

**Jay Lester** is currently serving as Director of Bands and Assistant Professor of Music at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas. A product of the Abilene public schools, he retired from the Abilene ISD as Executive Director of Fine Arts in December 2023. He also serves as the UIL Music Region 6 Executive Secretary for Region 6 and as a VIP for Conn-Selmer. Previously, he held the Director of Fine Arts position in Victoria ISD from 2008-2012 and was the conductor/founder of the Crossroads Community Band. Mr. Lester began his teaching career as a band director in Odessa and later taught band and orchestra at Clack Middle School and Cooper High School in Abilene. In Allen ISD he served as Director of Bands at the Lowery Freshman Center while assisting with the Allen High School bands and orchestras. The Allen band received the coveted Sudler Shield for marching bands by the John Philip Sousa Foundation in 2004. The Allen band marched in the internationally televised 2006 Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, California. Later that year in December, Jay co-conducted the Allen Full Orchestra at the Midwest Clinic in Chicago, Illinois. He won the prestigious Bell Ringer Award in Allen ISD in 2007-2008 and was named Employee of the Month in Victoria ISD in September of 2011. Hardin-Simmons University named him as one of their Distinguished Alumni in 2020. He was also named to Who's Who in America in 2022. Jay had the privilege of marching with the HSU Cowboy Band as an alumnus in the 2022 St. Patrick's Day Parade in Dublin, Ireland.

Jay graduated from Cooper High School in Abilene where he participated in golf, band, choir, show choir, theatre, speech, and film club. Highlights include the 1990 Tournament of Roses Parade, two trips to the UIL state marching band contest, a half-time performance at a Dallas Cowboys football game, and a choir tour of Colorado. He earned both the Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from Hardin-Simmons University where he studied trumpet with John Daniel, Scott Mather and Dr. Leighanne Hunsaker. Other trumpet teachers included Bobby Brown, Dave Scott, Paul Hankins, and Stacy Blair. While at HSU, he studied conducting from Scott Mather, Dr. Loyd Hawthorne, and Don Hanna. Upon graduation, he was awarded the Spear's Gold Medal as the outstanding band graduate in 1994. Jay finished his MEd in Educational Administration from the University of North Texas in 2007. His post graduate studies have included coursework in music from the VanderCook College of Music, the University of Miami, and Hardin-Simmons University. In addition, he has participated in workshops at the Conn Selmer Institute, Texas Tech, West Texas A&M, UNT, Angelo State University, and the Ohio State University.

Mr. Lester has presented at many conferences including the Texas Music Educators Association, Texas Bandmasters Association, Texas Orchestra Directors Association, Texas Music Administrators Conference, and the Midwest Clinic for Band & Orchestra. In addition, he has worked as a clinician or presenter in over 20 school districts and at several universities. Jay stays active as a music adjudicator as an active member of the Texas Music Adjudicators Association judging concert band, marching band, and orchestra each year. In the past Jay has judged TMEA Honor Band and Orchestra contests at the Area and State level. Jay enjoys judging music festivals for Director's Choice, Peak, and South Coast.

Additionally, Mr. Lester has also been involved with the Texas Art Educators Association, the Texas Dance Educators Association, the Texas Music Adjudicators Association, and the Texas Theatre Administrators Conference. In 2016, he helped charter the Lone Star State affiliate chapter of the International Trumpet Guild (ITG) which serves West Texas trumpet enthusiasts. This group has performed at least 1-2 recitals a year in various cities of West Texas as well as at TMEA and ITG. Jay has performed on trumpet with the Abilene Philharmonic Orchestra, the Midland-Odessa Symphony, the Allen Philharmonic, the San Angelo Symphony, the Big Spring Symphony, the Lone Star Brass Quintet, the Key City Brass Quintet, the Corpus Christi Wind Symphony, the Texana Community Band, the Abilene Community Band, and the Crossroads Community Band. He currently performs on trumpet and bass guitar with the Celebration Orchestra at First Baptist Church in Abilene, in orchestra pits for local musicals, and for the Big Spring and San Angelo Symphonies. In addition, he has performed on trumpet at TODA, TCDA, TBA, TMEA, and ITG on multiple occasions as part of bands, orchestras, choirs, and recitals.

Jay serves on the board of directors for the Abilene Teachers Federal Credit Union whose membership includes over 55,000 members. He also serves on the board of directors for Young Audiences of Abilene, the Paramount Theatre (Past-Chairman), and the HSU Cowboy Band Foundation (Past-Chairman). In addition, he is a member of the Abilene Downtown Association, the Grace Museum history committee, the City Sidewalks committee, and the HSU Board of Development. From 2018-2021 he served on the UIL State Music Technical Advisory Committee. Jay was President of the Texas Music Administrators Conference in 2019-2020. Jay has served on the Budget Committee and as a Deacon at First Baptist Church of Abilene where he and his family worship. Jay's wife Lisa is an Instructional Coordinator at Bowie Elementary School in Abilene ISD. They have two sons, Michael and Brian, who were both music education majors at Abilene Christian University. In addition to supporting the arts, his alma mater, and his church, Jay enjoys the outdoors, travel, and film.



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