

# Current Issue

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SBO Presents the 18th Annual 50 Directors Who Make A Difference Report

**ALABAMA**

Name: Jeff Hudson

School: Lee-Scott

Academy

City/State: Auburn, Alabama

Total Years Teaching: 34

Number of students in instrumental music program: 60

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

My proudest moments are when we finish a performance on the field or on stage and the students come off knowing that they did their absolute best and being proud of their performance. Those always seem to be the ones they continue to talk about as being the most fun too.

How do you hope to make a difference in your students' lives?

I hope that each student feels that in being a part of the band that they have contributed to the greater good of the organization and to the school as a whole. I want them to be able to take their experience with them and apply it throughout their lives in a positive manner. Also, it's great to hear the parents tell me that their child has really found their "niche" being in the band.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

I try to make my students realize that no matter what part they play, or what their role is in the band, that they matter to the organization and to me, and that there is no substitute for hard, honest work.

**ALASKA**

Name : Dr. Jamin L. Burton

School: Colony High School

City/State: Palmer, Alaska

Total Years Teaching: 12

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 190

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

My proudest moments as an educator come from watching individual students achieve consistent progress and reach their goals. Seeing the progress that individuals make from the time I became their teacher to now and seeing them be successful in their lives is fantastic and humbling. It always motivates me to stay focused, stay positive, and make consistent progress towards the big goals.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

My hope is that I can get to know them and find ways help them achieve their goals while enriching their lives through music and teaching them what they need to be successful if they decide to pursue music beyond high school. My students come from every walk of life. Some of their goals are to take care of their siblings, graduate high school, and be able to buy food and pay rent. For some, it is to find the courage to face another day. For others it is to attend an engineering school and get a scholarship and others strive to make it in the music world. For me teaching is about relationships, helping my students become better people, and opening the doors and giving them the skills to follow their passion and be successful.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

The most important lesson I can teach my students is to have hope and turn that hope into action. Every single one of us is capable of achieving more than we realize. When we dare to hope that our dreams can be real it provides stability and motivation. It helps us use our time wisely and focus on the small actions and day-to-day work that we need to do to see our dreams fulfilled. When we have hope it inspires us to spend that extra time in the practice room, make the extra effort to help another person, stand for what is right, see failures as opportunities to learn, and become better versions of ourselves today than we were yesterday.



ARIZONA

Name : Vincent Wedge

School: Red Mountain

High School (15th year)

City/State: Mesa, Arizona

Total Years Teaching: 30

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 170

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

My proudest moments often involve tears. Usually students' tears celebrating moments of accomplishment -- a great performance, an end to a season, a final high school concert. These moments make me feel that our activity has been important to them.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student’s lives?

I hope to provide a link from their teen to their adult years. A consistent, caring musical mentor. A place at school to call home, an environment where they can learn and grow, and a belief that there is honor and occasional victory in honest hard work.

What’s the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

The joy had better be in the journey! While goals, education, and dreams are vitally important, if we don’t have any fun getting there, we probably won’t like what we find when we do get there!



ARKANSAS

Name : Guianta “Richie”

Williams

School: Paragould High School

City/State: Paragould, Arkansas

Total Years Teaching: 9

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 425

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

Without hesitation I can say the proudest moment for me as an educator happens every year when the seniors of the program give “senior speeches”. As you can imagine these speeches are filled with tears, laughter, joy, some regret, memories of years gone by, and a reminder to all the underclassmen of where the program is and where it came from. The seniors talk about what being in the band program has taught them and some of the hard lessons they had to learn. I always love to hear them talk about what they were like before joining band and how being in band has changed their life.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student’s lives?

We always want to ensure all of our students feel like they “belong”. Growing up can be tough, and so many kids go through life feeling lost and in fear that they will be rejected. I hope we always create a family environment for them in our band room. We aspire to ensure our kids know they are loved and appreciated. Our students know that they matter— that they are unique and special — and that’s okay! We teach our kids that it is awesome to be different and to be a trailblazer. With our school-wide free & reduced lunch numbers at nearly 80%, the diverse backgrounds that each student comes from makes our jobs as educators/counselors/parent figures that much more important and very rewarding.

What’s the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

As important as music is and everything that we teach our students about in music, it is merely the vehicle that we use to help make our students better people. I would say that the biggest lesson we teach our kids

everyday is that excellence (in music or anything) is not a geographic phenomenon. Anything can be accomplished anywhere as long as everyone is on board and moving the same direction. Nothing worth having comes easy.



## CALIFORNIA

Name: Rob Barnes

School: Tokay High School

City/State: Lodi, California

Total Years Teaching: 13

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 82

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

Every music educator lives for those “aha” moments that students have from time to time when something just clicks. They could be banging their head against a concept for a day, a week, or more until one day, after the right combination of listening, theoretical study, and guided practice they are able to fully understand that which I have been trying to get across. My proudest moments, musically speaking, come at the least glamorous of times; during our daily rehearsals when seemingly out of nowhere, that student who didn’t “get it” just yesterday performs a passage showing they’ve grown towards that next level of musical excellence.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student’s lives?

My greatest hope for these young people is that they leave these few short years I am with them understanding how to work cooperatively with one another towards a positive goal. I truly believe that early participation in the Performing Arts and on sports teams is the best way to help each individual realize their greatest potential for contributing to a larger whole. The resulting sense of community instilled during their formative years, hopefully, then carries over into their family life and professional aspirations.

What’s the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

My teaching philosophy centers around the seemingly basic concepts of using common sense and taking personal responsibility. Through our various activities from parades, to football and basketball games, to fundraisers, concerts, and events in the community, students must learn to be responsible for all aspects involved. Whether it’s knowing how to dress and groom for a particular occasion, ensuring that they have all of the necessary materials for a successful event, or learning how to speak appropriately to adults in the “real world,” it is important to me that my students have the basic life skills required to become productive members of society. Combine common sense and personal responsibility with the old adage “early is on time,

on time is late, and late is unacceptable” and you have all the makings for a successful individual.



## COLORADO

Name : Tim Libby

School: Cherry Creek High School

City/State: Greenwood Village, Colorado

Total Years Teaching: 20

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 275

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

My proudest moments come when I see former students achieving high levels of success in their chosen careers. I feel an even greater sense of pride when they attribute their success to the lessons they learned through participation in the band program!

How do you hope to make a difference in your student’s lives?

I hope to make a difference through encouraging every student to pursue their passions and to value excellence in every aspect of their lives. I also make every effort to know as much about the lives of each individual student. I have found that personal connections build trust within the program leading to a positive community environment.

What’s the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

Even though some of the most important lessons are related to teamwork, time management, musicianship, and professionalism, the most important thing I want my students to gain through our band program is a lifelong appreciation of the arts regardless of their chosen career paths. My hope is that they will support the arts throughout their lives in every possible way.



## CONNECTICUT

Name: Mark F. Reppucci

School: Enrico Fermi High School

City/State: Enfield,  
Connecticut

Total Years Teaching: 23 Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 170

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

I am most proud of the number of students who continue to make music a part of their adult lives in college and beyond. It is also a thrill to turn around at one of our concerts to observe the numerous alumni coming back to visit in the audience and support the current members making music! One of my proudest moments was the marching band performing at the National Memorial Day Parade in Washington, DC, in 2014. We were also invited to participate in the opening ceremony and have our trumpet player's perform Taps spread-out on Constitution Avenue. As we were lining up before the opening ceremonies I received a tap on the shoulder and turned around...low and behold my high school band director, Ron Christianson, who made a difference in my life, was present visiting at the same parade.

How do you hope to make a difference in your students' lives?

I used to joke with my students that I wanted to make a difference in their lives through music, whether it was positive or negative: at least they would feel something! The point being that I wanted to affect change through music and cause them to be curious and to take action in making a difference in their own lives.

Ultimately I want to elicit an aesthetic experience through music for every student. For them to discover the sheer power of music to express emotion, offer solace, invite community and to bring their mind, body, and spirit together.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

Music excellence demands effort, sacrifice, and teamwork.



## DELAWARE

Name : Ryan J. Williams

School: Middletown High School  
City/State: Middletown, Delaware  
Total Years Teaching: 17  
Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 95

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

There are so many moments where, as an educator, I've seen my students succeed in performance - be it at football games, in competition, or other events where they're in the public eye. Where I find my greatest source of pride is seeing my students in rehearsal, succeeding and growing. Rehearsals are driven by intrinsic motivation, not the rush of performance. Students need to channel down in themselves and find that energy on their own. A step beyond that is watching student leaders step up to the plate and be leaders without being told. In a list of many moments like this, one that stands out was a marching band rehearsal night where we had an extra clinician in to help out and give new feedback. During the band's warm-up, the drum major was conducting through the exercises, and we (the regular staff) were discussing some details with our guest. The drum major finished her job, turned to get instruction from us, saw we were engaged in conversation, and turned back to the band, called out the next exercise, gave instructions, started conducting, then gave the band feedback. In that moment, she took charge as a leader and led her band. When we, the staff, realized what happened, all we could do was smile with pride.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

The biggest way I want to make a difference in the lives of my students is to have them understand they are professionals, and thus get them to work as professionals. This starts with schedules: if I publish a calendar that says rehearsal will begin at 4:00, I start working at 4:00, not 4:05 or 4:10. The students quickly learn that they need to be ready to work AT 4:00. On the backside, if rehearsal ends at 6:00, I make sure that they hear "dismissed" at 6:00 - not 6:10 or 6:15. The more I value their time, the more they value mine, and we get much more accomplished in our time together.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

The most important lesson I want every student to walk away with is responsibility - and that's something that is a huge topic of conversation among educators all across the country. If a student needs to miss a rehearsal or performance, I expect them to communicate with me. If the reason for the absence is weak, I expect them to take a step back, look at the situation objectively, and make the responsible choice to fulfill their obligation. If a student does something inappropriate, but owns up to it immediately and without needing to be confronted, there are far fewer consequences than if they are discovered - going to teach them to own their mistakes, learn from them, and move on.



FLORIDA

Name: William D.  
McClendon  
School: Terry Parker High School  
City/State: Jacksonville, Florida  
Total Years Teaching: 15  
Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 95

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

My proudest moment as an educator was just a few months ago. I was working with a group of brass players and I had been teaching them about overtones and how the different sounds of all the instruments worked together to combine and form new sounds that “triggered” new notes called overtones. It had been several weeks and I still had one student who understood, but she just couldn’t hear them. We were both getting frustrated, until one evening, she stepped out of her place and said, “I just heard them.” I took off my glasses and I think the entire group watched me break down with excitement.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student’s lives?

I try to make a difference by being a constant in the students’ lives. The band room was always a special place for me in school. It was always clean, orderly, and I knew that if I needed someone or something to help me with a problem, I could most certainly find it in my band room. I hope that I give a little of that back to my students, along with the realization that they can accomplish anything musically; they just need to put in the time.

What’s the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

I try to teach my students two very important lessons:

- 1.) When you think you’ve got it, go back and practice until you can’t lose it.
- 2.) When you have a choice to be right or kind, choose to be kind, because you can always go back and be right later.



GEORGIA

Name: Joe Heiberger  
School: Lovinggood  
Middle School  
City/State: Powder Springs, Georgia  
Total Years Teaching: 22  
Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 465

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

Several moments flash in my memory – moments of wonderful concerts from years past, special performances at Disney World or universities, or watching kids experiencing the excitement of participating in an All State or Honor Band group. However, the longer I stay in this profession the more I reflect upon the simple moments that we as educators sometimes forget. These moments can often be overshadowed by the higher profile events that occur in our programs, yet these moments by no means take a back seat. Seeing kids flock to the band room before school to practice and share a passion of music with their friends. The moments when that struggling beginner student enters your office excited that they finally figured out how to play those clarinet register exercises, or finally mastered the arpeggio to the F scale patterns.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

As a music educator, I realize that the majority of my students will not be choosing music as a profession. Some may decide to be a teacher or perhaps even a performer. Hopefully, many will continue to experience making music for the rest of their lives in some manner. However, whether or not they choose music as a profession, I hope that the life lessons learned through studying music are lessons that will always be a part of them.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

The most important lesson I try to teach my students: In everything you do, always do your best. I learned this lesson many years ago from my band director and it has guided how I approach many aspects of my life. When students are always giving their best they are not necessarily perfect, however they are constantly progressing. A student who is always giving their best shows consistent growth and continues to strive for greater levels of achievement and success.



HAWAII

Name: Kendal Ledesma

School: Kaimuki Middle School

City/State: Honolulu, Hawaii Total Years Teaching: 5 Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 530

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

My proudest moments are seeing my beginning ensemble students during their first performance. It's wonderful when they reach this musical milestone and are able to enjoy the product of their hard work and dedication. The look of accomplishment and pride as they walk off the stage is something I always look forward to.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

I hope that through music, my students are able to develop skills that will help prepare them for the

challenges that they might face later in life. Music provides them with many opportunities to strengthen character and build positive self-esteem. At the middle school level, I believe that it is especially important for the students to gain confidence and to have a means to express themselves.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

I try to teach my students that their success is a direct result of the quality and quantity of effort they put into it. I think that it's important for students to learn to never settle for anything less than their best.



IDADHO

Name : Casey Lindorfer

School: Capital High School

City/State: Boise, Idaho

Total Years Teaching: 3

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 80

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

Watching students succeed at activities in which they are passionate.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

I hope to give them a place to create something that they might not be able to create elsewhere in a safe, trusting environment.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

I try to impart on them to work hard in which they are passionate to help them on their way to having an enjoyable life.



## ILLINOIS

Name: Victor Anderson

School: Yorkville High School

City/State: Yorkville, Illinois

Total Years Teaching: 18

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 185

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

My proudest moments as an educator happen when my students demonstrate deep musical understanding and maturity beyond their years through thought, comments, and performance. A few years ago, we had a composer in residence and I opened the floor for questions from the students to the young composer of the piece we had just performed. One student raised her hand and spoke directly to the composer; “I just want to thank you for writing this piece of music because we are a better band for having played it.” She was insightful and correct!

How do you hope to make a difference in your student’s lives?

I hope to make a difference for my students by showing them how diligence, commitment, and teamwork are life skills that can lead to rewarding and enriching moments. I also hope to instill a lifelong relationship with the arts in all my students.

What’s the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

The most important lesson I try to teach my students is self-confidence and self-worth. I want every student that passes through my classroom to know that they are unique and that how they carry and present themselves makes a difference in all aspects of life.



## INDIANA

Name : Holly May

School: Westlane Middle  
School

City/State: Indianapolis, Indiana

Total Years Teaching: 20

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 230

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

I have had many prideful moments like: students telling me how much fun they had at our last band concert, parents sharing with me how much their child is enjoying band class, and students coming up to me years later excited to share their accomplishments. Moreover, I have had many profound moments. A large number of these are too complicated to put into words; however, I am extremely proud to be a part of helping students find their way through life by way of the love of music.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

I strive to teach them to enjoy the process of learning how to play an instrument. If students can develop self-discipline skills in band class, it will transfer to other areas in their lives.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

I tell my students the most important thing I can teach them is to be kind to one another. If they learn to play an instrument, that is just a bonus. Playing in band is all about working together. When students learn to respect each other and work as a team, great music will happen.

## IOWA

Name: Dr. Myron McReynolds

School: City High School

City/State: Iowa City, IA

Total Years Teaching: 35

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 200

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

My proudest moment is one that I have been blessed to see recreated many times. When a student leaves my program and continues to be actively involved in music making and knowing that they are prepared for all musical adventures that lie ahead.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

By making our band program, and the space it occupies, a safe place, where all are welcomed, valued, and affirmed.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

Integrity, in all forms. Integrity to the music, to what the composer intends. Integrity as a member of the program, being faithful to all that a successful band program requires. Integrity in personal life, to be the best person that each of us can be.



KANSAS

Name: Joe D. Emery

School: Andover Central High School

City/State: Andover, Kansas

Total Years Teaching: 34

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 600

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

The moments that I am most proud are those when I see the students really beam from their success in a performance, or even a rehearsal. There was a time when after a state large groups performance when my band had played extremely well on a very difficult Bernstein piece, all three of the state judges made it a point to find me at lunch and remark on how beautifully and technically the band had played. This was after I had been advised against performing that piece by a different set of judges a month earlier. We talked it over in class and the students all agreed that we could prepare the Bernstein piece in the time left before state, and they agreed to put in the work to do it! Two college band directors who were in the audience that day found me after the performance and shared that they thought that was the best band in the state that day! Very humbling!

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

I do all I can to be an example to my students of what it means to truly live with joy and enthusiasm, and that should be evident in everything that they do. If you are a great athlete or a brilliant science student, or anything else, then you have the capacity to be great in every other thing you do. Hold yourself to the highest standard possible and be great at everything you do, and enjoy it!

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

I hope that the most important lesson I teach my students is how to be a good person, how to live your life so that it impacts someone in a positive way, and how to live in a way that makes you and those around you

truly happy. The music will follow if you get the big picture in focus, I believe.



## KENTUCKY

Name: Brad Rogers

School: Oldham County High School

City/State: Buckner, Kentucky

Total Years Teaching: 37

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 120

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

I suppose the events that make me the proudest, and make me want to keep on teaching music, are the moments when a student is able to conquer a musical challenge that I have been helping them with. Sometimes, these events occur during individual instruction; other times, during full ensemble rehearsals. Regardless, the recognition by the student and myself that the “lights have come on” is the most energizing part of my life as a teacher.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student’s lives?

I hope to help students realize that having an expectation of personal excellence in all that they do, tempered with perseverance and a focus on long-term goals, is what winners in life do every day. Having an idea of where you want to be and how you will get there is a great way to set a person up for success in whatever he or she chooses to do for their life’s work.

What’s the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

Probably that self-esteem isn’t something you can be “given”, but something you earn. That’s probably not politically correct, and in some circles would be looked upon as a flawed concept. Learning to play an instrument well, understanding the language of music, and performing at the highest level possible are the means to this end for my students. I think it is the struggle we all go through to be good at something that gives any success and the resulting feeling of self-esteem its real value.



## LOUISIANA

Name : Emmanuel J.  
Hudson  
School: Booker T. Washington H.S.  
City/State: Shreveport,  
Louisiana.  
Total Years Teaching: 7  
Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 90

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

My proudest moment as an educator was receiving a superior rating at the LMEA District VIII Large Ensemble Festival while also qualifying for State Festival in 2014. The last time that Booker T. Washington High School qualified for state competition was 47 years ago. When I began teaching, I used the motto “Restoring the legacy... Return to Dominance”. This was a sign that my motto was being fulfilled. I believe that this was an even prouder moment for the students, faculty, alumni, and community.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student’s lives?

I hope to give my students knowledge that will benefit them for the rest of their lives. Teaching music is important to me, but teaching life skills has even more relevance for the students in my band program. I hope to be the inspiration they need to move on to greater things. For the last six years, the seniors graduating from the band program received music scholarships and either attended college or the military. Last year, they received over \$250,000 in band scholarships.

What’s the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

I try my best to teach my students how to deal with adversity. The odds for achieving life-long success are heavily stacked against them, and some of them face overwhelming challenges just to survive and come to school each day. The band serves as an incentive to excel academically and socially for them. I use many examples of success stories of people whose backgrounds are similar to my students that have gone through many trials to get to where they are today. I want them to believe in themselves just as much as I believe in them. I can see the talent and potential within each of them. It is my personal mandate to help them to see it as well.



MAINE

Name : Joshua Champagne  
School: Sanford High School  
City/State: Sanford, Maine  
Total Years Teaching: 2.5  
Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 55

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

Seeing the brand new winter drum line take the floor for the first time. Seeing a student that “hated” band

come around to love it again. Reviving our community band. Seeing a student take ownership of a rehearsal. Watching the marching band have its best performance ever. Seeing my first student accepted into music school. A 1st place finish. A gold medal. Getting them to love good music. Watching that shy, quiet kid become a real performer. Bringing the jazz band to its first ever festival. Bringing my first kids to All-State. My “World’s Best Band Director” certificate. Those moments when they truly get it. When a student says “Thank you” and really means it.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student’s lives?

Many of my students come from low-income and “at-risk” home situations. I strive to give them a place to feel needed, a place to strive for excellence, and a program that they are proud of. I want all of my students to feel safe and valued. That their thoughts, hard work, and contributions are appreciated and that they can succeed beyond their expectations.

What’s the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

That hard work and perseverance can lift you from a poor situation to something better. I was an example of that. I came from a very blue-collar family in the same town where I now teach. I want them to be proud of who they are and everything they accomplish. I want them to know that they can achieve great things and make a difference no matter who they are or where they come from.



#### MARYLAND

Name : Scott C. Engel

School: Perry Hall High School

City/State: Perry Hall, Maryland

Total Years Teaching: 10

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 260

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

I have the pleasure of experiencing my “proudest moment” every year. At the end of the year during our Band Awards Ceremony we recognize all of our senior musicians. As I read each name I am greeted with a hug by each senior and it warms my heart to be reminded, in that moment, of the impact I had on each child.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student’s lives?

I hope to impact my students by teaching them about life and music. All band directors want to have great bands, but I want to have great students and young adults. I hope that I make a difference by teaching them about life, responsibility, and maturity all while in the pursuit of making great music.

What’s the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

I have always been fond of a quote by Aristotle which goes like this: “You are what you repeatedly do; excellence therefore is not an act but a habit.”



## MASSACHUSETTS

Name: Rob Wheeler

School: Oliver Ames High School

City/State: North Easton, Massachusetts

Total Years Teaching: 16 years

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 140

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

I think that the thing that makes me the most proud is how many students I have that continue on in music in all aspects, not just as music majors in college. I get emails and text messages from students regularly who participate in college/university ensembles or have written music or produced an album. It's very satisfying to hear them continuing their love for music after their time at Oliver Ames.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

I hope for my students to understand that success in life can be measured in several ways and that growth over time is the key to that success in any aspect of life, not just music.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

Don't settle for anything but the very best you can do and anything worth doing that well is worth working hard for.



## MICHIGAN

Name : Michael D. Sekich

School: Stevenson High School

City/State: Sterling Heights, Michigan

Total Years Teaching: 25

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 190

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

I feel very proud all of the time of my students. I have had the blessing of teaching both of my children in my class. They have experienced all of this with me. There are so many positive memories. I would have to say the look on their faces after a wonderful performance that they had worked so hard to put together, and

everything just clicked the right way. All of us know that this does not occur all of the time. It is very special when that “special” performance takes place. Plus, I like to encourage my students to become lifelong learners of the Arts, and to support them always.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student’s lives?

I hope they remember what it feels like to work together as hard as you can to accomplish a goal. That feeling never changes in life, no matter what you do. I am blessed that I get to do what I love.

What’s the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

Life is short...enjoy all of it. It’s not about the destination; we are all about taking our musical journey together.



#### MINNESOTA

Name: Terry Brau

School: Willmar Senior High School

City/State: Willmar,  
Minnesota

Total Years Teaching: 38

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 190

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

There is one performance that always makes me so proud and it happens each year when we combine our band, choir, and orchestra for the finale piece at our last concert. The directors alternate conducting duties, so whether I’m conducting or performing with the ensemble, I always make sure to look at the faces of the students. You can see in everyone’s eyes that music is very special and that it makes a positive and significant impact on all of us.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student’s lives?

I try to help our students learn the value of continuing and being persistent even though it sometimes isn’t easy or comfortable.

What’s the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

The mission of our senior high band program is to teach life lessons while pursuing excellence in music performance. We strive to help students develop a healthy work ethic, to learn how to dedicate themselves to a cause, to become more responsible and reliable, and to value teamwork and setting and achieving personal and group goals.



## MISSISSIPPI

Name : Nicole Allen

School: Purvis High School

City/State: Purvis,

Mississippi

Total Years Teaching: 11

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 93

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

This season my band earned third place, and the Bronze Medal in class 4A at Marching Band Championships. They also placed second in music performance, color guard, and visual performance. My proudest moment happened hours before the awards when my students took the field and poured their hearts into a performance that I know none of us will soon forget.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

I hope that I am helping them to become better people. Band teaches so many life lessons. It teaches hard work, dedication, leadership, teamwork, citizenship, love, family, the list could on. I hope that I am providing them with tools that make them more productive, responsible, and caring members of society.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

Love. Love the people in the band that are different than you, love the ones you don't always like. It takes everyone to make the band successful. If we love each other and help each other we are helping the whole. It works the same way with the world we live in.

## MISSOURI

Name: Tyler G. Osborn

School: Center High School and Middle School

City/State: Kansas City, Missouri

Total Years Teaching: 17

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 250

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

Our Mighty Center Band's trip to Memphis, TN immediately comes to mind the immersive educational experience we shared. We used the journey from Kansas City, MO, to St. Louis to Memphis to explore the roots of American music and the historic and ongoing struggle for civil rights. We traveled while singing songs from the movement interspersed with every patriotic tune we knew. I've never seen kids so engaged or

emotionally connected to a trip, its purpose, and its ability to change minds and lives. We stayed for hours at the National Civil Rights Museum and the infamous Lorraine Motel. I had numerous conversations with students, being asked questions like, “Do people hate me like that?” We held group talks to understand and absorb hundreds of years of ignorance and the sacrificial bravery it requires to overcome it. To sit with students and reflect upon the spot Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated is knowledge not found in a textbook. Three years later, we still talk about that adventure and the place it holds in our hearts. Oh, and I should add marching in the 2015 Kansas City Royals World Championship Parade last month. An audience of 800,000 people ain’t shabby!

How do you hope to make a difference in your student’s lives?

Love makes the most profound difference in children’s lives. I am fortunate to work alongside great educators and administrators who love our kids and aren’t afraid of the word. Our kids know they are cared for, know they have support and a solid structure to rely on, and are confident that the professional adults in their lives are vested in their current struggles and ultimate successes. Once a student knows they are respected, cared for, and listened to, the learning relationship falls into place. Our Mighty Marching Yellowjacket Band is a family, respectful of and responsible for one another.

What’s the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

Most importantly, I want my students to find their passion, what they’re good at, and never stop doing what they love. If a kid can identify their gifts and start working towards self-determined goals, they can begin to see their education as a tool to achieve what they desire for themselves instead of something to endure. We teach kindness, empathy, and the courage to do what is difficult.



**MONTANA**

Name: Elizabeth

Coogan-Quinby

School: North Middle School

City/State: Great Falls, Montana

Total Years Teaching: 9 Years

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

Being selected to perform and represent Great Falls, Montana at the National Association for Music Education All-Northwest (NAfME-NW) Convention in 2015.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student’s lives?

Help my student discover a joy for music and create a life-long passion.

What’s the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

I believe that my students can do anything they set their mind to. All they need is passion, hard work, and

determination.

## NEBRASKA

Name : Nick Spath

School: Omaha Burke High School and Beveridge Magnet Middle School

City/State: Omaha, Nebraska

Total Years Teaching: 14

Number of Students in

Instrumental Program: 200

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

Seeing my students graduate with a sense of purpose and a love and appreciation for music.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

Through the creation of music, I hope my students learn to be better people. Whether it is working together, I hope they see what it means to be a part of something greater than them and carry that into their adult lives.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

I want my students to understand what it means to be accountable in all things. That means being on time, being responsible for your actions, musically or otherwise.



## NEVADA

Name : William Skembos

School: Basic Academy of International Studies

City/State: Henderson, Nevada

Total Years Teaching: 6

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 200

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

My proudest moment as an educator centers around that moment when it “clicks” for a student or group. For instance, we had a particularly trying marching band season during 2014, the music and drill were quite hard. However, it all seemed to fall into place at our very last performance. That was the moment it clicked for everyone. The ensemble gelled and the group had one of the best performances The Wolfpack Regiment had ever had.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

At the Basic Academy for International studies, we have many students that are poor or have terrible home lives. We even have a homeless population of about 90 students that attend Basic (some of these students are in band). My goal is to provide a safe place where students feel they can express themselves and a place where they can feel welcome when they're in need. I believe this makes the difference in how well they do in school as well as whether or not they even attend on a daily basis, because they have a place where they can feel at home.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

My goal as a music educator is to instill a lifelong love and appreciation of music in my students. I want them to understand the level of excellence required to perform music at the highest possible level. It's not my goal for all of them to become music teachers or performers, but rather lifelong musicians. They may lose their skill over time, but I want them to appreciate complexity and musicianship so that they can continually be moved by outstanding performances.



#### NEW HAMPSHIRE

Name : Jodi Lalos

School: West Running Brook Middle School

City/State: Derry, New Hampshire

Total Years Teaching: 14 years

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 80

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

My proudest moments are watching my students perform for their family and peers. I am incredibly proud of each of my students for working hard, overcoming performance anxieties, and sharing the gift of music with excitement.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

I hope to instill in all of my students a life long love of music and a compassion for fellow music makers.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

The most important lesson I teach my students is that music should be a enjoyable. Enjoyment while making music is the biggest reward for all the hard work they give on a daily basis.



## NEW JERSEY

Name: Carl Sabatino

School: Whippany Park High School

City/State: Whippany, New Jersey

Total Years Teaching: 27

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 137

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

Our parents and administration understand and value music as a core subject that all students should have access to, without this nothing that we do would be possible. There have been many moments that when I look back on them, I am very proud of and will always remember. For me it has always been the every day moments that mean far more than any extrinsic rewards we might have garnered. In particular, any time we get to take a trip, whether it's Washington, DC or Orlando, Florida, I am overwhelmed with pride as we see our students act with maturity and responsibility. There is nothing quite like it.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

I hope that when students move on they take the lessons they learned during their four years with us to help them be successful in whatever they do in life. I'm a firm believer in the tremendous life lessons that band teaches you each and every day such as the value of hard work, doing the right thing" and caring for one another. We strive to create a supportive and nurturing environment which allows them to grow and fearlessly make mistakes and that every person understands and knows that they are a valuable member of the group.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

The lessons I try to teach them every day are the importance of being responsible for your own actions and for being on time and prepared for each and every rehearsal. I hope that I teach the students these lessons by example and by showing them that I'm genuinely interested in their well being. If every student simply learns these things from being in band I feel of done my job.



## NEW MEXICO

Name : Winston Paul

Blakey

School: Volcano Vista High School

City/State: Albuquerque, New Mexico

Total Years Teaching: 20

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 108

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

When a former student of mine received his first band director position and became a much better teacher than me. To this day, I am still so proud to see this former student make such a positive difference as a talented music educator.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

I strive to be a good role model first while continually demonstrating how important music is to me (and the students) on a daily basis.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

Always be a person of good character and cherish every opportunity you have to make music.



NEW YORK

Name: Lynn Tsaousis

Cromeyn

School: Northport High School City/State: Northport, New York

Total Years Teaching: 16

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 300

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

I don't think that I could tell you exactly one moment. Throughout my career I have been fortunate to work in two amazing communities. My proudest moments are when I see a student or parent and they tell me that their life has been influenced in some positive way by having me as their teacher. It's such a privilege to know that you have such an impact on people's lives.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

I went into teaching with the philosophy that I teach people first. With that as my guiding idea, I strive to instill a deeper love, passion, and understanding for music, while facilitating the student's growth and development into responsible young adults. It is my hope that their participation in this band program teaches them core values, dedication, responsibility, and pride in everything they do!

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

My motto is, "work hard, play hard." Whether these students continue to pursue their study of music or not, I believe that the overarching philosophy of this band program is that everyone has the innate potential to create something amazing, whether it is as part of a team or as an individual. Regardless, my expectation of every student is that they are the BEST that they can be, and never to settle for anything less. I hope that as

they graduate from Northport they carry this philosophy with them throughout their lives!



**NORTH CAROLINA**

Name: Kiyoshi Carter

School: Western Guilford High School

City/State: Greensboro, North Carolina

Total Years Teaching: 9

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 75

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

My proudest moments as an educator are the moments when my students come back to visit me and share their newest music projects. I have students doing music degrees at all levels, undergraduate, master's and doctoral degrees. I have had students who now have careers as music educators and performers and as highly accomplished amateurs. These moments really make me proud that I was able to have a hand in helping students find a passion for music. Mostly, I think that I just show them music and music does the rest.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

I hope that I can make a difference in my student's lives by showing the role and importance of music in all of our lives. I want my students to come out of my program with a knowledge and appreciation for the power of music to shape us all. I also want my students to come out of their high school program realizing the power of discipline and hard work to accomplish their goals. Music humbles all of us at some point and in those moments, that is when we flourish or perish.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

The lesson that I try to teach my students is to work hard, be kind, and keep learning.



## NORTH DAKOTA

Name: Jeff Van Oort

School: Oakes Public School

City/State: Oakes, North Dakota

4 Years teaching

52 in elementary, 79 in high school

Total Years Teaching: 14 years

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 80

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

My proudest moments as an educator come from many of the “life lessons” that find their way into my classroom. My students are very open with their beliefs and interpretations and we often spend time discussing how a musical passage or a work affects us. Students are told how and what to think so often, and I always love to hear how they interpret the world. Seeing my students finally begin to open up and express themselves is one of the defining moments of my time as an educator and why I chose it as a career.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student’s lives?

I hope to make a difference in students’ lives by believing in them more than anyone else. I show my students how much work it takes to continually improve and progress by having lofty expectations, using music as a vehicle. If students can break their habit of setting limits on themselves and can push through self-doubt and worry, then I have made a difference.

What’s the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

The most important lesson I try to teach my students is that hard work and a good attitude will get them far. I strive to have my students all learn something from being in my bands. That “something” isn't anything specific, but should be significant and personal.



## OHIO

Name: Robert Davis  
 School: Cleveland School of the Arts  
 City/State: Cleveland, Ohio  
 Total Years Teaching: 7  
 Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 50

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

My first was having a student receive a full scholarship to the Berklee College of Music, and then this past school year, have a student receive a full scholarship to the Oberlin Conservatory, after having taken real flute lessons for about four months! Recently, I ran into a former student from my first year of teaching and he is now a band director, too! Very proud of these achievements besides so many others! This past year I was very proud of my students for winning first and second place in the Cleveland Chamber Music Society's first annual chamber music competition for high schools. Being able to share my passion for chamber music has been one of my great joys!

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

I hope to make a difference in student's lives by preparing them for the challenges of adulthood and seeing that there is a correlation with playing in a band and playing chamber music. You have to be responsible, you have to do your homework, you have to learn how to lead and how to follow, and ultimately, you have to learn how to work together.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

Since I usually see my students from 6th grade through senior year, I get to see them grow up in front of my eyes. I tell them that my only job in this world is to make sure that they are great human beings and I hold them to task when they aren't. It's been an honor running into former students and seeing that they in fact, have turned out to be great human beings! Also, that it's important to listen to live music!



OKLAHOMA

Name : Darnell Zook  
 School: Yukon High School City/State: Yukon, Oklahoma  
 Total Years Teaching: 18  
 Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 585

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

I am proudest when I see students who are changed as people by their participation in our program. I've always tended to root for the underdog, and many times my best band students end up being those who have had some difficulties at home, at school, or both. Band kids really are the best students in the school and its great to see how powerful that positivity is when you put so many great kids together in one organization. Peer pressure is real, and I've seen it work wonders, in a positive way, on kids who may otherwise have gone down the wrong road. I'm also really proud when I see our students being good ambassadors for our band

program and school when travelling. Simple things like having over 100 of our students eating at a fast food restaurant and leaving it cleaner than we found it.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

The truth is that, even in the best of circumstances, the overwhelming majority of students in any band program will no longer be playing their instruments five years after they have left high school. So if all we've done as band directors is to teach them how to play their instrument well, we've had a lasting impact on an extremely small percentage of our students. I hope to use a student's band experience to teach them a work ethic and an attitude that will help them be happier, healthier, and more positive people regardless of whether they continue to perform music. I also hope that being a part of the culture that we try to create in our program will help them become kind and empathetic people.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

I hope that my students learn that if they focus on the process, then the product will take care of itself. That's a concept that can be applied to pretty much everything they do for the rest of their lives. No matter what you're doing, if you show up every day prepared to work smart, work hard, and be kind to those around you, good things will happen.



OREGON

Name: David Sanders

School: Chehalem Valley Middle School

City/State: Newberg, Oregon

Total Years Teaching: 31

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 215

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

The moment that I hold dear to my heart is when our new superintendent addressed me at our first meeting by stating — “ so it is good to meet you— I conducted exit interviews from students as they left high school and your name was mentioned as the teacher that made the greatest impact in their lives.” I was instantly humbled and knew once again that I am exactly where I am supposed to be- teaching middle school students the gift of music.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

I try to teach my students that being in a band is similar to participating on a sports team. Everyone needs to work together to be successful. I treat my students with mutual respect and instill a positive learning environment. I realize that middle school is a tough time in students' lives and I value each student as an individual. I want them to respect themselves and each other as they work on becoming better musicians. I have high expectations and have found that students will work as hard as you expect them- if the grading is

fair and attainable.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

The most important lesson I try to teach students is that hard work pays off and that they need to have pride in their talents as musicians. Over and over again I find non-music students praised for their talents but when musicians are praised, they often downplay their talents. I want my students to be proud of their talents and to enjoy the group celebration of a great concert.



PENNSYLVANIA

Name: Katie German

School: Chichester Middle School

City/state: Upper Chichester, Pennsylvania

Total years teaching: 8

Number of students in instrumental program: 213

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

My proudest moments occur when my older students help with beginning band lessons. I often hear the older students explaining new concepts the exact way I did when they were beginners several years earlier. This not only lets me know I have been effective but shows me my students care enough to share their knowledge and love of music with others.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

I hope to make a difference by guiding my students to experience and enjoy the aesthetics of performance. I want my students to use the knowledge and skills they learn in band to go home and learn to play music they like to listen to. I also wish for my students to create life long friendships developed from making music with their peers.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

I try to teach my students that they all play a role and are each in control of their individual role. This lesson begins in a musical setting where students learn the importance of positively contributing to the performance by practicing at home, working hard in rehearsals, and coming prepared with their materials. Students learn that every decision they make has an impact on the big picture. I hope they take this lesson beyond the ensemble setting and positively contribute to everything they do.



## RHODE ISLAND

Name: Sarah Ferry

School: Westerly High School

City/State: Westerly, Rhode Island

Total Years Teaching: 4

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 75

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

I am not certain that any educator can answer this question with one specific moment knowing that our students make us proud in some of the most unexpected ways each and every day. At this point in my career I would say that my proudest moment was the first time that I realized how significantly the marching band had grown in both population and skill in one year. The dedication of the students, and their desire to perform at the highest level possible, not simply better than they had been was astounding. These students obliterated any long-term goals that I had set for them by reaching major milestones that should have taken years within mere months.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

I hope to give each and every student an experience in music that they will carry with him or her throughout their entire life. It is important to create an environment where students work together to achieve a common, long-term goal, and in the process become a family. Like any music teacher, I hope that the students graduate high school, and continue to make music.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

The most important lesson that I try to teach my students is that commendable achievement and accomplishment does not come easily, or quickly. In order to be successful in any endeavor you must set both short-term and long-term goals while being prepared to work hard.



## SOUTH CAROLINA

Name: Richard C. Baskin

School: T.L. Hanna High School

City/State: Anderson, South Carolina

Total Years Teaching: 38

## Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 210

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

Watching them succeed in performance and beyond has always been a source of great satisfaction and fulfillment for me. It is always humbling to have students return many years later to visit and tell you how much they valued their time in band and how much they miss their days here. I am grateful and proud that our members “pay it forward” so that they can continue the legacy that was afforded to them.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student’s lives?

I want the students that I work with to acquire the life skills to face any and all difficulties they may face in life with confidence and energy. Hopefully their participation in band has helped them prepare for the “real life” situations that they will face beyond high school. Working together with others for the common goal and to be a part of something larger than themselves will serve them in all walks of life. It is my hope that the band has helped provide them with these tools to help them become successful.

What’s the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

I think the key is to never stop learning. There is always somebody somewhere doing something better, so never hesitate to ask and observe. Also listen to those around you including students and parents and fuel that passion within you and those around you. Work to instill a sense of “us” and “we” and teach the value of true teamwork and working for something bigger than oneself.



**SOUTH DAKOTA**

Name : Dan Carlson

School: Lincoln High School

City/State: Sioux Falls,

South Dakota

Total Years Teaching: 16

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 275

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

While there have been many moments that have made me feel a great sense of accomplishment over my last 17 years, the most recent moment came this October, when our band was named a BOA Super Regional finalist in St. Louis. It was our second time attending a super regional, and it was extremely rewarding. I was super proud of the students, staff, and volunteers who have put in countless hours to put the 2015 show together.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student’s lives?

I want students to love music the way I love music. I also strive to teach excellence, patience, compassion,

and professionalism. If I can teach those characteristics through music to my students, and can give them a deep appreciation for quality music, I feel I have had an impact on their lives and have done my job. I also want to be a positive role model and want to bring joy into their lives.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

The most important lesson I try to teach my students is that it's never too late to do the right thing. I love seeing a student find the desire to improve, whether it be on their instrument, within their attitude, or in just realizing their potential. I want students to realize that the fun part of band comes from achieving excellence and emotionally experiencing the music. It is very rewarding to see the kids grow in their desire to be excellent by making the right choices.



TENNESSEE

Name : Carole Smith

Grooms

School: Freedom Middle School (band and orchestra)

City/State: Franklin, Tennessee

Total Years Teaching: 32

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 200

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

I have proud moments continuously - every time I see a current or former student succeeding in music! However, an incident in the past year may be the most special moment to date: I conducted an honor band clinic in the part of Tennessee where I grew up. The students in the junior high band I led included several children of my very first band students in Lynchburg, TN. Their parents (and grandparents, who were my treasured band boosters helping me survive my first band job) were in the audience at the concert. There were also students who were children of my high school band friends who still live in the area, and their parents, now as grandparents, were in the audience as well. The band directors participating in this clinic event with their students that weekend included my own high school band director, band directors who mentored me many years ago, a high school band mate, a former student from the Franklin High School Band, and my most recent student teacher from Middle TN State University who had just gotten her first job in that area. The other guest conductor was a hometown friend who had been in my high school band a few years behind me and has now been my teaching colleague for many years. In the audience were my own parents, a teacher from my present school (who had a grandchild in the event,) and a former teacher colleague from another past school. It really illustrated how incredibly rich my life and career have been with all of these people who have impacted me over the years.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

Whether I have a student for one year, four years, or more, when their time with me is over, I want them to

have a solid foundation of musical skills and knowledge which will allow them to continue being a musician and music lover, with or without the help of a formal teacher or program. I want them to have the ability to independently continue their involvement with music in a meaningful way, hopefully for the rest of their lives.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

I want to instill in my students what psychology today refers to as a "growth mindset." I spend a lot of time teaching students how to manage their own learning. I encourage them to use the foundational skills I am giving them to explore, be curious, answer their own questions and plan for their own growth in music. I spend a lot of time teaching skills and strategies for practicing - techniques to try, analysis and problem solving, goal setting. All of these are life skills that will naturally transfer to anything else they pursue if they embrace them.



TEXAS

Name: Jason M Levin

School: Lamar Consolidated HS

City/State: Rosenberg, Texas

Total Years Teaching: 18

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 210

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

I had the honor of conducting the Lamar Consolidated HS Band at Carnegie Hall in 2012. This entire trip was an amazing experience! We were able to bring the community and alumni together to raise money as well as excitement for the band program and our school! Also, my current assistant, Ms. Andrea Sanchez, was my former student. Watching our relationship transform from teacher/student, to mentor, to colleague has been one of the best experiences I have ever had!!

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

I want to give my students once in a lifetime experiences through music. A large percentage of our students have never left the Houston area, so having the opportunity to travel and perform as musical ambassadors of our school and community is a really amazing experience! We have had the good fortune to perform at Bass Hall (Ft. Worth), Murchison Performing Arts Center (Ft. Worth), South Padre Island in 2011 and 2015, The Alamo Bowl in 2009 and 2013, Carnegie Hall in 2012, and this year we are performing in Chicago's St Patrick's Day Parade and at Symphony Hall. I love when former students see a movie and say "I have been there!" or see a bowl game on TV and say "I remember performing there!"

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

When students wake up the day after graduation, I want them to have a plan for their life! I try to teach students that even if they do not pursue music as a career, the skills they are learning when they are practicing

and performing will help them for life! The most important skills of breaking down difficult music into easier parts until it is mastered, learning to get along with and leading difficult people, and truly working hard until your goal is achieved are all lifelong skills for any profession. If you want it...go work for it and make it happen!!



UTAH

Name: Christina Carrigan

School: Cedar High School and Cedar Middle School

City/State: Cedar City, Utah

Total Years Teaching: 10

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 170

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

I am proud every time my students realize success. It is exhilarating every year when my more advanced students get to learn more challenging, fun pieces and they work hard and make the music sound well prepared. I am proud to see the continual progress my students make from 6th grade through 12th grade. I am proud every time a student decides to keep working and keep practicing to improve a playing test. I am proud every time a student aces an audition and is able to participate in All State or State level festivals. I am proud when my students work together to make great music.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

I hope to make a difference in my students' lives by teaching them the skills and habits necessary to be successful not only in music, but in the rest of their lives. I hope they develop a love for music that will last a lifetime. I hope they develop the ability to set goals and keep working until they achieve them. Most of all, I hope to make a difference in my students' lives by caring about them, listening to them, and expecting great things from them.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

The most important lesson I try to teach my students is how to be successful in life and in music: How to work hard, set goals, practice and self-evaluate, persevere, work together, listen, accept responsibility for successes and failures, and how to make great music.



## VERMONT

Name : Brent Barnett

School: Rutland High School

City/State: Rutland, Vermont

Total Years Teaching: 11

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 90

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

To be honest, I feel every day has a “proudest moment.” Some days it’s big things like a student that has worked so hard for so long finally making into the All State Music Festival. Other days it might be seeing a student that has struggled have that “aha” moment where everything starts to click and their face lights up with a new found excitement.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student’s lives?

I try to show my students that no matter what is going on in their lives, there really are people that care about them. Someone notices that something is wrong. Someone cares that they are doing great things. Everyone needs someone they can talk to or just a safe place to go and my hope is that my students feel the band room can be that place for them.

What’s the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

Of course I try to create a passion for music, but the bigger lesson is that life is tough. Sometimes things work in your favor and sometimes they don’t. Celebrate the successes, learn from the failures and become a better person because of it. Through hard work and determination, you can achieve anything.



## VIRGINIA

Name : Jim E. Edwards

School: Peninsula Catholic High School

City/State: Newport News,

Virginia

Total Years Teaching: 17 years as certified teacher and 30 years as private teacher.

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 25.

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

Back in 1999 I took my small string orchestra to the annual orchestra festival event attended primarily by large string groups and even full symphony orchestras. In years past this school had a reputation of getting 3's and 4's. This was my first year as their director so my goal was to boost their confidence no matter what score they got. We went to the festival and did not get a "superior" but did get an "excellent" and were voted the most spirited ensemble. The kids were so proud of their hard work and decision to never give up.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

Every day I teach music and rehearse my groups I encourage the students to not see themselves as mere entertainers, rather more like dispensers of joy and healing. I challenge them to look at a difficult music passage not so much as an obstacle but as a chance to solve a puzzle. I want to instill a desire in all my music students to boldly proclaim, "If I can conquer the passage work in Mendelssohn's, A Midsummer's Night Dream, I can conquer anything."

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students? Never let anyone diminish your role as a music student or performer and never let somebody else tell you what your dream is or should be.



WASHINGTON

Name: Jared Sessink

School: Granite Falls Middle and High School

City/State: Granite Falls, Washington

Total Years Teaching: 2

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 138

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

All of the small successes seem like such a big deal to me. Over the last 2 years, I have been watching my students take ownership of our program. I am starting to feel them push back and want more, and that is what every director wants to see. The students are working to reach the high expectations that we have set for the program. Seeing that unfold makes me very proud.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

Band is a place where we all work together toward a common goal. Sometimes the individual demands can be overwhelming. When you are learning and performing on an instrument in school, you are overcoming so many fears – failure, embarrassment of sounding "bad", playing alone and in front of others, just to name a few. I hope that when students leave the program they will be stronger and more independent individuals with less fear.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

When we work on a hard piece, I put the pressure on them to overcome the difficulty through determined and goal-oriented practice. I guess the message is that no one will hand you anything worth having for free. Hard work and perseverance will always put you ahead.



WEST VIRGINIA

Name : J.P. Lynch

School: Jefferson High School

City/State: Shenandoah Junction, West Virginia

Total Years Teaching: 21

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 200

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

Last May, my students joined students from a neighboring school to perform Danny Boy at a band student's funeral. I was so proud of my students for stepping up and volunteering to perform such a beautiful song for someone who they had not ever met. The experience was overwhelmingly emotional yet beautiful. While I'm always proud of my students' musical accomplishments, I am even more proud that they are kind and caring young adults.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student's lives?

I want each of my students to know that they are important to me and that I believe in them. Students can accomplish amazing things when they have a solid support system behind them.

What's the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

You can accomplish incredible goals one small step at a time.



WISCONSIN

Name: Terry Little

School: Dixon and Tonawanda Elementary Schools

City/State: Brookfield, Wisconsin

Total years teaching: 30

Years at School: 14

Number of students in instrumental program: 150

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

I think that my proudest moment as an educator will be on December 15th, 2015, when I attend the Franklin Middle School Band concert in Janesville, WI. This is the first concert as a director for my daughter who is in her first year of teaching middle school band. To me this is a significant event because I am a proud mom, and because Wisconsin needs talented, dedicated, and learning-focused young people to continue to pursue education as a career. I am proud that my daughter has been inspired to be an instrumental music teacher because she knows I love my work, and because she knows music education is important for young learners.

How do you hope to make a difference in students' lives?

My current position is teaching beginning band students in fourth and fifth grade. I am making a difference in my students' lives by embracing the use of technology to help them succeed in their goal of learning to play an instrument. I personalize their progress by using our learning platform to give them written, specific, individual feedback on their playing. I enlist the support of parents, and give them tools to help them help their children succeed. I engage students by allowing them to move at their own pace, providing resources if they want to work ahead of the curriculum and extra time and help if they need to move more slowly.

What is the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

I am teaching my students how to be independent learners. Research shows that students who participate in instrumental music are more likely to be academically successful. Is this because they learned how to practice? My students know that the focus in band is learning, and they determine their own learning path. They are able to identify their learning target, use a recording to assess their own success, reflect on progress, and set a goal for future growth.



WYOMING

Name : Gino Hernandez

School: South High School

City/State: Cheyenne, Wyoming

Total Years Teaching: 20

Number of Students in Instrumental Program: 140

What is your proudest moment as an educator?

My proud moments occur regularly when I see my students continue with music after high school as a music major, non-music major in a college band, or playing in a community band.

How do you hope to make a difference in your student’s lives?

I try to be a positive role model for my students and my goal is to teach my students to be good people. I give them respect and they give me respect.

What’s the most important lesson that you try to teach your students?

The most important lesson I want to teach my students is there are no short cuts to be successful. It takes hard work and commitment to accomplish goals. Students do this on a regular basis in their music classes and I want them to take the skills they learn in music and transfer those skills to whatever they choose as a profession after high school.

2 Comments

School Band & Orchestra

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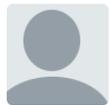
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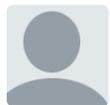
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**Wendy** · a day ago

This is wonderful! Thank you to all these intelligent, hardworking teachers. One thing I noticed is that although more than half my own school music teachers were women (in the 80s and 90s), this list is about 80% men. I'd love to see a bit more gender balance on this list.

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**sowsearsoup** · 2 days ago

Congrats to all! Well done!

^ | v · Reply · Share ›

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