Beth Melin Nelson
Candidate for Region III

Beth Melin Nelson is an Assistant Principal and K-5 music and movement teacher in St. Paul, MN.

She teaches on the faculties of the Orff Schulwerk courses at Southern Methodist University and at the University of St. Thomas, where she is the Course Director.

Beth is a frequent workshop clinician and has been a member of several AOSA Committees, including the Guidelines Steering Committee.

CANDIDATE FORUM

1. What do you see as the role of Orff Schulwerk?
Orff Schulwerk provides a process through which students are asked to think creatively and analytically as they explore ideas, work collaboratively, and develop artistry. For our students who are inundated with high-stakes testing and an overload of immediate information through technology, the role of Orff Schulwerk in music education is more crucial than ever. Our approach makes music accessible to every student and provides an avenue through which every student contributes to the whole. The gratification that results is built over time with student input and involvement. Community developed through such a process impacts the social-emotional side of development as students learn to express themselves and respond to the expressions of others. We are teaching music, but there is far more at stake with the lessons that we deliver.

2. What are your leadership strengths and how do you think they would contribute to the work of AOSA and promoting Orff Schulwerk?
Analyzing and synthesizing ideas with the big picture in mind is a strength for me. I am energized by collaborative work and thrive on the process of gathering diverse perspectives and engaging in thoughtful conversations. Through my administrative experiences and years of work on AOSA committees, I’ve had the opportunity to develop an appreciation for the value of listening and thoughtful inquiry. Transparent communication is an avenue through which meaningful change and action is possible. We must effectively balance creative vision with detailed strategic planning to grow Orff Schulwerk in the 21st century. I am passionate about the work of AOSA and excited about the possibility of serving as a member of the National Board of Trustees.

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3. What is the role of the National Board of Trustees as it relates to the general membership and how would you fulfill this role?

The National Board of Trustees is charged with the task of fulfilling the mission statement of AOSA:
• to demonstrate the value of Orff Schulwerk and promote its widespread use;
• to support the professional development of members; and,
• to inspire and advocate for the creative potential of all learners.

To meet the mandates of the mission statement, the NBT must be responsible for fiscal and organizational oversight – the business end of things – while creating an everchanging future vision. Needs of our members are best served through stellar professional development and healthy growth in our membership base.

4. What is your vision for AOSA and Orff Schulwerk in the future?

I envision work we have yet to do. I respect the traditions that have been developed and the need to maintain the strong foundation of Orff Schulwerk and AOSA, but are we changing to reflect the students that we teach? Does our beloved organization reflect the world that we live in today?

I would love to see AOSA explore ways to not only increase our membership, but to diversify it. Do we need a new and updated road map to encourage and mentor diversity in our future leaders? I’d like to be part of a leadership team that brings focus to ensuring diverse perspectives in the conversations that lead us forward. Ultimately, the students in our classrooms receive the benefit from an AOSA that advocates and supports all members.