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**Scholarships/Grants**

Michelle DiPasquale (W)

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**Past President Emeritus**

Donald Franklin (MWMS)

## Greetings to My Fellow OCMEA Colleagues!

I trust that each of you have just spent the past few month's relaxing, recharging, and resting. It has been a welcome break, but here we are now at the start of a brand new and what I hope will be an exciting 2023 -2024 school year for all of us!! I extend my warmest regards to my fellow OCMEA colleagues and a supportive welcome to all of the newest hires, who have joined and/or rejoined our musical ranks across Orange County.

In my day-to-day, for the past 30 year's, I am & have been the Director of Choirs at Middletown High School. In addition, I have now officially assumed the role of President of the Orange County Music Educators' Association, and it has been a very busy period of transition & change for me personally and professionally. I look forward to working with & serving each of you, as well as our student-musicians from across Orange County for the next two school year's. My focus is on bridging the gap, as I assume my new role, and honoring the time honored traditions of musical excellence that our county has come to be known and recognized for, since I first started as a teacher and while I was also a student in Middletown before that.

I want you to know & encourage each of you to reach out to me at any time. I had created a Google e-mail, but it continues to be a problem, so you can e-mail me at: [gregory.bennett@ecsdm.org](mailto:gregory.bennett@ecsdm.org). Please use that e-mail address to contact me. I will be checking it regularly, and assure each of you that I will respond to your questions, concerns, and feedback in a timely manner. Our OCMEA website has also been updated and will continue to be going forward.

In the meantime, our Executive Board members have been working very hard to ensure that we can continue moving forward. The challenge that many of you had heard about, in regards to liability insurance, has been handled. Our festival schedule for the 2023 - 2024 school year will be fully implemented and we are now independently named & listed as an insured organization

For the purposes of planning, OCMEA will be hosting a Back-to-School or beginning of the year Mixer at the Captain's Table Restaurant (Monroe) on Thursday, September 28th from 4:15 P.M. - 6:45 P.M. Please come join us, meet your colleagues, and I encourage veteran staff member's to bring along your new music colleagues, so that they can be introduced and begin to network. A supportive network can make a world of difference for all of us!!

I look forward to meeting & collaborating with each of you, while we continue to offer our K - 12 student's enriching, rewarding, and memorable music-making experiences throughout the upcoming school year. All my best!!

*Gregory Bennett*