

## *Investing in the future*

*“The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.”* William A. Ward

The beginning of each school year is always an exciting time, new and returning students, new music, maybe some new colleagues, perhaps a new class assignment. As I begin my thirty sixth year my mind still races with the anticipation of this new beginning. Best wishes to all for a tremendous start to an extraordinary year. Please remember that if MMEA can assist in any aspect of your educational agenda please do not hesitate to contact us.

As the new academic year begins we must be cognizant of challenges for all involved in the teaching profession. The teacher evaluation procedures that have been developed by local school districts will be implemented beginning this fall. Students entering our teacher education programs at all college and universities will also face changes to the existing certification process and curriculum offerings intended to meet the demands of the new rules for certification. Many of you will be involved with the restructuring of curriculums to align with various curriculum models. All of this plus the demands of educating and preparing our students requires a well versed professional ready to tackle these demands. Holding true to our mission ***“focus on effectively serving the membership in their goals of teaching and learning,”*** MMEA is prepared to assist you and your program as we undertake these challenges.

At the 2014 MMEA In-Service we introduced the *“Model Music Educator, An Inclusive Evaluation Model”* a collection of documents that you can use to assist your administrators in developing an “inclusive” evaluation tool that best serves the music educator. We are in the process of adding sample Student Learning Objectives (SLO) that can serve as templates for you to adapt to your curriculum and use as a means for measuring student growth when this portion of the evaluation is added in fall of 2015. If you were unable to attend our session last year I would be happy to explain the intended use of the various documents. These documents can be found by visiting the MMEA web site.

In June of this year the new National Standards for Music Education were published. It is a goal for MMEA to assist you in the understanding and scope of these new standards with the hope that you will find them useful as you make revisions to your district’s curriculum in the future. I encourage you to plan to attend a session on the new standards offered at the 2015 In-Service.

With an awareness of the recent changes in education and a sympathetic ear to the many challenges that a young teacher may face as they enter our profession I have adopted as our conference theme for 2015 ***“Mentoring, Investing in the future.”*** All of us have a responsibility to the profession, to future students and to these young music educators to ensure their successful induction into the teaching profession. MMEA is in the process of developing a mentoring program that will identify and reach out to young music educators and assist in whatever their professional needs may be. Under the leadership of Steve Litwiller, MMEA Mentoring Chair, and with the help of our affiliate organizations we will introduce procedures and train mentors to assist and strengthen our music education community.

Evidence strongly suggests that mentoring improves instruction and retention of new teachers in the profession. While not the entire solution, carefully designed mentoring programs can help in many ways to meet many of the challenges our young educators are facing. Mentoring can also serve as a recruiting tool in districts that offer an ongoing mentoring program, it will improve teacher retention rates and it can help to improve the skills and knowledge of both new and veteran mentoring teachers. Mentoring holds the potential to help the entire profession of teaching.

Imagine you wanted to learn to climb mountains and the only instruction you received was to be handed equipment, dropped off at the base of Everest and told to get to the top or quit. If you did not make the summit your enthusiasm disappears and you seek ways to avoid similar challenges in the future. (Wilson) This analogy is similar to the situations that a young music educator may encounter.

Colleges and Universities work diligently to prepare music teachers but time restraints and adjustments to new certification rules may allow for a very topical approach to pedagogy and instructional management. New teachers must weather a frazzling first couple years. A sink or swim approach is a recipe for early burnout and will leave music education without its best and brightest teachers to continue the job of delivering music education.

*"We don't put attorneys just out of law school alone on their first case, yet we put new teachers alone in the classroom for their first year and expect them to shoulder the same responsibilities as veteran teachers,"* says Kathleen Fulton, director for reinventing schools for the twenty-first century at the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

New teachers are expected to assume a full schedule of classes and rehearsals, create their own lesson plans, select literature, and develop teaching techniques and classroom-management strategies in relative isolation. They are also expected to learn quickly the administrative ins and outs of the job, from taking attendance and communicating with parents and booster organizations to navigating the schools' computer network and finding the faculty bathrooms.

Although still in the development stages MMEA is committed to a mentoring program. If approached I hope you will join us in support of our new and young music educators and help us ensure the future of music education in our schools. We will offer several sessions at this year's conference centered on the mentoring theme and approach.

A project that has been in the works for several months now is the redesign of the web site. By the time you read this it should be up and running. Please visit [www.mmea.net](http://www.mmea.net) and check out our new look!!

I am so excited and happy to have the NAFME President Dr. Glenn E. Nierman as a part of our 2015 In-Service. Our NAFME President for 2014-2016, Dr. Nierman is currently a member of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln School of Music faculty. He teaches graduate classes in research and curriculum development, as well as a non-major popular music guitar class. His public school teaching experience includes work with middle school general music and choir, as

well as high school band and orchestra. President Nierman is a Missouri native and attended Warren Co. RII High School in Wright City, MO.

(.....insert photo of Nierman here.....)

Our Keynote Speaker for our first general session and for the All-State student members on Wednesday evening is Steven Jarvi. Mr. Jarvi is the Resident Conductor of the St. Louis Symphony, Music Director of Winter Opera Saint Louis and the Music Director of the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra. Praised for his “uncommonly expressive and detailed” performances by the *Miami Herald* and described as an “eloquent and decisive” conductor by the *Wall Street Journal*, Steven Jarvi is recognized as one of America's fastest rising conductors with an equal passion for the concert hall and the opera house.

(.....insert photo of Jarvi here.....)

Congratulations to those ensembles selected to perform at our annual In-Service. This is an impressive list of outstanding musicianship. Please see a complete listing found in this issue or on the web. Please see Jeff Melsha’s article for a summary of our National Assembly visit in Washington D.C. Very special thanks to Marty, Sally, Jeff, Kristin and Angelete for attending National Hill Day. I have left this issue’s advocacy installment to the very capable hands of our NafME-C members. Speaking of advocacy please watch your e-mail for the announcement of MMEA’s Advocacy Day in Jefferson City to be held in March.

MMEA’s Vice-Presidents and Advisory Board are busy planning what I think is an outstanding In-Service for all areas and interests. I am looking forward to seeing all of you in January 2015!

Wilson, Kenneth. *The National Foundation for the Improvement of Education*. Fall 1999, No. 1.

Gary Brandes

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