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Begin with the Beginning in Mind

Chico Portillo, 2015-16 TBA Vice President



I hope that everyone has had a productive and meaningful school year. As band directors across the state begin to reach the end of the school year, it is natural to feel many different emotions such as pride in your students and staff, sadness to see your eighth graders or seniors move on, and happiness that a well-deserved vacation is on the horizon.

At some point in the near future I encourage you to reflect on this current school year. Take a personal inventory of the things that went well for you, your staff, and your students. Take note of what your expectations were when you started the school year and whether or not you met or exceeded them. What things are you going to do again next year and what might you have done differently?

This inventory helps us to focus on the good educational habits that we employ and to help to define the areas of growth that we would like to improve upon. The best music educators always seek to improve their skills, teaching methods and systems. It is my experience that these music educators also have the grace and desire to openly share their knowledge with other directors who will simply inquire whether they know them or not. We are all teachers of band students and to that end, in the same band director family. We all benefit from strong band students in great band programs.

So what separates the great programs from the good ones? The good ones from the weaker ones? There is no one single answer. However there is often times a recurring theme. In programs that struggle, there are obstacles. In successful programs, there are

obstacles, and directors who have found ways to overcome them. Whether the obstacles are in the form of scheduling concerns, knowledge of tonal productivity, technical rehearsal techniques, musicianship, pedagogy, recruiting and retention, classroom management, state wide testing or student and staff motivation, administration, there are band directors that have overcome these issues and are willing to share with anyone who asks.

As you begin to finish out this semester and set your goals for next school year, I encourage you to take a close look at the clinics that will be offered at the TBA Convention/Clinic on pages 22-23. No matter whether you are a seasoned veteran, first year teacher or somewhere in between, there will be several clinics for you to attend that will provide you even more tools to overcome the obstacles or enhance your growth. You will find newer and sometimes older points of view that will help you to refine your skills. By checking your personal inventory, you can match your needs to one of the many sessions that will help you grow.

I urge you to think of the TBA convention as the starting point or the beginning of your school year. It is constructed for your professional and personal growth. I know that you will enjoy the convention and the many opportunities that it will present. I wish you all the best as you conclude your 2015-16 school year and begin planning for the beginning of next fall.