

# THE B STER BEAT

May 2017

Booster Meeting: May 28, 3:30pm, SPHS Music Area

Special Edition

## A BOOSTER BEAT SPECIAL EDITION

As many of us Band Boosters are aware, Patrick Marsh Middle School Band Director Chris Gleason was one of four finalists for National Teacher of the Year this year. As part of the competition, Mr. Gleason went to Washington, D.C. for two days in March where he was extensively interviewed by the selection committee.

SPBB knows how fortunate we are to have Mr. Gleason in the Sun Prairie School District as well as all of the other highly dedicated band teachers. The lives of our children are forever enriched by the band program.



I asked Mr. Gleason to share his experience in Washington, D.C. with the Band Boosters. His words follow:

*You were all with me when I entered the Oval Office recently. I am very grateful and humbled to have been selected as a Finalist for National Teacher of the Year. Even though I did not receive the title as National Teacher of the Year - that honor went to Sydney Chaffee from Massachusetts- I am thrilled to have had many opportunities to advocate for teachers and students.*



*The 55 State Teachers of the Year from the US/territories spent one week in Washington DC in the end of April. We had the opportunity to visit many of Smithsonian Museums including the National Museum of African American History and Culture where we spent time collaborating with their staff. We also spent time at ASCD and the US Dept. of Education working with some of our nation's education leaders, including Betsy DeVos. I met with five of our state legislators including Speaker Paul Ryan advocating for more funding and support. I also spent nearly two*

*hours with the director of the United States Marine Band, Col. Jason Fettig, learning more about the tradition and history of that ensemble. Finally, I had the opportunity to meet the President, First Lady, Vice-President, Second Lady, as well as the Sec. of Education in the Oval Office.*

*Standing in the Oval Office was surreal. We had an opportunity to take a group photo and then an individual photo with the President (hasn't been sent to us yet). Once the individual photo was taken we were escorted out of the Oval Office through the door that leads to the Rose Garden. Once outside the door I was basically alone for a moment, with the exception of a Marine who was at the end of the canopied walkway. I realized where I was and old photos of JFK, Reagan, Obama and others flashed in my head. I gasped as I realized that I was in a place I would never be again in my life. At that moment the Marine said "Take your time." Stunned and in awe, I took a deep breath and then thought about all of the people who helped me get to this place. I thought about all of the students I have had the privilege to work with over the years. Many emotions were swirling inside of me, but none more than gratitude. In a blink of an eye it was all over. We were escorted back through security and onto the street to walk back to our hotel.*





*It certainly has been a whirlwind of a year! I appreciate all of your continued encouragement and support. Please know that NONE of this would have been possible without you and your amazing kids. I "bring them with me" wherever I go by sharing stories about their creativity and passion for learning through music. Thanks also needs to go to the other members of the band staff. As you know, they pour everything they have into this program for the benefit of your children. Their passion and team work is exactly the reason my wife and I came to Sun Prairie almost 15 years ago. We have much to be proud of in Sun Prairie; however we must never take it for granted. We know the importance of music in the lives of our children. It is up to us to advocate for music and the arts so that future generations will have the opportunity to learn "beyond the notes."*

*With much gratitude,*

*Chris*



## Band Director Contact Information

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## SPBB's General Committee Information 2016-2017

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For a full list of Committee Chairs, go to <http://www.spbb.org/committees--board.html>

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