

Candidate for AOSA National Board of Trustees Region IV:
Rachel Cecil



BIOGRAPHY

Rachel Cecil is entering her 15th year of teaching elementary music, and is currently the Music Specialist for Yulee Primary in Nassau, Florida. She holds Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Music Education, and has completed Level II Orff Certification. She is the past president of the North Florida Orff Chapter.

CANDIDATE FORUM

1. What do you see as the role of Orff Schulwerk?

The role of Orff Schulwerk is to develop well-rounded, musically minded children through a creative and collaborative music experience and to show the value of that experience to a broader audience. The strength of the Orff Schulwerk process lies in improvisation, creativity, and collaboration. The use of music and movement allows children to explore their creativity while simultaneously laying a foundation of musical experience that can grow into a life-long appreciation for the arts. Orff Schulwerk is also instrumental in the development of skills that are not just for the classroom but also for life. These skills such as curiosity, teamwork, and critical thinking, serve as building blocks for a successful future. AOSA stands at the forefront of the movement to educate schools, teachers, and students on the exciting and gratifying Orff Schulwerk process. I have experienced, first-hand, the transformative power the Orff process can have on both a personal and professional level. It is my sincere desire to help AOSA achieve continued success in its stated goals and to maintain its national reputation for excellence and equity.

2. What are your leadership strengths and how do you think they would contribute to the work of AOSA and promoting Orff Schulwerk?

My leadership strengths include organization, collaboration, and effective communication. I have learned through various leadership roles that programs and events, organizations or groups, and even meetings all run successfully the more they are organized. Looking at every detail, making to do lists, delegating tasks to responsible people, and coming prepared contribute to keeping things organized. It is also important to make sure that you are collaborating with others as a way of acknowledging all perspectives, learning new ideas, and to keep yourself invigorated about what you are doing. I love hearing from other educators about what and how they teach. I find that sharing successes and failures helps to improve my own teaching and educational growth. However, it does not matter the amount of organizing one does or with whom one collaborates if you are not communicating effectively. I make it a point to acknowledge all communication positively and respectfully. I think it is important that people feel that they have been heard. Being a good leader comes from the passion you have for the thing you are leading. I believe in Orff Schulwerk and I have seen the effects it can have on teachers and students. Therefore, I will use my skills and my passion to help continue the work of AOSA.

3. AOSA is committed to diversity and equity. What experiences and/or skills do you possess to strengthen our organization as we move forward?

One of the reasons I am proud to be a member of the AOSA community is because our organization aims to put diversity and equity at the forefront of our work. It has been inspirational to see how we have come together to support and educate one another this year as we have faced unprecedented challenges both nationally and globally. As an educational organization, we have the responsibility to engage in difficult conversations, make compromises, and take action to move our field towards inclusivity across the board. We have to listen to what is being said--hearing and accepting multiple perspectives, acknowledge our personal shortcomings, and continue to question what we don't know. Only after we listen and learn can we come together as an organization to support our membership in creating diverse and accepting classrooms. Holding ourselves accountable with plans built on actionable steps and timelines will help us to fulfill these responsibilities to our membership. As for me, I will bring my listening ears, my inquisitive nature, my desire and ability to be better, my quest for knowledge, and my tenacious work ethic to help achieve our mission.

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

My vision for AOSA is to continue to spread the word about this wonderful organization, the plethora of services and benefits it provides, and educate people on the process of the Orff Schulwerk. Throughout my years of attending national conventions, I have seen the awareness of AOSA grow across the country, but I feel there are still many who do not know about our organization. I want to strengthen our connections at the collegiate level, engaging pre-service educators in our work as they begin their careers, and increase the scope of research into our teaching approach, history, and materials. Additionally, I feel it is imperative to help local chapters achieve growth in national membership by relaying all of the expanding resources we have to offer. I want to help chapters find ways to advocate and send their membership to national convention so they can see presentations of the Schulwerk, collaborate with peers while exploring the process, and in turn bring inspiring ideas back to their chapters spreading the Orff Schulwerk into their community of educators.