



ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS SMALL SCHOOL BANDS

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NewsLetter

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Angie Liss's Column

President 2025-2027

I don't know about you, but I've replayed those All-State concerts in my mind just about every day since TMEA. They were truly unforgettable. I may sound like a broken record, but I am incredibly proud of our students and the way they performed. Simply outstanding!!



After each concert, I stood at the side of the stage as students walked off and congratulated them. I asked many what their favorite piece was, and I loved hearing their responses almost as much as I loved seeing their smiles. That joy, that sense of accomplishment—that's what it's all about.

A tremendous thank you to everyone who ensured the entire process ran seamlessly: audition chair Kristi Flusche; sectionals coordinator Christina Smith; Symphonic organizers Justin Mauldin and Hugh Grubbs, with apprentices Mark Belding and Joshua Leslie; Concert Band organizers John Bratton and Darshan Jhaveri, with apprentices Mandy Keen and Aidan McCarty; Jazz organizer

(Continued on Page 2)

REMEMBER!

Entries submitted in the 2026 ATSSB Outstanding performance Series will be checked to make sure the Head Director of the competing ensemble is a current Active Member of ATSSB, so join TODAY if you need to do so:

[CLICK HERE](#)

(Liss, continued from Page 1):

Devin Sipes and apprentice Chris Partridge; our Jazz Chair, Brian Donnell and our Organizer Consultant, Justin Ketner. The care, preparation, and countless hours you invested made a meaningful difference for our students. I'm also grateful to the sectional leaders on Thursday morning. You had a great deal of music to tackle in a short amount of time, and the polished performances were proof of your excellent work.

Congratulations to our newly elected ATSSB Executive Board members: 4A Representative Jay Sutton, 2A Representative Zachary Sims, and 2C/3C Representative Christina Smith. I look forward to serving alongside each of you as we continue working on behalf of our students and directors.

Congratulations as well to our newest ATSSB Hall of Fame inductee, Gina Muela. I had the privilege of serving on the executive board with Gina during the challenging post-Covid year. Those of us on the board at that time spent countless hours in Zoom meetings planning the 2021 clinic in Melissa, and in the process formed a bond that is hard to put into words. I am deeply thankful for Gina's steady voice during that season and have immense respect for her as an educator. Her steadfast dedication to students—especially those wonderfully sweet and sometimes awkward middle school band kids—is truly admirable.

There are several exciting developments ahead for our organization. We have adopted new Year A percussion etudes (thank you, Eric Rath and team), approved updates to the Set A Jazz audition music, and are finalizing plans for the inaugural All-State Percussion Ensemble. We've also commissioned future percussion etudes, and Brian Donnell will continue refining upcoming jazz sets with his team. The work is ongoing, and the future is bright!

Of course, none of this happens without the steady leadership and tireless efforts of our Executive Director, Kenneth Griffin. He keeps everything moving forward with care and precision. Thanks to his guidance, our organization continues to thrive both financially and educationally, and we are incredibly fortunate to have him at the helm.

I am so proud of this organization and truly honored to serve as your president. Please know that I am always just a phone call, text, or email away. I welcome your thoughts, ideas, and conversations, and I am excited about all we will continue to accomplish together.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angie Liss". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brian Sours' Column
President-Elect 2025-2027

Once again this year, the room was full at our general membership meeting! It is always great to see a strong and active presence at our meetings. The support shown by the membership for the recipients of the State Winner and Runner-Up OPS plaques each year is awesome to see. Additionally, it was great to witness Gina Muela get inducted into the ATSSB Hall of Fame! I had the privilege of serving with Gina on the Executive Board for several years including as we navigated the COVID era. She truly has a servant's heart for ATSSB. Seeing such high attendance at our business meeting and for the Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony shows the strength of our organization. I'm always hopeful that future meetings and ceremonies are as well-attended!



Before I go any further, I want give a shout out again to the State Audition Review Committee (SARC) members. The work that the SARC has done over the last year has been simply incredible! The committee has worked for hours on Zoom meetings, on the phone, and in person on Wednesday evening during TMEA. Each meeting and discussion involved disseminating information submitted from the membership related to improving the audition process, audition music, or revising policies and procedures. As chairperson, I'm happy to report that most of the items recommended from the SARC to the State Board passed. Some of the biggest items passed are as follows: the creation of and guidelines for a brand new All-State Percussion Ensemble, massively updating and modernizing the PAL, tracked color instruments, updating one of the Year E Flute etudes ("Allegro Vivo"), and the introduction of 3 brand new commissioned etudes for Year A Percussion to be used in auditions this fall (with additional commissions passed for new Year B-E etudes as well). This is the biggest update to any audition music in 35 years! I'm proud of the work the SARC has completed in just one year and the work will continue! The following people are on the SARC: Brian Sours (President-Elect and Chairperson), Angie Liss (President), Rodney Bennett (Immediate Past-President), Kenneth Griffin (Executive Director), Brian Donnell (Jazz Coordinator), Eric Rath (4A), Steve Rash (3A), Elliott Ayo (2A), Zach Sims (2A), David Andrus (1A), Bobby Castillo (Percussion), Brandon Manuel (Middle School), and Christina Smith (PAL Revisions Author).

Congratulations our incoming Executive Board members, Zach Sims (incoming 2A Representative) and Benjamin Keltner (appointed 3A Representative). They will both

(Continued on Page 4)

(Sours, continued from Page 3):

bring creative ideas and forward thinking to the Executive Board! Congratulations as well to both Christina Smith (2C/3C Representative) and Jay Sutton (4A Representative) for being re-elected to the Executive Board. I look forward to continuing to work with both of them! I would also like to wish the outgoing Executive Board members, Justin Mauldin (outgoing 2A Representative) and Jim Best (outgoing 3A Representative), the best of luck as they begin their next journey. Both gentlemen served ATSSB faithfully while on the Executive Board.

The spring seems to get busier every year with events such as; Region & State Solo & Ensemble, Concert & Sight Reading, winter guard, marching winds & percussion, various tryouts, spring trips, and navigating the world of absences due to spring sports and academic testing. Sometimes with all that is going on during the spring semester, it isn't unusual for one or two mistakes to be made or maybe even a missed goal or two. When I feel like I've missed a goal or made a mistake, I try to tell myself "it is what it is." While this doesn't always make me feel better immediately, it is the necessary admission internally that I must accept reality for what it is so that I can eventually learn from it, grow from it, and move on from it. Otherwise, I might hark back on it for months and years instead of spending that time growing and learning. "It is what it is" or "it was what it was." Those are facts, but just know that it doesn't have to be what it WILL be again in the future. Have a great semester and best of luck at your upcoming contests, concerts, and events!

Brian Sours

The ATSSB Newsletter is the official publication of the Association of Texas Small School Bands. 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) or email the Editor (Kenneth Griffin) at atssb@att.net 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.

Advertising is accepted for the ATSSB Quarterly Newsletter. The Newsletter is published online each September, December, March, and June. See our advertising policy and costs [HERE](#).

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

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



Rodney Bennett's Column
Immediate Past-President 2025-2027

January, with the crazy ice storm, and then February, have flown by. With Solo and Ensemble contest followed by the conventions, it does not seem possible we are already into March. The ATSSB All-State Symphonic and Concert Bands were both absolutely fantastic, and the All-State Jazz Ensemble concert was amazing. The conductors of the All-State ensembles: Dr. Richard M. Heidel (Director of Bands – University of Iowa) - Symphonic Band, Mr. Randall Standridge, (Composer Extraordinaire) - Concert Band and Mr. Tito Carrillo (Associate Professor of Jazz Trumpet – Texas State University) - Jazz Ensemble. These gentlemen did a masterful and inspiring job with each band.



ATSSB continues to commission new works for both concert band and jazz ensemble. The 2026 ATSSB All-State Concert Band premiered “Return to Imaginarium”, by Randall Standridge with the composer conducting. During their concert, the All-State Jazz ensemble premiered “Take a Hiatus”, composed by clinician Tito Carrillo. These two fine compositions will be welcome additions to the repertoire for the respective ensembles.

Most of us will have recently completed UIL Solo & Ensemble Contest, and hopefully your students had successful performances as well as becoming better musicians. UIL Concert & Sight-reading contests (evaluations) are underway with the first contest on February 25. Best wishes for inspiring musical performances.

The ATSSB All-State seating auditions would not happen without the work of Kristi Flusche (Groesbeck MS), the All-State Chair Auditions Coordinator. She did a masterful job of organizing the auditions and providing timely information to the judges and monitors. A special thank you to all the ATSSB members who served as monitors and judges for the All-State seating auditions; you are the ones who made the audition experience a success for our students. Thank you to all who worked in the state audition office on the computation side of the auditions to keep everything running smoothly. Also, a big thank you to Christina Smith for coordinating the All-State section rehearsals, and to each section teacher that gave up time during the convention to work with the students. The work you did helped make the performances outstanding musical events.

(Continued on Page 6)

(Bennett, continued from Page 5):

Congratulations to all of the ATSSB Outstanding Performance Series winners. Your performances inspire all of us to continue to improve our bands as we make beautiful music. If you have not been a participant in the OPS competition, consider entering and letting others hear the outstanding work being done in the small schools of Texas. I would be remiss if I did not give a shout-out to Collin Anderson and his work as State OPS Chair. Your tireless dedication and work for ATSSB does not go unnoticed.

I want to acknowledge the expiring term members of the ATSSB Executive Board, Christina Smith – 2C/3C Representative from Center, Justin Mauldin, 2A Representative from Sundown, and Jay Sutton - 4A Representative from Pleasant Grove. Each of these outstanding educators has had a positive influence on ATSSB, and your service is greatly appreciated. The following board members were elected serve: 2C/3C Representative Christina Smith, Center (returning to serve another term) and 4A Representative Jay Sutton from Pleasant Grove. Jay is returning to the Executive Board after being appointed by President Liss for 2025-2026. Thank you for willingness to serve ATSSB. We have an outstanding Executive Board who always has the best interests of our students, directors and the ATSSB organization in all decisions.

We had the sixth installation of the ATSSB Hall of Fame following the General Membership meeting on February 14. Our single inductee for 2026 is Gina Muella from Littlefield. Ms. Muella has had an outstanding career as a Texas band director. Her contribution to middle school students and their feeder high schools cannot be adequately put into words. Gina is most deserving of this honor. Congratulations to you and your family for all you have done for the small school bands of Texas.

ATSSB is in great hands with the leadership of President Angie Liss, Executive Director Kenneth Griffin, and members of the Executive Committee.

This will be the last spring newsletter article for me as Immediate Past-President. Thank you for the opportunity to continue to serve ATSSB.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert J. Bennett". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Christina Smith's Column
2C/3C Representative 2025-2027

It is my hope that your TMEA was informative and reinvigorated you for the Spring Semester. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who shared their time and talent with the students in the ATSSB All State Symphonic Band and the ATSSB All State Concert Band.



State Organizers

Band Organizer Consultant: Justin Ketner
Symphonic Band Organizer: Justin Mauldin
Symphonic Band Apprentice Organizer: Mark Belding
Symphonic Band Percussion Organizer: Hugh Grubbs
Symphonic Band Percussion Apprentice Organizer: Joshua Leslie
Concert Band Organizer: John Bratton
Concert Band Apprentice Organizer: Mandy Keene
Concert Band Percussion Organizer: Darshan Jhaveri
Concert Band Percussion Apprentice Organizer: Aidan McCarty
Jazz Ensemble Organizer: Devin Sipes
Jazz Ensemble Apprentice Organizer: Chris Partridge
State Jazz Coordinator: Brian Donnell
All State Chair Audition Manager: Kristi Flusche
All State Sectional Rehearsal Coordinator: Christina Smith

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christina Smith".

All State Symphonic Band Section Teachers

Flute: Danette Conard, Region 12, Area South
Clarinet: Erin Hanson, Region 16, Area West
Low Clarinet: Joshua Kurzell, Region 24, Area North
Saxophones: Michael Childs, Region 7, Area North
Trumpet: Jason Jones, Region 7, Area North
Horn: Jason Adam, Region 12, Area South
Trombone/Euphonium: Maximo Gutierrez, Region 15, Area South
Tuba/Bass Trombone/String Bass: Jeff Van Ort, Region 24, Area North

All State Concert Band Section Teachers

Flute: Stephanie Haffner, Region 21, Area East
Clarinet: Michelle King, Region 21, Area East
Low Clarinet: Donna O'Bryant, Region 8, Area Central
Saxophones: Shannon Sandage, Region 21, Area East
Trumpet: Todd Dock, Region 21, Area East
Horn: Zack Sims, Region 18, Area Central
Trombone/Euphonium: Lawrence Firmin, Region 13, Area South
Tuba/Bass Trombone/String Bass: Ray Portillo, Jr., Region 5, Area Central

Brian Donnell's Column
State Jazz Coordinator

Immediately following the All-State Jazz Band performance in the Hemisfair Ballroom, a first-time jazz concert attendee asked if the band and clinician were always that strong. My answer was yes! These students put on a show each year that is marvelous to hear. And we are fortunate to attract the top clinicians in the country to work with the students. This year, Tito Carrillo from Texas State University was our clinician, and the rehearsals were as fun and electric as the concert was. Kudos to the students who earned a chair and to the directors and lesson teachers who got them there!



Looking ahead to 2026/2027, the biggest changes to the jazz auditions are switching the improv song and moving the Area judging to panels chosen by the Area coordinators.

The audition music for Set A Jazz is:

- 1) Hotfoot Down!
- 2) Big Easy Parade
- 3) Three Meter Skeeter
- 4) Bags' Groove <<<<< NEW improv piece

Do you already own Set A? If so, go to www.atssb.org/jazz and download the sheet music and backing tracks to Bags' Groove. The Set A music is available for sale on the website.

Thank you to the committee that worked on these edits and changes: Michael Childs, Steven Rash, Russell Hopkins, Rex Novak, Benjamin Keltner. They were so wonderful to work with over the past year!

Want to join the working committee for the Set B jazz music? Contact me and let me know if you're interested in working on the audition music. The commitment is a couple of Zoom calls in the spring and summer, a few emails when we're proofreading, and some Finale/Band-In-A-Box/MuseScore/iReal Jazz – type of tasks.

The Area judging panels will be selected by the area coordinators before October 1. If you are a jazz band director and would like to be considered for one of the panels, contact your region or area coordinator before mid-September. The names of the adjudicators will be posted on the jazz page in October.

The jazz webpage has been updated to make it easier to navigate for students, directors, and coordinators. Check it out at www.atssb.org/jazz

It remains a privilege to serve our students and directors across the state in this role.

I hope everyone has a strong finish to the year!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Donnell". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Brian
bdonnell@atssb.org

Zachry Sims' Column
2A Representative 2025-2027

Is it spring break yet??? I fervently hope that your solo and ensemble season was successful, students didn't procrastinate in practicing their parts, and that all of your scores were numbered well in advance! With Concert and Sightreading just around the corner, I wish you and your band(s) the best of luck in preparing for your upcoming evaluations!



As we wrap up another outstanding TMEA convention, I want to take a moment to express my sincere appreciation for the many individuals who make our work possible and our students successful. I have just begun to get a peek behind the curtain on how this convention functions, and I have to say that it truly takes an army to make this happen. Thank you to the ATSSB state board for your steady leadership, thoughtful decision making, and commitment to serving small school music programs across Texas. Your dedication ensures that our students and directors continue to have meaningful, high-quality musical experiences year after year. The countless hours you invest behind the scenes do not go unnoticed.

I would also like to recognize the SARC committee for your meticulous planning and oversight throughout the audition and selection process. From reviewing procedures to ensuring fairness and consistency, your work protects the integrity of our All-State process and upholds the high standards we value as an organization. Thank you to the audition panel judges and volunteers for your professionalism, expertise, and careful listening. Evaluating hundreds of talented students is no small task. Your thoughtful scoring and constructive feedback help maintain a process that is both rigorous and encouraging for our young musicians.

I am incredibly thankful to be elected as the ATSSB class 2A representative.. This role is one that I take seriously and will pour myself into so that I can adequately represent class 2A schools across the state. As your 2A rep, I want to encourage open communication throughout the year. If you have any questions, concerns, suggestions, or input regarding class 2A, please do not hesitate to reach out. Your feedback is invaluable as we continue to refine processes and advocate for the needs of our directors and students. Strong communication ensures that our programs continue to grow and improve together. I would be remiss if I didn't thank my friend Justin Mauldin from Sundown for being an incredible example to follow in this position. I know that while I have big shoes to fill in this role, I will do my best to continue the work to further ATSSB and the impact it has on the small school band programs in Texas.

I am continually inspired by the collaboration, professionalism, and heart shown by this community. We are creating life-changing musical opportunities for students across the state in our band halls each day because of the work you do. Here's to the final push before spring break and hopefully some much needed rest and relaxation!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zachary L Sims". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'Z' and 'S'.

Zachary Sims

Kristi Flusche's Column

State Chair Audition Coordinator

Greetings ATSSB members! I would like to take a moment to thank all who participated in the ATSSB auditions in San Antonio, from the panel chairs who selected cuts, to the judges and monitors, to those who asked what they could do to help. To the directors who volunteered to judge and monitor the auditions, thank you for your time listening and guiding our students during the audition process. Thank you to the directors who stepped up at the last minute when circumstances arose that we needed replacements, you were greatly appreciated. There were many positive things that took place this year that we can build upon to make the ATSSB All-State experience memorable for all involved. I am happy to be asked to serve as the audition chair coordinator and look forward to serving ATSSB in the future. Wishing everyone a successful year as we move forward.



Kristi Flusche
Kristi Flusche

Flute (4A)

Chair: Stephanie Haffner, West Rush JHS
 Cristalina Burse, Tahoka HS
 Carrie Gonzalez, Mineola HS
 Alison Hamilton, Clifton HS
 Cathryn Smith, Dublin HS
 Monitor: Rachel Clakley, Van Vleck HS

Flute (3A)

Chair: Chastal Conard, Mountain Valley HS
 Johanna Balboa, Fredericksburg HS
 Giselle Cavazos, Port Isabel JHS
 Molly Rudd, Canton HS
 Tiffany McWilliams, Wills Point HS
 Monitor: Christine Halowec, Grandview HS

Oboe & Bassoon

Chair: Wylie Gore, Robinson HS
 Paul Auttonberry, Elkhart HS
 Nicholas Joslyn, Industrial JHS
 Donavier Mosley, Willowridge HS
 Bonnie Oreka, Fredericksburg MS
 Monitor: Michael Tucker, West Hardin HS

B-flat Clarinet (4A)

Chair: Crystal Senzig, Riesel HS
 Jennifer Webber, Clyde HS
 Vanessa Delgado, Natalia JHS
 Shannon Rios, Teneah MS
 Rene Rosales, La Pryor HS
 Monitor: Keith Davis, Maypearl HS

B-flat Clarinet (3A)

Chair: Luis Hernandez, Canyon HS
 David Chambers, Farmersville JHS
 Brandon Garmon, Gilmer HS
 Sara Hill, Crane HS
 Adam Lara, Diamond Hill-Jarvis HS
 Monitor: Alexandria Holcomb, Brazos MS

Alto, Bass, Contrabass Clarinet

Chair: Dr. Nora Mosby, Connally HS
 Jessica Carter, Industrial JHS
 Tim Edins, Hamilton HS
 Jennifer Fulin, Trinity MS
 Andrew Kier, Anahuac HS
 Monitor: Rebecca Kimmons-Choate, Italy HS

Alto Sax (4A/3A), Tenor & Baritone Sax

Chair: Charles Cabrera, Robstown HS
 Tony Gonzalez, Canadian HS
 Austin Nestler, Whitesboro MS
 Ronald Walker, Hempstead HS
 Elizabeth Wilson, Franklin HS
 Monitor: Tia Livingston, Sweetwater HS

Trumpet (4A)

Chair: Steven Wolf, Falls City HS
 Sherman Leggett, Shamrock HS
 Raymond Mendez, Santa Gertrudis Academy
 Jasper Miranda, Poteet HS
 Dr. Neal Woolworth, Franklin HS
 Monitor: Jacob Laster, Grand Saline MS

Trumpet (3A)

Chair: Blake Vajgert, Salado HS
 Jason Adams, Navarro HS
 James Carter, Dumas JH
 Craig Haynie, Henderson HS
 Scot McPhetridge, Springtown HS
 Monitor: Jeremy Kindla, Fredericksburg MS

F Horn (4A/3A)

Chair: Jon Schriver, C.H. Yoe HS
 Scott Bostwick, Christoval HS
 Jennifer Essary, Academy HS
 Jeff Parma, Tarkington HS
 Whitney Sims, Shiner HS
 Monitor: Sherry Marshall, Port Aransas HS

Tenor Trombone (4A/3A)

Chair: Grady Haffner, West Rusk HS
 James Beeson, Bosqueville HS
 Echoe Bruns, Fredericksburg HS
 Richard Cole, Pecos HS
 Wayne Winner, Valley View HS
 Monitor: Alex Cavazos, Port Isabel HS

Euphonium (4A/3A), String Bass

Chair: Lawrence Firmin, Industrial HS
 Wyatt Boswell, Merkel HS
 Marco Roadriquez, Brock JHS
 Jay Sutton, Pleasant Grove HS
 Mason Walker, Tahoka HS
 Monitor: Alexis Wells, Springtown MS

Tuba (4A/3A)

Chair: Dagoberto Gonzalez, Mineola MS
 Dr. Jason Levin, Caldwell HS
 Kendall Prinz, Goliad HS
 Cameron Warren, Winnsboro HS
 Brian Wilson, Gainesville Intermediate
 Monitor: Wes Canaday, Elkhart HS

Percussion (4A)

Chair: Dr. Charlie Bradberry, Iowa Park HS
 Jim Best, Mineola HS
 David Martinez-Saraoz, Connally JH
 Mattie McMeens, De Leon HS
 Krystal Michal, McGregor HS
 Monitor: Chelsea Hoffman, LBJ HS

Percussion (3A)

Chair: Spencer Emmert, Sulphur Springs HS
 Brad Arnold, Navarro HS
 Jerry Guerra, Grulla HS
 Eric Petrinowitsch, Wills Point HS
 Haley Spencer, Fredericksburg HS
 Monitor: Miguel Hernandez, Austin Achieve

Contest Office

Collin Anderson, Groesbeck HS
 Kristi Flusche, Office Manager, Groesbeck MS

Collin Anderson's Column

OPS State Chair

Congratulations, once again, to all our 2025 OPS winners who received their plaques at TMEA recently. It is always an honor and privilege to get to present those awards and shake the hands of the directors.

The OPS Steering Committee has decided to remove the 'pilot' status for both non-varsity categories, making the MSNV and HSNV a permanent addition to OPS.

The entry portal will open on Monday, March 2. The pages of the entry portal address most of the pertinent information regarding the contest, but you may also want to read through the OPS Handbook on the OPS webpage (atssb.org/ops/).

Entry deadline is Wednesday, May 20 by 11:59 pm. The deadline is a few days earlier, comparable to the last few years, as I decided to set it prior to the Saturday of TSSEC, instead of that same day. All portions of your OPS entry (signed verification form, audio uploads, and payment) must be completed by this date. Be sure to get your purchase orders in EARLY so that you are not fighting with your business office to get the payment in on time. You can always pay online on the ATSSB website if needed.

Region adjudication will be completed and entries certified to Area by midnight on Saturday, June 6. Area adjudication will be completed and entries certified to State by midnight on Saturday, June 20. State adjudication will be July 16 at the Texas Bandmasters Association convention in San Antonio.

A judging matrix of region and area adjudications will be available on the OPS webpage once decided. This is determined after all entries are in, as some regions have very large numbers of entries, while some are small enough in number, or have none, so that a listening session is not necessary. I try to balance the entry numbers between listening regions as best as possible.

Editing of any recording to be submitted is not allowed, except to remove any vocal announcements at the beginning (particularly a March selection) that could identify the name of the competing school and/or to remove applause following a piece.

Once a Region or Area level adjudication has been concluded, and all portions verified, notice of placement and advancement will be made available to all competing directors for that region/class/category.

Please take time to review the list of Approved Non-UIL Festivals on the website after March 6. Unfortunately, several of the festivals I have approved have not gotten to the list. I am working on updating that, but if you see a festival you normally attend, or would like to attend, let me know and I'll update the list. As always, if you have a new venue, you can request permission to add it to the list by submitting the Non-UIL Festival Approval Form, which will have a link on the website soon.

As always, if there are questions or issues while entering OPS, call, text, or email me!

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you and our fantastic organization as the OPS State Chair.



Collin Anderson
ATSSB OPS State Chair
Director of Bands and Fine Arts, Groesbeck ISD
opsstatechair@gmail.com
903-390-3271



Kenneth Griffin's Column

Executive Director

Another great ATSSB All-State experience under our belts. Really meaningful and interesting concerts by all three All-State groups (there will be FOUR next year when we add the ATSSB All-State Percussion Ensemble!). After the successful work of Randall D. Standridge with the Concert Band and the premier of RETURN TO THE IMAGINARIUM (commissioned by ATSSB), Dr. Richard M. Heidel with the Symphonic Band, and Tito Carrillo with the Jazz Ensemble and the premier of TAKE A HIATUS (commissioned by ATSSB) this year, we are looking forward to next year already as we have contracted with Jeremy Strickland (Tyler Junior College) to clinic the Concert Band, composer and clinician Robert Sheldon to clinic the Symphonic Band (and ATSSB has commissioned a Grade 3-4 piece from him), and John Wojciechowski (Chicago musician and educator) to clinic the Jazz Ensemble (and ATSSB has commissioned a piece for the 2027 Jazz Ensemble from him). A clinician for the new ATSSB All-State Percussion Ensemble will be announced in the Year A Update online.



There are so many people to thank for its success, but where do I start?

1. To all participating ATSSB band directors who encouraged their students to audition at the region level, only to continue working with them to compete at the Area level, then plan and arrange for their trip to San Antonio for the All-State Band - and serve as adjudicators at all levels, taking their students to the auditions and getting them home again safely.
2. To our Region Coordinators among our twenty-two regions who secured audition sites, arranged for judging panels, assigned directors to the panels with links to the audition software, oversaw the adjudication process, paid expenses for site hosting, maintenance and cleanup, reported results and filed paperwork after the auditions, and maintained the ATSSB membership on the region level all year,
3. To the five Area Coordinators who planned the Area auditions, securing a host site, assigning directors to panels and links to the audition software, overseeing results, reporting results, paying for all associated costs, overseeing the distribution of Area patches, collecting Area fees and much more in the background.
4. To All-State Organizers (Symphonic Band Organizer, Concert Band Organizer and Jazz Organizer, along with Apprentice Organizers in each group who will take over the following year). These directors give up most of their convention time getting the physical needs of each group ready to go, securing music folders and stuffing each with the assigned music, rehearsal schedules and anything else the clinician wants included, arranging for stand name tags so the clinician can call on students by name, securing equipment not provided by TMEA, arranging for breaks, overseeing each rehearsal to make sure students are there and cooperating with the clinicians and much more in the background. **Speaking of which if you would like to serve in those roles, be sure to contact Angie Liss to submit your name for consideration as an Apprentice to learn the role one year then take over as Organizer the following year.**

(Continued on Page 13)

(Griffin, continued from Page 12):

5. To Kristi Flusche and the Groesbeck staff for running a smooth chair audition office on Wednesday evening and Christina Smith for coordinating the Section Teaching Staff for leading sectional rehearsals on Thursday morning,
6. To TMEA for hosting the audition process on their servers, arranging for hotel space for students and their chaperones, securing and organizing the Convention Center for clinics and rehearsals and, most importantly, the final concerts and much more in the background. Many thanks for so many years of dedicated service from retired TMEA Deputy Director, Frank Coachman; Joe Muñoz, TMEA Executive Director; Andrew Denman-Tidline, TMEA Information Technologist; also Kay Vanlandingham, Karen Cross and the entire TMEA staff in Austin for their tireless efforts on behalf of the TMEA membership.
7. To ATSSB leadership: President's Committee Angie Liss, Brian Sours, and Rodney Bennett; Class Representatives Kristi Flusche, Christina Smith, Jesus Perez, Justin Mauldin, Benjamin Keltner, and Jay Sutton; State Jazz Coordinator Brian Donnell; OPS State Chair Collin Anderson; Webmaster Brian Hecimovich and so many others that stepped up to lead the way when asked. It has been a pleasure working with these directors over the past two years and I look forward to two more with the new officers we just elected: Class 2C/3A Representative Christina Smith (incumbent), Class 2A Representative Zachary Sims; and 4A Representative Jay Sutton.

A big **THANK YOU** to all of these people plus the unnumbered hundreds who did things in the background to make all levels of ATSSB work seamlessly throughout the year.

It was my pleasure to emcee the ATSSB Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony after the General Session on Friday. We are fortunate to have had Gina in the development of ATSSB:



Anna G. Muela
ATSSB Hall of Fame
Class of 2026

You can go to the ATSSB Hall of Fame Web page for details about Gina.

Interesting fact about the 2026 All-State Bands: The bands include 21 freshmen (down from 22 last year), 43 sophomores (down from 48 last year), 79 juniors (down from 96 last year), and 163 seniors (up from 140 from last year).

(Continued on Page 14)

(Griffin, continued from Page 13):

Outstanding Performance Series - Be sure to check out the OPS web page carefully regarding the process for 2023. Every 2022-2023 member of ATSSB will receive a link to stream all of the winning selections in the 2023 Outstanding Performance Series after results have been completed and mechanical licenses secured (CDs are no longer produced).

Interesting fact about the 2023 All-State Bands: The bands included 98 females and 208 males.

DIRECTORY - An ATSSB Membership Directory is available on the Website (on the main page, hover your mouse over HOME then ATSSB DIRECTORY and enter your last name and your 6-digit ATSSB membership number (that begins with 26XXXX) to access the Directory. It lists all those who are Active and Current for the fiscal year (which ends July 31). Since the State Board has voted that the ATSSB Website is the official document, we no longer print the Directory (or anything else) for mailout. All documents must be viewed/printed/downloaded from the Website. We secured the Directory because advertisers were mining the contact data and besieging our members with advertisements.

APPLICATION - There is a Membership Application in this Newsletter and on the Website that you can download and use or give to your assistants or to share with neighbors. Membership renewal reminders are not sent, so use the one available online or linked here to join as soon as you can in the new budget year (although we surely do appreciate all of the scholarship contributions you make when you join after October 1!). There is also a College Division Membership application available here and online. Give one to your senior bandmen that might be considering music as a major or minor in college. Remember that dues are \$50. The \$25 late fee will continue to be added after October 1, so if you want to avoid the late fee, get your dues paid as soon as possible (you can use a school PO at any time, a check or money order or your credit card online).

Interesting facts about the 2026 All-State Bands: Davenport and Sulphur Springs each had 8 students make All-State; Canyon, Krum and Raymondville each had 7 make All-State; West Plains had 6 students make All-State; Celina and Fredericksburg each had 5 students make All-State; six schools had 4 students make All-State; seventeen schools had 3 students make All-State; thirty-nine schools had 2 students make All-State; and one hundred schools had 1 student make All-State. In all, 170 different schools are represented in the ATSSB All-State Bands.

PAL - The Prescribed Audition List includes all known (and SARC-approved) errata to date on each of the etude pages. The scales are up to date on the website, including the State Board mandated statement that scales are to be played "as written" - so be careful your students play a whole note at the end of each scale. Be sure you are using the current data from the Website since an Update will not be mailed or passed out at TBA like we used to do (remember that the Website is the official document). We will be using YEAR A in the PAL for auditions in 2026-27. Watch the Website for the Year A Update - and remember that percussion auditions are unified and **using new etudes this year** (links to the new percussion etudes are available on the opening page of the website). Other

(Continued on Page 15)

(Griffin, continued from Page 14):

links will be updated as they become available.

Interesting facts about the 2026 All-State Bands: Of the 306 students selected for ATSSB All-State, 5 were from class 1A schools (1.63% - down from 7 last year), 17 were from class 2A schools (5.56% - down from 20 last year), 110 from class 3A schools (35.95% - up from 108 last year), and 174 from class 4A schools (56.86% - up from 171 last year).

This year, recordings of the ATSSB All-State Bands will again be available as a link online at no cost. We have moved away from CDs and now use streaming services. This way, everyone will have access to the All-State recordings without having to purchase CDs and waiting several months for their arrival (although we must wait until the end of March or first of April to get them ready. As soon as the recordings have been mastered and mechanical licenses secured, the links will be emailed to all participants and posted on the ATSSB website. You may still order plaques and t-shirts from the event through Pepwear (www.pepwear.com/atssb). You may also order the large 10" All-State patch from this office (\$10 each includes shipping). Use the order forms in this Newsletter or online to get yours today.

Use your contacts at colleges and universities across Texas (and beyond) to make sure that they give scholarships (all expenses paid) to ATSSB All-State students and tuition scholarships to ATSSB Area students for their summer band camps like some colleges do. Check out what the camp offers and then encourage your students to go where they are welcomed.

Interesting facts about the 2026 All-State Bands: Of the 306 members, each of the 22 regions had an average of 14 students in the band. One region had 30 (the most) and one region had 1 (the least).

Remember that Region Officers serve a two-year term, so if elections need to be held in your regions, go through the process in place to elect them. Be sure to let me know if you replace a Region Coordinator for 2026-27 in your Spring Meeting. I need to have their name as soon as possible for our plans for 2026-27 (call me at 713-874-1151 and leave a message). Your Region Coordinator is your region's representative on the State Board of Directors which makes all of the decisions for you regarding ATSSB matters. Make sure they or a proxy attends each SBOD meeting. It would also be nice if each Region Coordinator brought a mandate of opinion from region members so votes could be representative of each region of the state. Keep an eye on your region's page and volunteer to help keep it up to date if you are into web publishing and would like to help. The ATSSB State Board will send each Region a Fall Agenda, listing items each Region needs to address, so watch for those items.

Seniors Caleb Atkins (Davenport Jazz Trumpet), Carter Elza (Davenport 4A Clarinet), Jeremy Guo (Kinkaid 4A Clarinet), Rachel Jiang (Greenhill 3A Flute), Mark Lowe (Awty International 3A Flute), and Lauren Salinas (Raymondville 4A Clarinet) each received the \$2000 ATSSB All-State Band Scholarship for making the band all four of their years in high school. Seniors Jian Catalasan (Midland Christian 4A Flute), Michael Cepeda (Pleasanton Alto Clarinet), Trenton Ellis (West Plains 4A Tuba), Ethan Golden (Commerce Jazz Trumpet); Jayden Hale (Community 4A French

(Continued on Page 16)

(Griffin, continued from Page 15):

Horn), Steven Herrera (Pearsall 4A Trumpet), Dean Kuhl (Canton 4A Alto Saxophone), Joshua Lopez (Rockport-Fulton 4A Trombone), Calissa Marbut (Millsap 3A Clarinet), Josiah Medina (Carter-Riverside 4A Trumpet), Kollin Peiffer (Elkhart 3A Percussion), Brylee Posey (Canyon 4A Clarinet), Rory Richardson (Henderson Contrabass Clarinet), Matt Rios (Littlefield 3A Euphonium), Kaden Robles (Benbrook 4A Clarinet), Camarion Rodriguez (Nixon-Smiley 3A Alto Saxophone), Nicholas Rossi (Calallen 4A Alto Saxophone), Gilberto Sotelo (Hidalgo 4A Flute), Holden Stogsdill (Farmersville 4A Clarinet), Jackson Teague (Pleasant Grove 4A Euphonium), Alexander Thorne (Lampasas 4A Tuba), Jaciel Trejo (La Feria Tenor Saxophone), and Elias Zamora (West Plains 4A Flute) each received the \$500 ATSSB All-State Band Scholarship for making the band three of their four years in high school. Also, Caleb Atkins was presented with the 2026 \$1000 Bruce Kenner Memorial Scholarship and Hailo Garcia was presented with the 2026 \$1000 Jeannie Griffin Memorial Scholarship.

These senior scholarship recipients were given a plaque in a brief ceremony between the performances of the Concert and Symphonic Bands and those in the Jazz ensemble were recognized during the Jazz Ensemble concert. This makes one hundred sixty-nine students who have received the four-year scholarship (the first twenty-three received a \$1000 scholarship until 2003 when the three-year \$500 scholarships were started and the four-year award was raised to \$2000) and four hundred seventy-eight who have received the three-year scholarship. Since 1992, \$554,000 in scholarships have been awarded to 647 individuals from the 8782 individuals who have made ATSSB All-State (7.37 % of those selected to ATSSB All-State have received a scholarship).

In your spring meetings, be sure to nominate state officers for next year: President-Elect, Class 1C, 1A and 3A Representatives to the State Board of Directors 2027-2029.

My thanks to all of you for what you have done to make ATSSB what it is today.



ATSSB Music Lending Library

Various regions send the music they purchase for all-region band clinics to Groesbeck High School after they use them so others can use the music in similar situations. We also send the All-State music to the Lending Library. If you would like to borrow a title, let them know. Contact Kristi Flusche at Groesbeck High School, P.O. Box 559, Groesbeck, TX 76642 or call (254) 729-4117 between 10:10 and 11:00, or email her at k.flusche@groesbeckisd.net. The only expense you will have is postage (both ways) as a courtesy to Kristi and her staff. If you have music left over from an all-region clinic and would like to share it with other regions, send it to Groesbeck High School at the address above.

Here is the current list of titles available: <https://www.atssb.org/files/execsec/MusicLibrary.htm>

We would like to thank Collin Anderson, Kristi Flusche and the Groesbeck band staff for providing this service to ATSSB members.

Brian Hecimovich's Column

ATSSB Webmaster

Looking Ahead to Year A

As we move through the busy spring season, the ATSSB website is already transitioning to support your needs for the upcoming school year. While many of us are focused on the final months of the current semester, several key updates have been launched to help you get a head start on your planning.



New Resources for 2026-27

The site has been updated with the new **Year A Jazz Files**, which are now available for purchase. Additionally, the new **Year A Percussion Etudes** for the next audition cycle have been posted. (Region Coordinators please repeat early and often to your membership that the etudes have changed.)

Support for Coordinators and Directors

For our Region/Area/Director leadership, I am here to ensure you have the tools you need to manage your sites effectively. If you require **new email accounts**, **Google services access**, or need any assistance in **accessing and updating your specific webpage**, please reach out to me. My goal is to make the web side of your role as helpful as possible.

A Note of Appreciation

I also want to extend a sincere thank you to our Executive Director, Kenneth Griffin. His dedication to keeping me up to date is invaluable; he handles a large portion of the website updates personally and is always there to test out settings, sites, and inform me of problems of any technical hurdles that arise. His hands-on approach ensures the site remains a reliable resource for all of us.

Help Us Improve

Finally, I invite everyone to be my “extra set of eyes” as you navigate the site. If you encounter a broken link, a feature that isn’t behaving as expected, or if you have a suggestion for a layout change that would make your workflow easier, please let me know. Your feedback is the best way to ensure the site evolves to meet the specific needs of small school band programs.

Visit us at www.atssb.org to see the latest updates and grab the new Year A materials.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Hecimovich". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brian Hecimovich ATSSB Webmaster
brianh@atssb.org

ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS SMALL SCHOOL BANDS Membership Application

Please type or LEGIBLY print! We want to have accurate information for our Directory and mailing list.
If this is a membership renewal, only enter name and school and ANYTHING THAT HAS CHANGED.

NAME _____ Last four SS# _____ TMEA # _____
 SCHOOL _____ CLASS _____ REGION # _____
 TITLE _____ SCHOOL PHONE _____ Best time to call _____
 If a public middle or junior high school, what high school does your school feed? _____
 How many directors are on the band staff in your ISD? _____ New to this region? _____
 SCHOOL MAILING ADDRESS _____ PERSONAL EMAIL _____
 CITY & ZIP CODE _____ PROFESSIONAL EMAIL _____
 HOME MAILING ADDRESS _____ HOME PHONE# _____
 CITY & ZIP CODE (if different from school) _____ CELL # _____
 MAJOR INSTRUMENT(S) _____

Until October 1, mail this completed form and \$50* for dues to:

ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS SMALL SCHOOL BANDS
 Kenneth L. Griffin, Executive Director
 2117 Morse Street
 Houston, Texas 77019

Are you a judge listed with the Texas Music Adjudicators Association? If so, please select your area of certification:
 CB MB *CB-Supplemental *MB-Supplemental

I would also like to donate \$ _____ to the All-State Scholarship Fund.
Dues may not be deductible, but any amount over \$50 is considered a fully-deductible contribution.

I would also like to donate \$ _____ to the Bruce Kenner Memorial Scholarship Fund.
 Donations to this fund are fully deductible

I would also like to donate \$ _____ to the Jeannie Griffin Memorial Scholarship Fund.
 Donations to this fund are fully deductible

***NOTE:** The membership year runs from August 1 to July 31. After October 1, Regular Member dues increase to \$75 (the additional \$25 is deposited into the ATSSB All-State Band Scholarship Fund). A membership card and receipt will be returned to you via email, so make sure you have a valid email address. Associate Member dues are \$25 all year, so anyone may join as an Associate Member after October 1 for \$25. To enter students into competition leading to membership in an ATSSB All-State Band, you must be a current Active Member of the Texas Music Educators Association in addition to ATSSB. Retired Members dues are \$25. Only ATSSB Active Members may vote or hold office in ATSSB and submit entries in the Outstanding Performance Series. ATSSB membership is held on an individual basis and is nontransferable.

ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS SMALL SCHOOL BANDS COLLEGE DIVISION APPLICATION

Please type or LEGIBLY print! We want to have accurate information for our Directory and mailing list.

NAME _____ Last 4 SS# _____
 COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY _____ Anticipated Graduation Date _____
 SCHOOL ADDRESS _____ SCHOOL PHONE () _____
 CITY & ZIP CODE _____ SCHOOL EMAIL _____
 PERMANENT ADDRESS _____ TELEPHONE () _____
 CITY & ZIP CODE _____ EMAIL _____
 MAJOR INSTRUMENT(S) _____

Email address to which you want the ATSSB Newsletter sent: _____ School _____ Permanent

Mail this completed form and \$25 for dues to:

ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS SMALL SCHOOL BANDS
 Kenneth L. Griffin, Executive Director
 2117 Morse Street
 Houston, Texas 77019

Make checks payable to **ATSSB**

NOTE: College Division Membership entitles you to have your name listed in the ATSSB Directory. You will also be listed in the region, area and state database for selection to judging panels for ATSSB auditions. Only Regular Active Members may vote or hold office in ATSSB.

Minutes of the February ATSSB General Session

The General Session of ATSSB met in CC214 on Friday, February 13, 2026, with more than 300 in attendance. President Angie Liss called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and Jay Sutton from Pleasant Grove gave the invocation.

Ms. Liss introduced the head table then candidates for the office of Class 2A Representative to the State Board of Directors: Justin Mauldin from Sundown and Zachary Sims from Shiner. Matt Knight spoke for Justin Mauldin and Elliott Ayo spoke for Zachary Sims.

He then introduced candidates for the office of Class 4A Representative to the State Board of Directors: Jose Sanchez from Gatesville and Jay Sutton from Pleasant Grove. Tami Goss spoke for Jose Sanchez and Eric Gray spoke for Jay Sutton.

Ballots were then cast.

The minutes of the General Session July 25, 2025, were approved as printed in the September Newsletter after a motion by Brandon Huff from Krum and a second by Matt Knight from Abernathy.

There were no Special Committee reports.

Under the SARC report, President-Elect Brian Sours thanked his committee members: Eric Rath from Canyon HS, Steven Rash from Odem HS, Elliott Ayo from Rivercrest HS, Zach Sims from Shiner HS, David Andrus from Water Valley HS, Bobby Castillo from Troup HS, and Brandon Manuel from Howe HS. Also on the committee as ex officio members were President Angie Liss from Howe HS, President-Elect Brian Sours, Immediate Past President Rodney Bennett from Olney, Executive Director Kenneth Griffin from Houston, and State Jazz Coordinator Brian Donnell from Greenhill School. He then asked that if anyone had concerns about the audition process or etudes being used to send him a message so the SARC could address it. He expressed excitement about the addition of the ATSSB All-State Percussion Ensemble.

Rodney Bennett, Chair of the Past-President Committee, noted that the Committee was made up of ATSSB Past-Presidents Matt Knight, Bob Vetter, Eric Gray, Jim Jones, Mike Bartley, and George Strickland. They are charged with selecting the ATSSB Exemplary Band Program Award, and they have received three nominations for this year: Anahuac, Commerce, and Ranchview. These programs have until June 15 to submit supporting documentation, after which the Committee will select the recipient of the Award. The Committee also oversees the selection of the ATSSB Outstanding Contributor Award, for which anyone can nominate by March 1, with supporting documentation submitted by April 1, all online.

OPS State Chair Collin Anderson noted that we will use the online process again since it operated so smoothly last year. He asked that if anyone knows of an issue to contact him immediately so the process can be set up to operate smoothly once again. He noted the OPS Handbook was not updated, but will be soon. The OPS Steering Committee was dealing with a few issues, most of which concern how to increase participation by Class 1A schools.

The 2025 Outstanding Performance Series winners and runners-up were announced, and awards were presented to the directors.

State Jazz Coordinator Brian Donnell noted the Jazz Ensemble concert at 1:00 in Hemisfair Ballroom 1 and invited everyone to attend. He said Tito was doing a great job with the kids. He noted that the Year A Jazz audition fields had been redone for clarity. The jazz improv piece has been replaced with Bag's Groove, but is available online, as is the adjusted audition files. If you have purchased Year A in the past, they still work, adding the Bag's Groove with back tracks from the website for Year A. This coming year, Area Coordinators will send names of adjudicators for the Area Jazz adjudications to the State Jazz Coordinator for judging assignments, allowing more opportunities to get judges familiar with the instrument from across the state, rather than having one region try to come up with 5 bass trombone judges, etc.

Webmaster Brian Hecimovich reported that the website has experienced no downtime this past year, but since there are thousands of links online, he needs to know of broken links to keep them all updated. Let him know if you find a broken link (name the page or send him the link's URL). He asked the membership to send him any suggestions or comments for improvement.

Ms. Liss noted that actions taken by the State Board:

- Voted to approve updating the Prescribed Audition List (PAL) to address verbiage regarding the use of electronic devices in the audition room.
- Voted a change for flute Year E Gariboldi etude to 75-90 and stop on the first note of the second measure of line 2.
- Voted to change Year A percussion etudes, paying Adam Bruce \$800 to write the three parts (snare, mallet,

(Continued on Page 20)

(General Session Minutes, continued from Page 19):

timpani).

- Voted to commission Adam Bruce to write Years B-E, with each year submitted to ATSSB at TBA, for approval, then adopted at TMEA for the following year after input from the regions.

Executive Director Kenneth Griffin gave his report:

- SCHOLARSHIP REPORT: Value of portfolio was \$233,945.97 as of January 30. Dividends are reinvested into the brokerage account each month. We have 23 3-year recipients this year = \$11,500 (with one more possible - student who made first 3 years but did not audition for 4th - they must apply) and 6 4-year recipients this year = \$12,000 for a total of \$23,500 in scholarships awarded this year. Since 1995, 647 individuals have been awarded ATSSB Scholarships totaling \$554,000.

- KENNER SCHOLARSHIP REPORT: Value of portfolio was \$39,703.44 as of January 30. Dividends are reinvested into the brokerage account each month. We have given twelve \$1,000 scholarships to date.

- GRIFFIN SCHOLARSHIP REPORT: Value of portfolio was \$396,104.51 as of January 30. Dividends are reinvested into the brokerage account each month. We have given two \$1,000 scholarships to date.

- COMMISSION FUND REPORT: Value of portfolio was \$13,482.41 as of January 30. Dividends are reinvested, then funds are withdrawn to pay for commissions each year.

- PROGRAM FUND REPORT: Value of portfolio was \$26,968.97 as of January 30. Dividends are reinvested, then funds are withdrawn to pay for All-State programs each year. This fund was established with a gift from the Elmer and Anita Schenk Family Trust beginning in 2007.

There was no old business.

Ms. Liss then announced the result of the ballot: Class 2A Representative 2026-2028 is Zachary Sims from Shiner; Class 4A Representative 2026-2028 is Jay Sutton from Pleasant Grove.

Ms. Liss then announced the recipient of the 2026 Bruce Kenner Memorial Scholarship in the amount of \$1000: Caleb Atkins from San Antonio Davenport. The recipient of the Jeannie Griffin Memorial Scholarship in the amount of \$1000: Hailo Garcia from La Feria.

Ms. Liss recognized Christina Smith, Justin Mauldin and Jay Sutton for their service on the Executive Board with individual plaques.

Ms. Liss then adjourned the meeting to the ATSSB Hall of Fame Induction and Kenneth Griffin, who presided over the induction of Gina A. Muela into the ATSSB Hall of Fame.

**State Board of Directors Meeting
7:15 a.m., February 12, 2026
Menger Hotel Minuet Room**

Present: Region 22 Coordinator Anthony Alvarado, Class 3A Representative Bonnie Anderson, Region 2 Coordinator Daniel Balkema, Class 1C Representative Jenny Bartley, Past-President and Region 3 Coordinator and Area North Coordinator Mike Bartley, President Rodney Bennett, Region 14 Coordinator Charles Cabrera, Region 1 Coordinator James Carter, Region 6 Coordinator Brittany Cole, Region 11 Coordinator Leo Garza, Past-President Eric Gray, Executive Director and Founding Charter Member and Hall of Fame Member Kenneth Griffin, Region 21 Coordinator Craig Haynie, Region 29 Coordinator Brian Hecimovich, Region 10 Coordinator Russell Hopkins, Region 15 Coordinator Benjamin Keltner, Region 7 Coordinator Josh Kidd, Region 16 Coordinator and Immediate Past-President Matt Knight, President-Elect and Region 24 Coordinator Angie Liss, Region 18 Coordinator Ann Lowes Mueller, Region 8 and Area Central Coordinator and Webmaster Marc Nichelson, Region 9 Coordinator Jeff Parma, Region 13 Coordinator Rod Rodriguez, Class 2C/3C Representative Christina Smith, Class 2A Representative Brian Sours, Past-President and Hall of Fame Member

(Continued on Page 22)

(SBOD Minutes, continued from Page 20):

George Strickland, Region 4 Coordinator Jay Sutton, Class 1A Representative Brian Tillman, Past-President and Charter Member and Hall of Fame Member Robert Vetter, and Region 5 Coordinator and Area West Coordinator Joe Walker. Attending as guests were OPS State Chair Collin Anderson, State Jazz Coordinator Brian Donnell, Area East Coordinator Joe Hewitt, UIL Assistant Music Director Gabe Musella, Area South Coordinator Steven Rash, TMEA Band Division Vice-President Andy Sealy, Area West Coordinator Don Summersgill, and Juli Wild. Not present: Past-President Brandon Brewer, Founding Charter Member John Gibson, Region 12 Coordinator Nichele Gonzales, Founding Charter Member Michael Hardy, Founding Charter Member and Past-President and ATSSB Hall of Fame Member Michael Marsh, Past-President Steven Moore, Past-President and Charter Member Ronnie Page, Founding Charter Member and Past-President and Hall of Fame Member Fred Pankratz, Region 23 Coordinator John Pritchett, Past-President Gary Robbins, Founding Charter Member and Hall of Fame Member Elmer Schenk, Past-President and Charter Member Don Stockton, Past-President Rob Toups, and Past-President John Young.

Meeting called to order at 7:15 a.m. by Angie Liss.

The Invocation was given by George Strickland.

Ms. Liss suspended the agenda to introduce TMEA Band Division Vice-President Andy Sealy who spoke to the Board. He thanked the Board for inviting him and said he was a product of small schools and is appreciative of the work done in small schools across the state. TMEA appreciates ATSSB and the cooperation we have enjoyed over the years, noting the addition of the ATSSB All-State Percussion Ensemble for 2026-27. TMEA wants to continue working together in the future.

Ms. Liss then introduced UIL Assistant Director of Music Gabe Musella who noted he and Andy Sealy went to school together, then brought us an update of UIL news:

- The sightreading pilot was used in all regions this past year and will again next year.
- Key signatures used in sightreading were released in January.
- The updated Prescribed Music List will be released on September 1.
- The State Mariachi Contest will be in Seguin, with 99 registered to participate.
- TSSEC (with a few string and vocal exceptions) will be in Hays Consolidated ISD this year, not Pflugerville.
- The inaugural UIL State Jazz Festival will be held on March 6, with more details available online.
- The Instrumental Chamber Music Competition will be in Bastrop again with 10 wind and 10 string events this year.
- The 2026-2028 Area Marching Band Alignments will be released after the committees have completed their work. Send concerns to the Marching Band Music Advisory Committee.

The Oath of Office was given by Kenneth Griffin.

Minutes of the SBOD meeting July 24, 2025, as printed in the September Newsletter were approved after a motion by Rod Rodriguez and a second by Jim Jones.

Heard reports of Standing Committees:

(Continued on Page 22)

(SBOD Minutes, continued from Page 21):

President-Elect and SARC Chair Brian Sours thanked his committee: Angie Liss, Rodney Bennett, Eric Rath, Steven Rash, Elliott Ayo, Zach Sims, David Andrus, Bobby Castillo, Brandon Manuel, Kenneth Griffin, and Brian Donnell.

Motion by committee to update Set A, replacing the improv piece Bloozin' Elf with Bag's Groove and simplifying the audition sheets for each instrument for clarity and to avoid confusion. After a second by Jay Sutton, motion passed.

Motion by committee to allow Area Coordinators to submit judge names for Area jazz adjudications to the State Jazz Chair to allow a more equitable and viable judging panel, second by George Strickland. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by committee to change the flute Year E Gariboldi etude to 75-90 and stop on the first note of the second measure of line 2. Second by Jesus Perez. Motion carried.

Motion by committee to update the Prescribed Audition List (PAL) to clear up verbiage regarding the use of electronic devices in the audition room. Second by Jesus Perez. Motion carried.

Referenced several items that were tabled for further discussion, including consequences for breaking school rules and how to handle medical issues that arise during auditions.

Immediate Past-President Rodney Bennett noted that a committee formed to select the Exemplary Band Award consists of himself as chair, George Strickland, Jim Jones, Mike Bartley, Eric Gray, and Bob Vetter. They had received three nominations: Anahuac, Commerce, and Ranchview. These programs have until June 15 to submit documentation supporting their nomination.

Collin Anderson gave the OPS Report:

The OPS Steering Committee will meet to debate how to encourage more participation in Class 1A.

Brian Donnell gave the Jazz Report: He handed out a sheet to help Region Coordinators understand their responsibilities and what documentation was needed. The sheet also described the changes being made to the audition parts, so they were clearer and less confusing.

Brian Hecimovich gave the Website Report: He noted that the website had experienced no downtime this year and was operating smoothly. There are thousands of links online, so please let us know if a link is broken so it can be repaired. He has a video online showing how to set up a region webpage, or he can Zoom with you to walk you through it.

President's Report by Angie Liss:

ATSSB has been in discussions with TMEA regarding our new All-State Percussion Ensemble. They will share their experiences getting their percussion ensembles up and running with suggested clinicians, etc. Percussionists will go through a recorded audition after Area to secure chairs, then the Percussion Ensemble will be filled by choice during a Zoom meeting prior to All-State.

Ms. Liss noted she had appointed the 3A Representative to serve an unexpired term and has designated Juli Wild to complete the term of 1A Representative Jesus Perez when his school goes to 2A in the fall.

She encouraged the SBOD to participate in all elections, noting that online voting for ATSSB officers was not good.

She encouraged everyone to attend the General Session and to call or text with concerns or

(Continued on Page 23)

(SBOD Minutes, continued from Page 22):

suggestions in the future.

Executive Director's Report by Kenneth Griffin:

- SCHOLARSHIP REPORT: Value of portfolio was \$233,945.97 as of January 30. Dividends are reinvested into the brokerage account each month. We have 23 3-year recipients this year = \$11,500 (with one more possible - student who made first 3 years but did not audition for 4th - they must apply) and 6 4-year recipients this year = \$12,000 for a total of \$23,500 in scholarships awarded this year. Since 1995, 647 individuals have been awarded ATSSB Scholarships totalling \$554,000.
- KENNER SCHOLARSHIP REPORT: Value of portfolio was \$39,703.44 as of January 30. Dividends are reinvested into the brokerage account each month. We have given twelve \$1,000 scholarships to date.
- GRIFFIN SCHOLARSHIP REPORT: Value of portfolio was \$396,104.51 as of January 30. Dividends are reinvested into the brokerage account each month. We have given two \$1,000 scholarships to date.
- COMMISSION FUND REPORT: Value of portfolio was \$13,482.41 as of January 30. Dividends are reinvested then funds withdrawn to pay for commissions each year.
- PROGRAM FUND REPORT: Value of portfolio was \$26,968.97 as of January 30. Dividends are reinvested then funds withdrawn to pay for All-State programs each year. This fund was established with a gift from the Elmer and Anita Schenk Family Trust beginning in 2007.

There was no old business.

Under new business:

Bob Vetter moved, and Matt Knight seconded that ATSSB adopt a policy regarding adding alternates to Area and the All-State Band. The policy approved by unanimous vote is:

- Each Region shall select alternates for Area at Region auditions and All-State Band at Area auditions.
- Every effort should be made by all ATSSB Active Members to notify their respective Region Coordinator of any vacancies or forfeiture of Area or All-State candidacy at the earliest opportunity.
- The Region Coordinator is the only person authorized to secure alternates from their Region for Area. The Region Coordinator shall notify the director of the alternate student, the Area Coordinator, and the TMEA office of the substitution.
- The Area Coordinator is the only person authorized to secure alternates from their Area for All-State. The Area Coordinator shall notify the director of the alternate student, the ATSSB Executive Director, and the TMEA office of the substitution.
- An alternate to Area may not represent a vacancy from a Region different from their own to Area. An alternate to All-State may not represent a vacancy from an Area different from their own Area.
- For vacancies that occur prior to the Area Audition date or the beginning of the All-State clinic, alternates should be notified as soon as the vacancy has been verified.
- For vacancies that occur on the day of audition or the beginning of the All-State clinic, alternates should be given every opportunity to arrive before the end of the first round of auditions. Alternates should not be substituted until the end of the first round.

In other New Business, Rod Rodriguez raised concerns about not getting all emails being sent regarding

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(SBOD Minutes, continued from Page 23):

voting and other important time-sensitive messages. It was determined that many schools block emails with attachments and for many other reasons. It was suggested that the ATSSB email address be given to school IT personnel to add to accepted emails. It was also suggested that dates for voting, etc., that would require an email link be posted online (Officer elections first week of January, OPS entry deadlines, etc.).

Angie Liss moved, and Kenneth Griffin seconded that we increase the State Jazz Coordinator stipend from \$1000 to \$2000. Motion passed.

Matt Knight moved, and Jim Jones seconded that the time and place of the General Session is to be set for 2:00 p.m. on Friday, February 13, 2026, in CC214. Motion passed.

There was no other new business.

Under Region reports:

Region 1: No report.

Region 2: No report.

Region 3: No report.

Region 4: No report.

Region 5: No report.

Region 6: No report.

Region 7: No report.

Region 8: No report.

Region 9: No report.

Region 10: No report.

Region 11: No report.

Region 12: No report.

Region 13: No report.

Region 14: No report.

Region 15: No report (Coordinator preparing for Honor Band concert).

Region 16: Congratulated Gina Muela for her induction into the ATSSB Hall of Fame.

Region 18: No report.

Region 21: No report.

Region 23: No report (Coordinator absent).

Region 24: No report.

Region 29: No report.

Under Area reports:

Area North: No report.

Area East: No report.

Area West: No report.

Area South: No report.

Area Central: No report.

Ms. Liss reminded everyone about the two Honor Band concerts Friday, then adjourned the meeting at 8:50.

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