

Greetings! Western District is continuing to keep active to benefit its members and their students. We had an outstanding Senior Festival in January. I would like to thank our gracious hosts, Dr. Benedict Smar and the music education students at UMass Amherst, for their help with making the Festival an exciting music making experience for our students. I would also like to thank the managers, Mark Todd, Paul Sawyer, Karen Atherton, and Christina Climo, and their assistants for their many hours of hard work that helped to make the Festival such a success.

We eagerly look forward to the Junior Festival on March 7 and March 21 (snow dates are March 8 and March 22). The coordinators have been planning professional development sessions and forums for the membership to discuss the audition rotation currently in place and if any changes need to be made. Details will be sent via e-mail and posted on the District website. We will also have general membership luncheons at both West Springfield High School and UMass Amherst starting at 1:00 PM to discuss important District and state business. All District members are invited to attend any membership luncheon, session, or event regardless of whether or not you have students at the Junior Festival.

After both Festivals are completed, a new team of assistant managers will be needed. If you have never managed a group before, now is a great time to get involved and help to create great musical experiences for the students of the District. Please contact me for more information.

We are very excited that SGMM and the Gill-Montague Regional School District will host a General Music Festival in the Western District! Save Saturday, May 16 on your calendar for this exciting and enriching event for you and your students. More information, including the registration flyer, is on the District website. Questions may be directed to Steve Damon, GMF coordinator ([sdamon@gmrsd.org](mailto:sdamon@gmrsd.org)). Also, don't forget about our Elementary Sharing Session on Friday, May 15 starting at 4:00 PM at the Community Music School of Springfield.

Be on the lookout in early April for your invitation to the Spring membership dinner meeting at Union Station in Northampton on Tuesday, May 5 starting at 4:00 PM. More and more members have been attending these important meetings and we hope the trend continues! All members are welcome to attend any of our monthly meetings for any period of time – check our calendar for dates, times, and locations.

Please let me know of Western District members that are retiring at the end of this school year. Also, be sure to nominate a deserving educator for the Western District Outstanding Educator Award. Information regarding the Award is on the District website. Please send your nominations to me by Tuesday, March 31.

Please let me or anyone on the Executive Board know how the District can be of assistance to you and your students, especially during these challenging economic times for our school districts. We have an outstanding team of educators working for you and your students to improve the quality of music education in the Western District. Our District, however, is only as strong as its members – now is your time to be active and get involved.

Take care and all the best to you.

*Dan*