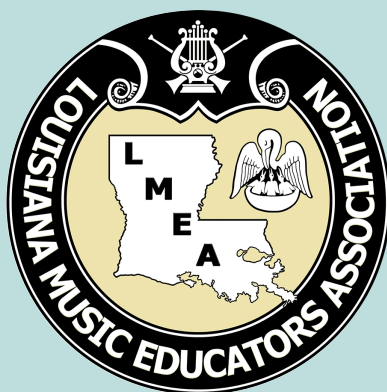


# LMEA SUPPORTS MUSIC EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

*prepared by the LMEA Advocacy Committee*



**Teacher Mentorship Program**

**Assessments Based on LDOE Standards & Benchmarks**

**Focus on Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion**

**Statewide Professional Development Conference**

**Conversations With Current and Former Music Students**



# LMEA Victories

- 2021 National Association for Music Education, State Excellence in Advocacy Award Recipient.
- 2021 Country Music Association Foundation Advocacy Grant Recipient
- Formation of:
  - Louisiana Advocacy Leadership Force Committee - Ginny Medina-Hamilton, chair
  - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee – James Square, chair
  - Professional Development Committee – Brett Babineaux, chair
  - Mentorship Committee - Brett Babineaux, chair
  - Guitar Committee – Dr. Greg Robin, chair
- Virtual November 2020 Professional Development Conference
- Monthly Webinar Series – “12 for 12”
- Ready, Set, Geaux 1 day summer conference
- Addition of the All-State Guitar Ensemble to premier in November 2021
- All-State Solo Festival
- All-State Virtual Solo Recital featuring the top 10 instrumental and vocalist from throughout the state
- Virtual Large Ensemble Opportunities
- Ongoing communication with the Louisiana Department of Education and the Louisiana Department of Health
- Member of the Donna Edwards’ Arts Advocacy Council
- NFHS Coalition Team Member
- Large Ensemble Awards
  - Robert L. Wilhite Award
  - Barbara Butler Award
  - Standard of Excellence Award
- American Eagle Award Recipient sponsored by NAMM – Jessica Fain, recipient
- Advocacy Stories (Music’s Impact on My Life) Project
- Adjudication Standards Revision
- Redesigned Website
- Reimagined LMEA Newsletter
- Reimagined LMEA Magazine (Louisiana Musician)
- Increased Media presence.
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - YouTube

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## LMEA Mission Statement:

**The mission of the Louisiana Music Educators Association is to provide leadership, professional development, and support for its membership to ensure quality music education.**

# Consistent, Comprehensive Music Education Is Associated With:

Improved academics AND higher test scores.<sup>3,4</sup>

Better language arts and math grades.<sup>4</sup>

Listening skills that let students hear through classroom noise.<sup>5</sup>

A meta-analysis  
of **15 studies**  
and **701 children**  
aged **3 to 12**

tells us musically educated students scored higher than control groups on spatial-temporal tasks important to math learning.<sup>6</sup>

## IMPROVED

phonological awareness<sup>1</sup>,  
attention,  
working memory,  
sound  
discrimination,  
verbal skills, and  
impulse control<sup>2</sup>

& more  
reliable  
short-term  
memory<sup>3</sup>



After receiving a “substantial influx of arts education,”<sup>7</sup> **10,548 students in 42 Houston elementary schools** had:

Decreased  
disciplinary  
infractions

Improved  
writing  
achievement

Significantly  
improved school  
engagement and  
college  
aspirations

Improved  
students’  
empathy and  
compassion  
for others

In a study of **37,222** eighth-grade students, those enrolled in music had **higher English and math LEAP test scores**.<sup>8</sup>

“White suburban students of high levels of SES tended to receive significantly more music experiences than students of color from urban and rural settings and of low SES — we **MUST advocate for high-quality music programs for all students** and particularly for those from traditionally underserved populations.”<sup>9</sup>

In a study of **110,000 children**, students “highly engaged” in music were on average **ONE ACADEMIC YEAR AHEAD** of peers not in music class.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Patscheke, H., Degé, F., & Schwarzer, G. (2019). The effects of training in rhythm and pitch on phonological awareness in four-to six-year-old children. *Psychology of Music*, 47(3), 376-391.

<sup>2</sup>Jaschke, A. C., Honing, H., & Scherder, E. J. (2018). Longitudinal analysis of music education on executive functions in primary school children. *Frontiers in Neuroscience*, 12, 103.

<sup>3</sup>Holochwost, S. J., Propper, C. B., Wolf, D. P., Willoughby, M. T., Fisher, K. R., Kolacz, J., Volpe, V. V., & Jaffee, S. R. (2017). Music education, academic achievement, and executive functions. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, 11(2), 147–166.

<sup>4</sup>Said, P. M., & Abramides, D. V. M. (2020, February). Effect of music education on the promotion of school performance in children. In *CoDAS*, (32)1, p. e20180144.

<sup>5</sup>Kraus, N., Chandrasekaran, B. (2010). Music training for the development of auditory skills. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 11, 599–605.

<sup>6</sup>Hetland, L. (2000). Learning to make music enhances spatial reasoning. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 34(3/4), 179-238.

<sup>7</sup>Bowen, D. H., & Kisida, B. (2019). Investigating causal effects of arts education experiences: Experimental evidence from Houston’s arts access initiative. Houston Education Research Consortium: *Research Report for the Houston Independent School District*, (7) 4.

<sup>8</sup>Baker, R. A., Jr. (2011). The relationship between music and visual arts formal study and academic achievement on the eighth-grade Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) test. *LSU Doctoral Dissertations*. 578.

<sup>9</sup>Miksza, P., & Gault, B. M. (2014). Classroom music experiences of US elementary school children: An analysis of the early childhood longitudinal study of 1998–1999. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 62(1), 4-17.

<sup>10</sup>Guhn, M., Emerson, S. D., & Gouzouasis, P. (2020). A population-level analysis of associations between school music participation and academic achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 112(2), 308–328.



# WHAT MUSIC MEANS TO ME...

## Kaleb Woolery

Dry Prong, Louisiana  
(participant in band)

Before I joined band, I didn't really have anything to do at home, except read a book (which isn't bad). Band gave me something to strive for and I practiced every day to get better. Also, in my opinion, my academics got better.

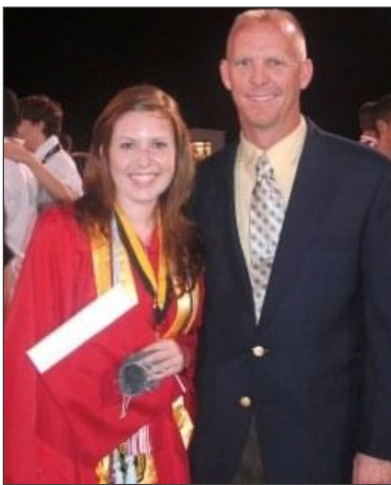
At my house, I have to take care of my mom because she's sick. When I'm sad from having to do that, playing my instrument makes me happier. It not only made me happier, but it helped me make new friends through the band program. But I couldn't have gotten good at my instrument without my teacher, Ms. Fain. My family doesn't have much money, but every time we went on a field trip or someplace to eat, she would help me buy food, or other necessities. Ergo, band has changed my life for the better.



## Amber Wiggins

Pollock, Louisiana  
Tioga Junior High School  
(participant in band)

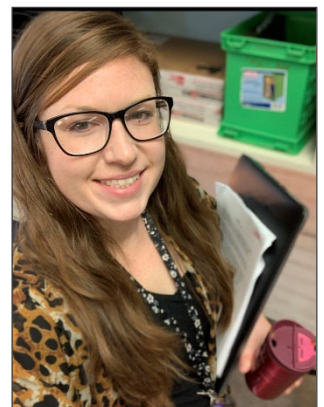
Music, band specifically, became an escape for me during my youth. I am the oldest of four children that grew up in an impoverished and abusive home. I know my involvement in band is directly responsible for my success and drive as an adult. Band gave me a safe space to learn the satisfaction of hard work and in turn create self-esteem and confidence. Here, I was able to experience a sense of love from members, directors, and band parents that I had never experienced within my own home.



Music helped me express myself, when I felt like no one else could understand where I was coming from. My high school director became my mentor, my biggest supporter, and my greatest advocate in areas where my parents had failed.

College band introduced me to an extremely diverse group of lifelong friends that shared my passion for appreciating and creating music. I chose to become an educator due to the positive impact band has had on my life.

As an educator, I can now create the safe space in the midst of the chaos that many of my students live in every single day. I can now give back to the next generation what so many music educators gave to me--the satisfaction of hard work, self-worth, confidence, teamwork, and a passion to appreciate the arts.



# WHAT MUSIC MEANS TO ME...



## CAPT Marshall Sauls

Deridder, Louisiana

DeRidder High School, Tulane University

*(participant in general music, band, jazz ensemble, orchestra)*

I am a trumpet player by avocation. I'm not a music educator, in fact I have spent my adult life as a professional aviator. I am a former Naval Aviator and have been a pilot for American Airlines for over 33 years. Currently I am a Captain flying the Boeing 777 on worldwide routes.

As a child, I suffered from bronchial asthma. My allergist recommended that I learn to play a wind instrument. And that's how I started down the road to become a trumpet player. As I grew and advanced through the band program, I developed in a challenging undertaking that expanded my horizons, gave me a sense of self-confidence and a feeling of belonging to a group which existed to create something beautiful and fun. Making music within a band, whether in marching band, wind ensemble or concert band, inspired my young mind to seek something greater than myself. It taught me self-discipline, cooperation with others towards a common goal and the pay-off of hard work and perseverance. Because of my asthma, I would probably never have been able to succeed in organized sports, but as a trumpet player, I pushed myself and sought out solo and ensemble competitions which brought success and satisfaction in knowing that one can accomplish just about anything they set their mind to.



As a student, belonging to something worthwhile, gaining self-confidence, self-discipline, overcoming fear and learning to master a horn and make music in all of the complex key and time signatures was invaluable in shaping the person I have become.



I have continued to play trumpet and Flugelhorn in church worship. I also play Solo Cornet in a "British" style Brass Band. To me, music is the thing I do for fulfillment. I'm not a professional, no-one pays me, I just love to make music. More than a hobby, music makes me feel like I am achieving what I was made for, especially when I'm worshipping God through my horn.

Much thanks to the many awesome teachers and directors in the music program in the La Public school system when I grew up. I truly believe that providing the opportunity for young people to learn to play a musical instrument and teaching them musical skills is absolutely essential and invaluable to their development as capable adults. It is a wonderful discipline, as valuable as any of the sciences. In fact, music incorporates a lot of math and physics and art. It is creative, both from a right brain and the left brain, creating something within one's self and yet also appreciated by others. Interestingly, I think there is a direct connection between music and flying. Both involve a concerted team effort, a journey which flows smoothly and beautifully from a starting place to a certain destination.

Blending and celebrating all language and cultural distinctions, music is a language unto itself. I have traveled several times with church friends to Honduras and played my trumpet there along with the local church band members who didn't speak English and speaking no Spanish myself, yet we have made wonderful music together. Music crosses all barriers; racial, ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic class structures, pulling together and transforming participants and listeners into a common enjoyment of sound. What other thing in the universe can possibly accomplish that?





# WHAT MUSIC MEANS TO ME...

## Amy Pearce

Lake Charles, Louisiana  
Grand Lake Elementary School  
(parent, general music, choir)

I am Pre-K teacher and a mother of a student at Grand Lake. My Pre-K students LOVE to go to music class. We only go once a week for 30 minutes, but they ask to go every day. They are always singing the songs they learned in music class. I even incorporate the songs in my classroom during transition times. Music is very important for preschoolers because it a gateway to helping them read.

My son was honored to be chosen to sing with the chorus. He now sings at church and in the car and loves singing his favorite songs at the top of his lungs. I think music class as made a major impact on his life.

## Leah LeBlanc

Rayne, Louisiana  
(participant in band, choir, piano)

In kindergarten, I knew that I was going to be in music for the rest of my life. I started doing musicals that same year. When I was in the 4th grade, I figured out that being a Band Director was a career and that it was going to be my life's work. I started band in 6th grade and continued through college. I never changed my major. Music scholarships paid most of my way through college.

Band and music have given me opportunities to travel and do things I would never have been able to do otherwise. The vast majority of people I know and are friends with were in band or music. I have made life-long friendships and connections with people all around the country and world through music. Band and choir have gotten me out of some of the lowest points in my life. Music has been my entire life. It has brought me the closest to God or the universe that I have ever felt. Music has shaped me into the person I am today. Frankly, I don't know where I would be if I wasn't given the opportunity to be in band or music. I would be a completely different person. Music has always been my love and passion in life.



At the end of the day, band, choir, and music are so much more than subjects. They change people's lives for the better and give them life-long memories. Music is the only activity that I know of where you can participate for your entire life. Yes, athletics are important, but I don't know any 60 year-olds still playing football, baseball, etc. I do know quite a few 60+ year-olds who are still playing their instruments and singing.

My whole reason for wanting to become a band director was to create a second family and a safe space for children. I want my students to know that if they don't have anyone at home to tell them they are loved, they will know that I love them. My goal in life is not to make the next virtuoso, it is to make better people. I believe I have already made a difference in some children's lives and I will continue to strive for that until my final day on this earth.

"Where words fail, music speaks." - Hans Christian Andersen

# WHAT MUSIC MEANS TO ME...

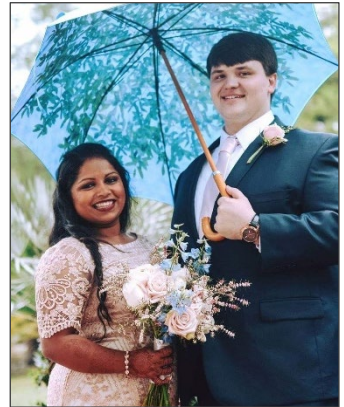
## Devi Innerarity

Mandeville, Louisiana

*(participant in general music, band, orchestra)*

I was adopted at the age of 7 from India and was so behind in all subject areas. When my mom introduced me to music it changed my whole life. Music helped me see the world in a different way. It helped my brain form connections that would help me forever. I was able to understand subjects like Math more, it helped me get out of my shy spell and, in general, it helped me be more confident by giving me an avenue to express myself.

I now have a masters and never would have completed the journey without the music scholarships I received to complete my bachelors. I know I can always rely on my music side to help me through the toughest times. Now I cannot wait to share my passion for music to my baby. I believe in music so much that I know it will help my baby with anything.



## Elle D'Angelo

Mandeville, Louisiana

Lakeshore High School

*(participant in general music, choir, piano)*

Music has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. I began chorus in 3rd grade because I loved to sing. This passion has given me so many opportunities to meet new people and develop leadership skills. When I entered the doors of chorus my freshman year, I was nervous and worried that I did not fit in. I soon learned that I loved the group and looked forward to class every day. Later that year I was asked to take over temporarily as secretary. Now going into my senior year, I will be choir president for a second year.



Being in these positions has taught me that everyone has special talents and needs. Part of my job is to welcome and make everyone feel loved by others, themselves, and music, and I do so both inside and outside the classroom. I have learned to be a positive role model while helping others achieve their goals and helping them through difficult times in their lives.

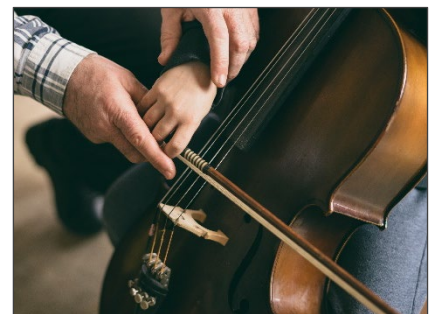
High School can be challenging, and chorus has been there for me as much as I have been there for them. The skills that I have learned will help me to be a better elementary teacher when I graduate from college. I want to tell my students to know that they are loved and to be a positive light in a sometimes scary world. Music has the power to carry us through challenging times.

## Rudie Soileau

Lake Charles, Louisiana

*(parent)*

I write specifically on behalf of two of our daughters and hopefully on behalf of all of children. Somehow the positive impact of music on learning - even just music playing in the background - always seemed a given, or perhaps something inherited. I first confronted this question of the role of music in education when our daughter, now a gifted educator, was working on her degree at LSU. She shared with me her curriculum did not allow for music courses. If



# WHAT MUSIC MEANS TO ME...

she were to combine music courses with the given curriculum, her graduation would be delayed and her education more costly. This seemed wrong. She included music in her education.

More starkly, our youngest daughter elected to enroll 5 years ago in the new orchestra class at her middle school, SJ Welsh, in Lake Charles. She began playing the cello. The impact was immediate and obvious. Her interest in music took off. She had played the piano for years, but her interest waned. No longer. More striking was the sudden change in her grasp and work in mathematics. I would challenge anyone who might doubt the direct relationship between music education and math. Indeed, I was suddenly aware that her uncle, an excellent, self-taught violinist, works as a computer programmer.

Of course, there is so much more to be said, but maybe this summarizes it: music teaches – thought at a very specific level, organization, and harmony – and it does so while causing our children to share with each other, and all of us, their learned skills. This brings joy to all. Music makes learning more effective and more fun. What better goal could there be?

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## Gabrielle Maurin

Hammond, Louisiana  
Ponchatoula High School  
(participant in band, choir)

I started learning about music when I was in choir in Ponchatoula public schools, grades 2-5. In 6th grade I joined beginning band with Mr. James Square at Martha Vineyard. I continued participating in band at Ponchatoula Jr High with Jeffery Cardaronella. At Ponchatoula High school I had Mr. James Square as my band director grades 9-12. In 10th grade I served as the Woodwind Section Leader, 11th grade as Executive Officer, and 12th grade as Drum Major of the band.

Band has helped me grow as a person by teaching me that the cornerstone of success is working hard and applying skills that I have honed through practicing. It has taught me to be flexible with ever changing circumstances. It has taught me resilience, discipline, multi-tasking, and especially teamwork! Camaraderie, time management, flexibility, and creative problem-solving skills. Mr. James Square taught me so many life lessons that I will possess forever. I had an amazing experience in band and many great memories that will last a lifetime! I am extremely thankful I had the opportunity to grow as a person through band.



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## Christian Williams

Monroe, Louisiana  
Louisiana Tech University  
(participant in general music, band, choir, piano)

My story... before I start, I just want to say I'm not bashing anyone in this story. This is simply meant for people to know no matter who believes in you, or who doesn't think something is possible - if it is your dream you can do anything you want.

Starting off as a kid, I have always been in love with music. My family has connected through music and performing at different events. It helped me realize my love and passion for music. The problem was, I didn't believe in myself.



# WHAT MUSIC MEANS TO ME...

You see, at a young age, someone who I love deeply and look up to told me that I could not sing. It embedded in my head and really convinced me that I couldn't sing. It didn't matter how many times other people told me that I could. But still, I continued to sing and perform, to try and build confidence and impress the person that told me that it would never work. And it didn't work. If anything, I embarrassed myself because I wasn't taught the proper things. I tried to sound like people other than myself. Yet, I still had this dream of becoming a professional musician. I still believed in myself...just not my voice.

But then a miracle happened, I decided to join my high school junior choir. I still was not very confident in my voice, but I figured maybe some professional teaching would help. So, I sang with the choir and eventually signed up to do the Christmas solo. I got the solo! My teacher Casey Doucet worked with me and taught me things I did not know. So here comes the concert time. When it's time for me to sing my solo, the one track in the whole concert messes up - while I'm trying to sing with it. I have to stall the crowd and talk with them until they fix my back-up track. When they finally fix it, I sing my song and get the longest standing ovation of the night. This gave me an extreme boost of confidence. And the person I looked up to was there. Finally, I thought that person could see my dream possibly becoming a reality.

Throughout my junior and senior years, I continued to thrive in my choir. I became choir president my senior year. I was the first student in four years to make it to the all-state audition. I was the first person in a long time to sing the national anthem at our homecoming, football games, and ROTC events. Now, I'm now a LA Tech music education student.

I know for a fact that none of this would have been possible if it was not for Casey Doucet's teaching and motivation, and just being there for me when I needed to talk.

This is my story and if you take anything from this, just know *it doesn't matter who you are or where you come from*. None of that. *Whatever you want to be, if you have a dream, it can become a reality*. It can be accomplished through hard work, encouragement, keeping yourself surrounded by people who love you and want the best for you; and most of all, **dreaming**. Thank you.



LMEA supports Louisiana's  
Music Educators

## MENTORSHIP PROGRAM



Collaboration - In Person  
and Virtual  
Classroom Management  
Resources  
Advocacy  
Rehearsal Tips  
Recruiting  
Assessments



# WHAT MUSIC MEANS TO ME...

## Maddie Bertran

Lacombe, Louisiana  
Lakeshore High School  
(participant in choir)

Music helped me grow as a person by giving me a new perspective of life. The perspective music gave me was to never give up hope and to always be happy, even when we have bad days. Also, music is my life! I listen to all types of music daily. Listening to music can calm me down after a long stressful or challenging day.

When I lost my dad from brain cancer it was a hard time. I was depressed and wanted to stay by myself, but music helped me, gratefully, to get through my loss. I always have a smile on my face when listening to music. I love music from all decades because I believe we should remember the old music to pass down for many generations.

Being in choir has made me realize there is more to life because when I sing, I feel like I'm in a safe happy place. Singing brings me joy especially when I sing for God in worship. It brightens my soul. I've also met many good people in choir – some of them are now my closest friends.



## Madeline Maurin

Ponchatoula, Louisiana  
(participant in band)

I believe that we are all meant for something in this crazy world, and I was meant to express myself through playing music. I've played Alto, Tenor, and Bari Sax for the last 9 years and counting! As an active band member, I have been given so many opportunities, such as clinics, meeting new friends, making connections, and growing with other musicians! I am often unable to speak what's on my mind, but I have never had an issue expressing myself through the music I play. Music has given me a sense of belonging to a family. Whether in middle school, junior high, high school, and now college, I feel like I have a new family.



Ever since I joined band in the 5th grade, I wanted to be in the LSU Tiger band! Here I am now, after countless years of hard work and determination, getting ready for the first LSU game of the season as an LSU Tiger band member! I am so very thankful for all of the opportunities I was given through LMEA 9 and all of the people I crossed paths with.

One last thing that I would like to share is that before my 85-year-old Granny passed away, I asked her "What is one of your biggest regrets in life?" She said, "giving up playing music". That will forever stick with me, and I will never give up my music.

## LMEA SPONSORED ASSESSMENTS

Individual - Solos  
Small Group - Small Ensemble  
Classes - Large Ensemble

All evaluations are based on Louisiana Department of Education benchmarks and standards

# WHAT MUSIC MEANS TO ME...

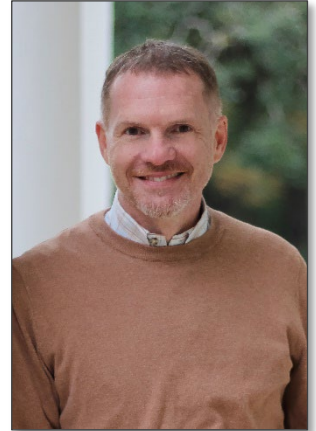
## Brett Babineaux

Lafayette, Louisiana  
(participant in band)

It was my junior year of high school and was chatting with my Mr. Sensat, my science teacher. He asked me a question that no one had asked me before. "What are you going to do after high school?" Rewind my life years earlier when I joined band in 5th grade (probably only because my older brother and sister were in band). Other than that, my saliva test revealed no real traces of generational music careers. I was just a kid having a blast being in the band and playing my trumpet. College, a career, a job, was not something that was on my radar. Again, not a generational trait.

That question gnawed at me until I decided to talk to my most trusted advisor. He was my high school private lesson teacher and my band director, Mr. Scott Guidry. He asked, "Have you ever thought of being a band director?" The question was obvious and so was the answer. It was really the only thing I did outside of playing city-league sports and watching TV. But this scrawny kid from Carencro, La. had NO shot at a life in sports. My claim to fame in sports was that I played softball with Kevin Faulk. At that moment, my trumpet playing began getting more serious. I started auditioning for as many honor groups as possible. I started paying close attention to those honor band directors, like the late James Croft. The great instruction I was getting from my band directors were so inspiring. I wanted to follow in the footsteps of Scott Guidry and James Square. I was truly blessed to have such wonderful teachers in high school and in college. I cherish every memory. I continue to be inspired by so many of my colleagues. I love teaching, I love making music, I love my students, I love learning.

If it were not for Mr. Sensat, if it were not for Guidry and Square....where would I be?...Who would I be? Thankfully, and with the support and guidance and love from my parents, I don't ever have to wonder! Thanks to all of you who ever crossed my path. You have made a tremendous impact on my life.



## Bonnie White

Alexandria, Louisiana  
Bolton High School  
(participant in band)

Music has always been a part of my life. My mom was a violinist for Acadiana Symphony Orchestra and she insisted that I take every chance possible to learn music. Theory, violin, piano, history. I was quiet and music gave me a place to think and share.



I was lucky to study with some musical giants in Louisiana. Diane Robin, Scotty Walker, Linda Morehouse, Frank Wickes. I remember the rehearsals and festivals and games, but what I live on today are the character lessons.

- Personal responsibility: I am never late to anything, event or deadline.
- Confidence: I have talents and experiences that are worthy.
- Determination: I do not give up on my goals, especially the hard ones.
- Persistence: I will shape and reshape a project until it is the best I can give.
- Community: I can't always do things by myself and the good things are usually better with other people.

I work every day at my school to teach these same things. I required band of my own daughters because I know these character builders are important. And I want to continue to have the arts for my students and my children. Even more so now.





# WHAT MUSIC MEANS TO ME...

Regardless of the phases. The outlet to express yourself and the perseverance through problems and the community of support. Our children need this now more than ever.

## Jennifer Zuckerman

Mandeville, Louisiana  
Lakeshore High School  
(participant in choir)

I consider myself someone with many different interests. I thrive in school and I am an avid reader of fantasy books. I've even attempted writing a novel of my own. But there is one thing that has stuck with me for more than five incredible years, and now I can hardly imagine the person I'd be today without it: music.

To be more specific, it is singing that has changed my life so profoundly over the years. I've found that I have a knack for classical music, the style that I most enjoy, but that I can also step outside of my comfort zone and try both fun and emotional musical theater pieces. All of this comes from five years of choir and private vocal lessons with amazingly talented instructors who helped me turn a decent voice into something that I am truly passionate about. Ironically, though, it took quite a bit of convincing to get me started with singing at only ten years old. I wasn't a stranger to music—I'd played the violin for a few years previously—but I never fell in love with the instrument, and I wasn't very eager to try anything new. However, many of my friends were joining the school choir. So, while my twin sister joined the band, I decided to give singing a shot.



It was over the summer, in preparation for joining the choir, that my parents wanted me to start private lessons, which I was not happy about. At my first lesson, I was a nervous wreck, and incredibly shy. I was completely clueless—never once had I considered myself as having any real talent. But I got through my first song, and then through the first few weeks, and then I was earning solos in the school choir. Unfortunately, for years I dreaded performing, and my confidence never proved to be particularly high, no matter how reassuring my friends and family were. Truthfully, it wasn't until eighth grade that I really began to enjoy concerts, and now the rush that comes with singing on stage is something I, despite my ever-present nerves, always look forward to.

There seems to be no easy way to describe exactly what music means to me. Because of it I've enjoyed new experiences and met new people, and I have found something that I can truly be proud of myself for. It, my voice, has become a part of me and I would never trade it for anything else. I have grown for the better because of it, and I know that without my voice, my life would be considerably less full, less happy, than it is now.



# WHAT MUSIC MEANS TO ME...

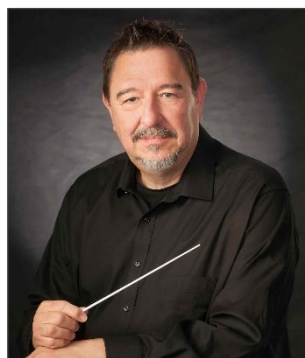
## John Frank Reeve

Youngsville, Louisiana

*(participant in general music, band, choir, and piano)*

Music has been a part of my life since my days in elementary school. I was always drawn to music and it was my creative outlet all through my elementary and high school days. Being encouraged by all my music teachers was what influenced my decision to follow a call to full-time Music Ministry through my church. I obtained a Bachelor of Music degree and a Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance and have been actively involved in the Music Ministry for over 30 years.

Music has also given me an avenue into my community as I have been a part of and directed choral ensembles wherever I have been serving. Currently, in addition to my job as a Music Minister, I am the Co-Artistic Director for the premier choral group in our area. My life has been filled with musical pursuits and I really can't imagine what life for me would have been apart from music. It is an honor to serve the ultimate Creator of all music, and to be a part of helping others find the joy of a life filled with the beauty of music.



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## Frank Graffagnino

Friendswood, Texas (formerly from Lafayette, Louisiana)

*(participant in general music, band, orchestra)*

How has music education impacted my life? I'll be honest - it might be easier to try to think of areas of my life that weren't affected by music education.

I started playing trumpet in the 5th grade at S.J. Montgomery Elementary School in Lafayette, LA. I learned basic skills - just enough to make sounds and be part of a group. But things really started for me when I got to Lafayette Middle School. There was a relatively young band director there named Scotty Walker. I learned so many things under his direction and got to experience so much. First off - I realized that band directors were more than just music educators. They are counselors. They are role models. They are motivational speakers. They are second parents. They are, in a word, leaders.

At Lafayette Middle I was exposed to so many things that my young heart had never experienced before. I watched very poor kids have the ability to play on a school owned instrument that their family could never afford to purchase. I watched kids have a safe place to engage in after-school activities. I watched kids get to be part of a welcoming group and atmosphere. I experienced things like playing Christmas songs at hospitals or driving to nursing homes to play songs for the elderly.

While I was in 7<sup>th</sup> grade at Lafayette Middle, a band director position opened at Lafayette High. The band parents began a letter writing campaign to help Mr. Walker get the job. Luckily, they were successful and their children were blessed to be influenced by Mr. Walker again in grades 9-12. We planted a tree at Lafayette High School honoring Mr. Walker.

Mrs. Robin Daigle became the band director at Lafayette Middle School for my 8th grade year. She was also exceptional. I am very grateful that I had such a great introduction to music by these two teachers.

But as anyone who has gone through a music education will tell you, your experience in high school is really where things are taken to the next level - especially due to the addition of marching band. Arriving at Lafayette High, my first steps were at band camp in the Louisiana summer heat. I was not only introduced to extremely hard dedicated work from 8 AM to 8 PM for two weeks, but also with the most comforting feeling of being welcomed into a truly great group. There I met older kids - juniors and seniors (men and women in my young 9th grade eyes) who welcomed me, were kind to me, invited me to gatherings, asked me how I was doing,

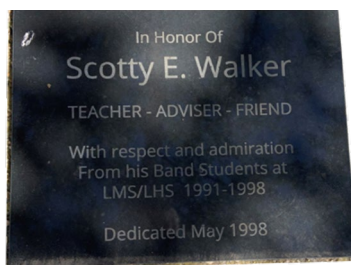


# WHAT MUSIC MEANS TO ME...

celebrated successes with me, made sure I had a ride, and gave me guidance. It was an amazing feeling for someone scared to death of their first day of high school. After band camp, I walked onto the Lafayette High School campus as a freshman already knowing about 200 kids there. I already knew where my classes were. I already knew who I was going to sit with at lunch. It was really something.

Only later would I realize this super supportive environment, so common in band programs, isn't some magic that occurs by everyone playing music - it is generated from the top. It is the music educators and leaders that drive into the kids not just music, but kindness, grace, and decency. And with that, the programs build kids who understand work ethic and pride.

My four years in the music program at Lafayette High School are without a doubt, the most formative years of my life. I not only benefited from all that kindness, but I learned to be kind once I was the upper classman. I learned to value the pride in working really, really hard - not for a trophy or recognition - but for the inner satisfaction that I, and my group, did the absolute best that we could at something. I learned to be a leader. And I watched as Mr. Walker



escorted many, many children through their teenage years with what I can only describe as the perfect example for us. I am 40 years old now, and I can say, without hesitation, Scotty Walker is the biggest influence I have ever had on my character and my work ethic.

I haven't even talked about music yet. That's how influential it was. That's how life-changing a music education can be for so many kids. Add to that, the years of cherished memories of music experiences - concerts, parades, competitions, solos, ensembles... it just goes on and on.

And now I am a parent. And with each passing day I find myself trying to teach my kids some of the same lessons that I learned during my time in band.

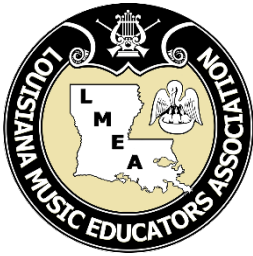
- "Don't just be on-time, be early! If you're early, you're on-time. If you're on-time, you're late. If you're late..."
- "Remember, son, how you feel when those older boy scouts welcome you into their group. One day, you will be the older scout, and you will have the opportunity to make those younger scouts feel the same way."
- "Don't want to spill your drink while walking to your seat? Try rolling your feet from heel to toe, like this!"
- "Every kid is different, and everyone has their own problems and crosses to bear that you can't see, so we must afford them some grace..."
- "Leadership is forgiving and for giving - we forgive others and we train others to be leaders as well."
- "Do your best. The trophy doesn't matter. What you will remember is your effort and the journey."

These are all things I've said to my kids... some of them recently. And I can tell you, without a doubt, that those are things I absolutely learned in my music education. My music education had more than just an impact on me - it set the direction for the rest of my life. It surrounded me with role models and with good friends. I will be forever grateful to my 3 years at Lafayette Middle and 4 years at Lafayette High and especially to the music educators who gave so much of themselves for the kids in those programs.





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- LA-ASTA (American String Teachers Association)
- LA-ACDA (Louisiana American Choral Directors Association)
- LAJE (Louisiana Association for Jazz Education)
- LBA (Louisiana BandMasters Association)
- LA PAS (Louisiana Chapter of Percussive Arts Society)

# Music is Essential

**ATTENDANCE:** Schools that have music programs have an attendance rate of 93.3% compared to 84.9% in schools without music programs. (*The National Association for Music Education. "Music Makes the Grade." The National Association for Music Education. Accessed February 24, 2015.*)

**TEST SCORES:** Students in high-quality school music education programs score higher on standardized tests compared to students in schools with deficient music education programs, regardless of the socioeconomic level of community. (*Nature Neuroscience, April 2007*)

**READING:** Children who study music tend to have larger vocabularies and more advanced reading skills than their peers who do not participate in music lessons. (*Arete Music Academy. "Statistical benefits of music in education." Arete Music Academy. Accessed July 17, 2014.*)

**URBAN:** Urban teachers believe more strongly that music education can build 21st century skills, such as communication, critical thinking, problem-solving and innovation skills. (*NAMM Foundation and Grunwald Associates LLC, 2015. Striking a Chord: The Public's Hopes and Beliefs for K-12 Music Education in the United States: 2015.*)

**MINORITIES:** African-American and Hispanic parents generally believe more strongly in a wide array of potential benefits from music education, are more likely to have seen these positive impacts on their own child and more strongly support expanding music education programs. Ironically, these parents also are more likely to report that there are no music programs in their schools (21 percent of African-American parents and 22 percent of Hispanic parents report this, compared to 15 percent of Caucasian parents). (*NAMM Foundation and Grunwald Associates LLC, 2015. Striking a Chord: The Public's Hopes and Beliefs for K-12 Music Education in the United States: 2015.*)



LMEA is Louisiana's federated state member of the National Association for Music Education



LMEA is an affiliated member of the National Federation of High Schools



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