



Fall 2020 Newsletter

Instrumental News James Drew, Director

Mark of Excellence Winners Named for 2020



Five orchestras in Fort Bend ISD received national recognition as winners in the 2020 *Mark of Excellence* project, a not-for-profit organization sponsored by *The Foundation for Music Education*, which seeks to recognize and award outstanding achievement in performance by high school and middle school bands, choirs and orchestras. Ensembles compare their performance quality to other outstanding groups from across the country. The top 25 percent of entrants are recognized as National Winners, with the second 25 percent named as Commended Winners. This year, 145 of the finest musical ensembles in the nation entered the competition. The project received entries from thirty-eight states. Winners are recognized in regional and/or national publications and at national and regional conventions.

In this year's *Mark of Excellence's National Orchestra Honors* project, the **Austin High School Camerata Orchestra**, directors Ann Victor and Zoran Jasmak, the **Dulles High School Honors String Orchestra**, directors Michael Isadore and Angela Yip, and the **Dulles Middle School Symphony Orchestra**, directors Sally Kirk and Edward Odeh, were named **National Winners**.

The **Garcia Middle School Full Orchestra**, directors Frances Weberpal, Giovanni Fuentes, Nicole Elias, and Joel Chavarria, and the **Austin High School Symphony Orchestra**, directors Ann Victor and Ryan Demkovich, were named **Commended Winners**.

Congratulations to the students and directors of these outstanding FBISD secondary music programs for being selected winners in the 2020 *Mark of Excellence* project!

Sartartia Middle School Orchestra Chosen to Perform at Nation's Largest Music Conference

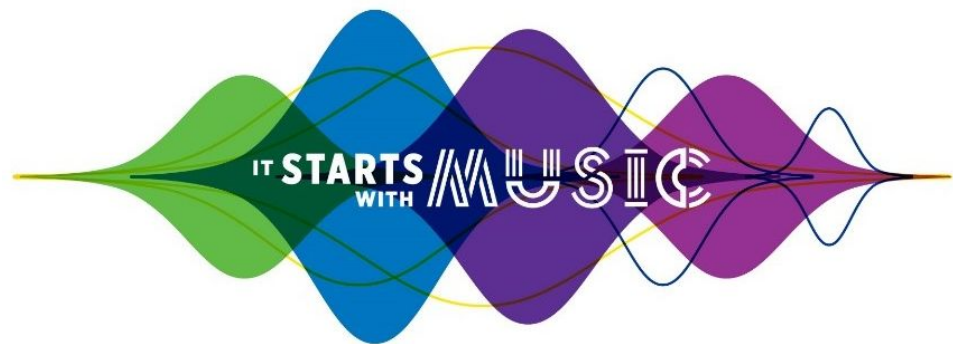


The **Sartartia Middle School Honor Orchestra** has been selected to perform as an Invited Orchestra at the **Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) annual 2021 Convention**. The Sartartia string orchestra was selected from recordings submitted by middle schools across the state of Texas. The Orchestra will record a live performance this January to be broadcast at this year's virtual convention in February 2021.

The annual four-day TMEA convention is the largest music educator's convention in the nation, with over 31,000 attendees (including over 11,000 active music educators). The convention is usually held in San Antonio's Henry B. González Convention Center; however due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 TMEA Clinic/Convention will be a virtual event from February 10-13, 2021. This year, TMEA has invited select performing groups that represent all divisions to submit recorded performances that will be presented during the virtual convention.

Since its inception in 2001, the Sartartia Orchestra consistently has placed as a finalist in the TMEA State Honor Orchestra competition for String Orchestra events, including being chosen as the 2012 State Honor String Orchestra under the direction of Ann Victor and Sophia Hsieh. Sophia Hsieh assumed the orchestra director position in 2017. Under her direction, the Sartartia Orchestra placed First Runner-Up in the TMEA Honor String Orchestra Competition in 2018 and 2019, was awarded the American Prize in 2018 and 2019, and was named a Finalist in the first Houston Cup 2019. The Sartartia String and Full Orchestras have performed a record four times at the prestigious Midwest Clinic in 2002, 2007, 2012, and 2017.

Region Orchestra and Band Competitions Go Virtual in 2020



Due to the pandemic this school year, the Texas Music Educators Association Region Band and Orchestra audition and selection process has gone virtual. Students record their audition music via an online platform, and then Music teachers evaluate and rank recordings to identify students selected for the All-Region groups. Students who score in the top percentage on their respective instruments are eligible to audition at the Area level for All-State.

Fort Bend ISD's **Orchestras** fared exceptionally well in the **Region audition process**. Of the 132 positions available in the **high school Region Orchestras**, FBISD students won 128 seats. Clements High School earned the most seats in the Region Orchestra with 46, while Dulles High School had the second highest number of students with 34, and Austin High School had the third most students with 33. At the **middle school level**, of the 195 available seats in the Middle School Region Orchestras, FBISD students earned 192 seats. Fort Settlement Middle School had the most students winning seats in the Region auditions with 66, Sartartia Middle School earned the second highest number of seats with 40, and Dulles Middle School earned the third most seats with 31.

FBISD Band students also did exceptionally well in **Region Band auditions**. At the **middle school level**, all 139 seats were earned by FBISD band students, with Fort Settlement Middle School earning the most seats with 28. Dulles Middle School earned the second highest number of seats with 22 students earning a place in the Region Bands, and First Colony Middle School earned the third highest number at 19. At the **high school level**, FBISD students won 77 percent of all Region Band positions available. Clements High School earned the most seats in the Region Band with 48, Elkins High Schools earned the second highest number of students with 19, while Austin and Ridge Point High Schools tied for the third most number of students, earning 15 seats each. A total of 82 Fort Bend ISD Band students advanced to the Area round of auditions to be held in early January.

For **High School Region Jazz Band** auditions held in October, Fort Bend ISD earned 20 seats of the 38 positions available. Kempner High School earned the most seats in the Region Band with 7, while Dulles High School and Ridge Point High School tied for the second highest number of students with 5 each. There were 11 FBISD Band students who advanced to the Area Jazz Band auditions.

Choir & Innovative Program News Gene Holkup, Assistant Director

Middle School Choir UIL Solo Contest and High School TMEA Region Choir Competitions Go Virtual in 2020



Due to the pandemic this school year, the UIL Region 13 Middle School Solo contest has gone virtual. The solos were recorded and submitted to a judge for evaluation, comments and a rating. Fort Bend ISD's **middle school Choirs** performed exceptionally well in the virtual **UIL Solo Contest**. FBISD middle school Choirs entered 281 soloists. 92% of our FBISD MS Soloists earned a Superior rating for a total of **258 First Division Medals**.

The Texas Music Educators Association Region Choir audition and selection process has also gone virtual due to the pandemic. Students recorded their audition music via an online platform, and then Music teachers evaluate and rank recordings to identify students selected for the All-Region groups. Students who score in the top 5 chairs on their respective voice part are eligible to audition at the Area level for All-State.

FBISD's **high school Choirs** performed exceptionally well in the **Region audition process**. FBISD placed 145 members of the 154 members in the **high school Region Choirs**. Clements High School earned the most chairs in the Region Choir with 36, while Travis High School had the second highest number of students with 18, and Ridge Point High School had the third most students with 17. FBISD did remarkably well at Pre-Area Auditions earning 70% of the 40 places available. 28 FBISD Choir students will advance to the Area round of auditions to be held in early January.



This Fall, the FBISD Department of Fine Arts began a Piano Technician Program, the first of its kind in any public school. The Piano Technician Program cadre includes 11 students from across the district under the leadership of Joseph Tomlinson, Piano Technician and Teacher. Presently, most piano technicians receive their training by becoming apprentices to an experienced technician. With more tuners retiring than there are replacing them, the demand for piano tuners is on the rise. Many large school districts and universities employ their own technician or team of technicians to maintain their piano inventory.

Upon program completion, students will have the necessary skills to begin working as a piano technician, work as a technician for a music retailer or continue their training at the Moores School of Music, University of Houston to become a Master Piano Technician.

Janet Menzie Named Region 4 Secondary Teacher of the Year



Fort Bend ISD's Secondary Teacher of the Year Janet Menzie was named the 2021 Region 4 Secondary Teacher of the Year! The regional winners were announced during the Region 4 Teachers of the Year Virtual Awards Ceremony held August 3, 2020.

Janet Menzie, Head Choir Director at Clements High School, represented Region 4 at the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) Texas Teacher of the Year program. “I am so gratified to have the value of fine arts instruction validated in this way by Region 4! Both the elementary and secondary Teachers of the Year this year teach fine arts! Our students need a balanced, holistic education from Kindergarten through 12th grade to be prepared for the ever-changing requirements of our world today,” Menzie shared. “Fine arts courses teach more than content. They teach innovation, resiliency, creativity, and emotional wellness. I am privileged to have this opportunity to represent my artist-teacher colleagues.”

David Yaffie, principal of Clements High School, believes Menzie sets the benchmark for outstanding choral music instruction in Texas. Her level of instructional expertise provides her students with an outstanding foundation for their development as musicians. “I am in awe of what she has accomplished. Beyond her teaching skills, Janet cares for each of her students as if they were her own children. Her students know she supports them as unique individuals with unique talents and skills,” Yaffie said. “It is my privilege to be Janet’s colleague and friend.”

Elementary Music News
Julie Boettiger, Coordinator

12th Annual Honor Choir Festival



Auditions for the 12th Annual Fort Bend ISD Honor Choir Festival were held in a new virtual process. The elementary music teachers were able to select 130 excellent young singers from across the district to participate in this year's festival. Our festival will be virtual for the first time in its history.

MusicplayOnline



Fort Bend ISD has a new Kodály based digital resource for the Elementary Music Classrooms for the 2020-2021 school year. MusicplayOnline includes interactive activities, seasonal and fun songs, rounds, partner songs, folk music, multicultural music and choral music. MusicplayOnline includes singing, playing instruments, moving to music, listening, creating and learning to read and write music. Important concepts are taught through play using this resource.

3rd Annual Fort Bend ISD Kodály Institute

Due to the pandemic, the Fort Bend ISD Kodály Institute was postponed in 2020, but we are moving full steam ahead with the planning of our Institute for the Summer of 2021. The Fort Bend ISD Kodály Institute serves FBISD Elementary Music Teachers and Choir Directors to enrich their skills in creating curriculum and delivering pedagogy in a Kodály inspired classroom. Participants experience and collect traditional (folk) materials that can be sequenced with the intention of leading their young music makers toward the goals of music literacy and musical understanding. The Institute is planned to take place in June of 2021 and will have its first group of participants complete Level 3 certification.

Theatre & Dance News Travis Springfield, Assistant Director

FBISD High School Theatre Participates in Virtual Texas Thespian State Festival

Over four weekends in November and December, seven FBISD high schools attended the Texas State Thespian Festival virtually along with hundreds of other drama students and teachers from across the state. Participants attended workshops, auditioned for colleges and scholarships as well as competed in individual and group events in a range of categories. FBISD was well represented with the following individual state recognitions:

- **Scholarship Winners:** Myles Keys - **Ridge Point HS** (\$2000), Caitlyn Harris - **Austin HS** (\$1500), Pradanya Subramanyan - **Clements HS** (\$1500)
- **Mainstage Selected Performer:** Eloka Dike - **Kempner HS**
- **Mainstage Technical Showcase:** Pradanya Subramanyan - **Clements HS**
- **State Thespian Officer Selection:** Talya Hammerman - **Ridge Point HS**

In addition to state recognitions, 38 students qualified for Nationals in 34 individual and group events:

- **Austin HS:** Isabella Tinnin - Costume Construction; Kayla Johnsen - Monologue; Briana Martinez - Solo Musical; Amelia Vandiver - Solo Musical
- **Bush HS:** Rhonor Efe - Monologue; Rachel Omotoso - Solo Musical; Jordan Okeke - Solo Musical; Emilie Petrich - Sound Design; Theresa Ezeani & Noel Obi - Duet Acting
- **Clements HS:** Jaycie Voller & Paige Yepsen - Duet Musical; Kaitlyn Millikin - Lighting Design; Tori Poole - Monologue; Alexander Pham - Monologue; Emma Kuo - Solo Musical; Andrea Vargas - Solo Musical; Pradanya Subramanyan - Stage Management; Isabella Marino - Theatrical Marketing
- **Dulles HS:** Courtney Menefee - Monologue; Chloe Arceneaux - Monologue; Mia Harryman - Solo Musical
- **Elkins HS:** Arwen Costello - Solo Musical
- **Kempner HS:** Mikijah Gaines - Monologue; Eloka Dike - Monologue; Julie Pham - Scenic Design; Zach Sharer - Scenic Design; Sabah Azam - Scenic Design; Payton Wolff - Solo Musical; Lola Miertschin - Solo Musical; Crystal Ike - Solo Musical
- **Ridge Point HS:** Maxey Levinton & Dalena Locklear - Duet Acting; Katherine Benton & Madeline Lumley - Duet Acting; Erin Brogan - Solo Musical; Nicholas Pizzuti - Solo Musical

The National competition occurs during the Virtual International Thespian Festival in Indiana in June. Best of luck to all of our National competitors!!

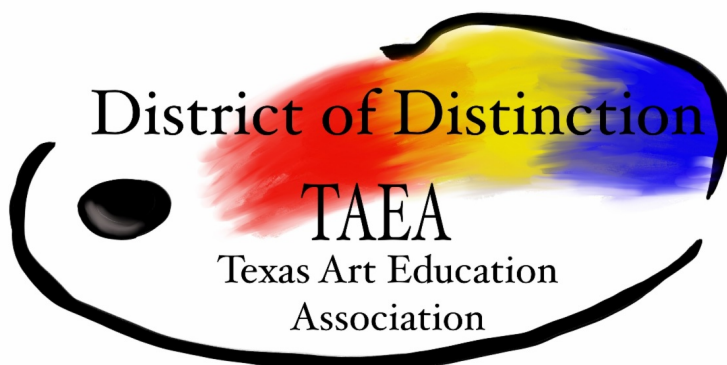


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Visual Arts News Fahmi Khan, Coordinator

Fort Bend ISD Wins 2020 TAEA District of Distinction Award



Texas Art Education Association (TAEA) has recognized Fort Bend Independent School District with the 2020 TAEA District of Distinction Award – in Visual Arts. This is the first time that the FBISD – Visual Arts program has been recognized with this honor. This highly distinguished award was given for providing a well-rounded education that advocates and integrates visual arts curriculum to inspire creativity and reach different learners. The award is based on recognizing the high standard of the Visual Arts program set by the district, with outstanding leadership in promoting the arts in the district and community. TAEA looks at the district's active participation in Regional and State VASE (Visual Arts Scholastic Event), field experience, community service (National Art Honor Society – NAHS), and community exhibitions to name a few as part of the rigorous rubric for the award.



Student Artwork Selected for TAEA Virtual TASA/TASB Exhibit

Each year, Texas Art Education Association – TAEA presents an exhibit of Pre-K -12th grade artwork from across the state of Texas at the Texas Association of School Administrators & Texas Association of School Boards (TASA/TASB) Fall Conference. This conference attracts school board members, superintendents, and district administrators from all over Texas. Due to Covid-19, the exhibit this year has been virtual.

The following students' artwork was selected to be part of the TAEA- TASA/TASB Virtual Exhibit:

Anna Desantos - **Clements High School**

Catherine Li - **Dulles High School**

Lorelai Galloway - **James Patterson Elementary**

Avery Levermann - **Settlers Way Elementary**

Brynn Mahoney - **Highlands Elementary School**

Alison Ngo Rita - **Drabek Elementary School**

Jake Nguyen - **Walker Station Elementary School**

Sophia Santos - **Mission Bend Elementary School**

Below are some of the selected pieces in the exhibit:



Artist: Avery Levermann



Artist: Jake Nguyen



Artist: Brynn Mahoney



Artist: Lorelai Galloway



Artist: Allison Ngo



Artist: Sophia Santos



Artist: Catherine Li



Artist: Anna Desantos

Fine Arts News

FBISD Fine Arts Administrators Elected to State Offices

This fall, two Fort Bend ISD fine arts administrators were elected to serve on the boards of two prestigious state arts education organizations. Jim Drew, our Director of Fine Arts, was elected to the Board of the Texas Music Administrators Conference (TMAC), and Travis Springfield, Assistant Director of Fine Arts for Dance, Theatre, and Arts Integration, was elected to the Board of the Texas Educational Theatre Association (TxETA).

Drew will serve a four-year term on the TMAC Board, serving one year in each officer position, as Secretary, Vice-President, President and Past-President. Composed of fine arts administrators from across the state, TMAC’s purpose is to promote and support music education and music educators through collaboration, networking and the sharing of best practices to ensure that every child in Texas can receive quality instruction in understanding, appreciating and performing music.

Springfield will serve a six-year term on the TxETA Board, serving two years each as President-Elect, President, and Past-President. Founded in 1951 and serving as the primary state organization for the theatre teachers, TxETA’s goal is to support educational theatre at all level, from elementary to college.



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