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A Note from Dr. Tim

Greetings. In this edition of *Touchpoint*, **Dean Westman**, Director of Orchestra and Performing Arts Department Chair at Avon High School in Avon, Indiana shares his unique perspective on the importance of Music Education not only as an educator but also as a parent.





Welcome to our newest

V.I.P.s

Mark Lane

Central Washington University

Scott McCormick

Association for Music Parents

Rusty Briel

Indiana State School Music Association

Our Next Issue Featuring: An article by **Rick Ghinelli, retired** Fine Arts Supervisor for Spring ISD in Houston, TX and Conn-Selmer Educational Support Manager, TX

In Our Last Issue: **Building Trust** by Gary Markham

click here for full article

Confessions of a Band Parent

By Dean Westman

school time for MOST of you. For those of us on a "balanced calendar" school year, we've been at it for Picture" glasses on. How is pacing? Are we 6 weeks! This is the part where I am supposed to write the "It's a Brand New Year/Fresh Start" or "Why Music Education matters" article that will make you feel great...at least until around 3rd period of your first day of school.

Instead, I want to share with you an amazing and amusing experience that I have been having since beginning my 20th year of teaching music six weeks ago. Our only child, Abigail, is now a freshman at Avon High School. She plays violin in the Orchestra and is a member of the Avon Marching Black and Gold Color Guard. Yep...I am a Color Guard Dad!

Throughout my career, I've watched countless friends of mine have their own children go through their programs and have always wondered how they were able to wear the teacher hat AND parent hat with such grace and class, and what I've discovered is that I have NO IDEA how they did it!

As far as the "Color Guard Dad" Hat goes, I've lost all perspective. In addition to being the Performing Arts Department Chair and Orchestra Director at Avon High School, I've had the blessing of being able to serve as one of the show designers for the award-winning Marching Black and Gold. It's a Dream Team! As a designer, it means total creative freedom. When you have band directors like Jay Webb and Matt Harloff, the designers get to approach creating a show with a Disney-Like "If you can dream it, you can do it" mantra. Thursday night ensemble rehearsal is the night when literally hundreds of parents and community members come

Well, it's back to school time again. OK...it's back to out to see where the band and show are at. A big part of my job is to really look at the show with "Big creating enough energy here? Is the focus exactly where we want it to be? And as I sat at the first big Thursday ensemble rehearsal ready to contribute to the team, I found myself completely fixated on MY OWN KID! After they finished the first run through of the opener, I turned to the crowd of parents sitting behind me and said "I have no idea how everyone else's kid performed, but mine was AWESOME!"

> It was at that moment that I realized that perhaps I don't have to wear the parent hat and the music teacher hat. Maybe I just wear one really big hat? The experience of having Abby in orchestra and color guard is not only making me a better teacher, it's making me a better dad! I am more present in my own life, both at work and at home. I am finding more joy in the smallest things. Heck, I'm finding joy in running Freshman Band Oboe Sections for Mr. Webb!

> So, YES...it is a brand new year and an opportunity for a fresh start and YES, Music Education does matter! I'm not telling you as a colleague, I'm promising you as a MUSIC PARENT...YOU and every other great teacher that makes a positive impact on our children each and every day are my heroes. Tune out any of the "noise" that distracts you from creating incredible experiences for kids through music because none of that matters. The kids need you and they need music in their lives...so get back to 3rd period and tune those oboes!