

# TBA News

## “Put a Bow on It”

**Michael Brashear, TBA Executive Director**

---

This is the time of year when thoughts often turn to gift giving: picking out that perfect gift, wrapping it in a beautiful package, finding just the right moment to present it, and wondering if it made the right impression. The person receiving the gift is very special to us and we hope to convey that with the gift. Therefore, many times the presentation and the thoughtfulness can be just as important as the gift itself.

As we approach the end of a semester or end of a marching season, it is very important to give your students, their parents, and your staff an important gift. You must create a moment or event for students and parents to reflect on accomplishments and feel an intense amount of pride resulting from a job well done. From today's vantage point, last August and the beginning of the school year seems like ancient history. The initial enthusiasm and excitement of the first few days is long gone. That burst of energy has been replaced by a day-to-day consistent commitment to excellence that results in ongoing progress and ultimately, outstanding bands. There is no short cut or easy way out. Consistent hard work



is necessary to develop exemplary bands and great student musicians. This ability to set long-term goals, develop a plan of action, and achieve a successful end result is one of the greatest benefits of being a band student. There is no instant gratification here!

I hope your bands have achieved the goals you set in August. If your students are playing their instruments now better than they were when school started, you are making great progress—congratulations! If they are motivated to continue playing and really enjoy the daily process, you are establishing a foundation for success. As directors, we hardly ever question whether this is all worth it. After all, this is our profession and hard work is our mantra.

However, maybe we should put ourselves in the students' shoes and look at this from their perspective: Is all this hard work really worth it? Are all of the hours of practice, learning scales and audition music, standing at attention and learning drill, and giving up weekends worth it? The students' answer to this question becomes critical to the growth and development of all band programs. Obviously, we want the

answer from all our students to be a loud and resounding, “YES, it is worth it!” The more yeses we get, the better and larger our programs will become.

This is where your gift becomes important—even crucial. You must create a defining moment or event for reflection and celebration of a job well done. This event could be a final concert, a booster meeting, or an assembly program: some large public event for the students, parents, and band family. This is no time for modesty—pull out all the stops! This is your bully pulpit to convince all involved that, “Yes, It Was Worth It!” No doubt, you will want to display all the trophies and awards won. BUT, this must reach much deeper than just the hardware on display. This is not about winning first place or being Number One. This is where your “packaging and wrapping” comes into play. In this moment, you must affirm everything that is right about band and justify the hard work and time put in by every student and staff member. This is your opportunity to make everyone (students, parents, staff, administration) feel important and successful. As you approach the end of a marching season, semester or year, don't forget to create this closure event. Wrap it in a beautiful package and “Put a Bow on It”!