

May 27, 2022

Dear TODA Membership,

It is my honor and privilege to write on behalf of Member-at-Large nominee Sean Carlton. In the last decade, I have seen him become a brilliant music educator who would serve our profession well as a member of the TODA Executive Board.

I first met Sean in 2014 when he interviewed to be the assistant orchestra director at Newman Smith High School in Carrollton. As the director of a well-known and highly-regarded program, I knew I needed a strong musician with solid pedagogy and a love for students. It was easy to recognize those traits in Sean Carlton immediately. His excellent work at Madison Middle School in Abilene prepared him for a new challenge at the high school level. We worked side-by-side for two wonderful years, and when I went to graduate school full time, Sean took over as the head director. In the two years he held that position, I watched and listened as the top orchestra played at a level that hadn't been heard at that school in a while.

When family called him to a position in the Houston area, I was sad, but I knew he would thrive and flourish at Seven Lakes High School. What a joy it was to see Sean on the podium at an Honor Orchestra concert! Beyond that, Sean is a widely sought clinician and judge. His interest and willingness to learn new things and methods is invigorating. One of the most special things about Sean Carlton is his acceptance and near excitement when he's wrong about something; he sees it as a learning opportunity. I wish more of us were that way.

Sean Carlton would make an excellent member of the TODA Executive Board not only because of his teaching resume, but also because of his willingness to volunteer and serve at the region and state level. When I was TODA President, Sean conducted an outstanding reading session, and he's been on the Hospitality Committee several times. He has a deeper understanding of the convention than many do, and he wants to make sure everyone has a good experience. I have no doubt that he would get along well with the other board members as they navigate the future of our organization.

Lastly, Sean is a dear friend and wonderful person. We were fast friends because he is kind and an excellent listener. I know his wife and children would say the same about him. It's difficult to quantify those virtues in a letter like this, but I think all can agree that kindness and morality are a good fit for the TODA Executive Board.

Sean has my highest recommendation, and I hope you vote for him as the next TODA Member-at-Large.

Sincerely,
Lamar Smith
Orchestra Director
McKinney North High School