

"If kids come to us from strong, healthy functioning families, it makes our job easier. If they do not come to us from strong, healthy, functioning families, it makes our job more important." -- Barbara Coloroso

As we swing into fall – or back-to-school, as we call it in Louisiana (until late October or so!) – many of you are getting ready to teach the children/youth in your classes once again. There are so many things to do when you are a teacher. . . people who don't embrace teaching as their career sometimes have a hard time understanding why it is so hard to get classrooms ready, prepare for new students, rework lesson plans and/or throw them out and begin again, make sure supplies are available in your room for singers, and everything else that beginning a school year entails. I'm sure as I write this, some of you are making 500 copies of discipline contracts/behavior expectations for the kids you will teach – and if you are a little OCD, as I am, they will be color-coded by grade level!

Once again, we have an amazing conference planned for this November. Our main clinician will be Dr. Andy Paney from University of Mississippi, who will bring us four great sessions over our three days of clinics. He has so much energy and brilliant ideas about how to craft lessons and work with kids of all ages (elementary-adult), that I love learning new concepts from him.

A Louisiana native who retired from Calcasieu Schools after twenty years and then taught in Tomball TX for ten-plus years will be our secondary clinician. Mrs. Diane Engle is an engaging, thoughtful, and fun master teacher, who will bring us many new ideas and some old favorites that will appeal to all of your singers, young and old.

I am so excited that Mr. Lamar Robertson will present a session for us this year – after I begged him to please grace us again with his presence. Every time he is here, I am inspired anew to do my best by the children I teach. His clinic will be, "A Step-by-Step Approach to Making Music Literacy Fun!" I am sure we all will be under his master teacher spell as he helps us to be the best we can be.

In addition, there will be a few other clinicians that will be discussed in our next issue of Louisiana Musician. I am excited for all of you to see what we have planned.

As you begin this school year, please remember – as Lamar says – that "every lesson must include beauty and joy". Please make sure that your students experience beauty and joy every time you see them. Claim a blessed school year!

Michele M White, Chair