

# ZONE RAP CORNER

## *News from Across the State*

*[Editor's Note: For this second edition of the Zone Rap Corner, we present informational updates and positive accomplishments from Zones 3, 7, and 11. As previously noted, this feature is meant to focus on a number of different zones each time it's presented, ultimately giving every one a chance to shine.]*

### **Zone 3 (Central Tri-Cities Region) –**

Dr. Jennifer L. R. Greene

- Zone 3 held a successful Junior High Area All-State Festival at Homer Central Schools, with new host Cara McLaughlin, and a Senior High Area All-State Festival on the Ithaca College campus, hosted by Graham Terry.
- The relationship with Ithaca College has been positive, with new faculty who have welcomed us with open arms and have encouraged the school's music education majors to get involved. They were invaluable with all of the set up and logistics!
- There were three notable professional development sessions held (for CTLE hours), given by Amanda Steinhoff, Kenneth Starr, and Austin Kiley.

### **Zone 7 (Capital District Region) –**

John Fatuzzo

- Niskayuna CSD band director Phil Pandori was the winner of the Manilow Music Teacher Award. The award includes \$5,000 to purchase instruments for his classroom. Area music teachers Samantha Baldwin, Michael Blostein, David Bresnahan, Jeff Calistri, Gregory Clark, James Haertel, John Halvorsen, and Lori McAllister were also nominated for this award.
- The Bethlehem Central School District recently held its District Choral Festival on March 9-10. Chorus students in grades 5-12 came together over two days to work with guest composer and conductor Francisco Nuñez, performing several of his choral pieces on two evening concerts.

- The Guilderland High School Jazz Ensemble (John Fatuzzo, director) will be a featured ensemble in the Saratoga Performing Arts Center's 2026 Festival of Young Artists. This annual event showcases youth-created visual, literary, and performing arts online and in an in-person event on Sunday, May 31.
- On Friday, April 24, Shenendehowa CSD hosted their 22nd Annual Invitational Jazz Festival, featuring GRAMMY-award winning saxophonist Jeff Coffin of the Dave Matthews Band. The event included 350 students across 15 student ensembles from schools around the Capital Region.

### **Zone 11 (Westchester County) –**

Kimberly Dunkin

- Zone 11 will be launching a pilot for a first-ever Modern Music Showcase for the 2026-2027 school year. This will encompass Modern Band, Electronic Music, and a Songwriting Showcase.
- On April 30, our zone held its 3rd Annual All-State Recognition Ceremony at the Westchester County Center. It was attended by State Senator Shelley Mayer, Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins, and NYSSMA® President-Elect Daryle Redmond.
- Ten teachers from Zone 11 successfully completed the 2026 Adjudicator Orientation this spring. Additionally, 11 of our teachers stepped in to judge as a "Fill Locally" and are now eligible for Fast Track Orientation next year.