

# MEET THE BOARD MEMBERS



**HEATHER STAHR**

**1. Describe your background and career - where did you go to college, what degrees, and career roles?**

I grew up in McCool Junction and was blessed to be where there was a strong music program throughout my schooling. I attended Midland Lutheran in Fremont to get my teaching degree in the 90's. I taught at Weeping Water Public, in the Omaha Public School district, took time off to raise our two boys, and now I'm at McCool Jct where I've been for 17 years. I have my BA from Midland, a Master in Music from UNL and a Masters in School Counseling from Doane University. I started as a K-12 all-things-music teacher at McCool Jct. Then soon went to 5-12 band/7-12 vocal and now I'm the 5-12 band and 7-12 School Counselor.

**2. Describe a meaningful moment from your career in music education.**

It's hard to choose a single one - getting to come back to my home school and rebuild the program; I have had students from college contact me telling me they remembered a time that we had played a song that they heard the college band playing; or how they really missed being in band after they graduate; or getting to teach my own boys through high school band and choir. My philosophy is that band/choir is for anyone - I want them to experience being part of a large group (or small) and putting yourself out there to be creative and expressive. I have seen this many times through the years and that is when I feel that I've helped these students see a greater part of themselves.

**3. What type of arts do you like to be involved in or arts events you continue to support?**

I really love all types of art and how it affects me and humans in general. I love music, specifically live music - so my husband and I will attend events at the Holland Center in Omaha or the Lied in Lincoln. I love to look at museums and visual art, but I can't draw a stick person! I also love theater and musicals. With being a band teacher and all the extra duty things, I don't get to attend as much local events as I'd like - but definitely after I retire!

**4. You are finishing your term as Director of Advocacy for the Nebraska Music Educators Association. Would you share an experience you have had where you have witnessed meaningful change through your advocacy work.**

On a grand scale, getting to go to DC and participate in the National Hill Day for the past three years has been a great experience for me and our state. I have learned so much from the process and how important it is (even when you think they aren't listening to you). This past year in talking with the Senators and Representatives, I felt they understood that the teacher shortage is a very important topic that needs to be addressed and fixed. We were able to shed some light on possible solutions they have been talking about to try to get more people to go into education as well as stay in education. On a state level, I have enjoyed bringing back the Collegiate Music Hill Day in Lincoln and getting to see the future music educators get excited and understand the importance of advocacy ~ It has been a powerful thing to be a part of. The overall Advocacy role has helped me grow and allows me to share how important the Fine Arts are to our young people's development and well-being as they go out into the world to become productive citizens.

**5. Please share anything else you would like - if you want to share anything about your family or meaningful experiences.**

I am going to be a Grandma in January and my husband and I are very excited. My son told me, "Mom, we want our child to be in piano lessons and we want you to teach them!" I love that he understands the importance of music in our lives and wants to encourage that for his children. (especially since he battled me ferociously at practicing his piano lessons each week!)