



The BTB Playbook

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"We are the very model of a modern major general booster organization"

(with apologies to Gilbert & Sullivan)

The Mission: Build world-class operational infrastructure with professional-grade financial management, technology systems, volunteer coordination, and institutional knowledge that enables teaching excellence and student leadership.

The Core Challenge:

Excellent theater teachers should focus on teaching and directing—not fundraising, financial management, volunteer coordination, and administrative operations. Like a surgeon who shouldn't also manage hospital billing and operations, teachers need professional booster infrastructure to handle the business side.

Buffalo Theater has earned respect from peer districts, and is recognized as a strong program. By building a world-class booster organization, we achieve multiple outcomes: enhanced programming through sustainable volunteer engagement, continued excellence in productions, expanded student opportunities, and lasting tribute to those who have invested a career in building this program.

Why This Matters - The Bigger Picture

Theater transforms lives. Every year, 100+ students develop skills that shape who they become as adults—confidence, collaboration, work ethic, creativity, communication, resilience. The performances audiences see are just the visible outcome. The real product is developing young people.

The compound effect is extraordinary: 100+ students per year × 35 years = thousands of lives shaped. Students who become executives, teachers, entrepreneurs, artists, leaders—carrying forward skills learned on stage into every aspect of their lives.

These leadership opportunities align with Buffalo High School's B1 Leaders commitment—students taking on real responsibilities while developing leadership capabilities that last a lifetime.

This booster organization exists to scale that impact. By building professional operational infrastructure, we remove barriers that limit how many students can participate and how well the program serves them. World-class operations enable teaching excellence, which enables student transformation.

This is gratitude in action. Many of us involved in BTB are former students or parents/alumni of students who experienced this transformation firsthand. We build this infrastructure to pay forward what theater gave us—ensuring the next generation of students has access to the same life-changing experiences.

The show is the showcase. The skills are the outcome. The infrastructure enables both.

Operating Principles: Ten Characteristics of a Winning Team

The BTB organizational structure is intentionally designed around proven leadership principles that create high-performing teams:

1. **Recruit/Hire and Retain the Best People** - TLT student leaders paired with committed adult mentors
2. **Set Clear Expectations** - Detailed role descriptions, documented responsibilities
3. **Incorporate Discipline and Structure** - Quarterly reporting, fiscal sponsorship compliance, documented procedures
4. **Teach/Train/Coach/Develop** - Mentorship model, apprenticeship approach, progressive responsibility
5. **Provide Leadership—Influence & Inspire** - Student leadership empowered through roles that align with BHS B1 Leaders philosophy, with adult guidance available
6. **Keep Score and Assess Performance** - Financial reporting, success criteria, measurable outcomes
7. **Follow Up/Provide Feedback** - Regular check-ins, mentor reviews, continuous improvement
8. **Recognition/Accountability/Consequences** - Clear success milestones, transition planning, honest assessment
9. **Teamwork/Synergy/Interdependence** - Paired roles, committee collaboration, "in the building" + "outside the building" coordination
10. **Have Fun While Being the Best** - Theater people building world-class operations (we're the very model...)

This framework drives every structural decision we make. The paired mentorship model, documented procedures, student leadership development, and professional operations all stem from these principles.

Organizational Structure

The Whole Organization: BTB

Buffalo Theater Boosters encompasses:

- **Students** (performers, musicians, tech crew, and now producers)
- **Parents/Alumni** (volunteer support, fundraising, operations)
- **School Staff** (teachers, directors - the people we serve)
- **BAC** (fiscal sponsor providing nonprofit infrastructure)

"In the Building"* vs "Outside the Building"*

In the Building:

- Students
- School Staff (teachers/directors)
- Where the theater work happens
- TLT (Theater Leadership Team) operates here

Outside the Building:

- Parents/Alumni (BTB adult leadership)
- BAC (fiscal sponsor/governance oversight)
- Where the operational support happens

Strategic Alignment Note: *This distinction establishes clear roles and reporting structure. "In the Building" leadership (Staff and students) sets artistic and programmatic direction. "Outside the Building" (booster organization) provides operational support aligned to that vision. This partnership thrives on open dialogue—ideas and best practices flow in both directions. Whether inspiration comes from inside or outside the building, we're all focused on doing what's best for kids.*

Theater Leadership Team (TLT) - Student Positions

Newly Formalized Student Leadership Structure:

1. **President** - Student leader of TLT
2. **Vice President** - Supports president, succession planning
3. **Treasurer & Technology Director** - Student managing BTB finances and tech
4. **Keeper of the Records Director** - Student managing documentation and communications

These TLT leadership positions align with Buffalo High School's B1 Leaders philosophy—providing opportunities for students to take on responsibilities and develop leadership capabilities for a lifetime.

BTB Adult Leadership - Paired Mentor Model

The Strategy: Each TLT student position pairs with a BTB adult mentor who:

- Provides guidance and institutional knowledge
- Ensures continuity and compliance
- Mentors student into success
- Creates sustainability beyond any individual

Pairing Structure:

- TLT President ↔ BTB Adult President
- TLT Vice President ↔ BTB Adult Vice President
- TLT Treasurer & Technology Director ↔ BTB Adult Treasurer & Tech Mentor
- TLT Keeper of Records ↔ BTB Adult Secretary/Communications

Current Operational Status

BTB Operational Positions (Seeking Volunteer Leaders):

- BTB President
- BTB Treasurer & Technology Director

BAC Fiscal Sponsorship Oversight (Ongoing):

- BAC Treasurer & Technology Board Member
- BAC Board Sponsor for BTB

Current State: BTB operational roles are currently filled on an interim basis, as required by BAC subordinate agreement. The objective is to recruit and mentor permanent volunteer leaders for these positions. BAC oversight roles remain ongoing as part of fiscal sponsorship structure.

Development Goal: Recruit and train volunteer leaders for BTB operational positions. Once capable operators are in place with documented procedures, BTB functions independently with BAC providing fiscal sponsorship oversight only.

Strategic Naming: "Buffalo Theater Boosters"

Why NOT "Buffalo High School Theater Boosters": The broader name enables expansion beyond high school to serve the entire theater pipeline in the community.

Future Vision:

- Current: High school program
- Phase 2: Middle school
- Long-term: Comprehensive theater development pathway serving Buffalo youth K-12

The Capacity Equation: Organization + Structure + Documentation = Capacity to expand impact beyond just high school.
