

From the Utah Music Educators Association (UMEA) Executive Board

September 22, 2017

The Utah Music Educators Association (UMEA) Orchestra Committee made the UMEA Executive Committee aware of an incident at the May 2016 State Orchestra Festival in which there was compelling evidence that ratings may have been altered by a director. The Executive Committee took these charges seriously and began an inquiry. A mutually agreed upon mediator was engaged to investigate the incident. Upon closing the investigation, the mediator acknowledged that the orchestra committee had a compelling argument and they were persons of integrity. The mediator also found the explanations of the director and student teacher to be highly credible and could not state with certainty that the ratings were altered. This resolution left both sides with unanswered questions. In the months following, concessions have been made on both sides. The final posted festival scores were those affirmed by adjudicators' affidavits and the board accepted resignations of persons on both sides of the issue. When concerns were brought to the Utah High School Activities Association (UHSAA) regarding the ability of the director in the incident to adjudicate impartially, the matter was again given considerable attention. The UHSAA Music Committee concluded that the director, who has several years of successful adjudication experience, would be retained on the adjudication list and could be trusted to provide objective and constructive comments.

UMEA prides itself in providing excellent state festival experiences for its member teachers and their students. This happens year after year due to the many people, such as the current Orchestra Committee, who log countless hours of prudent work. In the months since this incident, the UMEA Board has implemented some procedures that will create a better support system for our state festivals. Not having an Executive Committee member at the 2016 State Orchestra Festival was a problem. An Executive Committee member is now in attendance at every state festival. The board has created a new position of State High School Festival Manager. This person is a resource for each state festival committee and chair. S/he will assist with last minute scheduling issues, adjudication accommodations, etc. things that may arise at a festival that are outside the norm. These implementations proved helpful in the spring 2017 festival season. Better overall adjudication procedures throughout UMEA and UHSAA music events will be a welcome end product.

We are now at a point where all involved want a conclusion that is best for UMEA. We all love the association and have spent many hours serving it. The board understands that the orchestra committee is disappointed with the results of the investigation, but the UMEA Executive Board feels that due process was provided. We acknowledge the extreme amount of hours spent on both sides in an effort to resolve this issue amicably. The UMEA Executive Board feels that a petition sent to state music educators would be extremely damaging to the association. If the petition is circulated, it will necessitate this statement being sent to the UMEA membership. If the Orchestra Committee proceeds with action to make this matter public by any means, they must proceed on their own, not as a committee under the UMEA brand.

Due to confidentiality by-laws that govern and protect all who serve in UMEA, Executive Committee members and Executive Board members are not free to discuss any board meeting deliberations where personnel issues are concerned.

Statement approved by UMEA Executive Board vote, September 22, 2017.