



# NEWSLETTER

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# DECEMBER 2024

Volume XXXIV

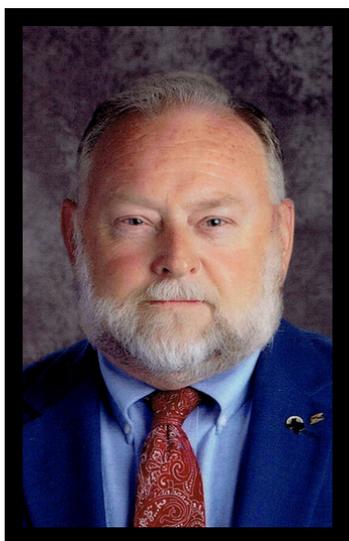
No 3

Updated December 1, 2024

**OUR 33RD YEAR OF SERVICE TO SMALL SCHOOL BANDS IN TEXAS**

## PRESIDENTS COLUMN

RODNEY BENNETT



Where did the fall semester go? Marching season seemed to fly by this year. I hope it was a successful one for you and your bands. Congratulations to all the bands that advanced to the UIL Area Contests and qualified for the UIL State Marching Band Championships in San Antonio. This marching season has been exciting, with bands from all classifications advancing to the UIL State Marching Band Championships. There were two weeks filled with outstanding and inspiring performances.

A special shout-out goes to the 1A UIL State Marching Band Champions, Irion County High School, directed by Brian Tillman; the 2A UIL State Marching Band Champions, Sundown High School, directed by Justin Mauldin; the 3A UIL State Marching Band Champions, Mineola High School, directed by Jim Best; and the 4A State Marching Band Champions, Celina High School, directed by Jon Weddle (celebrating their third consecutive state championship!);

and our Military Bands 4A State Marching Band Champions Lindale HS directed by Weston Fisher (celebrating their 5th consecutive state championship), 3A State Marching Band Champions White Oak HS directed by Jacob Ramos, and 1A/2A State Marching Band Champions Carlisle HS directed by Chris Clifton. Every band that participated in the UIL State Marching Band Championships is a winner and represents the best of what we strive to achieve in our band programs. The artistry, both musically and visually, continues to rise to new heights. Bravo and well done!

I want to thank the UIL State Music Office—Dr. Brad Kent, Mr. Gabe Musella, and Mrs. Rebecca Kinz—for the invitation to help acknowledge the participating schools and drum majors at the conclusion of the preliminary performances for conferences 1A, 2A, 3A, and 4A. It was an absolute joy and honor to help present trophies to the finalists, as well as the bronze, silver, and gold medalists. This experience was one of the highlights of my career, and I will forever cherish the opportunity to represent ATSSB at the 2024 UIL State Marching Band Championships.

Please take the time to review the constitutional amendments presented in the September 2024 newsletter. Voting on these amendments will take place at the ATSSB General Membership Meeting on Friday, February 14, at 2:30 PM in room CC 214.

Thanksgiving break has come and gone, and Christmas break is fast approaching. I hope each of you had a good pause in your routine and spent time with family, getting some much-needed rest to recharge for the final days of the fall semester. When we return from Thanksgiving break, most of us will have only three weeks before Christmas break due to the late date of Thanksgiving this year. Please do your best to stay healthy and energized for your students. For those of you who still have upcoming marching band performances with your football teams in the playoffs, enjoy the ride and continue making great memories with your students.

I understand the challenges of preparing for region band auditions, Christmas concerts, and marching band all at the same time can be draining. Make sure you stay on top of the dates, deadlines, and procedures for your region auditions. This will ensure that you enter students correctly and timely, ultimately saving you time and money. Late fees can add up quickly, and you may have to explain why students were entered late.

I hope we all recognize how fortunate we are to teach at our respective schools and positively impact our students' lives. This year has continued to present challenges with student behavior, classroom decorum, and what sometimes feels like a lack of commitment to excellence. We must press on to create meaningful musical experiences in our daily rehearsals, focusing on making music for the sake of music. Translating our daily work into outstanding performances for our students and audiences is essential.

This will be my last article as President of ATSSB. It has been an honor and privilege to serve the directors and students of our ATSSB schools. ATSSB will continue to serve the small school bands of Texas under the leadership of soon-to-be President Angie Liss, the Executive Board, and Kenneth Griffin, our esteemed Executive Secretary. I am honored to have served alongside these respected colleagues. It is my sincerest hope that ATSSB continues to meet your needs as small school band directors in Texas.

I look forward to continuing to serve the directors and students of small schools in Texas as Immediate Past President. If I can ever be of assistance to you or your students, please don't hesitate to ask.

Additionally, be sure to check your region's website for all the information regarding your region auditions. Also, refer to the ATSSB website for any errata related to audition music.



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Any correspondence should be addressed to ATSSB; 2117 Morse Street; Houston, TX 77019.

You may also contact us on our Web Site ([www.atssb.org](http://www.atssb.org)) or email the Editor (Marc Nicholson) at [mnichelson@atssb.org](mailto:mnichelson@atssb.org) or call 713-874-1151.

Letters to the Editor will be published as space permits if signed and verified, although writers may remain anonymous by request.

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<https://www.atssb.org/files/execsec/AdPolicy.pdf>.



# DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

## PRESIDENT-ELECT COLUMN

ANGIE LISS

I can't believe November is already over! We've successfully navigated another marching season, and aside from a parade or two and possibly the football playoffs, we can now store away the marching equipment for a while. It does take over our band hall during the fall, so it's a relief for me to see our space return to a regular band room again!

I continue to be amazed by the quality of our small school marching bands and all the incredible work you are doing. Congratulations to everyone who performed a show each week; that alone is a significant achievement. A special shout-out goes to those who advanced to area and state competitions, and especially to our state champions:

- Open Class -
  - 4A: Celina HS (Jon Weddle)
  - 3A: Mineola HS (Jim Best)
  - 2A: Sundown HS (Justin Mauldin)
  - 1A: Irion County HS (Brian Tillman)
- Military Class -
  - 4A: Lindale HS (Weston Fisher)
  - 3A: White Oak HS (Jacob Ramos)
  - 1A/2A: Carlisle HS (Chris Clifton)

These groups are absolutely outstanding!

While marching band often captures public attention for various reasons, as we transition into concert season, please remember to promote all the activities you're involved in. Sending an email to the staff at your school, writing an article for your local newspaper, posting on social media, or distributing a newsletter to parents can significantly help keep others informed and foster support for your program. It's essential for people to know that your students are still working hard, even if they don't see you on a practice grid or football field.

I hope you are making plans to attend the TMEA Convention in February. It's a great opportunity to learn, hear remarkable concerts, and connect with peers we don't see often. As we begin the All-State process, please ensure you understand all the audition policies and procedures, and familiarize yourself with the housing process in case one of your students makes the All-State Band. If a student does qualify, be sure to complete all necessary paperwork and be as informed as possible before heading to San Antonio. We want that experience to be positive and as stress-free as possible for the students!

It is truly an honor for me to serve this organization. You are all amazing educators, and I feel privileged to work alongside you. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns.



A handwritten signature of Angie Liss in black ink.



# DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

## PAST PRESIDENT COLUMN

MATT KNIGHT



Greetings from West Texas!

It is hard to believe it is already December 1st. Where did the time go? It feels like we just started summer band yesterday! Time moves so fast!

I hope each of you enjoyed a great fall season. We all chase that first division at the region contest, aim to make finals at area, and ultimately hope to end up in San Antonio. While the awards are nice and fun to display, they are not the most important aspect. What truly matters is: Did you and your kids get better each day? Did you improve professionally every day? Did you experience that breakthrough moment with your band? If you can answer yes to those questions, then you had an outstanding marching season. That affirmative answer is more valuable than any trophy!

I would like to congratulate all the bands that competed at the UIL State Marching Contest. You are truly the best of the best! Each group was a joy to watch and set a standard that we all strive to emulate. I want to personally congratulate our state champions:

- Open Class -
- 4A: Celina HS (Jon Weddle)
- 3A: Mineola HS (Jim Best)
- 2A: Sundown HS (Justin Mauldin)
- 1A: Irion County HS (Brian Tillman)

- Military Class -
- 4A: Lindale HS (Weston Fisher)
- 3A: White Oak HS (Jacob Ramos)
- 1A/2A: Carlisle HS (Chris Clifton)

As we conclude the marching season, we enter the most important time of the year—concert season. So much can be learned during this time. When I first started teaching, I loved marching band and all it had to offer. However, over the years (this marks my 32nd year of teaching), I have developed a passion for concert season and everything it encompasses. There are countless teaching opportunities. I have shared before, but it bears repeating: Dr. Charles Trayler and Harold Bufe have often said that the best way to build a band program is through the All Region process and Solo and Ensemble—and I couldn't agree more.



# DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

## PAST PRESIDENT COLUMN

MATT KNIGHT

This is the time of year when our region coordinators become incredibly busy. Thank you so much for the countless hours you dedicate to helping our kids. Directors, I challenge you to reach out to those coordinators and offer your assistance. Whether it's stuffing folders, setting up chairs, or moving stands, every little bit helps. When was the last time you sent an email after an audition or a thank-you card? We are quick to criticize, but we often forget to express our gratitude.

As I wrap this up, it's hard to believe this will be the last time I get to share an article with you. It's astonishing how quickly six years have passed. There are many people I want to thank: a huge thank you to those who served on "The SARK" committee, the assistant band and percussion organizers, band organizers, Area Coordinators, and everyone else appointed for ATSSB. I also want to thank the individuals I had the privilege to serve with on the Executive Board during my time: Jenny Bartley, Brian Sours, Marc Nichelson, Angie Liss, Brian Tillman, Mike Bartley, Jerry Whorton, and Rodney Bennett. Each of these educators has an amazing heart for children and genuinely wants what is best for ATSSB. It's a privilege to call them my friends. Additionally, I want to voice my gratitude to Gina Muella and Bonnie Anderson from Region 16 for their service and friendship. You two are truly exceptional!

Kenneth Griffin has been, and continues to be, the heart and soul of ATSSB. Thank you for your advice and guidance; he is a treasure for small school bands. The future of ATSSB looks bright.

You are fortunate to have outstanding leadership with President Rodney Bennett, President-Elect Angie Liss, and the Executive Board. They are truly one of a kind.

I have been blessed to work with Trisha Burrell and Anna Jo Knight for many years. Trisha, thank you for everything you have done behind the scenes and for all the extra hours you've put in. Anna Jo, what can I say? Any wife who can work alongside her husband for 26 years deserves a prize! Thank you for encouraging me to run for office and for helping me get elected. I appreciate your advice, your proofreading of documents, and especially your ability to help me talk through things and encourage me to do what's right for the kids. My hope for anyone reading this is that you are blessed with a spouse who is half as wonderful as mine. Anna Jo, I am truly fortunate to have you in my life, and I love you.

When I ran for office six years ago, my goal was to make a difference and do what is right for our kids. I'm not sure how much of a difference I made, but I know that every decision I made was centered around doing what was best for all ATSSB students. Thank you for the opportunity. It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve as President of ATSSB.

As always, if there is ever anything Anna Jo or I can do for you, please don't hesitate to reach out.

On behalf of my wife Anna Jo, my son Keelan, and his fiancé Avery, let us be the first to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



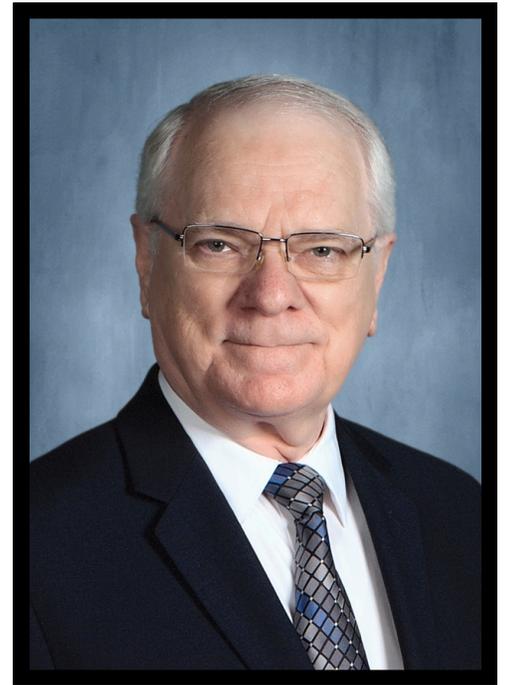
# DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

## EXECUTIVE SECRETARY COLUMN

KENNETH GRIFFIN

I hope the region audition process went well for all of you and that your students who advanced to Area are preparing for an even better audition for Area on January 11. Make sure you have paid the \$25 Area fee (most regions collect that and send one check).

The ATSSB All-State Symphonic Band clinician is Dr. J. Eric Wilson from Baylor University. ATSSB has commissioned Julie Giroux to write a grade 4 piece for the Symphonic Band. The ATSSB All-State Concert Band clinician will be Dustin Seifert from Eastern New Mexico University. We also look forward to Ronald Wilkins, a Shires Trombone Artist and New York musician working with the ATSSB All-State Jazz Ensemble. ATSSB has commissioned Mr. Wilkins to write a piece for the 2025 ATSSB All-State Jazz Ensemble.



There are no forms needed for Area. Students selected to State will receive an email from TMEA regarding housing, the Medical Release, and the Code of Conduct (requiring signatures) that they must bring to registration on Wednesday of the clinic, February 12, 2025. Students making ATSSB All-State (including the 20 ATSSB Jazz Ensemble students) need to make housing plans for the clinic. See the 2025 ATSSB All-State Housing Guide in this Newsletter, which needs to be followed immediately after Area January 11.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Jenny Bartley, Brian Tillman and Bonnie Anderson for their service to ATSSB the last two years as Class 1C, Class 1A, and Class 3A Representatives, respectively, to the ATSSB State Board of Directors. A State office is time-consuming but necessary to keep our Association strong and current for our small schools. These outgoing officers also contributed as members of the Executive Committee as it met to accommodate the needs of students and their directors in the interim between State Board of Director meetings.

Please not only thank our Licensees for their support but also use their services. These companies have paid a fee and are contracted to use the ATSSB logo and marks on their products. They pay a portion of their receipts to the ATSSB All-State Band Scholarship Fund. Please consider using them before any other companies offering the same or similar products. See the list elsewhere in this Newsletter. Also, be sure to ask anyone selling items at ATSSB activities (region concerts, etc.) if they are official ATSSB Licensees. This brings up a point regarding recorded examples of ATSSB audition music. The only officially approved recordings are those by Licensees. We realize some college and university faculty members make recordings. Still, you need to be careful they do not use their own editions or interpretations utilizing individual editorial changes that might confuse the student (and judges!) when auditioning. Ensure official ATSSB Licensees provide the recordings before purchasing them. Not only will you be maintaining consistent recording and performing standards, but you will also be supporting our Scholarship Fund since Licensees pay a royalty on all sales to the Fund.

A reminder about Piccolo and Eb Clarinet: If your flute player makes the All-State Band at the Area auditions on January 11 and would like to play piccolo, have them bring their piccolo to San Antonio. After regular chair auditions are completed for flute, we will hold separate auditions for piccolo in each band from among those students interested in it who were selected for their respective bands. If your clarinet player makes the 4A All-State Band at the Area auditions on January 11 and would like to play Eb clarinet, have them bring their Eb clarinet to San Antonio. After regular chair auditions are completed for clarinet, we will hold separate auditions for Eb clarinet in the Symphonic Band from among those students interested in it that were selected for clarinet (the Concert Band will not use Eb clarinet this year). A notice concerning this policy will be placed in the flute and clarinet links they will receive at Area this year if they are selected for the All-State Band. Piccolo and soprano clarinet players will audition on the actual piccolo or soprano clarinet parts, and chair placement in their respective bands will have nothing to do with who is selected to play piccolo or Eb clarinet.

We plan to hold our ATSSB Business Session on Friday, February 14, 2025, in CC214 of the convention center at 2:30. Elections for Class 1C, Class 1A, and Class 3A Representatives to the State Board of Directors along with President-Elect will be held at that time if no one is elected in the electronic ballot in early January (so you need to join to vote if you have not already done so!). A short biographical sketch and picture of each candidate for state office who has submitted documentation can be found in this Newsletter. If any are missing, check back because biographies and/or pictures will be added when the candidates have submitted the information to the Newsletter Editor. An electronic ballot will be held in January to reduce the nominees to the top two vote recipients in each office for the ballot at the General Session (unless one person receives 51% of the votes cast in the electronic ballot).

When you get a chance, be sure to thank our Region and Area Coordinators for their efforts in securing audition panels, planning and executing region clinics and concerts, meetings, etc., and volunteer to serve in some capacity at each level – good leaders are always needed! Be sure to visit with your Region Coordinators about issues you wish addressed at the upcoming State Board meeting in February. Make your opinions about issues confronting ATSSB known to your representatives to the State Board so they can be discussed with a consensus from the membership. Thanks to all of you for your continued diligence and hard work on behalf of the students in our small school programs. Keep up the great work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kenneth L. Griffin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'K'.



# DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

## STATE JAZZ COORDINATOR COLUMN

BRIAN DONNELL

Congratulations to all of the students who earned a chair in the ATSSB All-State Jazz Band. And to their directors who supported them throughout the process. We had 351 students from all across the state participate at the Area level.

I want to especially thank the region and area coordinators, the TMEA office, and Mr. Griffin for making the process so smooth.

This year's band:

Alto sax 1: Hunter Fulmer, Teague HS  
Alto sax 2: Parker Phillips, Kilgore HS  
Tenor sax 1: Sean Starwalt, Benbrook HS  
Tenor sax 2: Henry Raymer, Fredericksburg HS  
Bari sax: Cody Brannon, Canyon Lake HS  
Trumpet 1: Tyler Hill, Robinson HS  
Trumpet 2: Devin Merchant, Madisonville HS  
Trumpet 3: Andy Le, Kerr HS  
Trumpet 4: Caleb Atkins, Davenport HS  
Trumpet 5: Anthony Arias, Fredericksburg HS  
Tenor trombone 1: Larkin Tyler, Grandview HS  
Tenor trombone 2: Rogelio Aguilar, Kerr HS  
Tenor trombone 3: Elias Rios, Brazosport HS  
Bass trombone 1: Nathan DuVall, Krum HS  
Bass trombone 2: Elijah Cortez, Raymondville HS  
Drums 1: Gabriel Gonzales, Jim Ned HS  
Drums 2: Leon Guzman, Raymondville HS  
Piano: Preston Andrews, Glen Rose HS  
Bass: Robert Ornelas, Odessa Compass Charter  
Guitar: Ryan Gomez, King HS



A more thorough analysis will be published in the next newsletter. In the meantime, put 1:00PM in the Hemisphere Ballroom 1 in the Convention Center on Feb 15 on your schedule. That's the time and location of the All-State Jazz Band concert, directed this year by Mr. Ronald Wilkins, Shires Trombone Artist and New York Musician. The concert will also feature the premiere of this year's commission.

Until then, I wish all of you a wonderful holiday season!

Brian Donnell  
Greenhill School  
bdonnell@atssb.org  
[www.atssb.org/jazz](http://www.atssb.org/jazz)



# DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

## ATSSB STATE CHAIR AUDITION COORDINATOR KRISTI FLUSCHE

I would like to express my gratitude to the directors who have accepted the panel chair positions for the upcoming state auditions. As we approach the region and area auditions, please consider making yourself available to judge the state auditions in February. A Google form will be sent to directors who are interested in participating as judges for the state auditions at TMEA.

Please keep in mind that you must be available on Wednesday, February 12, at 4:00 PM for the monitor and judges' meetings. While not everyone who signs up will be accepted, I sincerely appreciate your willingness to serve ATSSB and support the talented students who make it to the All-State Band.

There will also be a section on the Google form for those willing to assist with setting up and tearing down the audition rooms. If you choose to help with setup, you will need to be available on Wednesday at 12:30 PM.

Last year, the auditions ran smoothly and efficiently, thanks to all of our monitors and judges. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via email at [k.flusche@groesbeckisd.net](mailto:k.flusche@groesbeckisd.net) or by phone at 254-744-8763. I wish you all the best for a successful and productive year ahead.

Best regards,

Kristi Flusche  
ATSSB State Chair Auditions Coordinator



# DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

## OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE SERIES

COLLIN ANDERSON

As we approach the end of the fall semester and prepare for Christmas concerts, parades, and, for some, playoff games, I encourage everyone to take time to slow down and find rest during the holiday season. This time of rejuvenation is essential as we get ready for the spring semester.

With February just around the corner, I want to remind all of our 2024 Outstanding Performance Series winners (1st place and runner-up in both the marching and concert categories) that awards will be presented during the ATSSB general session at the TMEA annual convention. I hope all award recipients can attend and receive their winner's plaque during the ceremony. Please remember that anyone who changed schools over the summer will still receive the award earned in their previous position.



I would like to extend my gratitude to all the judges for this year's competition at every level. Thank you for dedicating your time during the busy end-of-school period, your time off in the summer, and for taking time away from the TBA convention. Having excellent judges at the region, area, and state levels is crucial for ensuring that the most outstanding performances progress and excel at the state level. I also want to thank all the bands and directors who have made the Outstanding Performance Series a tremendous success by stepping up to create impressive musical performances. A special thanks goes to Chris Moix for assisting me over the summer in hiring judges, which allowed me to enjoy more personal and family time during vacations and church mission trips.

The OPS contest continues to grow each year! The 2024 season saw 329 different ensembles enter a total of 914 certified entries for the contest. The addition of non-varsity categories for middle and high school was received positively, with 28 middle school ensembles and 36 high school ensembles participating with a total of 170 pieces in the competition. The 1A OPS competition category is thriving, but it would be great to see even more growth in this area.

I wish all of you the best as you prepare for your Christmas performances, solo/ensemble events, and the upcoming spring UIL season! Stay tuned for an email in the near future with reminders about the OPS process and possible changes for the 2025 competition.



# DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

## WEBMASTER COLUMN

MARC NICHELSON



Celebrating the achievements of our Small School Bands and the broader band community brings immense joy. It is truly inspiring to witness numerous schools performing at such high levels. Congratulations to the outstanding marching bands that participated in this year's competitive season! Your commitment to upholding excellence in our esteemed Texas Band community is commendable.

As we conclude the marching season, our bands now focus on the end of the semester. This transition marks a change in musical repertoire and reflects the culmination of unwavering dedication, extensive practice, and collaborative effort. The forthcoming concerts will showcase each musician's collective commitment and diligence, highlighting the artistic growth and skills developed throughout the semester. Bands are eagerly preparing to captivate audiences with a presentation that reflects their dedication and musical prowess.

As your Webmaster and 4A Representative, I want to express my sincere gratitude to everyone within the ATSSB Organization for allowing me to serve in these meaningful roles. Being a former student in the early stages of the ATSSB, it has been immensely fulfilling to contribute to an organization that has held significant value throughout my band career.

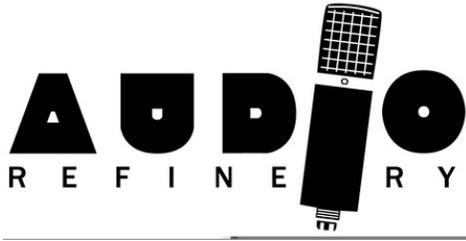
Lastly, as professionals, being involved in the ATSSB at the Region and State level is crucial. This organization supports our programs immensely, and our presence and participation are vital. Let's commit to being there and contributing. Good luck this year, and I look forward to seeing you in February!

Website Projects Currently in the works:

1. Small school oriented Podcast covering topics we are seeing across the spectrum in small school bands. Please email me if you have anyone who'd like to act as a sponsor or if you have someone who you think would be a great person to interview.
2. If you know of any business that would be interested in beginning an advertising relationship with us, please have them contact me at [mnichelson@atssb.org](mailto:mnichelson@atssb.org).
3. Job Board Upgrade and Membership services area of the website is currently in the works!
5. I am also looking at digital media/site based locations (video clinics, podcasts, clinics at local schools, and even zoom hangouts) to continue adding opportunities for directors not only use our contests but have more wonderful resources given through our website. If you know of anything we can add PLEASE LET ME KNOW!

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# PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

## Proposed ATSSB Constitutional Amendment #1 for 2025-26

Change ARTICLE III, Membership from:

ATSSB membership shall be defined according to the following categories: ACTIVE (RM, CM, FCM, Retiree) - A current director or assistant director of a Class 1A, 2A, 3A, or 4A high school band in Texas or a current director or assistant director of a junior high or middle school band which feeds a Class 1A, 2A, 3A, or 4A high school band in Texas as defined by the University Interscholastic League by counting enrollment in grades 9-12 (or proportionate enrollment if the high school does not encompass grades 9-12; i.e.: if a high school has only one grade in it, its enrollment would be multiplied by 4; if two grades, its enrollment would be multiplied by two; and if only three grades, its enrollment would be multiplied by 1.333), or a current director or assistant director of a private middle school through the eighth grade, or anyone who has retired from any of these positions as an Active Member. These schools must be certified by the Texas Education Agency or an accrediting agency approved by the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC). Payment of the prescribed dues will allow the individual the following privileges: Participation in ATSSB activities, the right to vote, the right to hold office, and admittance to scheduled or called General Sessions upon compliance with registration requirements.

To:

ATSSB membership shall be defined according to the following categories: ACTIVE (RM, CM, FCM, Retiree) - A current director or assistant director of a Class 1A, 2A, 3A, or 4A high school band in Texas or a current director or assistant director of a junior high or middle school band which feeds a Class 1A, 2A, 3A, or 4A high school band in Texas as defined by the University Interscholastic League by counting enrollment in grades 9-12 (or proportionate enrollment if the high school does not encompass grades 9-12; i.e.: if a high school has only one grade in it, its enrollment would be multiplied by 4; if two grades, its enrollment would be multiplied by two; and if only three grades, its enrollment would be multiplied by 1.333), or a current director or assistant director of a private middle school through the eighth grade, or anyone who has retired from any of these positions as an Active Member. These schools must be certified by the Texas Education Agency or an accrediting agency approved by the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC). **A middle school that matriculates any students to a 5A or 6A school will not be eligible to participate in ATSSB activities.** Payment of the prescribed dues will allow the individual the following privileges: Participation in ATSSB activities, the right to vote, the right to hold office **under the provisions of Article I, Section 3, ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP in the BY-LAWS** and admittance to scheduled or called General Sessions upon compliance with registration requirements.



# PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

## Proposed ATSSB Constitutional Amendment #2 for 2025-26

Change ARTICLE V, State Government, SECTION 2, THE PRESIDENT-ELECT from:

The President-Elect shall assume office in the manner prescribed in the By-Laws. The President-Elect shall be a current Active Member of ATSSB. The President-Elect shall be chairman of the State Audition Review Committee.

To:

The President-Elect shall assume office in the manner prescribed in the By-Laws. **To be elected to this office, the** ~~The~~ President-Elect shall be ~~a current Active Member of ATSSB~~ **concurrently employed as a band director in an ATSSB-eligible school.** The President-Elect shall be chairman of the State Audition Review Committee.



# PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

## Proposed ATSSB Constitutional Amendment #3 for 2025-26

Change ARTICLE I, SECTION 3, ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP in the BY-LAWS from:

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP shall be open to any individual currently serving as a band director or assistant director in a Class 1A, 2A, 3A, or 4A high school in Texas or is a band director or assistant director in a junior high or middle school which feeds a Class 1A, 2A, 3A, or 4A high school as defined by the University Interscholastic League by counting enrollment in grades 9-12 (or proportionate enrollment if the high school does not encompass grades 9-12; i.e.: if a high school has only one grade in it, its enrollment would be multiplied by 4; if two grades, its enrollment would be multiplied by two; and if only three grades, its enrollment would be multiplied by 1.333), or a current director or assistant director of a private middle school through the eighth grade. These schools must be certified by the Texas Education Agency or an accrediting agency approved by the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC). Payment of the prescribed dues will allow the individual to participate in ATSSB activities, the right to vote and hold office, admittance to meetings upon compliance with registration requirements, and to enter students in grades 9-12 in the audition process leading to membership in the ATSSB All-State Band. A Regular Member who retires may continue Active Membership so long as dues are kept current. Payment of the prescribed dues will allow the individual to participate in ATSSB activities, the right to vote, the right to hold office, and admittance to scheduled or called General Sessions upon compliance with registration requirements.

To:

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP shall be open to any individual currently serving as a band director or assistant director in a Class 1A, 2A, 3A, or 4A high school in Texas or is a band director or assistant director in a junior high or middle school which feeds a Class 1A, 2A, 3A, or 4A high school as defined by the University Interscholastic League by counting enrollment in grades 9-12 (or proportionate enrollment if the high school does not encompass grades 9-12; i.e.: if a high school has only one grade in it, its enrollment would be multiplied by 4; if two grades, its enrollment would be multiplied by two; and if only three grades, its enrollment would be multiplied by 1.333), or a current director or assistant director of a private middle school through the eighth grade. These schools must be certified by the Texas Education Agency or an accrediting agency approved by the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC). Payment of the prescribed dues will allow the individual to participate in ATSSB activities, the right to vote and hold office, admittance to meetings upon compliance with registration requirements, and to enter students in grades 9-12 in the audition process leading to membership in the ATSSB All-State Band. A Regular Member who retires may continue Active Membership **as** long as dues are kept current. Payment of the prescribed **Retiree** dues will allow the individual to participate in ATSSB activities, the right to vote, ~~the right to hold office~~, admittance to scheduled or called General Sessions upon compliance with registration requirements, **and hold an appointed office. If the retiree is a current State officer, they may remain in office until the end of the prescribed term.**



# PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

## Proposed ATSSB Constitutional Amendment #4 for 2025-26

Change ARTICLE V, State Government, SECTION 4, AT-LARGE REPRESENTATIVES from:

One representative from each Class (1C, 2C/3C, 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A) shall assume office in the manner prescribed in the By-Laws. Each of the six representatives shall be voting members of the State Board of Directors.

To:

One representative from each Class (1C, 2C/3C, 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A) shall assume office in the manner prescribed in the By-Laws. Each of the six representatives shall be voting members of the State Board of Directors. **Each Representative must be concurrently employed in the school ~~Class~~ school classification they represent when they are elected. Should a Representative move to a different ~~Class~~ school classification, the President shall name a replacement to serve out the term of office until a new one can be elected. Should a Representative retire from the ~~Class~~ school classification they represent, they may, at their option, complete the term of office. Should they resign the position on retirement, the President shall name a replacement to serve out the term of office until a new one can be elected.**

Change Article II, SECTION 4(a) from:

DUTIES OF THE AT-LARGE REPRESENTATIVES. Each of the six At-Large Representatives (one from Class 1C, one from Class 2C or 3C, one from Class 1A, one from Class 2A, one from Class 3A, and one from Class 4A) shall serve as voting members of the State Board of Directors so as to maintain a balance of opinion among the different classes of schools.

To:

DUTIES OF THE AT-LARGE REPRESENTATIVES. Each of the six At-Large Representatives (one from Class 1C, one from Class 2C or 3C, one from Class 1A, one from Class 2A, one from Class 3A, and one from Class 4A) **must be concurrently employed in the ~~Class~~ school classification they represent when they are elected. ~~and~~ They** shall serve as voting members of the State Board of Directors so as to maintain a balance of opinion among the different ~~classes~~ **classifications** of schools. **Should a Representative move to a different ~~Class~~ school classification, the President shall name a replacement to serve out the term of office until a new one can be elected. Should a Representative retire from the ~~Class~~ school classification they represent, they may, at their option, complete the term of office. Should they resign the position on retirement, the President shall name a replacement to serve out the term of the office until a new one can be elected.**



# DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

## STATE OFFICER NOMINEE BIOS

### ELECTION

Class 1C Representative, Class 1A Representative, Class 3A Representative and President-Elect will be elected by secret ballot during the ATSSB General Session at TMEA . An electronic ballot will be cast in January to reduce the field to two nominees per office for the secret ballot at the General Session (unless one candidate gets 51% of the total votes cast in that office). Nominees who submitted a biography and/or picture by the time of publication are listed below Only current Retired and Active Members actively involved in 1C middle schools (including the high school directors involved) may vote on 1C Representative. Only current Retired and Active Members actively involved in Class 1A high schools may vote on 1A Representative. Only current Retired and Active Members actively involved in Class 3A high schools may vote on 3A Representative. All Retired and Active Members are eligible to vote for President -Elect



# DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

## CLASS 1C REPRESENTATIVE NOMINEES



**Jenny Bartley** is a music educator with 30 years of music teaching experience, with 25 years in Texas. In 2013, she began directing the middle school band at Grand Saline ISD, as well as teaching beginners and assisting the high school band. She has also spent many years as a teacher of clarinet master classes and as a frequent woodwind judge. The Grand Saline Middle School Band is a consistent sweepstakes band and has frequently been represented at the state level of the ATSSB Outstanding Performance Series. Although she has taught in larger schools, she spent most of her time teaching at small schools, her favorite level. In Region 3, Mrs. Bartley has served as the leader of the woodwind committee, served as the middle school coordinator, and coordinated middle school all region bands.

Mrs. Bartley is a 1989 graduate of Amarillo High School and a 1993 graduate of the University of Arkansas. She resides in Canton with her husband, Mike. Their oldest son, Daniel, is a music major at the University of Arkansas who will graduate in May with degrees in music education and composition. He was a three year member of the ATSSB All State Band on euphonium and jazz trombone. Their youngest son, Matthew, is a sophomore music education and percussion major at Texas Christian University who was also a member of the ATSSB All State Band on percussion. Both sons have been participants in DCI for several years with most time spent in the Blue Stars.

Mrs. Bartley is the current Class 1C Representative on the executive committee of ATSSB. She is also a member of ATSSB, TMEA, TMAA and TBA. "I strongly believe in the mission of ATSSB. After many years of teaching, I would like to continue to be involved in the promotion and strengthening of music education in small schools."

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**Beth Butler** is in her 37th year as band director at Thrall ISD in Region 26, where she teaches music/band to Pre-K through high school, as well as music theory and leadership. She received her Bachelor of Music in Education degree from Southwestern University in 1988, where she studied horn and piano under the leadership of Dr. George Nelson and Ms. Drusilla Huffmaster, respectively. She also served as chapter president for Delta Nu chapter of Delta Omicron, an international music fraternity. Mrs. Butler has been a member of ATSSB since its first year, has served numerous times as a middle school and high school region band coordinator for Region 18/26, and is currently organizing for the Region 18/26 high school wind ensemble. She has also had the honor of serving as pianist for the ATSSB All-State Bands when needed for over a decade. She accompanies all of her student soloists at both middle school and high school levels. Mrs. Butler is a member of TMEA and TBA. Her bands have earned consistent first division and sweepstakes ratings over the years, and the Tiger Band proudly represented Region 26 at the 2A UIL State Marching Band Contest in 2018 and 2020. The Tiger Band has also participated in OPS, and has had recordings heard at both Area and State levels. Several of her students have earned seats in the ATSSB All-State Concert Band.

In addition to her band activities, Ms. Butler enjoys serving on the worship team and in the choir at St. Philip's UMC in Round Rock, where she was previously on part-time staff as praise band minister, musician, and worship leader for 22 years.

"I am passionate about what music can do in the lives of our students, and ATSSB is a great way for students to grow their skills and further their appreciation of the musical arts. We have a responsibility to ensure that this organization continues to provide excellent opportunities for all small school students to experience musical growth and superb performances during their time as students."





# DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

## CLASS 1C REPRESENTATIVE NOMINEES



**Marilyn Bennett** serves as the Associate Band Director and woodwind specialist for Olney ISD, with thirty-seven years of public school teaching experience across several Texas school systems. During her tenure in Munday, the Purple Cloud Band achieved numerous state finals and was honored as the TMEA Class A Honor Band in 1994 and 2000.

In Olney ISD for 17 years, she has taught students in grades 5-12, leading the "Pride of Olney High School" to attain superior ratings and Sweepstakes awards. Mrs. Bennett is actively involved in numerous music education organizations and has presented at several conferences.

She has held various positions within TMEA and founded the Red River Sixth Grade Honor Band. A graduate of Midwestern State University with both Bachelor and Master's degrees in Music Education, she has received multiple honors, including the National Band Association Citation of Excellence.

Beyond her professional engagements, Mrs. Bennett actively participates in church and community activities. She has been married to Rodney, also a band director, for 44 years and has one son, Ronnie, and a daughter, Emma Grace. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, gardening, cooking, sewing, and crafting.

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**Morgan Contreras** is currently in his 5th year in education and has spent all 5 years at Anahuac ISD. In his five years at Anahuac ISD, Morgan has served as the Assistant Band Director and as the Middle School Band Director for the past 4 years. His bands consistently receive Sweepstakes in Concert and Sight-Reading, have placed the past three years at the state level of the ATSSB Outstanding Performance Series, including 1st in 2022 and 2024, and most recently was named the 2024 TMEA 1C Honor Band.

Morgan received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Music Education from Lamar University. At Lamar, Morgan was part of the Lamar University Wind Ensemble, Honors Saxophone Quartet, and conducted the University Concert Band. During the summer, Morgan still serves his Alma Mater as the Dorm Supervisor and as a Conductor for the Lamar University Band Camps. Lastly, Morgan has served as a clinician for other small schools in Region 10.

"It would be an honor to serve as the Class 1C State Representative. Growing up in a small school, and now teaching in a small school, has given me a clear understanding of their unique challenges and strengths. If elected, I will use my passion for music education to represent Class 1C at the state level and make a positive impact in our community."





# DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

## CLASS 1C REPRESENTATIVE NOMINEES



**Kristi Flusche** is a band director at Groesbeck Middle School in Region 8 and is in her 20th year of teaching, 17 of which have been in Groesbeck. In her current position she is the head middle school director conducting the 8th grade band, teaches beginners, elementary general music, and conducts the Concert Band at the high school. Her bands have made first divisions in concert and sight reading many times. She is also the GHS Band color guard and winter guard instructor.

She is a graduate of Muleshoe High School and received her Bachelor of Music from West Texas A&M University. She has three children: Logan, Brittney, and Lindsey, and has one granddaughter.

She is a member of TMEA, ATSSB, and TBA. Currently she serves as one of two Region 8 Middle School Coordinators and as the ATSSB All-State Chair Auditions Coordinator.

"I grew up in a small school band program and know the benefits that it brings to our schools and communities. It is an honor to be nominated to serve the directors of ATSSB and the 1C programs throughout the state."

**Stephanie Haffner** is currently in her 25th year of teaching and has spent the past 17 years at West Rusk Junior High as the Junior High Band Director. Previously, she served as an elementary music teacher and assistant band director at Arp ISD for nine years. Under her direction, the West Rusk Junior High Band has consistently earned 1st division ratings in concert and sight-reading. The band has advanced to the state level of the ATSSB Outstanding Performance Series nine times, earning notable accolades such as 2nd place in the concert division in 2013, 1st place in the march division in 2021 and 2024, and 2nd place in the concert division in 2021. Most recently, in 2023, the junior high band was a 3rd place finalist in the state Honor Band Competition.

Stephanie earned her Associate of Art in Music from Tyler Junior College and her Bachelor of Music from Stephen F. Austin State University. She is an active member of several professional organizations, including ATSSB, TMEA, TMAA, and NAMMB.

Stephanie and her husband, Grady Haffner, who is the high school band director at West Rusk, have been married for 25 years and have been teaching together for 17 of those years. They have three children—Caleb, Noah, and Hannah—who have all participated in their band program. Caleb and Noah are currently majoring in music with aspirations of becoming music educators.

"I grew up attending a small school, and being part of the band was such an important part of my life. It is a privilege to teach in a small school band program and to introduce my students to the joy of being a member of the band family," Stephanie says.





# DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

## CLASS 1C REPRESENTATIVE NOMINEES



**Mae Trevino-Mendez** is honored to be nominated for the position of ATSSB 1C Representative. A native of Alice, Texas, Mae discovered a passion for band and music at an early age. She holds both a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Music Education from Texas A&M Kingsville. With 18 years of experience in education, Mae has spent the past six years at Santa Gertrudis ISD, where she directs the Santa Gertrudis Middle School Honors Band and co-directs various other music ensembles. Under her leadership, these ensembles have achieved numerous UIL Superior ratings. The Santa Gertrudis Middle School Honors Band has been a State Finalist in the ATSSB OPS competition multiple times, with their recording of Brave Spirit being named the 2023 1C OPS concert selection winner. That same year, the band earned 5th place in the TMEA Honor Band competition and was recognized as a National Concert Winner in the ARTS Performance of Achievement Honor Recording competition.

Mae is an active member of several professional organizations, including the Texas Music Educators Association, Texas Bandmasters Association, Texas Music Adjudicators Association, Texas Jazz Educators Association, and Women Band Directors International.

Recognizing the profound benefits of music for every student and the unique challenges of small school band programs, Mae and her husband, Raymond, have dedicated their lives to enriching children's lives through music education. If elected, Mae will continue this dedication through a focus on community, communication, and advocacy.

## CLASS 1A REPRESENTATIVE NOMINEE

**Jesus Perez** serves as the band director at Cross Plains ISD in Region 7. He is in his 21st year of teaching and holds a B.M.Ed. from Southwestern Assemblies of God University and a M.M.Ed. from Tarleton State University. His career has been exclusively in service to small schools, having taught in Axtell ISD, Italy ISD, Midlothian Heritage HS, and Cross Plains ISD.

During his ten year tenure at Italy ISD, his bands consistently earned sweepstakes awards, and achieved state recognition for their 3rd place in the 2014 State Honor Band contest, and as a State OPS runner up in 2015. During his three year span as assistant director and percussion instructor at Midlothian Heritage, he helped establish a brand new band program and had multiple students earn the coveted Outstanding Performer Award at the Texas State Solo and Ensemble Contest. Since beginning his tenure at Cross Plains in 2019, his bands have been consecutive sweepstakes award winners, earned a first ever trip to the State Marching Contest Finals in 2021, earned the bronze medal at the SMC in 2023, and the silver medal in 2024. The Cross Plains band has also earned state recognition in OPS placing 2nd in 2022, runner-up in 2023, and 1st place in 2024. The Cross Plains 7th grade band also earned the school's first ever middle school sweepstakes at UIL in the spring of 2022. He is a member of TMEA, ATSSB, TBA, TMAA, and is active as an adjudicator and clinician around the state.

Mr. Perez was honored with the Mirabeau B. Lamar Excellence in Education award for his contributions to Italy ISD in 2010 and was selected as the Teacher of the Year at Cross Plains in the spring of 2020.

Mr. Perez resides in Eastland, TX with his wife Jodi, daughter Gabriella, and son Caleb. He is an active member of his church's worship ministry. Mr. Perez spends his spare time fishing, skeet shooting, and managing his fantasy football teams.

"It would be a tremendous honor and a privilege to serve my fellow 1A directors as the 1A representative. Whether I am elected or not I will continue to serve and advocate for the needs of our 1A bands."





# DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

## CLASS 3A REPRESENTATIVE NOMINEES



**Dan Balkema**, Director of Bands at Pilot Point High School, is in his 21st year of teaching. He has served as the Region 2/31 ATSSB Region Coordinator for three years. Dan holds a B.M.E. from the University of North Texas and an M.M.E. from the University of Hawaii, where his research focused on parental involvement in small school band programs.

Dan began his career at Midland ISD's Legacy High School, where the band advanced to the State Marching Contest and earned recognition as a "Texas Exemplary Band Program." Transitioning to Pilot Point High School, he developed a deep passion for small school bands. Over 12 years, his bands consistently earned sweepstakes ratings and advanced to the UIL State Marching Contest in 2021 for the first time in 40 years. Dan was named Pilot Point High School's Teacher of the Year in 2023 and received the Pilot Point Legacy Award in 2022.

Dan is a proud member of ATSSB, TMEA, TBA, TMAA, and Phi Mu Alpha. He is married to Elizabeth, his wife of 16 years, and they have two children, Lily and Andrew.

"My passion for small school bands began in my high school band, which felt like a home away from home. Teaching in a small school has reignited that joy as I share my love of music with a new generation. It is an honor to be nominated, and I would be privileged to serve as your 3A state representative for ATSSB."

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**Jim Best** is currently in his 17th year in education and is the Director of Bands at Mineola ISD, where he has served since 2022. He previously held positions at Redwater ISD, Searcy School District (AR), Aubrey ISD, and Winnsboro ISD. Throughout his career, Jim has earned numerous accolades, including UIL Sweepstakes awards every year and leading ensembles to state and national recognition. Notable achievements include a UIL State Marching Gold Medal in 2017 as Assistant Director, a Silver Medal in 2023 as Head Director, and the 2024 TMEA 3A Honor Band designation.

Jim holds an undergraduate degree from Henderson State University and is an active member of ATSSB, the Texas Bandmasters Association, the Percussion Arts Society, and the Texas Music Adjudicators Association. Additionally, he served as Percussion Coordinator for the ATSSB All-State Concert Band in 2020 and Symphonic Band in 2021.

Jim is married to Alysén Best, and they have three children: Bentley, Archer, and Lilliana. "Students and directors in small school programs face unique challenges, and I am passionate about advocating for their success. It would be an honor to serve as your ATSSB 3A Representative and work to advance small school music programs through education, advocacy, and unwavering support for what is best for kids."





# DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

## CLASS 3A REPRESENTATIVE NOMINEES

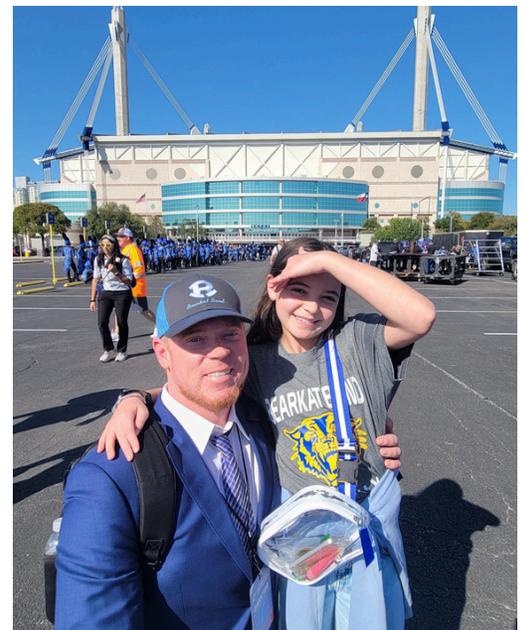


**Jennifer Condon** is in her 16th year of teaching and currently serves as Director of Bands for the Stanton ISD in Stanton, Texas. The Stanton HS Band is a consistent recipient of the UIL Sweepstakes Award and in 2023, the Stanton High School Band advanced to the TMEA Honor Band State Semi-Finals and the ATSSB Outstanding Performance Series (OPS) State Finals. In 2022 The Stanton HS Band was the invited group for the inaugural "Richard Crain Small School Band Clinic" at the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago. At the 2024 Texas Bandmasters Association annual convention, Ms. Condon, along with several of her mentors and colleagues, and using the Stanton HS band as a demonstration group, prepared a clinic geared towards teaching in small school band programs in an effort to address the unique challenges their directors and students face (specifically rural programs). She has served on the UIL State Solo and Ensemble Revision Committee, been an ATSSB Region Band Clinician and has served as an ATSSB Region Band Percussion Organizer. She is grateful to her many mentors for sharing their knowledge and love of teaching with her, including Stazie Church, Gabe Musella, Stan Mauldin, John Carrol, Alan Hanna, Kenny Capshaw, Eric Allen, Albert Lo, Rocky Harris, Mary and Al Mendez and Sara Hill. Her professional affiliations include TMEA, TBA, ATSSB, Pi Kappa Lambda, and Women Band Directors International. Ms. Condon holds a Bachelor in Music Education from Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, TX and a Masters Degree in Music Education from Texas Tech University. When she is not in a band hall, Jennifer loves to travel, garden, and visit her family in San Antonio.

**Benjamin J. Keltner** is currently in his 22nd year in education and has spent the last four years as Head Band Director at Raymondville ISD. Throughout his career, Benjamin has worked exclusively in the Rio Grande Valley, including positions at Port Isabel and Rio Hondo ISDs. His bands have advanced to the UIL State Marching Championships five times, most recently as finalists in 2024, and have earned 13 consecutive UIL Sweepstakes awards. Additionally, his ensembles are four-time State Finalists in the ATSSB Outstanding Performance Series, earning State Runner-Up in 2024, and achieved the TMEA Honor Band State Semi-Finals the same year.

Benjamin earned his Bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Austin and a Master's degree from the University of Texas at Brownsville. A native of Harlingen, TX, and a proud veteran of the U.S. Army, he served in Iraq from 2005 to 2006. Beyond teaching, he is the Region 15/28 ATSSB Coordinator, an eight-year member of the ATSSB State Board, and has spearheaded initiatives like the All-State Percussion Ensemble and the Non-Varsity OPS track.

Benjamin is deeply committed to fostering a family atmosphere within his band programs, promoting student leadership, and encouraging ownership among his students. He and his wife, Jackie, are proud parents of four children and are active members of Christian Fellowship Church, where Benjamin performs in the church band.



"I humbly ask for your support and vote as Class 3A State Representative. ATSSB has been an integral part of my life and career, and I am eager to continue advancing innovative ideas that support our students, directors, and communities."



# DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

## CLASS 3A REPRESENTATIVE NOMINEES



**Dr. Cody Knott**, a native of Cedar Hill, TX, is the Director of Bands for Eastland ISD, where the Eastland High School Band advanced to the 2023 State OPS and was a TMEA Honor Band State Semi-Finalist. His students excel in All-Region, All-Area, Solo and Ensemble, and community service projects.

Before joining Eastland ISD in 2018, Dr. Knott served as Director of Fine Arts and Bands at Caldwell ISD, where he led the Caldwell High School Band to 6th place in the 2021 ATSSB State OPS. He was recognized as a "Bright Star Teacher" in 2019 and 2022 and named Caldwell ISD Teacher of the Year in 2021. Earlier, he was Assistant Band Director at Decatur ISD, earning high marks for marching and concert performances.

Dr. Knott earned his Doctorate in Music Education from Liberty University, with a thesis on marching band camps' benefits for pre-service music educators. He holds a Master's in Trombone Performance from the University of South Dakota and a Bachelor's in Music Education from Tarleton State University. An advocate for small school bands, he serves on the ATPE Legislative Committee and is a member of TMEA, ATSSB, TBA, and other professional organizations.

Dr. Knott lives in Eastland with his wife, Mandy, and daughter, Cadence.

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**Steven Rash** is a dedicated educator with a rich history of supporting small school music programs. Currently in his 20th year in music education, Steven has spent the past decade at Odem High School and previously served at Odem Junior High and Koogler Middle School in Aztec, New Mexico. Throughout his career, his bands have achieved consistent UIL Sweepstakes Awards, become UIL Area Marching Band Finalists, and participated in the UIL State Marching Band contest three times. Notably, his ensembles have performed at prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall in 2016 and Severance Hall in 2024. Steven has also been a finalist and runner-up in multiple OPS State competitions.

A graduate of Case Western Reserve University with a Bachelor of Science in Music Education, Steven is a member of ATSSB, TMEA, TBA, Phi Beta Mu, and TCTA. He has served ATSSB in various roles, including Area South Coordinator, State SARC Committee Member, and past Region 14 Secretary, among others. His professional contributions include presenting at the 2025 TMEA State Convention with a clinic titled "Title I: Small School Nuts and Bolts."

Steven is committed to student-centered decisions and enhancing opportunities for small school band programs. "Serving ATSSB and our students at the Region and Area Levels over my career in Texas has been an enormous privilege. My time serving has led me to believe that if we support our small school students and schools, we will see all our programs continue to grow for everyone's benefit. I pledge to do everything possible to serve that role for ATSSB. It would be my honor to serve you if you should choose to elect me as the 3A State Representative."





# DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

## CLASS 3A REPRESENTATIVE NOMINEES



**John Zalman** is currently in his 32nd year in education and has served at Canadian High School since 2022. Throughout his career, John has held various positions across Texas, including roles at Dimmitt High School, Amarillo Tascosa High School, Monahans Junior High and High School, Slaton High School, Georgetown High School, Lockney High School, and Amarillo Palo Duro High School. His dedication to music education has spanned both high school and junior high levels, showcasing his versatility and commitment to student development.

John earned his Bachelor of Music Education from Texas Tech University in 1991. He is an active member of TMEA, ATSSB, TBA, and TMAA, continuously contributing to the professional community.

"I look forward to the opportunity to serve and represent my colleagues as Class 3A representative," John states. With over three decades of experience and a deep passion for supporting music educators and students, John seeks to bring his knowledge and leadership to the ATSSB as the Class 3A Representative.

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A REMINDER: YOU CAN ONLY VOTE  
FOR REPRESENTATIVE IN  
CLASSIFICATIONS YOUR SCHOOL IS  
ASSOCIATED WITH. ALL  
CLASSIFICATION'S MEMBERS CAN  
VOTE FOR PRESIDENT-ELECT



# DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

## PRESEIDENT-ELECT NOMINEES



**Brandon Garmon** is currently in his 22nd year in music education and has dedicated his career to teaching in ATSSB schools. Brandon began his journey at Gilmer Junior High School, where he served as Band Director from 2001 to 2013, then became High School Band Director at Union Grove ISD from 2013 to 2021. He has been the Band Director at Gilmer High School since 2021. His bands have consistently earned First Division and UIL Sweepstakes Awards, with notable achievements including OPS wins at Gilmer Junior High and Union Grove High School, as well as top placements in UIL State Marching Contests across various classifications.

A graduate of Gilmer High School and Texas Tech University, Brandon is an active member of ATSSB, TMEA, TBA, TMAA, NAMMB, and Phi Beta Mu. He has served in numerous leadership roles, including ATSSB Region 4 South Zone MS Coordinator, Region 4 Treasurer, and multiple state-level representative positions. Currently, he represents Region 4 in the Texas Bandmasters Association and serves on the UIL State Sight-Reading Committee.

"I am truly grateful for the nomination to the office of President-Elect of ATSSB. As a student at Gilmer High School, I was a member of the ATSSB All-State band in 1994 and 1996. I grew up in an ATSSB school and have spent my entire 22-year career teaching in ATSSB schools. Needless to say, ATSSB holds a very special place in my life. I am eager to serve ATSSB as President-Elect if chosen by our membership and look forward to continuing the success our association has seen for over 30 years."

**Marc Nichelson** is proud to announce his candidacy for ATSSB President-Elect. With extensive experience in music education and a deep commitment to small school band programs, Marc brings a wealth of knowledge and leadership to this role. A graduate of Brownsboro High School, Marc earned his Associate of Arts in Music from Tyler Junior College and a Bachelor of Arts from Stephen F. Austin State University.

His career began as a 7th-grade director at Hallsville ISD, followed by his time at Wortham ISD, where he revitalized the band program, leading it to success in both marching and concert seasons. For the past seven years, Marc has served as the Director of Bands at China Spring ISD, where he oversees the Marching Band, directs the Wind Ensemble and Jazz I, and teaches AP Music Theory. Under his leadership, the China Spring Band Program has achieved remarkable success, including 14 State Marching Contest appearances, multiple ATSSB OPS State recognitions, TMEA Honor Band State appearances, consistent ATSSB State Musicians, and UIL "Sweepstakes" awards.

Marc's contributions extend beyond the classroom. He actively serves ATSSB as Region 8 Coordinator, Area Central Coordinator, Webmaster, and 4A State Representative. His initiatives include redesigning the ATSSB website, managing auditions at Region, Area, and State levels, and editing the ATSSB Newsletter. These roles reflect his dedication to supporting both educators and students while enhancing the organization's functionality and outreach.

Professionally affiliated with ATSSB, TMEA, TMAA, and Kappa Kappa Psi, Marc is committed to advancing the mission of ATSSB. "I am passionate about ensuring small school bands thrive and students have opportunities to excel," he states. As President-Elect, Marc aims to advocate for music education, foster collaboration, and enhance resources for educators across Texas. Your support will help him continue making a lasting impact on the ATSSB community.





# DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

## PRESIDENT-ELECT NOMINEES



**Brian Sours**, entering his 11th year as Director of Bands at Tenaha ISD and 16th year overall, holds a Bachelor's in Music Education from the University of Arkansas and a Master's in Educational Leadership from Stephen F. Austin State University. He began his career at San Saba ISD, where his leadership resulted in historic UIL Sweepstakes Awards and a 5th place finish at the 2013 UIL State Marching Band Contest.

Since joining Tenaha ISD in 2014, Sours has transformed the band program, earning numerous accolades, including the 2021 UIL State Marching Band Contest gold medal and invitations to the TMEA and Midwest Clinic. Under his direction, the high school and middle school bands have achieved consistent success, with ATSSB OPS State Wins, national recognitions, and TMEA Honor Band distinctions.

Mr. Sours is an active member of ATSSB, TMEA, TBA, & TMAA.

"It has been an honor to serve ATSSB as the 2A state representative for the last 5 years and as an ATSSB All-State organizer for 3 years prior to that. I have taught in the smallest of small schools my entire career. As a product of a small school, I benefited from ATSSB as a student and I fully support the mission and purpose of ATSSB as a teacher. I'm honored to be nominated as a candidate for the next ATSSB President Elect. I humbly accept this nomination and I'm ready to serve this great organization as the next ATSSB President Elect if elected by the majority of the membership."

Do you need to purchase one of the large 10" patches at state this year? They cost \$10 each (including postage).

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