

**To: MERN**

**Re: Update and information from summer convention meetings**

**From: Dick Clardy**

I want to thank you for your attendance during the summer meetings at TBA, TODA and TCDA. I was pleasantly surprised at the turnout. I also want to thank those of you that worked in the Foundation for Music Education booth during the convention. We were able to visit with many qualified people that we can hopefully recruit as additional new MERN advisors.

A bit more background on how this worthwhile project started is in order and might be helpful to all of you as we proceed. Conversations between Jon Locke and veteran teachers Rodney Klett and Gerald Babbitt about the need to give back to the profession by mentoring young teachers led to an informal gathering at TMEA in 2007.

Mr. Klett and Mr. Babbitt walked the exhibit hall personally and invited most music vendors attending TMEA to attend this gathering and to hopefully support some type of network for mentoring new music teachers. Professor Keith Dye and Dr. Fred Hardin spoke about the importance of mentoring from the perspective of a university music education professor and from a public school administrator perspective of what mentoring could do for the profession. Not one vendor signed on to help.

Undeterred, this same group grew with the addition of Diane Gorzycki, Michael Ware, Rick Yancey, Keith Dye and myself. We continued to promote MERN with a conference call in the summer of 2007 and a meeting at TMEA in 2008. Additional members have been added through 2007 and 2008 to where we are at this point.

We are indebted to the commitment of Gerald, Rodney and Jon for staying with this idea. They will be part of an Executive Committee of original founding advisors that will confirm and support the findings of our new MERN Steering Committee headed by Michael Ware.

The MERN Steering Committee will begin work this fall with conference calls and meetings. They will catalogue all ideas from the membership that will be sent to Michael Ware via his email - [mwware@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mwware@sbcglobal.net). All ideas concerning what MERN should be about will come from you. I have charged the MERN Steering Committee to offer a plan of action that will be confirmed by the Executive Committee. It will be ready for the MERN membership at TMEA 2009. It will include a Mission Statement, a set of Bylaws, and recommended activities with a very detailed plan for implementation.

**MERN Steering Committee**

Michael Ware – Managing Director of MERN – [mwware@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mwware@sbcglobal.net)

Ferd Vollmar - band

John Benzer - band

Nick Boltz - choir

Tom Jennings - choir

Kathy Fishburn - orchestra

Royce Coatney - orchestra

Karen Bryan - elementary

Carol Sullivan - elementary

**MERN Founding Executive Committee**

Dick Clardy – Executive Director of The Foundation for Music Education

Keith Dye

Gerald Babbitt

Diane Gorzycki

Rodney Klett

Michael Ware

Rick Yancey

## **Reminders to MERN Members**

### ***Background***

The Music Education Resource Network (MERN) is being developed and hosted by TFME to provide mentoring and support for inexperienced music educators in band, choir, orchestra, and elementary music classrooms.

Invitations to become part of the MERN advisor program will only be extended to music educators that have demonstrated an ongoing commitment in support of the future of music in the schools.

MERN success will be dependent on the quality and commitment of the membership.

### ***Purpose and Goals***

MERN will be proactive in identifying new teachers

MERN advisors will voluntarily mentor new teachers

MERN advisors will be available to new music teachers

### ***Goals for MERN Steering Committee***

Recruit members from all areas of the state

Develop a Mission Statement

Create By-Laws

### ***Goals for Each Member***

Recruit members

Submit ideas for MERN to Michael Ware for Steering Committee – [mware@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mware@sbcglobal.net)

Support Steering Committee

### ***Examples of MERN Activities***

Interactive Website with an Ask.com type format

“Music Matters” articles by MERN members

Sponsor convention clinics

All suggestions sent to Michael Ware – [mware@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mware@sbcglobal.net) for Steering Committee

### ***MERN Time Line***

Recruit membership until Nov. 15, 2008

January issue of SW Musician to describe MERN and list members

February TMEA meeting to approve steering committee recommendations

Present MERN to teachers in Spring/Fall region meetings

Michael Ware forwarded a recent statement written by a university professor that he believes should be the aim of MERN. Here it is: “One of our best chances of keeping young teachers in the classroom is the personal and professional connection established through mentoring.”

As one of our founding members relates, we want to be very selective in who we invite for membership. Their quote, “My only concern is in HOW and WHO is recruited for MERN membership. I do not want anybody to think of this as a "glorified" judging or clinician list of names. I want the reason for membership to remain that of helping young teachers gain in their knowledge, expertise and experience. If names are added just to be part of an "elite group", we are defeating our purpose and destroying the very premise of our organization. I would suggest that each member forward names of new prospective members to my attention and/or Michael Ware. We will run them by the Steering Committee and Founding Executive Committees for their opinion.

I believe that MERN is reaching the point where committed members are creating the energy needed to be successful – thank you for being a part!

Regards,

Dick Clardy