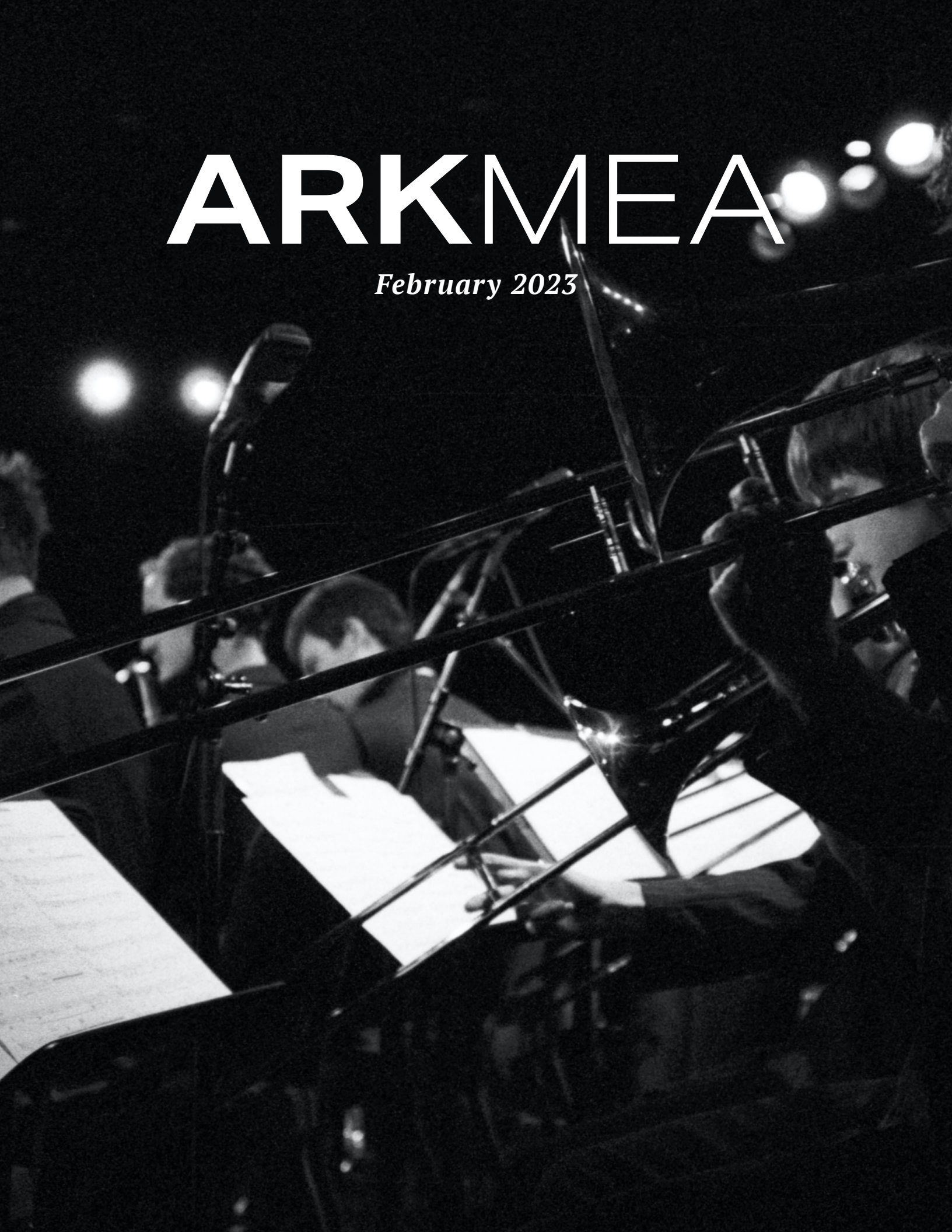


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PRESIDENT'S NOTE



Happy 2023!

I am sure your Spring semester has begun to pick up as we move full-steam ahead into the season of performance assessment, musicals, and the other multitude of performances many of us have scheduled. This is also the time of the year many of us consider the various conference and professional development opportunities to further perfect our craft.

Your Arkansas Music Educators Association is presenting professional development sessions at the Arkansas All-State Music Conference in the areas of general music, instrumental music, vocal music, and an exciting session for collegiate students or novice music educators. Music in our Schools Month events are being coordinated by Bart Dooley, ArkMEA MIOISM chair, and we hope your school can participate!

Looking forward into 2023, I encourage you to remember your “Why.” Moving back into teaching post-pandemic has reminded me of how very busy our profession can be at times. Virtual teaching allowed many of us to set healthy boundaries with our careers while still delivering effective instruction. Why do you teach music? Is everything we commit to absolutely necessary? These are questions that I have found myself asking often as I self-reflect.

I wish you a successful Spring semester and hope the Arkansas Music Educators Association can be a resource you find useful.

Musically yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CamRyn Stillman'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'C' and 'S'.

CamRyn Stillman
ArkMEA State President

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*The ArkMEA journal is the official publication
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MUSIC IN OUR SCHOOLS MONTH

ArkMEA Capitol Concert – March 2023

By Bart Dooley, MIOSM Chairperson

Music In Our Schools Month

Arkansas State Capitol Performances 2023

Wednesday, March 15th & Thursday, March 16th

Application deadline: February 21st

arkmea.org



The 23rd Annual Capitol Concerts to Celebrate Music In Our Schools Month will be Wednesday, March 15th and Thursday, March 16th. These concerts take place in the beautiful rotunda of the Arkansas State Capitol. In recent years, we've had over 1000 students from schools from all corners of the state. We all join our voices in singing the music selections to accompany each year's theme. Selections for this year's celebration is Kusimama, Cantar!, Peace Like a River, America, Soldier's Joy, The Best in Me, and Tomorrow's Our Day. Practice tracks and PDFs of the music will be sent to those who register. Musical selections will be appealing to all school age children.

Before the concert portion of the program, schools are invited to perform individual selections. It is always nice to hear the individual choirs perform.

The concerts will start with individual performances at 10:30, the full concert at 11:00 and will end by noon. We also have a special guest speaker/musician as part of the program. Afterward you may want to set up a tour of the Capitol building and the treasury. There are also many other interesting things to do with your students in Little Rock in the afternoon.

To register for this year's Capitol Concert, please complete [this form](#).

For more information, merchandise, and ideas to celebrate Music In Our Schools Month 2023, please go to nafme.org. Hope you will consider joining us!

SYNC Up Now!

SYNC (Supporting Your Newest Colleagues) is moving into its second year and is designed to encourage music educators across Arkansas. We need both mentors (those with 6 years or more experience) and novice teachers (those with less than 3 years experience) to sign up!



- In those districts without Fine Arts supervisors, administrators are rarely versed in the intricacies of music instruction. Experienced educators provide effective feedback and resources for next steps.
- Novice teachers need to know what they are doing right!

What are the expectations?

- Connect with your mentor/mentee at least bi-weekly
- Genuine care for the teaching profession
- Utilize suggested timeline for discussions about best practices
- Evaluate program at the end of the year

Why is a mentoring program needed?

- Music educators are often isolated from peers during their workday. Mentorship can help increase retention of both novice and experienced educators.
- Novice teachers are reluctant to ask for help for fear of appearing incompetent. Experienced teachers are reluctant to offer help for fear of interfering.
- Novice teachers develop coping strategies to help them survive the first year, and these strategies may prevent them from becoming effective educators.
- Both novice and experienced teachers benefit from shared strategies in classroom management, motivation, scheduling, effective routines, student discipline, and balance between work and family.

I know I would not have survived my first few years without two stellar music educators within walking distance during the day. Many other educators helped me define my philosophy and led me to training opportunities that built upon my undergraduate skills. Many novice educators in small school districts don't have this kind of access to quality mentors. Won't you consider giving your time and expertise to our newest colleagues? If you are willing to be connected to a mentor or mentee, please fill out the following form: <https://tinyurl.com/ArkMEASync>. We'll be getting you in SYNC in July!



Sincerely appreciative of your service,
Delyne West, NBCT
ArkMEA Mentorship Chair
dwest@bryantschools.org



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TOP 10 TIPS FOR MUSIC RECRUITMENT

By NAFME Member Sarah Bean Stafford, Granite Falls Middle School Band Director in Caldwell County, North Carolina

Reprinted with permission from National Association for Music Education (NAfME). The original article published on April 27, 2015, can be found [here](#).



We've all been there. Looking out at a crowd of little, seemingly fresh-out-of-the-womb faces and think, "How am I going to convince these little children to make a lifetime decision to study music?"

Recruiting rising sixth graders (or in some cases around NC, seventh graders) is not an easy task, but it is a rewarding and fun experience. I promise. I think we all agree that every child who wants the opportunity to learn music should get the experience, and it is our job to 'win them over' before they even sign up.

When recruiting for your music program, feel free to refer to my 'Top Ten' tips. These work for me, and I hope they will work for you, too!

1. Seem Fun!

Sell yourself! You have qualities as a teacher that nobody else in your school possess. You teach a 'FUN CLASS!' They need to know this. Smile a lot. Look in their eyes, and move around the room. Introduce yourself

in a positive way that gives them a little background on you. “My name is Mrs. Stafford, and I LOVE this elementary school! I went here too!” Engage them in the conversation. When introducing brass, I start with buzzing. I say, “Alright guys, I have a baby at home and he is adorable, but this is how he talks to me!” (I then do a buzz with my lips). “Do any of you have baby brothers and sisters at home? A buzz is like that, but a little bit firmer. Like this!” Look energized. Look excited. Drink a lot of coffee beforehand!

2. Move Around a Lot.

As I stated in number 1, I have had more success while moving around a room instead of standing on a stage. See if you can do your recruitment presentation in a cafeteria or a gym. While demonstrating the instruments, the kids want to see them. They will think of them as shiny new toys, and will admire them even more if they get an up-close, personal look. Plus, this will help the students see YOU better. As you play the instruments, get as close to the kids as you can. Speak with instruments in your hand.

3. Sell the Trombone!

Your band is only as good as your trombone section! This is an INVESTMENT. When I do my presentation at the elementary schools, I play each starting instrument for them. I play something fun (Cupid Shuffle, Uptown Funk) on each instrument, but I go all out on the trombone. It’s important to get as many students to play trombone as possible, and to make it a ‘fun’ instrument. Play the Charlie Brown’s teacher voice. Play a huge glissando- you can even go all out and invite a volunteer from the kids to come up and move the slide back and forth while you blow air through.



4. Have them fill something out at the first meeting.

When I am at the elementary schools, I hand out an interest form. The students fill out their current school, homeroom teacher, etc. I also have space on there for the children to give me email addresses and phone numbers. They tell me if they’ve taken piano lessons (this helps with instrument assignments... more to come on that later) and they pick their TOP THREE instrument choices. They indicate each choice with a number (1 being their first choice, and so on.) Even students who choose band as a second choice should fill this out- you’ll probably get a few in the summer that change their mind and decide to join, and this way, you won’t be starting out from scratch.

Homeroom Teacher's Name: _____

Print neatly. Wait for instructions to fill-in information.

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Phone: (828) _____ Male _____ Female _____

Parent Name(s): _____

Parent Email(s): _____

Circle CURRENT school: *Granite Falls Elementary* *Dudley Shoals Elementary*







Select your 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choice for Enrichment Classes:

BAND _____ CHORUS _____ OTHER _____

Have you ever taken piano lessons? If so, for how many years? _____

If you chose OTHER or CHORUS, do not mark anything below the dotted line.

If Band is your 1st choice, now select your 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choice instruments. (Put a 1, 2, or 3.)

 Clarinet _____	 Flute _____	 Saxophone _____
 Trumpet _____	 Trombone _____	 Percussion _____

If your family already owns a band instrument please list that instrument: _____

<https://nafme.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/PDF-Recruitment-Hand-out.pdf>

5. Instrument Assignments

This can get dicey. Not everybody can play percussion and alto saxophone. It helps when you really play up the trombone, as mentioned above, but you should go into this knowing you will only take a certain amount of percussion and certain amount of saxophones. Keep your instrumentation balanced (and realize that not everyone who turns in their interest form at the end of the presentation will end up participating in band!)

I usually have an unlimited amount of clarinet and trombone positions, and then take it from there. When selecting saxophone and percussion positions, remember that you don't know these kids from a hole in the ground. I send a list of the students interested in percussion and saxophone to their elementary music teachers. I have them rank the students for musical aptitude. They know these kids much better than I do. Utilize these professionals!

6. Send home a packet of information ASAP.

Don't wait too long on this. You could lose the students to another program if their interest dwindles after the presentation. My packet includes a permission slip with their instrument assignment on the top (Make it a really bright color!), then a list of my RECOMMENDED (not required) instrument brands, a supply list, tips and tricks, a list of ALL the surrounding area's camps and private lesson teachers.

I tell them that it's not required to get a head-start, but I find that if they are holding a list of private instructors and beginner camps in their hand, they're more likely to use it. They are to turn in their brightly-colored permission slip (the louder the color, the better) to their homeroom teacher within one week of getting their packet. Then, go pick them up the next day, and remind the students that there are still trombone and clarinet positions available for any student who forgot to turn in their permission slip. (You can never have too many of those!)

Granite Falls Middle School Band

Registration Form

Please return to your homeroom teacher by Friday, April 17th! ☺

Student Name

Instrument Assignment based on student choice and needs for the band:


(Due to the popularity of some instruments and in the interest of having a balanced band, not ALL students have been able to receive their first choice of instrument, although I tried very hard to keep all students in their first or second choice.

Yes, I would like for my child to participate in the GFMS Band! I will provide a band instrument and a method book, "Essential Elements 2000, Book 1" for my band student. He/She has my permission to be in the award-winning and awesome GFMS Band!

Parent Signature

Telephone Number

Parent Email Address



<https://nafme.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/PDF-Full-Recruitment-Packet-.pdf>

7. Follow up!

The day of your recruitment, go through the stack of interest forms and create an email. Include every email address you have. Some kids will not know their parent's email, and that's fine, but it will at least give you a good start. Include all the fifth grade teachers, the fifth grade principal and scheduling coordinator (we call that our Data Manager here) and anyone else you can think of that could be a good recruiting tool for you. Here is an example of the message I sent out after my fifth grade visit:

Dear Fifth Grade Parents,

My name is Sarah Stafford, and I had the privilege and honor of meeting your fifth grade students today while I was at GFES! They were very attentive, listened well, and seemed really excited about the possibility of playing an instrument.

If you are getting this email, your student expressed interest in being in band next year at GFMS. I absolutely cannot wait to have them. Our band is award-winning, musical, and FUN. We have concerts, go on trips, win awards, and learn the value of hard work and dedication through musical education.

Pretty soon, your child will receive a packet of information from his/her homeroom teacher. This information will contain the instrument assignment, where to obtain a good quality instrument, what accessories your child will need, etc. If you go ahead and start looking now for an instrument, or have one readily available, please let me know so I can make sure it's a brand that works well.

We are also really excited to offer something new this year- we will have a Band Camp for rising sixth graders in Caldwell County! It will be in June and will take place at South Caldwell. Your child will learn how to assemble the instrument, how to play a few fun songs, etc. Information will come in the packet on this opportunity, which is not required, but HIGHLY recommended. The packet will also include my recommended private instructors- your student is always able to take a few lessons over the summer to get started on their road to musical success!

Again, thank you for your time. Please allow your child to be in band- if you're unable to afford to purchase or rent an instrument, please let me know.

Do not let that stop your child- he may be the next Mozart! ☺ I will find SOMETHING for your budding musician to play.

Please encourage your friends with fifth grade students to contact me if they have an interest in joining our fun, amazing program!

Have a blessed day!

Sarah Stafford

8. Follow up some more!

Keep at it! Your initial roster should be your starting point. Go to all the “Rising Sixth Grade Parent Nights”, and ask to give a mini-presentation. Send a few phone messages home throughout the rest of the school year, if your elementary schools allow you to do so. (I just emailed their principal to put out a phone call to all fifth grade parents, stating we still had positions open and to email me for info.) Keep the info train rolling with all the fifth grader’s parents. Sometimes kids just need a little push.

9. Don’t be afraid to let them ‘try out’ the instruments.

I’m not a huge fan of mouthpiece nights. They have their merits, but I think that barring any huge circumstances, a child can play whatever he/she has interest in. Where there’s a will, there’s a way. When I have a little more time, I like to take my mouthpiece cleaner and let volunteers come up and try the instruments during the presentation. Usually we just do mouthpieces on brass, barrel and mouthpiece on clarinet, and heajoints on flute. It’s fun for the kids to see their peers actually MAKING SOUNDS on these new, shiny objects.

10. Don’t take anything personally.

You will not keep every kid in band that turns in an interest form. It’s NOT about you. Whether they regret not taking the opportunity or not is not what should concern you. Ignore any negative comments or any students who decide your program isn’t right for them, even if it’s last minute. Focus on the children who you won over. They are excited about seeing you on that first day. They will remember your name. They will love you already, and you won’t even know their names. You will grow to learn about them and will see them blossom into young men and young women, and you will make a difference in their lives, and THAT is what you should take to heart.

About the author:



NAfME member Sarah Bean Stafford is the band teacher at Granite Falls Middle School in Caldwell County, NC. Currently, approximately half of the school is enrolled in band. She graduated with a degree in Music Education from Appalachian State University in 2007. While at ASU she served as principal clarinetist with the Wind Ensemble and the Symphony Orchestra, as well as section leader for the Marching Mountaineers.

During her time at Granite Falls Middle School, Mrs. Stafford has doubled the numbers in the band program and was named “Rookie Teacher of the Year” by her peers at GFMS. Mrs. Stafford’s band placed more students in the Caldwell All County Band, the Northwest District All District Band, and the North Carolina All State Band than had ever been done in the school’s history. Under her direction, the Granite Falls Middle School Band has received numerous Superior ratings at Music Performance Adjudication Events. She also had the privilege of conducting the Catawba County All-County Band.

Mrs. Stafford was nominated and selected by her colleagues to receive the “ENCORE” Award, given by the American School Bandmaster’s Association for outstanding young band directors in North Carolina. She is also serving a second term as Middle School Representative for the Northwest North Carolina Bandmasters Association, representing all middle school band directors in Northwest NC.



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HERDING & CATS

Lessons Learned from Observing Elementary Music Classes

By Trey Reely

Used by permission. The Instrumentalist, 2022.

As a university supervisor for Arkansas State University, I have the opportunity to observe music interns in a variety of settings before they enter the “real world.” For many, it’s an

opportunity to bring what they want to do upon graduation into sharper focus. At ASU, students are required to spend a portion of their internship in an elementary setting. While many

find this a little disconcerting and not aligned with their career goals, most ultimately find the experience a rewarding one and much more enjoyable than they expected.

I had a similar feeling the first time I observed an intern teaching a kindergarten music class. I wondered if I would have any worthwhile suggestions since the totality of my school experience was teaching band in 7th-12th grades; I had not been in an elementary music class since my college days. (I do not predate Orff and Kodaly but am probably close.) How would I fare evaluating an intern's work with kids who are still talking to imaginary friends and believe monsters are under their beds? Since I was the upper elementary director at my church where I work with 4th-6th graders on a weekly basis and had grandkids all under the age of 8, I was very experienced working with kids of pre-school and elementary age, but the best way to teach them music was somewhat foggy.

Fortunately, my fears were unfounded. As I observed the intern's work, the similarities to my work with junior and senior high bands were plainly evident. There were advanced teaching concepts that lent themselves to younger music students as well, even kindergarteners. Over time, I have compiled quite a few suggestions for music interns in an elementary setting.

//
Don't assume that kids in elementary grades cannot behave and should be given more slack. It's all about expectations.
//



First, have high expectations for behavior, effort, and results. Don't assume that kids in elementary grades cannot behave and should be given more slack. It's all about expectations. I remember being told during my first year of teaching that all of my wonderful sixth-grade beginners would turn into monsters over the summer and would return the next fall to terrorize our school as zombie-like beings. I was skeptical but still a little wary. Three months later, with a couple of notable exceptions, most had not returned as raving lunatics. They may have seemed that way for the other teachers, but I didn't experience it. It was my first clue that results are connected to expectations and subject to the perils of self-fulfilling prophecies.

I also think that it's important for even the youngest of children to learn how to give full effort in musical endeavors and realize the importance of their responsibility to their fellow class members. Everyone pays attention, follows directions, and plays or sings together to the best of their ability. This serves as a basis for a successful musical program for friends and family and trains them for future musical endeavors. Is this taking things too seriously at this age? I don't think so. Again, it's all about expectations.



It's much easier just to tell students to do something but more learning takes place when they understand why.

Elementary students need to be presented with goals. This is typically easier for the more structured band class, but young kids will respond when they know what it is they are to accomplish and where their newfound knowledge is leading. Classes should not be a “one and done” sort of experience—they should be set within the context of a larger whole.

Even young kids need to know the “whys” of what they are learning. When presenting information, tell students why the particular concept is important and why you are teaching it. It’s much easier just to tell students to do something but more learning takes place when they understand why. If you don’t have a good reason why, then maybe you shouldn’t teach the concept in the first place, particularly if you’re only doing it that way because it is how you were taught.

Conversely, I observed that there was a lot that band directors can learn from elementary music classes. The first thing that “jumps out” at me when I enter the typical elementary music classroom is the vast amount of colorful encyclopedic information on the walls; even the carpets are impressive and educational. I must admit

that one of my weaknesses as a band director was making my band room more inviting; I decorated one bulletin board in 34 years of teaching. I must humbly say that it was very well done and looked great; that is, until it faded after remaining unchanged for seven or eight years. My typical mode of re-decorating was getting a renovated band room or a totally new fine arts facility every few years, but this is not practical for everyone. However, I did work very hard to keep band spaces neat and orderly and demanded that band members respect and maintain what we had, even if conditions were not ideal. (At one school, I inherited a soda stain on the carpet that resembled Abraham Lincoln.)

It may surprise you that young kids, as wild and crazy as they are, still love order and routine. I’ve subbed several times in elementary classes since my retirement, and those kids did not hesitate to correct me when I didn’t do something the “right” way. The best elementary music classes I’ve observed have a routine from the time the kids enter the room to the time they exit. The same should be true for band classes. Can your students run a band class in your absence, or do they take advantage of the musically-impaired substitute? You know you’re

doing things right as a band director when you receive a glowing note from the sub about how great the kids were during your absence. This results from good discipline and a steady routine.

Elementary students, particularly the younger ones, believe they can do anything and are eager to volunteer even before they know what the teacher is going to ask them to do. The best elementary teachers never quash this enthusiasm and sense of confidence. Band directors would do well to coax this quality from their more cautious and self-conscious teenagers using their own enthusiasm as an encouraging example.

Elementary music concerts are fun but stressful, often presented with very limited rehearsal time. Teachers regularly have to pull together several classes that only rehearse once or twice a week. But one thing you can count on is a presentation that will have the parents as

proud as peacocks. High school band directors would do well to remember this as they decide whether to present a marching contest show along the likes of “The Life of Molecules in the Vast Cosmos” or something more understandable to the average parent.

I’ve also noticed that elementary music classes are filled with movement, games, and activities. Variety is key no matter what the age, so a good dose of it with older kids is an important component of an engaging class that makes band the best part of a student’s day.

So, while on the surface the teaching of elementary music and junior/senior band classes might seem like the proverbial apples and oranges, the similarities far outweigh the differences. Taking the best practices of both and applying them in an age-appropriate manner will result in the best of both worlds.



About the Author:



*Recently retired from public school teaching, Trey Reely is an Adjunct Professor of Music at Arkansas State University and Executive Secretary of the Arkansas Small Band Association. A graduate of Harding University, he has written five books and is a contributing editor to *The Instrumentalist*.*



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THE TRAUMA-INFORMED MUSIC CLASS

EASING THE FEARS OF YOUR STUDENTS

By *Janet Knighten*

It's the first day of school, and you are standing at your classroom door to meet the students in the third-grade music class. Children are well behaved but are wiggly and slyly waving and smiling at you as they stand in line with their teacher, waiting for their chance to greet you. As you begin singing the welcome song, the children start to sing while walking into the classroom. You notice Linda. Last year she was always the first to sing or dance with a big smile. As you watch from afar, you see her eyes quickly scan the hallway and doors, and she isn't singing with the other children. Something is different. What happened since you last saw her in May?

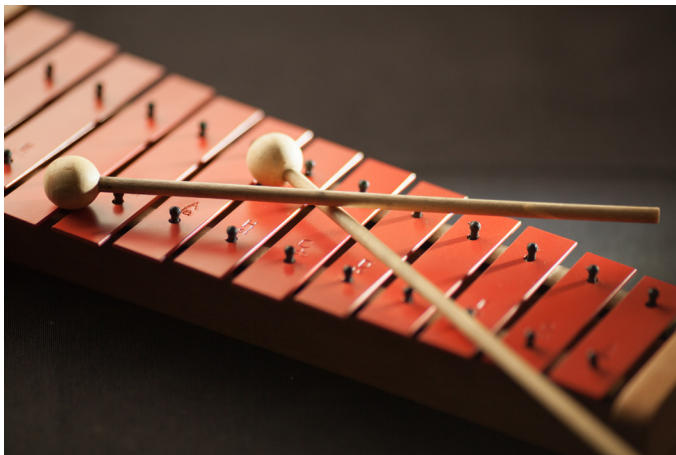
Over the past several years, we have all been subjected to the stress and trauma of current events worldwide. For many children and their families, lives have been completely unraveled. Children rely on structure and “sameness” for security in their lives. When a child experiences violence, pandemics, social unrest, and death (whether in person, by media, or by hearing adults talk), they do not have the capabilities to process the feelings they are experiencing. The children returning to your classrooms this fall have not had a complete structure in their familial or educational lives since March 2020. And the children that began school in kindergarten in the fall of 2019 will be entering fourth grade this fall. The events this past May in Uvalde, Texas, may be alarming to some children due to the widespread media images of children close to their own age.

As a music educator, you are uniquely positioned to help children once again find joy through the experiences you plan in your classroom. In most cases, there is only one

general music teacher in an elementary school. You teach each child throughout their time at school. Therefore, you have great insight into behaviors and personalities displayed by students as they grow. The downside of being a music teacher is that you only see your students once every five or six days, and a lot can occur in a child's life during that time. With careful planning and collaboration between yourself, the general classroom teacher, and the special education professional, you can learn about your student's behavior and cognition over time and in varying environments. Likewise, you can share children's strengths and unique behaviors naturally occurring in a music class. This will provide a more well-rounded vision of the student's capabilities so that the child's strengths can be integrated across academic areas.

Open communication between the child's educational team (all the child's teachers, including “specials”—music, art, PE, etc.) is imperative to provide the best

educational opportunity. Don't be hesitant to reach out to other professionals in your school, regardless of academic assignment, to discover information about students and solicit strategies they have found successful. Parents may share concerns with any team member about recent changes in behavior, such as excessive worry, questions, sensitivity, or anger. Teacher teams need to plan and work together to provide a consistent environment for the child across social and academic interactions in the school. Behaviors such as lack of concentration, unusual emotional responses, anxiety, and problems with sleeping and eating are often signs of a child struggling. A unified approach for intervening in these behaviors must be provided to establish safety and security for the child during school.



Strategies and activities inherent to the music class (singing, playing instruments, rhythmic activities, creating, and moving) activate areas of the brain responsible for emotions. By planning and integrating activities in music class based on trauma-informed teaching strategies, you can help children ease the stress and worry they may bring to school. Imagination and creativity are used frequently in music activities. When you provide an opportunity for children to express their feelings through the creation and performance of music, you give them an outlet for voicing their feelings. Observing children as you play excerpts of

classical music and allowing students the opportunity to move or draw can provide insight into how children are functioning emotionally.

Practices You Already Do in Music Class

Many research-based strategies for a Trauma-Informed Classroom are already embedded in your practices or are easy to adapt to a music classroom. Below are three of the suggestions from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (nctsn.org) for addressing the needs of your students that may be impacted by trauma.

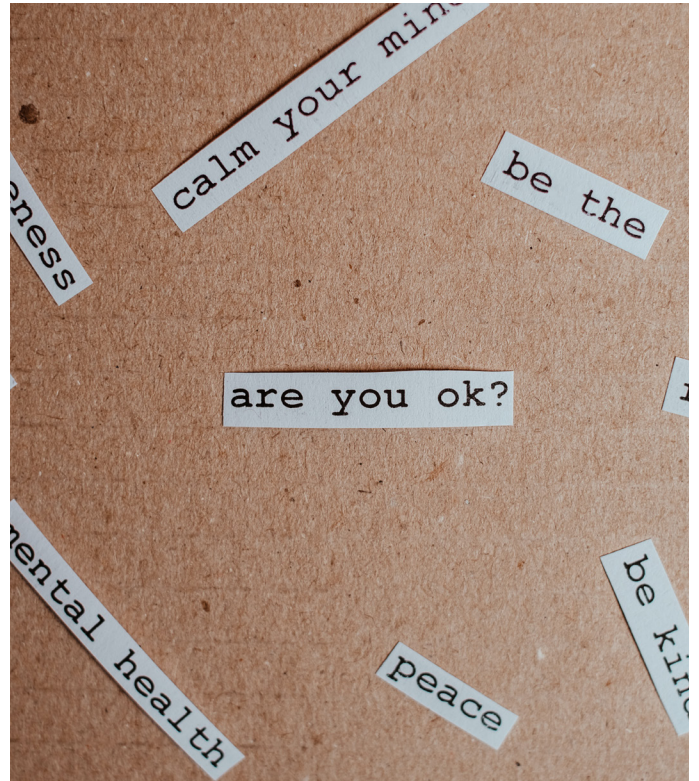
1. Establishing a meaningful, positive relationship with students helps them feel safe and supported.

As the music teacher, you have an opportunity to establish an ongoing relationship with your students. We all know the joy when students see you for the first time in the fall and come to greet you. You represent stability in an otherwise chaotic world, and they want to share all their fun activities from the summer because you know them and they already know you. When you start the first class with a welcome song or activity from the previous year, you provide a segue into this year's music class. They don't have to learn new participation rules and know what to expect in your class. Your class can provide stability and structure that is in place from the previous year.

When you provide an opportunity for children to express their feelings through the creation and performance of music, you give them an outlet for voicing their feelings. ”

2. Your classroom provides a safe, supportive space for learning.

Due to the nature of music class, your classroom provides a stimulating, supportive environment. There are instruments and manipulatives of all colors, shapes, and sizes. Hopefully, you have a large enough room to provide adequate space for individual movement and activities that will not interfere with others. If your room is small or you have an unusually large class, consider rearranging the room or moving some materials to a closet or office for this class. Because you have clear, established rules for participation, students know what to expect. Cues for transitions are consistent with what they already know, and activities frequently vary to coincide with their attention span. Establish a safe space for students who may be overwhelmed or overstimulated so they can move to this area and self-regulate. Consistency and structure translate into security in a classroom.



Aggression, anxiety, language deficits, distraction, and issues with executive function are behaviors that may indicate a student has been affected by something traumatic ”

3. You possess the awareness to detect changes in behavior because you are already familiar with the children.

Children change so quickly in elementary school, but most characteristics of their personalities remain

consistent. You have an advantage in noticing specific behaviors that may be different or concerning because of previous interaction with them. Children at this age usually demonstrate trauma through behavior rather than verbal expression. Aggression, anxiety, language deficits, distraction, and issues with executive function are behaviors that may indicate a student has been affected by something traumatic. Talking with previous and current educators of the child will help you put together changes in behavior and understand why the child is behaving as they are. Collaboration with the Teacher Team will open the door for the unified approach needed to help the child cope or overcome those fears they may be experiencing. Several resources are listed at the end of the article to assist you in becoming more aware of the ways trauma can affect behavior and strategies for supporting the student.



Suggestions for Music Activities

When you plan your classes, you may not know who is experiencing the effects of trauma as these effects often display in varying ways, depending on the child. The suggestions below are great for inclusive classes to meet the needs of all children.

1. When the new year begins, don't hesitate to use repertoire from the previous year(s) as a segue to new concepts. Familiarity with previously learned songs and activities will provide consistency and a sense of security in their routine. Use these songs to introduce new concepts with the same song.
2. Before the first lockdown drill of the year, prepare students using an age-appropriate book coordinated with a song about safety. Emphasize the drill is about safety and not fear. Create words to a known song tune that can be used during the drill transition. Students can sing it silently as they move into their safe spaces, and it can act as "internal talk" to soothe them.
3. When a behavior escalates, use your voice to de-escalate. If a child has a reoccurring behavior that may interrupt class, plan a pre-arranged intervention with the child, parents, and other teachers (for consistency and consensus), such as an easily accessible area or space where they can retreat to calm down.
4. Varying activities and keeping them within the attention span will decrease the time a student has to fixate on thoughts based on fear or suspicion. Learning is a doing thing, so keep them engaged with scaffolded concepts. Vary tasks by using different modalities (aural, visual, kinesthetic) as well as high and low energy. Always end the class with a soft, slow song like a lullaby to help children slow down and regroup before sending them to another teacher.
5. Light can have a significant impact on behavior in the classroom. Consider using transparent light material to drape over the lights in your room if they are too bright or glaring. Turning off alternating rows of light can also help. Consider using as much natural light as possible if you have large windows in your room.
6. Employ puppets in teaching call and response activities. Students will talk to the puppet if they have issues relating to adults. Introduce the puppets in an age-appropriate manner as a helpful and supportive entity early in the year. Use the puppet as the voice of the books you read in class. This may provoke helpful interactive communication between the students and the puppet.
7. Using drum circles as a transition activity is an excellent way to allow for nonverbal expression and communication. Ask the children to express their mood through interchanges of drum riffs.
8. Depending on the age of the children, you might consider placing some small stuffed animals in your room where children will gather for the drill.

Trauma-Informed Classroom strategies validate the behaviors of children that may have experienced trauma. Preparing activities for your class with these suggestions in mind may help your students continue to feel safe and secure in your music class.

Books on Lock Down Drills

- Lia-Ria and the Lockdown Drill, Jodi J. Fiore
- Lockdown Drill at Superhero School, Tamara Rittershaus
- The Elephant in the Room: A Lockdown Story, Alicia Standard
- Room 23 and the Lockdown Drill, Suzanne Wolf

Resources for Teachers

- Best Practices for Trauma-Informed Instruction. (2019). Hanover Research. <https://wasa-oly.org/WASA/images/WASA/6.0%20Resources/Hanover/BEST%20PRACTICES%20FOR%20TRAUMA-INFORMED%20INSTRUCTION%20.pdf>
- Module 7: Trauma. Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation. Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development. https://www.ecmhc.org/tutorials/trauma/mod1_1.html
- Beyond the ACE Score: Perspectives from the NCTSN on Child Trauma and Adversity Screening and Impact. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network.
- Talking to Children When Scary Things Happen. (2022). National Child Traumatic Stress Network. <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/talking-to-children-when-scary-things-happen>
- How Should Teachers and Parents Talk about the Uvalde School Shooting with Their Children? An

interview with child clinical psychologist Jennifer Greif Green on helping kids and educators deal with the trauma of another mass shooting. (2022.) Thurston, A. <https://www.bu.edu/articles/2022/how-teachers-and-parents-should-talk-about-uvalde-school-shooting-with-children/>

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- Minahan, J. (October 1, 2019). Trauma-informed teaching strategies. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) <https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/trauma-informed-teaching-strategies>.

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LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Making Key Changes in Your Career

By NAFME Member Dr. Lori Schwartz Reichl

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“There comes a time in your life when you focus solely on what you believe is right, regardless of what everybody else is doing.” — Alexander McQueen

In May 2019, I published an article for the teacher edition of *In Tune Magazine* entitled [“An Individual Path: Thinking Outside the Box When Making Career Changes”](#) which was later reprinted online with permission for NAFME. Since its publication, I have suggested the article to several people as a resource. I have also received emails from people I do not know who located this article online and found it helpful. Almost four years after writing it, I still believe in its message and my reason for writing it. Within the article, I provided questions to ask oneself before reaching a decision about a career change:

- How long can this change take place?
- Do I understand my contract?
- How will this shift affect my health?
- What impact will it have on my family?
- How will I grow, personally and professionally?
- What will I sacrifice—and what will I gain?
- Who will be my support system?
- Have I thought outside the box enough?

When the pandemic hit in March 2020, I did not feel nearly as affected as many of my family and friends. I felt like I had experienced my own personal “pandemic”

a few years prior when I made the decision to step down from my band directing position and leave the classroom on a full-time basis. My priorities had shifted in many ways. I had a dream in my soul, and I wanted to explore it. However, I had little guidance for how to make these key changes in my life. Fortunately, I had worked hard at putting into place many opportunities that continued beyond my former position. I also followed a calling in my heart and trusted that my path would continue to grow. I have kept that dream in my vision and remained laser focused on my desired path. I have enjoyed the opportunities to connect, collaborate, and grow. Anxiety and doubt have crept into my mind at many stages on this path. However, I have learned that when they do, it is once again time to reflect and potentially revitalize.



Almost seven years later, that dream has expanded to my current work where I am fortunate to collaborate with educators globally. Together, we reflect on our teaching practices while making key changes to refresh strategies that represent a shared vision to enrich the curriculum, classroom, and community. We also reflect on our personal career paths, dream about the future, discover the steps needed to achieve such transitions, and encourage one another to maintain the desired path. Colleague Dr. Jenny L. Neff and I also co-authored an article entitled “Has Your Flame Burned Out or Have You (Temporarily) Lost Your Spark?” as a way to guide others to reflect with a promise to reignite:

“More than anything, the pandemic taught us that our programs and professions are not linear. There are curves to maneuver, mountains to climb, and valleys to roll down at all stages of our careers. Passion, priority, and purpose may have centered us during this historic educational era; however, they may have also led us to new interests, dreams, and aspirations.”

Change is in the air! Fall is here and the leaves are beginning to change. I have spoken to many colleagues who are ready for a change in their careers, too. Some want to attempt a new grade level or area of teaching, some want to explore a role in administration, some are considering a leave of absence for such things as caregiving or study, some are questioning retirement, and others are contemplating a new professional path altogether. These are natural feelings to have as we progress through our careers. They are also expected as we exit a global pandemic.



Some people are commenting that they feel “lost” or “stuck” in their work. Others are motivated (both positively and negatively) to make a change based on what they have experienced. Others are having difficulty putting into words the reason why they want a change. Regardless, we need to establish a plan for making a change. This action should begin with deep reflection and dedicated focus.

Take some time, possibly away from work, home, and others to independently review these questions for why, how, and when you want to make a change. Write down your answers if that is helpful.



Questions for Reflection:

- What are the reasons for wanting this change?
- How are you preparing for this change?
- Who will you include in the conversation?
- What questions will you ask?
- What feelings are you experiencing?
- How will you fill the void of what you are currently doing?
- How will you achieve the void of that teaching “high”?
- How often do you feel the need for that teaching “high” in your life?
- How will you own the decision once you have made it?
- Who will you reach out to when you need support?



Our lives cannot parallel others for our entire careers. Everyone has different needs in their lives at different times. If we do not reflect on our personal needs and wants, we may remain following the crowd. Let’s lead by example! Let’s demonstrate to our students, our colleagues, and ourselves that we can make key changes in our careers at any point. These key changes may be exactly what we need to do to reignite the spark that brings joy to ourselves and those we serve.

About the author:



Dr. Lori Schwartz Reichl is a champion of mentorship and motivation in education. Her mission is to encourage educators to reflect on our teaching practices while [making key changes](#) to refresh strategies that represent a shared vision to enrich the curriculum, classroom, and community. Dr. Reichl’s unique educational experiences have permitted her to expand her multifaceted career into a portfolio as a clinician, conductor, instructor, writer, and speaker. She is the author of

nearly 100 educational articles and has designed these mentoring pieces into a graduate course that she instructs at The University of the Arts (Philadelphia) and VanderCook College of Music (Chicago). Musically, Dr. Reichl has served as an adjudicator, clinician, and guest conductor for honor bands in a handful of states. Generally, for all areas and levels of education, Dr. Reichl has presented countless professional development sessions and keynote speeches for school systems and organizations in 16 states including for international events. She has spoken in dozens of collegiate classrooms nationwide and has been interviewed for 13 education and leadership podcasts. Learn more: [MakingKeyChanges.com](#). Subscribe to the Making Key Changes [monthly newsletter](#) or peruse Dr. Reichl’s [professional development offerings](#) and [articles](#). Check out [Music Reading Class](#), too!

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