Now well into our school year, fall brings us cooler nights, skittering leaves, concerts, auditions, and the exhilarating promise of winter break. While we work diligently in our rehearsal halls, construction on the expanded Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center continues with a planned completion date of December 2015. This means that our 2016 TMEA Clinic/Convention will take place in a shiny, new, spacious facility. If the finished product is even half as impressive as what the Executive Board saw on their tour of the ongoing construction this July, convention attendees will indeed be in for a treat. The new convention center includes expansive exhibit and ballroom space, rehearsal room pods, several sets of escalators for smooth traffic flow, and green space for rest and relaxation. This new building remodel and extension will be a change for all of us. Make plans now to be part of the first group of music educators to christen our new gathering place. While it’s exciting to look forward to these changes, our purpose here is to review our association’s previous year through this annual report.

I’m definitely pleased to offer this most positive account of our thriving association in which we can all be proud to be members!

Membership

Strength in numbers shows in our continued rise in active, student, and retired TMEA memberships. Connecting with each other across the state and unifying as a force to be reckoned with, our organization continues to be an example of how to infuse daily student life with music. We ended our last year (July 1–June 30) with 12,024 active members, 3,837 college members, and 751 retired members. These numbers make up the majority of the more than 17,000 total membership. Thank you for maintaining your membership in this vital organization.

Region/Area Realignment

Beginning in March 2014, the TMEA Executive Board began a statewide Region and Area realignment with consideration of geographic concerns, equality of student opportunity, statewide representation, impact on all three performance divisions, classification size, and a proactive allowance for population growth in certain areas of Texas. The Executive Board and UIL reviewed alignment concerns, suggestions, and solutions during its September board meeting, and the final plan for Regions and Area alignment will be introduced prior to the February 2016 TMEA Clinic/Convention. This realignment will go into effect in the 2016–2017 school year.

Mentoring Network

The Mentoring Network is such a vital program sponsored by TMEA. It is imperative that we communicate with and support our teachers, especially those new to the field. Our network continues to strengthen and to incorporate willing mentors who foster relationships with those new to education or those new to Texas. Please consider volunteering as a mentor. We ended last year with 178 pairings of mentors/protégés. Offering ideas, sharing experiences, or simply listening can be a huge resource for our new colleagues. To enroll as a mentor or protégé, go to www.tmea.org/mentor.

Texas Future Music Educators

Chapters continue to grow in our quest for building future directors in band, orchestra, choir, and elementary music. The best job in the world begins with a foundation of experience and knowing that we, as teachers, can help lead our future colleagues in making decisions about what they want to pursue in college and why. TMEA boasts 40 TFME chapters with 970 active members. Consider beginning a chapter on your campus or in your district. Learn more and start a chapter at www.tmea.org/tfme.

Financial Status

The financial health of our organization remains steady, thanks to the diligence of the Board and our team of financial experts who are vigilant and conservative in watching over and protecting our organization’s funds. Because of this, generous
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Hal Leonard has Texas Edition textbooks that meet or exceed 100% of the requirements for Proclamation 2015 – Fine Arts.

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Contact your administrator about accessing your IMA funds!
scholarships and grants were given in 2014–2015 and reserve funds continue to exceed a two-year cumulative budget.

**Grant Funding**

The Elementary Music Classroom grants given during the 2013–2014 school year were received with such a positive reaction that the Executive Board voted to focus on the middle school music population with sheet music grants for the band, orchestra, and choral divisions. During the 2014–2015 school year, TMEA awarded 819 grants for a total of $762,267.

**Scholarship and Scholars**

As we witness each year during TMEA general business meetings, the opportunity to award scholarships to outstanding students is a tangible way to acknowledge and support our young people in their quest for wanting to be one of us! Thank you for your continued donations to the TMEA Scholarship Fund. This past year, TMEA awarded 75 scholarships totaling $192,000. Another excellent way our best music students were acknowledged was through the Texas Music Scholar program. Last year, TMEA designated 2,211 students from 241 campuses as Texas Music Scholars. Continue to acknowledge the students in your program who deserve recognition with this award.

**84th Legislative Session**

TMEA continued to have an effective presence at the capitol throughout the 140-day 84th legislative session. The primary objective of Executive Director Robert Floyd, along with lobbyists Matt Matthews and Michelle Smith, was to not lose ground on the successes reflected in HB 5 during the 2013 session. Those gains were primarily related to the new graduation programs which include an Arts and Humanities endorsement and limitations on pull-out from our music classes for test preparation and remediation. TMEA also successfully lobbied with other educational and publishing groups to secure full funding for Proclamation 2015. These dollars provided local districts with an instructional materials allotment to purchase new instructional materials for fine arts.

I am pleased to report that fine arts is better protected in state law than at any time in recent history.

**State Board of Education**

TMEA was most successful in preventing a list of seventeen CTE courses from being approved to meet the one-credit fine arts graduation requirement for all Texas students. These recommendations by the CTE TEKS Writing Team were rejected in their entirety in a unanimous vote by the State Board of Education. In addition, TMEA successfully worked with TEA staff and the SBOE Committee on Instruction to adopt new middle school rules that require campuses to provide students the opportunity to take three of the four fine arts disciplines in grades 6–8. Schools may appeal to the Commissioner of Education to reduce that number to two if the total middle school district enrollment is fewer than 250 students. Rules continue to reflect law that requires a student to successfully complete one fine arts course in grade 6, 7, or 8.

**TEKS Update**

TEKS revisions were adopted in 2013 and are now in place. These can be found on the TMEA website. The new TEKS have been carefully studied and
tweaked and offer our teachers tangible guidelines, expectations, and assessment markers. Have your TEKS visible in your classroom as a reminder of where you began and where you are going in leading your students to music appreciation and literacy.

2015 Clinic/Convention

With 26,756 convention attendees, the 2015 TMEA Clinic/Convention was one of the most well attended in our history. With opportunities to attend clinics and concerts, as well as connect with professionals from across the state and the nation, the TMEA convention continues to provide a February boost to music educators and students. The 2015 convention marked the final one in the structure as we know it. At next year’s convention, we will experience the newly refurbished center.

Our convention fees will also be increased. Convention registration fees will increase for the following membership: Active member convention registration will increase from $50 for preregistration and $70 for on-site registration to $60 and $80 respectively. Convention registration fees will also increase for Retired members from $15 to $20. College student memberships will increase from $20 to $25. This is the first increase in fees in 15 years.

All-State Process Review

The TMEA Executive Board reviewed the audition process for the new Small School All-State Mixed Choir and, with suggestions from Region and Area Chairs, made some tweaks in that process as well as in the Area assignment of chairs based on the data from the audition process. Along with these adjustments, participation by alternates at the Area level was reviewed and clarified.

Officer Training and Advocacy

The 2014 summer Region officer training was so helpful, and TMEA received such positive comments as to the merits of having everyone gathered together, that this training was offered again this past summer. It continues to be a great source of information and communication, especially as realignment was the major subject of interest leading up to the 2016 implementation.

A Vital Source and Force

TMEA is a strong presence in the lives of its many members, as a voice at the capitol, in the creation of lifelong memories for student musicians, for the opportunities provided in clinics and poster sessions, and in the grooming of future teachers and fine arts supporters. Let music live!

Dinah Menger is TMEA President-Elect and Director of Choral and Elementary Music at Fort Worth ISD.