

MUSIC *Connects*

Regardless of our individual differences, people can unite in music.

During this trying time of a global pandemic and the uncertainty of music education's role in the public school setting, it is more important than ever to connect students with their communities, their musical families, their *tribe*. We must be resilient. We must be consistent and, above all, we must connect.

Most of us have faced more adversity this year than anytime before in our lifetimes. Human connections and interactions—being a part of something where we are all working toward a common goal—is how we are able to take care of ourselves, each other, and especially our students. Each time we held an event this year, a parent has come to me, moved to tears by seeing their young one's face light up while making music with their friends. This connection we have through music and through introducing our love for music to our students and their parents is exactly why we all fell in love with this field. **Music is connecting us in ways that no other field truly could.**

Music can bring the most unlikely people together. Through my years of being an ATSSB All-State student, I have met many people who I never would've talked to otherwise, and we are the best of friends today.

Music connects everyone in so many ways. It connects us across all ethnic backgrounds, political viewpoints, and religious beliefs. It just means we have music in common when there is nothing left for us to connect with. Music is universal to the human experience.

It connects peoples of different races and different cultures through song.

Although the convention could not happen in San Antonio, we still found a way to connect with each other and celebrate a shared love for music.

Music connected me to my grandfather, and it was that connection we had that influenced me to become a music teacher.

Despite the turmoil of the last year, one thing remains constant throughout—music keeps us connected. During quarantine it brought us hope. During this school year it brings us joy. During TMEA it brought a small sense of normalcy to be connected to our fellow music makers without needing to leave the safety of our homes. Music has been the constant!

My family is made up of band musicians. Music has become a way we can bond and express our love for each other.

Whether it's a live concert with hundreds of fans, or an online virtual concert, music will never cease to create togetherness.

No matter what happens—a hurricane, a winter storm, or a pandemic—music is always there. It forever connects us.

Music connects all of humankind. No matter where you are from, what your culture is, what language you speak, music is a **universal language** that transcends all barriers that may divide us.

Even if we differ in how we see the world around us, we can still make beautiful music together.

Music connects the stories of our past and future. Music connects us to each other, both young and old.

In times of crisis and conflict, times of joy and celebration, music will always connect us.

Music transcends distance—whether that distance is social, virtual, remote, or even from here to the International Space Station—**music brings us together.**

Music is universal. It connects generations and cultures. It can excite, evoke, and educate. We need this connection that music provides.

Music connects to math, science, language arts—contributing to the whole student. But where music truly connects and shines is when it draws out the person's soul, the intangible and emotional core of humanity, and with all our weaknesses, makes us vulnerable to one another.