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# Be Thankful and Pay it Forward

## Phillip Clements, 2018-19 TBA President Elect



As we enter the Holiday Season and our thoughts turn to the things that we are thankful for in our personal and professional lives, it is important to remember that we are members of a wonderful profession. We are all fortunate that as music educators we are connected in a very personal way. You can almost always find a common connection with a colleague, acquaintance, or even a teacher you just met. How many conversations have you had that contained comments like these? “My roommate studied with that teacher during their undergraduate degree”, “She used to work for the person I student taught with”, and “We were in All-State Band together”. The list goes on and on. We are brought together by our love for music, but it is the people who connect us.

We are all indeed fortunate to be music educators and to have had so many wonderful people that have helped us along the way. While it is sometimes hard to remember all of the teachers, colleagues and mentors that have had an influence on you as music educators, I encourage you to reach out to those who have helped you along the way and thank them for all they have done and meant to you. You know as teachers that something as simple as a thank you from your students goes such a long way in igniting and sustaining your passion for teaching. Take the time to send a text, email, or better yet, pick up the phone or write a note to those who have made a difference

in your career and life. It will mean more to them that you could possibly imagine.

Just as you can never truly repay your parents for all that they did, you can never come close to repaying your mentors and those who have had an influence on you during your journey as a teacher. However, you can honor them by being an influence and a mentor for the next generation. You can pay it forward! As mentors to your students, you continue to create the next link in the chain. You can be the person they will remember years from now as the teacher who influenced them the most. You probably don't realize what a daily effect you have on your students. A caring comment, a nudge in the right direction or away from the wrong one, an inspirational musical moment—these things all make a difference. As you work so hard to create great ensembles, remember to take the time to teach the individual. Take the time to be a mentor, and to help those students who put their trust in you every day. Remember, we are teaching PEOPLE about music.

We should all also take time to be thankful that we live in such a wonderful state where band and music education flourish. Be thankful for music and for your ability to impact the lives of so many students and have a joyous Holiday Season!