

# LMEA's Zoom Meeting - May 16, 2024

## LMEA Marching Championships Discussion Zoom Meeting

May 16, 2024 - Summary (*with AI Companion Created - edited by Lee Hicks on May 17th*)

### Quick recap

The team discussed the impact of ESSER funds on layoffs and the formation of a data collection committee. Deliberations were held on band sizes, school sizes, and classifications for competitions. Financial concerns regarding an upcoming event led to discussions on increasing fees and potential system modifications.

### Next steps

- LMEA will announce the formation of the district data collection committee and its purpose to track students, GPAs, and ACT scores to support music education.
- Lynn Burton and Aaron Theall will co-chair the district data collection committee and recruit interested members recommended by our district directors to assist in data collection and tracking.
- Dr. Tim Schneider and Dr. Jennifer Pulling will serve as advisors to the district data collection committee, providing expertise and guidance on data analysis and tracking.
- Jim will amend the motion to increase the group fee to \$350 and conduct an email ballot in a few days to pass the amendment.
- Sharon will check and adjust the director and group counts for the show bands and corps style bands, ensuring accurate representation and classification for the upcoming season.

## Summary

### Layoffs, ESSER Funds, and School Activities

LMEA (Lee) and Aaron discussed the recent layoffs of district directors due to budget constraints. LMEA expressed concern about the impact of the use of ESSER funds to create positions, which have now depleted, leaving the districts unable to cover the costs of maintaining those positions. They also highlighted the importance of the data collection committee in this regard.

### Spreadsheet Updates and AI Tool Discussion

Lee discussed a spreadsheet that Lynn had been updating, which included additional categories. Lee also mentioned that Jennifer and Tim were available to offer their assistance, with Tim being particularly knowledgeable due to his doctoral dissertation on the subject. A committee was planned to be announced later. The conversation also touched on upcoming concerts, end-of-school activities, and graduation. Lastly, Sharon introduced an explanation of an AI meeting note tool, which she found intriguing despite its inaccuracies.

### LMEA Team Addresses Music Programs and Teacher Cuts

The LMEA team engaged in discussions on various topics including band size, school size, the absence of several district directors, and the formation of a data collection committee. The committee, co-chaired by Lynn Burton and Aaron, aims to track students' GPAs, ACTs, and other relevant data to demonstrate the success of music programs and support music teachers. The team also discussed recent cuts of elementary and choir teachers in some districts, attributing this to the depletion of Esser funds. Lastly, there were discussions about classification concerns and issues related to the State marching festival.

### School and Band Size Debate

The discussion focused on the evolving debate about school and band sizes, which initially began as a school size conversation but later shifted to band size. Jim shared his perspective, indicating that small schools favored band size while larger schools had more opportunities. Aleisa, as a district director, emphasized that concerns about unfairness in band contests stemmed from small bands feeling penalized for their size. Joshua confirmed that his district favored band size over school size in their classifications. The group agreed to address the issue further, with suggestions to count all performers, separate classes based on entries, and

form a committee to decide on overlapping ranges, while Jim acknowledged various ways to determine the best number for each class.

### **Discussing Marching Band Classification Fairness**

Concerns were raised by Aaron regarding the fairness of classifications for small rural schools with limited resources, specifically regarding the counting of performers in marching bands. Various proposals were put forward, including counting every performer on the field, counting performers when the performance starts, and considering the complete band program size, including 7th and 8th graders. Lee and Jim discussed potential issues with these proposals, including the fact that students may not participate in marching band if they are also involved in other sports, and the unfairness of smaller bands competing against larger ones. The decision on which system to adopt was discussed and members' voices were heard; the issue will be voted on and plans to revisit the discussion after the first year are certain to happen.

### **Addressing Band Classification in District 6**

There was a discussion about the classification of bands in District 6, particularly concerning the participation of middle and high school students. Many Catholic high schools in the New Orleans area are 8th through 12th grades so they consider the 8th graders as high school students. Telly also raised concerns about the potential of focusing on band size, leading to a discussion on simplifying rules and clarifying the usage of middle school students in band programs. Proposals were made to address the classification issue, with suggestions including considering high school students almost as 8th through 12th graders and focusing on band size, regardless of school size or grade level.

### **State-Level Competition and Classification Debate**

Jim emphasized the potential benefits of competing at the state level, even if not placing in the top three. He argued that it could inspire schools to improve and provide talking points for school administrations. Robbie's proposed setting classifications based on the number of performers at the actual competition, rather than on school size. However, Lee explained the concerns were raised by some directors about the potential disadvantage for the smaller schools since the larger schools draw from a larger talent pool. Billy further highlighted the potential disadvantage for smaller bands in large schools competing against much larger ones. The group ultimately agreed to continue the discussion outside of the meeting.

### **Hybrid Show Band Competition Challenges**

The LMEA team discussed the challenges and logistics of administering a hybrid show band style and traditional style competition. Aaron raised a concern about the fairness of competition when younger, less experienced participants face off against more seasoned high school groups. Lee clarified that it's up to the individual directors to decide which style they feel most comfortable with. Michele voiced her concerns about the seeming regression to past methods, after the organization worked so hard to adjust the classification issues for concert assessments. Ryan noted that the director should choose the style sheet that best serves their program's goals. Jim added that hybrids might be better off in the show band class. Ultimately, Joshua proposed maintaining the current structure for the first year, while considering necessary adjustments based on the number of bands and their age ranges.

### **Discussing Event Financial Concerns and Solutions**

There was a discussion led by Lee about the financial concerns related to the upcoming event. Lee suggested increasing the fee per group from \$300 to \$350 to cover potential costs such as judges, hotels, and flights due to the large number of adjudicators and the unknown of how many groups will actually participate. Sharon and Jim discussed the need for a motion to amend the fee, which would require another vote. The group also discussed the potential issues with transportation and the possibility of some groups not being able to afford it. The group expressed the need for people to start thinking about this well in advance.

### **LMEA Seeks Feedback on District Directors' Role**

Lee thanked the team for their contributions and sought their feedback on how he can help simplify the role of district directors. Lee requested a motion to end the meeting, proposed by Ryan and seconded by Aleisa.

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**UPDATE:****The Vote for the proposal was 13 For and 1 Against - the Motion has Passed**

Robert	Freeman	District 1	FOR
Aleisa	Hudlow	District 2	FOR
Bailey	Lanier	District 3	FOR
Ryan	Benoit	District 4	FOR
Aaron	Theall	District 5	AGAINST
Telly	Higgins	District 6	FOR
Jim	Trant	District 7	FOR
Michele	DesLattes	District 8	FOR
Stephanie	Robertson	District 9	FOR
Billy	Hochkeppel	Divisions - Band Division	FOR
Edward	McClellan	Divisions - CNAfME	FOR
Keith	James	Divisions - Elementary Division	DNV
Doug	Stone	Divisions - Jazz Division	FOR
Katrice	Lacour	Divisions - Orchestra Division	DNV
Joshua	Stearman	Divisions - Public Relations	FOR
Victor	Drescher	Divisions - University Division	DNV
Stephen	Galliano	Divisions - Vocal Division	DNV
Brett	Babineaux	Executive Board - Past President	FOR
Jessica	Fain-Blanchard	Executive Board - President Elect	DNV