

Why YBDT?

Amanda Blackstone, YBDT Executive Director

Perhaps you stumbled across our name for the first time at the 2019 TMEA convention, maybe you've been following our Facebook page for a while, or it could be that you're hearing about us for the first time. In any of those scenarios, you may find yourself asking, "Why YBDT?" YBDT is a tongue-twisting acronym that stands for Young Band Directors of Texas, a new nonprofit organization designed to promote community and provide resources for band directors in the great state of Texas—particularly those who are just starting out.

YBDT currently boasts nearly 200 members, six Exec Board members and eight Regional Chairs. Each person involved with our organization is currently employed as a band director. We have sponsored informational events at the 2018 TBA convention and the 2019 TMEA convention. Additionally, YBDT social events have been popping up all around the state in El Paso, Arlington, Houston, Lubbock, and San Antonio. Not to mention, the YBDT College Division will be hosting a Student Teaching Crash Course this month at the UNT College of Music for those studying to join our profession. Whether it is a social or informational climate, we believe that coming together as young band directors will help to reduce director burnout and curb the isolation that some may feel throughout the school year.

Community looks a little different now than it may have 30, 20, or even 10 years ago. I know plenty

of people who were able to get the "shop talk" out of their system after work maybe at a bar or local music store. Those meetups are few and far between these days with the non-stop high school schedules, the simple fact that the dog needs a walk, or due to a lengthy commute to a neighboring suburb. YBDT is finding ways to use technology and social media to keep our members connected and engaged in the band world. We have a YBDT Members Only Facebook group that allows people to post silly and serious questions of varying topics openly. That page has now inspired a YBDT gaming community and possibly a March Madness pool on ESPN.com. The format may be different, but the benefits remain the same: friendship, support, and learning.

We hosted our first-ever Q&A Session at the TMEA convention this Spring. Dana Pradervand and Reagan Brumley did an amazing job of providing insight, sharing

stories, and inspiring us to focus on the long-term impact of our jobs. Many people in attendance said the YBDT Q&A Session stood out to them as one of their favorite events at the convention. It was nice to gather in a smaller setting and engage in a more intimate way than a traditional clinic. We look forward to hosting our next Q&A Session at the TBA convention in July.

As members and leaders of Young Band Directors of Texas, we have only just started our journey to serve and support our profession. Working around the demands of our number one job, we strive to answer that question, "Why YBDT?" We are very thankful for our ongoing partnership with TBA and the immense growth that we have experienced as a result of their belief in our mission.

Anyone interested in Young Band Directors of Texas is encouraged to find us online or at the July 2019 TBA Convention/Clinic.



Amanda Blackstone is an assistant band director at Farley Middle School in Hutto, Texas. She teaches beginning woodwind classes and the sub non-varsity band. Prior to becoming a Hutto Hippo, Amanda taught in Southlake, Texas at Carroll Middle School. She graduated from Texas Tech University in 2015 and is currently working towards earning a Master's degree in Music Education at Texas Tech. In her three years as a band director, Amanda has already observed the escalated burn-out rates of new band directors. Through the creation of Young Band Directors of Texas, she hopes to provide resources and a sense of community to new band directors so they can better serve the band programs of Texas.

Amanda was the 2014 recipient of the TBA Malcolm Helm Memorial Endowed Scholarship.