

Dear Board of Education:

We would like to thank you for allowing us to have the amazing opportunity of attending Area All State; it was a wonderful experience! We learned so many new things, and made so many new friends and memories. The sound of a full-size band is absolutely breathtaking, and you let us be part of that. We played four great pieces that we would likely have never otherwise gotten to play. This experience taught us many musical lessons.

It can be difficult to adjust to a guest conductor, and doing so means that you have to be able to adapt to and understand his somewhat foreign movements. He could have wanted a piece to be played in a style we were unfamiliar with, or a level of dynamics (volume) that we had not previously needed to reach. However, he often first conveyed these things to us with conducting, not speech. We had to be able to interpret his movements in order to correctly perform the music at hand.

We were also unfamiliar with the set-up of the band, as it was the first time we had experienced a seating arrangement based on our abilities. Solos were automatically awarded to the first chair player, rather than an audition being held for that phrase of music. This will push us to work even harder at the NYSSMA Solo Festival, trying to land those first chair seats.

The size of the band was also different from what we're all used to, as we typically play with a twenty-member band, and the AAS ensemble had seventy-four members. Each instrument section had at least nine members, and there were many more low brass and low woodwind players than we are accustomed to. This made the band sound more supported, and gave us a fuller, more well-rounded overall sound.

In order to be accepted into AAS, we had to participate in the NYSSMA Solo Festival, where you perform a solo, some of your major scales, and a sight-reading passage. The solos took a lot of time to prepare, but we all had a lot of fun and enjoyed the experience immensely.

Again, we would like to thank you for allowing us to participate in this wonderful opportunity. We really enjoyed it, and learned a lot of valuable lessons, both personally and as musicians.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Timofeeff

Elizabeth Stinson

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