

Edmund Chiarello – NYSSMA® President



“NYSSMA® ... Investing in Our Future!”

Music teachers are continuously working to research, develop, customize, and then implement appropriate curricula. We recognize that it is important to determine the work that is within our capacity to accomplish, to realize and list the long- and short-term goals, and begin to consider the best strategy to move forward. We are often reminded that anything that is meaningful and will ultimately stand the test of time requires patience, reflection, and a major effort to achieve.

Recognizing that there are limitations to what can be accomplished in two years, my effort to prepare and begin the process of moving forward, began during my two-year term as President-Elect.

It is important to realize that like most associations, NYSSMA® is an organization made up of volunteers, and each person who chooses to contribute serves the greater good to the extent possible. Recognize additionally that NYSSMA® encompasses a large state. Therefore, that which is sometimes considered for the greater good is often seen through the eyes of the local contingent. Items that may seem critical to those in one location, may or may not be on the top of the list for other or most areas of our great state.

While localized strategies work for goals and improvements that meet localized needs and challenges, as they should, that work may or may not generate the best guardrails at the state level. However, we absolutely appreciate and applaud localized successes as, clearly, they are serving their students and their programs, and we can learn from and utilize those experiences to inform our state-level work.

The goal then is to plan for progress that provides real, tangible opportunities for all our music students, teachers, and music programs.

A new strategic plan

Our last NYSSMA® Strategic Plan is dated March 2012. Much of the work that was labeled has been accomplished. Those of us teaching at that time remember our primary focus was standards

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and assessments. We navigated SLOs (Student Learning Objectives), considered future improvements with technology, planned for updates to existing programs and services, and were heavily invested in professional development. It is time to begin working on updating and developing a new Strategic Plan 2025 consisting of both short-term and long-term goals.

The Majors Clinic, currently being piloted this year, began as a seed that was planted two years ago. The Adjudication Festival Committee, led by the incomparable George Smith, embraced the idea wholeheartedly and began work on the project. The Majors Clinic

pilot this year will undoubtedly uncover items that need to be addressed. We are, however, committed to making the adjustments and continuing to work for BEDR opportunities for all our performing ensembles.

Following the 2019 Conference, the Rochester Riverside Hotel closed. Simultaneously, we lost the ability to house, rehearse, and manage eight all-state ensembles. The pandemic further complicated our circumstance as we no longer maintained the ability to house three students to a room. Additional concerns included, but were not limited to, securing hotels with proximity considerations, adequate housing, and rehearsal space.

NYSSMA® was additionally challenged to build a schedule that included traveling, securing adequate busing (currently hard to find), and petitioning Eastman to once again stage eight performing ensembles. I am excited to report that Winter Conference 2024 will include all eight ensembles with the return of the All-State Wind Ensemble, String Orchestra, and Treble Choir.

New initiatives

The Public Relations Chair title has been changed to Social Media and Communications Chairperson. In addition to public relations, the work will include a monthly flow of Zone and committee highlights. Continuous efforts occur throughout the organization, and our social media platforms are clearly the place where members are able to gain quick access to the good news.

Launch of the Electronic Manual is scheduled for July 2025. Contrary to what many believe, it was not simply a matter of designing an electronic platform and then converting paper to a digital

resource. Rather, volumes of details needed to be weighed and configured to make the new electronic product work for all of our purposes. For example, during our in-person NYSSMA® festival events many personnel, including adjudicators, festival organizers, information checkers, and the Zone Representative, require continuous access to the manual. Consider for a moment, how many of our schools make their WiFi available to visitors?

Research has been ongoing for the past three years and recently we began the formal process of designing a Modern Band experience to be added to the 2025 NYSSMA® Winter Conference. More information will be available in the weeks and months ahead.

The Office of 3rd Vice President is working on developing the next generation of professional development. The scope and vision for future professional development is wide open as we explore opportunities that may occur

online and/or in person, synchronous or asynchronous. CTLE credit will be considered as it may or may not apply. Individual committees or a committee consortium may be grouped together as they may or may not align. Additionally, we will be reaching out to the affiliates to the extent that they wish to be involved. A COMEA Chair will be appointed as necessary.

The NYSSMA® website is due for an upgrade. Websites in general proceed through stylistic periods. For example, years ago scrolling was the most popular design. More recently, website designs feature compartmentalized information found by menu selection. Currently, scrolling has returned as the favored design and NYSSMA® will be making improvements to our website for easier navigation.

Securing the future

The collegiate members represent our future. The President's mission for 2024-25 is to support, celebrate, promote, and provide for our collegiate sector. In addition to our usual collegiate conference sessions and events, NYSSMA® will be working with NAFME Collegiate to build synchronous and asynchronous events. We hope to connect pre-service teachers with the districts who wish to bring new talent to their programs. Emphasis will include providing knowledge and experience to nurture our collegiates and help them gain the skill, potential, passion, and licensure to fill the seats of retiring teachers.

I am hopeful these small steps will lead to higher ground. I recognize that nobody accomplishes anything alone. I invite you to join me to the extent possible, to make these goals a reality. Please start by remembering to always login to the homepage www.nyssma.org for recent information and updates. ||

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