

Scattering Seeds of Purpose and Passion

School band directors are more than just music teachers. They are cultivators of character, discipline, teamwork, and joy. With each rehearsal, performance, and moment of encouragement, they scatter seeds—seeds that often bloom far beyond the concert hall. These seeds are not just about music; they are about life. The 2025 Alabama All State Band Festival was a true testament of how we work with purpose and passion for our students.

The countless hours spent by so many individuals helped to assure this year's All State Festival was a resounding success. We began the festival with our President Elect, Keith Anderson doing a fantastic job with our Solo Festival. I commend the sixty nine participants in the prelims, who poured their hearts and souls into their performances. To celebrate 25 years of this event, the Solo Festival winner was awarded the Glenn Spiller Solo Festival Scholarship. Congratulations to Thomas Washer for his first place finish along with our other finalists: Gabriel Ballesteros Avila, Madeline Cagle, Luke Chynoweth, Ashlynn Hayes, Mollie Lewis, Michael Madera, Cannon Spidle and Caleb Wilson.

Our All State Band conductors were absolutely incredible and gave so much of themselves to our students. I am so appreciative of our hosts and percussion techs; Red Band conductor Dr. Amy Woody was hosted by Jon Bubbett and Rebekah Hammock, White Band conductor Mr. Randall Standridge was hosted by Heather Henson and Doug Teuscher, Blue Band conductor Dr. Peter Boonshaft was hosted by Damon McAllister and Zack O'Bryant, Land MS Band conductor Dr. Mary Land was hosted by Tim and Connie Hammond and Josh Lynch, and the Owens MS Band conductor Mr. William Owens was hosted by David Caddell and Courtney Langford. The percussion equipment was organized and provided for all of our bands by Meredyth Petersen and the Directors of District 7.

As I reflect on the All State Band Festival and the broader impact of band programs in Alabama, I'm filled with a profound sense of gratitude. Gratitude for the dedicated members of the entire ABA Board, who tirelessly work behind the scenes to assure our students have opportunities to grow and experience musical moments that they will cherish for a lifetime. I am grateful to have served on the ABA Board with our outgoing Past President Joel Henson, Jazz Chairman Nick McDonald, along with our District Chairmen Davin Kyle District 1, Sid Hearn District 3, Emily Gray District 5 and Susan Henderson District 7. They have given of their time, energy and leadership selflessly, and it is appreciated by all of us. I also want to thank the awesome exhibitors that we had! The venue was always busy and it is exciting to see new products and concepts being brought into our band world!

One of the greatest highlights of the festival was having Dr. Paula A. Crider share her immense knowledge, her unwavering passion and the beauty of her heart with us. She is a beacon of light that has impacted countless people throughout her prestigious career. The seeds she has sown in the music education community are deeply rooted in all that have had the opportunity to learn from her. I am beyond grateful to the ABA Board for the opportunity to have her join us.

As Dr. Crider reminded us, *"Why do we throw ourselves—heart, soul and often-abused bodies—into a relentlessly demanding occupation? Because music can touch our souls in a place nothing else can. Because the smile of a child can make it all worthwhile. And if we do our jobs well, every day has the potential for sharing the joy of high achievement. Through music we teach life lessons. We create memories that will last long after we are gone."* In other words, what we scatter through our teaching gives our students the opportunity to become more responsible, develop leadership skills, and have a sense of belonging. Band becomes a place where students find their voice, their people, and their purpose. Many will not go on to pursue music professionally, but the lessons planted by us stay with them, like a steady rhythm guiding their steps through life. In the end, the true measure of a band director's impact is not in the trophies or the performances, but in the lives touched and the futures shaped. It isn't about what we gather, it is about what we scatter. I pray that I have scattered more than I gathered and I thank you, from the depths of my soul, for the opportunity to have served as President of the Alabama Bandmasters Association. May you all have a peaceful ending to the school year, filled with a renewed sense of purpose and passion.