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# From the Board

**Alfredo Vélez III, 2011-12 TBA President Elect**

## Questions for Success

***Be who you are today...but try to be better tomorrow.***

Dear friends,

It is my hope that you have experienced great success in your classrooms this fall and my wish is for you to continue to grow musically and professionally in the New Year. We are planning an exciting TBA Convention/Clinic next summer and hope you and your friends will join us in San Antonio July 20-23, 2012.

I would like to ask you to take a moment to reflect

on your fall semester and consider some questions that may help you to improve. We should always be a work-in-progress, constantly looking for ways to improve ourselves for the benefit of our students.

Throughout my career I've witnessed this "work-in-progress" among many of the most experienced and successful teachers in our profession—attending and engaging in clinics, performances and rehearsals at conventions. Even after retirement, many continue to stay connected and I assume are still quite curious about expanding their knowledge base.

Let's assume you are a successful teacher in a successful program. How can we find ways to improve upon ourselves and improve our programs so that our students can benefit from our growth?

I encourage all of us to step back and take account of our methods, ourselves and then perhaps even revise our goals.

In addition to self-examination,

I encourage us all to be evaluated by outsiders who are not just supporters or friends. Ask those people who you know to be brutally honest. (This means honest, not hurtful; although honesty can sometimes hurt to a degree.)



We should never be unwilling or afraid to ask for help. Almost anyone will be willing to help if you only ask.

For example, right now is a great time for high school directors to genuinely evaluate their marching season. This is separate from any success we did or did not achieve in the results category. We need an objective assessment from someone who is not emotionally connected to either the teachers or the students. This assessment does not necessarily need to be critical (although it can be), but simply honest in its musical, educational and production intent.

• Was it a truly musical experience for the students? The audience? The directors?

# Questions for Success

***Be who you are today...but try to be better tomorrow.***

- Did the performance achieve its desired effect?

- Was the rehearsal procedure efficient and productive? Positive?

- Were the students actively engaged in the process and product throughout?

- Was it an educationally rewarding experience? For us? Also for our parents?

After carefully examining valid assessments, what modifications would you consider in the future for your staff and for your students? It's important to hear several forms of feedback and criticisms and be able to take it all into thoughtful

consideration. It's also important to be able to absorb the information without prejudice and draw impartial conclusions for enhancing the experience for the future. This requires maturity from everyone if there is truly going to be personal and professional growth among the staff. To effectively achieve the utmost from the evaluation, the leader must set the tone for being open to modifications in any area of the process and product.

Decide in what areas you want or need to improve. The next step is learning how to actually achieve the desired modifications. Outside of your own program, recognize and acknowledge the quality in musicianship, educational

methods, performance, organization, and leadership skills of other outstanding programs. Seek ways to incorporate these into your daily life and rituals. Also look outside of the music field for great qualities in other organizations. Most successful principles apply to all organizations and walks of life.

My purpose in this article was not to provide answers for success only to pose a few questions that may raise your own awareness for growth. I assure you that this type of exercise will be rewarding and will become fundamental to your future success.

I would like to leave you with one final thought: The musical and educational process we provide our students, along with who we are as a person, is by far more impactful than the end musical product.

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## Mission Statement

The purpose of the Texas Bandmasters Association, Inc. is to:

Continually assist its membership in achieving the highest standards of instrumental music education.



Promote the place and value of music education in our society and the important role instrumental music plays in our cultural, intellectual, and social lives.



Foster goodwill, fellowship and a collegial, fraternal spirit among its members.



Provide its membership with an annual Convention/Clinic which introduces new music, tried and proven teaching methods and materials as well as instruments and equipment.



Provide Educational Publications of instructional methods and materials for TBA members and aid them with their personal development and leadership.



Provide information for the university music student preparing to become a band director.