

Candidates for Office

The following Board of Director positions are open for election in the Fall of 2018, with the nominees are listed for each:

- Auditions – Rick Mitchell, Kearney Public and Brad Ronne, Scottsbluff High
- College/University Affairs – Louie Eckhardt, Hastings College and Derrick Fox, University of Nebraska-Omaha
- Middle Level / Jr. High Affairs – Jody Lindquist, Beadle Middle School (Millard) and Dave Schaefer, Ralston Middle School

Candidates were asked to share a short biography and to answer the following three questions:

1. What does Nebraska's music education of the future look like?
2. What specific strengths, skills, and ideas do you possess that will make you a better member of the board of directors?
3. What do you feel NMEA leadership needs to do to strengthen music education, the profession, and our organization?

Here are the candidate's unedited biographies and responses to the questions.

AUDITIONS

Candidate: Rick Mitchell

Rick Mitchell has been teaching since 1993 and has been at Kearney High School since 2000 as an Instrumental Music Instructor and Music Department Chair and Tri M Sponsor. He also taught at Schuyler Central High School, Elm Creek Schools, served as adjunct brass faculty at the University of Nebraska – Kearney, and established Kearney's first Kindermusik studio.

Rick is a trumpet player that performs in both the classical and jazz styles and has performed with groups including the Columbus Jazz Orchestra, Dobytown Brass Quintet, Flatwater Jazz Orchestra and the Kearney Symphony Orchestra. He is also active as a clinician and adjudicator throughout Nebraska. Rick holds a B.M.E from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and an MA in Music Education from the University of Nebraska-Kearney. He lives in Kearney with his wife and two children and has a son studying Saxophone performance at UNL.



Mitchell Question Responses

1. Judging by the people that are in the profession, things look pretty bright for the future of music education in this state. Nebraska is full of competent, caring individuals that are passionate about passing along the craft and artistry of music to the coming generations. However, the inequity of resources in both finances and personnel continues to be an issue and looks to only increase in the coming years. This has the potential to create musical have's and have not's in our state, which would be quite tragic. Current and, I'm sure, future technology has the potential to bridge that gap if we are willing to get creative and utilize it to its full potential.

In addition, with the emphasis on 21st Century Skills music education is poised to truly become an integral part of the curriculum, even more so than it is already. Skills like creativity, collaboration, problem solving, flexibility, leadership, and social responsibility are inherent in the music making process and are things that we, as music educators, have been teaching for a long time. Our challenge is to fully implement these skills and demonstrate to administrators and decision makers that we are uniquely suited to propel students successfully into their future.

2. My breadth of experience would be an incredibly valuable asset to the board of directors. Having had students as young as 7 weeks old up to college seniors in both vocal and instrumental music gives me a wide perspective on the needs of educators in the state. I have served on many different boards including church boards, Kearney Symphony board, and I am currently the President of the Kearney Concert Association board. In these positions, I have provided leadership and learned from a wide variety of people in many different contexts.

In terms of the ideas that I would bring, the audition process that has been put in place seems to be working well. I would initially work within this process and look for ways to make it as fair as possible so that every qualified student gets an opportunity at an All State experience. I would also continually look for the best practices in choosing students for these groups.

3. One of the most valuable things we can do to strengthen music education is to focus on current high school students that have the skills and the heart to be potential music educators. These people are the future of our profession. Tri M is the high school division of our professional organization and is a perfect vehicle to begin to build into students the tools they will need to be successful educators and to give them a vision of what it would be like to teach music. Let's face it, the students I am talking about are more than likely super successful in many disparate areas. It is vital to capture the imagination of the best and brightest of these and ensure that they go on to a career in music education.

NMEA has done a good job of working with other organizations such as NSAA, NSEA, and lawmakers in Lincoln. This needs to be continued, strengthened and possibly expanded. It is so important to remove barriers that students may have to participation in music. As I stated before, most of our kids excel in many areas and feel pressure to dedicate themselves to those activities. While this is not inherently a bad thing, it does tend to create conflicts and when that happens someone loses. There are things that the adults involved can do to lessen these conflicts and working with these groups is a vital tool in that endeavor.

AUDITIONS

Candidate: Brad Ronne

Brad Ronne has been a Nebraska music educator for 26 years. He served as the K-12 vocal music educator in Mitchell, NE for 13 years and is currently the 9-12 vocal music educator at Scottsbluff High School. At Scottsbluff High School, Brad directs 3 curricular choirs, 2 show choirs and a very active musical theatre program. Brad also teaches 3 levels of music technology. He is a graduate of Grand Island Northwest High School, Hastings College, and Lesley University. He traveled with the Nebraska Ambassadors of Music European Tour as a staff member and conductor, and has been a choral clinician and adjudicator in Nebraska and Wyoming. Brad has also served on the listening committee for ACDA National Honor Choirs.



Ronne Question Responses

1. Music plays such a critical role in the development of each child. We as music educators need no reminder of that (preaching to the choir)! Each year, it seems the electronic and social media distractions available to students gets more insistent. The intellectual, emotional and social growth that students get from ensemble participation will become even more critical with each year.

From large schools to small rural community schools, students need to have access to music. I have seen the NMEA All State process challenge and grow students both in the small school environment as well as the larger schools. Whether they are selected to All State or not, they will have grown from the effort. This in turn feeds back into the school program as well!

I see so many passionate young educators who are eager to impact their students. NMEA has the awesome responsibility to serve and grow those educators statewide and the All State process can be part of that growth.

2. For 26 years, I have had students who gained the benefits of the NMEA organization. I know that there is a great deal of work involved for any board position. I am certainly willing to step up to the plate and contribute my time and energy to an organization that has given so much to so many. Answering the “what are your strengths” questions are always tough. First of all, I bring a strong set of technology skills to the table. For Director of Auditions, this would be a must. My Masters is in Technology in Education, and it is what fueled my passion to pilot the Music Technology program at Scottsbluff. What started in an old practice room with 5 weak computers has expanded to a full 15 station lab and recording studio. Those skills would be really critical in understanding and troubleshooting the audition process.

Throughout my career, I have had to learn how to be very organized in order to accomplish some of the large projects involved with my job. I am able to plan and execute large projects well (show choir festival, yearly musical, honor choir events, etc.)

I am also someone who is always looking at things to see if there is a better way to do them. “If it’s not broke, don’t fix it.” is an important philosophy. If there is a better way, however, let’s find a way to improve the process.

3. If you look at colleges, the number of music education students has plummeted! In the next 5-10 years, we will probably see a shortage of music educators in the state. It’s already affecting some of the schools in rural districts. It will be really important that NMEA finds ways to inspire high school students to pursue this amazing profession. NMEA has already worked hard to include the collegiate level future educators in this organization. Finding new ways to challenge and prepare the collegiate members to become the next generation of teachers is critically important. Investing in these two demographics has been and will continue to be vital discussions to NMEA.

There are many rural schools where teachers are not able to participate in the Fall conference. This conference is such an important professional development tool to us as educators. We need to always be exploring ways to get a higher percentage of educators involved with NMEA. I’m sure this same discussion was a part of NMEA 50 years ago and will still be discussed 50 years from now. It’s that important!

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS

Candidate: Louie Eckhardt

Dr. Louie Eckhardt is Assistant Professor of Music and Director of Bands at Hastings College, also teaching high brass, music history, and serves as Fine Arts and Humanities Division Chair. He currently plays principal trumpet of the Hastings Symphony Orchestra, principal trumpet of the Monroe Symphony Orchestra, and with the Cathedral Brass Quintet. He has performed with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, Acadiana Symphony Orchestra, Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra, Boulder Chamber Orchestra, Cheyenne Symphony Orchestra, and the Rapides Symphony Orchestra. As a Baroque trumpeter, Dr. Eckhardt has performed with La Follia Austin Baroque, the American Bach Soloists, Mercury, and Bach Society Houston.

Dr. Eckhardt has performed with the Victoria Bach Festival in Victoria, TX, and the Vail International Dance Festival. In 2013, he presented masterclasses and recitals across Panamá through the Fundación Sinfonía Concertante de Panamá. He is the founder and artistic director of the INTEGERS new music performance series.

Dr. Eckhardt holds degrees from Hastings College, The Pennsylvania State University, and Louisiana State University. He studied with Daniel Schmidt, Langston J. Fitzgerald, III, and Brian Shaw, as well as Denny Schneider, Keith Benjamin, John Thiessen, Charles Lirette, and Vance Woolf. He studied conducting with Dennis Glocke, Donald McKinney, and Carlos Riazuelo.

Eckhardt Question Responses



1. Integrating music technology into the classroom will be critical over the next several years. Today's "iGen" students already view technology as nothing special, just a normal part of everyday life. Curriculum and pedagogy must adapt to use technology seamlessly and efficiently, for both instructional and assessment purposes. Educators must then teach students how to use that technology creatively and responsibly. Bridging the technological gap will be the only way that we can truly connect with them.

In addition, there are so many career paths in the music field that lie outside of performance and education—and some of these careers have yet to be invented. We must begin teaching students production, recording, and sound engineering from a young age, and to encourage their creativity in integrating music and technology. Many of today's students are already doing it on their own!

2. First, I'm a product of the great music education of this state. I was born here and then attended elementary school through my undergraduate education here. I also spent 5 years as a music educator in the state. I have an intimate familiarity with education in Nebraska as both a student and a teacher. I also have perspective gained from spending time outside of Nebraska, in Pennsylvania, Louisiana, and Texas. I believe this diverse range of experience would benefit the board of directors by providing a fresh perspective.

I also bring with me a respect for the past but a willingness to challenge the status quo and to innovate. I firmly believe we need to make changes to our current music education models to incorporate the changing demographics and needs of our students. We are making music education irrelevant by sticking to decades-old models that, at best, ignore our students' needs, and at worst, alienate our students.

3. I feel like NMEA is an amazing resource already for music education in Nebraska, and would like to build upon these resources. I would love to see NMEA's mentorship program thrive with music educators in the state, connecting younger educators with more experienced educators. We can start making these connections early on in the process, with music education majors across the state. Our more experienced and retired music educators have a wealth of knowledge that they can share with younger educators, while still allowing plenty of space for them to innovate.

Additionally, we can provide resources for learning music technology and integrating it into our classroom instruction and assessment, as well as into our curricula. I would love for NMEA to sponsor free workshops that could serve as meaningful, innovative professional development for music educators. I would also like to find a way to encourage teachers to share ideas and success stories for incorporating technology in the classroom.

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS

Candidate: Derrick Fox

Dr. Derrick Fox is the Director of Choral Activities and Assistant Professor of Music at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. He earned a BME from Arkansas State University, a MM in Choral Conducting from the University of Missouri – Columbia and a DMA in Choral Conducting from Michigan State University, where he was awarded the prestigious University Enrichment Graduate Fellowship.

Dr. Fox has conducted all state choirs, honor choirs and led professional development workshops across the United States and internationally. His professional workshops focus on assessment in the choral classroom, inclusive pedagogy, building classroom community, rehearsal strategies, choral conducting techniques and shape note singing in the African American community.

Dr. Fox serves on the National ACDA Diversity Subcommittee, the Missouri Music Educators Association Diversity Council and is the Collegiate Coordinator for Student Activities for Nebraska Choral Directors Association. As an author, he has written articles for many organizations and was a contributing author in the Hal Leonard/McGraw Hill choral textbook *Voices in Concert*. His compositions



and arrangements are published by Hal Leonard Sacred Music Series, G. Schirmer Andrea Ramsey Choral Series and BriLee Music. His newest book, *Yes You Can: A Band Director's Guide to Teaching Choirs* is published by Brilee/Carl Fischer.

Fox Question Responses

1. Like many around the country, music educators in Nebraska are starting the work required to grow the musical tent in a way that will make room for more participants. It is my hope that the fruits of this labor will yield higher participation from underrepresented populations from around the state. With this work, we will have more diversity in the All State ensembles and a wider variety of selected performance groups at NMEA. Because of the aforementioned efforts, the future of Nebraska's music education community will be a stronger representation of the mission to represents all phases of music education in schools, colleges, universities, and teacher-education institutions.

2. Having taught middle schoolers through adults, I am positioned to be an advocate for our educators who teach at those levels. My first degree is in instrumental music education and the experiences that came with that training gives me a perspective that may be helpful in connecting the instrumental and vocal areas in NMEA. The role of NMEA in supporting in-service teachers is invaluable and my role as a college professor is focused on teaching pre-service music educators. Marrying my current work at the University of Nebraska-Omaha with the work of NMEA will help engage our in-service and pre-service teachers in meaningful exchanges that will keep music education in Nebraska vibrant and relevant. Connecting pre-service and in-service teachers is vital for sharing best teaching practices and strengthening the pool of educators that step in front of our young musicians each school year. More specifically, I want to explore how we can use technology to support real time conversation between college students and in-service teachers, as well as establishing a more successful mentoring experience for new teachers. I am interested in working to showcase the successful work of educators who teach middle school musicians and those from areas with limited resources. I would also bring to the board a passion for building relationships with community music making organizations from churches and community bands, choirs and orchestras.

3. The mission of the Nebraska Music Education Association is to foster life-long learning and active music-making by all Nebraskans. Organizations must ask themselves who they want to be a part of their activities and the practices/systems they use to engage those populations. If NMEA intends to be inclusive and diverse, we must revisit the processes that have been in place to identify those who are lauded as successful music educators in our state. We must be intentional to showcase at the state convention diverse ensembles, elementary ensembles, instrumental and vocal groups that represent educators who are working with imbalanced instrumentation/voicings. We need to utilize audition systems that allow equal access to students in all corners of the state, promote an All State adjudication process that allows students from culturally diverse backgrounds to achieve success (particularly in the choral area), encourage diversity amongst compositions performed by all-state ensembles, continue to provide professional development sessions that challenge our educators to be the best version of themselves in the classroom and utilize technology as a way to connect the membership across the state. The next step for the Nebraska Music Educators Association is to outline what we value as an organization on this quest to foster life-long learning and active music making by all Nebraskans.

MIDDLE LEVEL / JUNIOR HIGH AFFAIRS

Candidate: Jodi Linquist

Jody Lindquist is currently in her twenty third year of teaching and eighteenth year as Director of Bands at Beadle Middle School (Millard Public Schools). Her teaching responsibilities include directing the sixth, seventh and eighth grade concert bands, jazz band, wind ensemble and sixth grade general music. Prior to moving to Omaha, Jody taught elementary general music for the Woodland School District in Gages Lake, Illinois. While in Millard she has served on the district curriculum writing team, music leadership team and as the middle level band PLC leader. Jody received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Education from the University of Nebraska at Kearney (1991) and her Master of Music Performance degree from the University of Miami (1994). Mrs. Lindquist’s professional memberships include NEA, MEA, NSBA, NMEA, and NAFME. Jody currently resides in Omaha. Her husband Slade is an Optometrist with Army Medicine in Ft. Bragg, NC. They have two children. Zac plays French horn with the Marine Band in Quantico, VA. Zoe is a freshman at Millard West High School and an outstanding young oboist and pianist.



Lindquist Question Responses

1. I believe the future of music education in Nebraska is ever changing. Many districts are struggling financially with the loss of local and state aid in recent years. Some districts have struggled to find a way to balance the budget forcing districts into a process of selective abandonment. Thus forcing cuts to music and other district programs to maintain a balanced budget. This provides an increasing challenge to music programs across the state. Asking music teachers to teach more with less. Technology is becoming an increasingly important part of education. Many schools now have secondary students that are one to one with technology. We as music educators must constantly work to find ways to integrate technology into our classrooms and yet maintain the integrity of what we do. Thorough it all we as music educators are resilient. We collaborate and work together to find solutions so we can continue to provide a quality music education to students across our state.
2. As a music educator I have twenty three years of experience teaching K-8 band and vocal music. Those years of experience represent the knowledge and experience I have acquired in working with students of all abilities, parents, administrators and colleagues. I am organized and pay attention to the details. I am a good listener and always open to listening to and sharing your thoughts and ideas with the board. I started my musical life as a student in TX and have knowledge of music education outside the state of Nebraska. Having started as a student in TX, moved to England for two years of high school, undergrad in NE, grad school in FL, teaching experience in IL as well as NE. I would be honored to serve on the NMEA Board of Directors representing the middle level educators.
3. I feel it is NMEA’s primary responsibility to act as an advocate for music education and educators in the state of Nebraska. NMEA needs to ensure it is providing members with advocacy and support at all levels throughout the year. NMEA needs to continue to offer an outstanding convention that provides professional growth opportunities for music teachers that are relevant to music and the students in our schools today.

MIDDLE LEVEL / JUNIOR HIGH AFFAIRS

Candidate: Dave Schaefer

Mr. Schaefer is currently the Vocal Music Teacher at Ralston Middle School, where he directs the 7th and 8th grade concert choirs, the show choir, and teaches a music appreciation class. In addition to his curricular responsibilities, he currently serves on the coordinating committee for the NCDA Middle Level Summer Honor Choir. He received his Bachelor of Music in Education degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in December of 2013, and will be starting his Master’s in Choral Conducting through the University of Nebraska at Omaha in the Fall of 2018. Outside of the school day, Mr. Schaefer has performed with Opera Omaha, taught voices lessons



through Sing Omaha Studios, and taught the Papillion-La Vista South Marching Band and WGI Winter Winds.

Schaefer Question Responses

1. I believe we can expect to see continued growth in school and professional music organizations across the state, as well as an increase in the quality of those programs. I have been out of high school for 10 years now, and in that time I continue to be impressed by how the standard of excellence rises every year. Through the variety of elementary, secondary, and professional concerts I have attended in both choral and instrumental music over the years, it is easy to see how the skill level of our students continues to increase. If we continue to stay the course, and fight for our students, and for our schools, we will continue to see growth in Nebraska's music programs. We need to continue to voice our concerns about budget cuts and keeping music in our schools to our local and state representatives. Positive change and growth will not happen unless we fight for it.

2. I am tireless in my pursuit for excellence in my ensembles, my teaching, and my personal self. My goal is to always be the best I can be in whatever I set out to do. I am constantly pursuing new knowledge and new ideas for my classroom. If I run into a problem, or have a question I am unable to answer, I always have a list of people on hand that I can contact for advice.

My primary goal if chosen for this position is to help increase membership in the middle level area. From personal observation, I have not seen many middle school teachers attending the conference over the last several years. My goal would be to reach out to those teachers in hopes of working out a way for them to attend. I would also work towards bringing in more clinicians and presentations geared towards the middle school age group.

In this position, I would strive to be a resource in areas such as classroom management, technology in the classroom, repertoire selection, and vocal pedagogy. Though not my primary field, I do have quite a bit of experience in instrumental music. I have several experienced instrumental colleagues that I could defer to when questions or concerns arise, especially in the areas of middle level band/orchestra repertoire.

3. One of the biggest things we can do is to continue to encourage people to join our organization. One of the ways to facilitate this will be continuing to include a diverse set of clinicians/sessions at our Fall Conference, as well as providing opportunities for our students such as the All-State ensembles, and performances like the Capitol Concert Series. Each year, a group of music educators from our state travel to Washington D.C. to talk with our state representatives about music education in Nebraska. This important event is instrumental in keeping open the lines of communication between educators and their elected representatives. These representatives have the responsibility of protecting the quality of education and the availability of resources necessary to sustain quality music programs in Nebraska. I truly believe that in order to stay on the right path for continued success, we need to stay the course, and as the world changes around us, be open to new ideas for bettering our organization.