

# Teaching It Forward

**John Morrison, 2014-15 TBA Secretary**

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Four years ago I began to embrace, at a much more inclusive level, the retired music professionals in my community. I thought that I could use these experts with class help sessions in small group settings. I am fortunate enough to have a couple of these recently retired friends that I can tap to visit our program on a regular basis. The students now recognize them as experts and friends of our band program. I do compensate them for their time, but in the truest sense they are getting to teach my kids without restrictions to grade books, attendance tracking, etc. They just show up and teach! Thank goodness for the support

of our administration, our community and our local fundraising efforts to pull off something

like this. I enjoy sharing the names of these local experts, along with our private teachers, in our concert programs. Do you have locals that you could empower to have a similar positive influence on your students?

The real bread and butter of your band programs are the partners with whom you share your teaching days. Many of you know that you can truly reach a point of synergy in your office and classroom settings.

I continue to find that I have a great group of colleagues who have the students' best interests at heart and desire to make a positive impact on their campus and community **within my office**. It became clear to me years ago that not only is it *necessary* to assign tasks to my staff, it allows for them to gain the knowledge and experience they will need should they desire to lead a program of their own someday. Routine tasks like inventory control, private lesson staffing, interviews and communications, basic office duties, curriculum projects, and trip planning certainly give a wealth of practical administrative experience. This model in our office of high levels of trust and cooperation has extended into our choir and orchestra department and has created a music team on our campus for me to be thankful for on a daily basis. This team approach within our campus music department allows for cooperative and respectful presentations for our community to encourage student participation regardless of the musical group from our school.

I recently finished my official duties as a "university cooperating teacher" for a student teacher assigned to my campus. Now that his

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coursework is complete and the diploma is in hand, we can all respect the challenges ahead for this recent college graduate. The challenges of creating a revenue stream to support the penny pinching budget, transportation and housing expenses, as well as other living expenses must certainly be daunting. I had the conversation recently with this former student teacher about including him in a routine pattern of coming out to work with our students. Now that his schedule will be occupied serving as a music substitute in our district, he has been invited to attend all classes, sectionals, and events for our band program as a “friend of the band.” I know these additional experiences will continue to fill his bucket with useful information that he can use in his future decision-making. I believe that embracing this future band director and including him in all levels of our program will give him the truest insight to our daily schedule and the tasks beyond teaching band that we must balance while keeping our eyes on the prize....individual student successes. I also believe that if it's reasonably possible, I should compensate him. Based on his experience level, that sometimes means that I just pick up the tab for lunch or dinner.

**I believe that embracing this future band director and including him in all levels of our program will give him the truest insight to our daily schedule and the tasks beyond teaching band that we must balance while keeping our eyes on the prize ... individual student successes.**

Many of us can personally attest to a mentor or supervising teacher that allowed for us to have these similar opportunities as we were getting started as young band directors. I can tell you that meaningful opportunities to practice teaching in front of kids, meals and conversation with colleagues, and invitations to travel on spring band trips were certainly carrots that made it exciting for me to look forward to getting into my very own classroom.

One pledge I am confident to make is that while this young teacher candidate is waiting for his first day of class and his first paycheck in the Fall, I can assure you that I will be paying for his TBA New Teacher Academy and TBA 2015 Convention/Clinic Registration. I believe this to be a strong commitment for our future and I challenge other supervising teachers and mentors to consider in what ways they are encouraging and motivating our future band directors.

I trust you will all have exciting Spring semesters and I look forward to seeing you in San Antonio this July.

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