up an endowment, connect to other foundations
12. Find someone to write grant applications
13. Build up advertisers for the programs – someone responsible for setting up recurring accounts with local businesses, creating a contact list for future requests.
14. Develop methods to obtain coupons from local businesses.
15. Set up events with local businesses
16. Meet with Taylor and Kraak to discuss our ideas, acknowledge but try to mitigate their fears and limitations
17. Research other boosters to learn from their successes. Research national or state booster organizations to join
18. Develop a logistical protocol for obtaining sponsorship and requesting annually
19. Develop a working list of parents in our MT, who they work for, who they may be able to connect us with to obtain donations, advertising, endowment, or who they know we can connect with to develop a relationship with our department.