More than 25 TMEA members paused their summer vacation in July, traveled to Austin, and took part in TMEA’s Summer Dialogue IV, held on July 8–9 at the TMEA headquarters. This timely event followed the 2019 legislative session, occurred on the 10-year anniversary of the 2009 TMEA Dialogue II, and led us into the school year where we will celebrate TMEA’s Centennial.

In reviewing the goals that were formed from previous Summer Dialogues, we found that many are still matters of concern for music educators and fine arts administrators across the state. Previous goals included:

- A greater advocacy push in getting the message out about the importance of music in the lives of the students as a critical concern.
- Updating and making the TMEA website more user-friendly and marketable.
- TMEA’s role in continuing to work with school administration and counselors in understanding the importance of the arts and how students across the state can participate in music courses and in various other activities.
- TMEA initiating research correlating student music participation with academic achievement, better attendance, and graduation rates.
- HB 3, the new accountability system, and inclusion of Fine Arts within it.
- Continued collaboration between TMEA and TMAC to develop assessment tools for measuring student achievement in music.

Years later, we continue to encounter many of the same issues. This fueled our focus for more aggressively creating step-by-step plans for a statewide, grassroots movement. The goal of this undertaking is to facilitate immediate actions promoting a contagious awareness of the many benefits of music education in today’s global workplace. We added topics from our participants, who contributed to a survey sent out prior to this year’s meeting. These included:

- How do we educate decision-makers of the important role of rigorous arts study on College, Career, and Military Readiness (a new funding source for campuses in HB 3 and part of A–F District Grading)?
- How do we educate the business community on the value of arts education in training a 21st-century workforce?
- How do we counter the negative impact that 7th and 8th grade...
administrators in:
The Fine Arts Administration Committee vowed to train fellow
presence from campus programs to district-wide involvement.
and Marketing created very specific ways in which to create a vital
presence. The group discussing the Teacher Toolkit on Advocacy
to align campuses across the state to increase their social media
lined process for promoting music and its benefits with a push
from our website. The Social Media committee created an out-
for the advocacy toolkit TMEA will make available to members
21st-century audience. His advice regarding immediate action by
our membership was extremely relevant, giving us an 18-month
window to create new relationships with those in public office
and to create a resurgence of a strong and unified presence mar-
keting the essential skills fostered by a rigorous fine arts educa-
Matthews urged participants to target businesses, those in
political office, parents, students, and every fine arts teacher in
Texas! He reminded us that it is up to each of us to educate and
convince our government officials, with a unified and consistent
presence, that all students must have rigorous fine arts as part of
their education.

Subcommittees were created to unpack and address the con-
cerns presented. We discovered that most topics fell into three
main categories:
1. Advocacy and a focused social media presence with effec-
tive how-tos in marketing a central message using unified
hashtags (#itstartswithmusic and #TMEA100).
2. More specific data-gathering strategies clearly showing the
benefits of music in correlation to graduation rates, attend-
dance, academics, and retention.
3. A greater focus on convincing campus, district, and state
leaders on the inherent value that studying music has on
students developing 21st-century skills.
The committees designed toolkits that will serve as a basis
for the advocacy toolkit TMEA will make available to members
from our website. The Social Media committee created an out-
lined process for promoting music and its benefits with a push
to align campuses across the state to increase their social media
presence. The group discussing the Teacher Toolkit on Advocacy
and Marketing created very specific ways in which to create a vital
presence from campus programs to district-wide involvement.
The Fine Arts Administration Committee vowed to train fellow
administrators in:
• Using the toolkits consistently.
• Working with their teachers to set goals for media presence.
• Continuing this push toward marketing at the TMAC
November Conference.
• Leading sessions on the why and how of marketing fine arts
programs at the TMEA convention.
• Unifying each district’s fine arts educators in their presence
and advocacy and messaging.
• Creating a “Profile of a Graduate” model that showcases the
extensive experience a graduate has in a discipline, including
how four years of fine arts electives is intentionally scheduled
to further inspire and equip students for their futures.

Those in attendance left recharged, committed, and ready to
take the next steps with tangible ways to ensure that all Texas
music educators can implement statewide, aligned actions to
empower themselves, their students and parents, their campus
and district administration, and their representatives in public
office regarding the necessity for music in the life of every child
and how best to market this necessity in an ever-changing educa-
tional climate.

Participants
Our thanks go to the following TMEA members for their ser-
vice and commitment to our association shown through their
active participation throughout this Summer Dialogue:
• Amanda Blackstone, Hutto
• Chad Dempsey, Edinburg
• James Drew, Fort Bend
• Jim Egger, McAllen
• Eric Grey, Gilmer
• Karen Herrera, Killeen
• Eric Hindman, Seminole
• Katherine Johns, Floresville
• Gary Keller, Northwest
• Matt Knight, Abernathy
• Tim Linley, Dallas
• Jami Lupold, La Porte
• Dinah Menger, Fort Worth
• James Miculka, Northside
• Christopher Reidlinger, Amarillo
• Matthew Saltibus, Northside
• Lauren Summa, Alvin
• Hector Trevino, San Antonio
• Jeff Turner, Allen

TMEA Executive Board and staff members present were
Executive Director Robert Floyd, Deputy Director Frank
Coachman, Administrative Director Kay Vanlandingham,
President Joe Muñoz, Immediate Past-President Bob Horton, Band
Vice-President John Carroll, Vocal Vice-President Jed Ragsdale,
and UIL State Director of Music Bradley Kent.

Dinah Menger is Director of Choral and Elementary Music
in the Department of Visual and Performing Arts with Fort
Worth ISD. Menger is also a TMEA Past-President.