



Jim Cox is in his twenty-fifth year of music education and his fifteenth year at Eagan High School, where he directs a variety of curricular and co-curricular ensembles, provides vocal instruction, and teaches Advanced Placement Music Theory. Throughout his distinguished career, Jim has led a diverse range of ensembles—including treble, tenor-bass, show, jazz, a cappella, and madrigal choirs—while also teaching courses in music history, piano, guitar, and composition.

Beyond the traditional classroom, Jim serves as the co-director and vocal director for the Eagan summer community theatre musical and the school's premier musical showcase, ENCORE!. A frequent adjudicator for choral and solo competitions across the Midwest, he currently serves as President-Elect of the American Choral Directors Association of Minnesota. As a respected conference presenter, Jim has shared his expertise on topics ranging from diversity, equity, and inclusion to vocal pedagogy and ensemble team-building.

Jim's choirs have been featured at numerous regional and state conventions and have premiered several works by contemporary American composers. He holds degrees from Luther College and Saint Mary's University. Outside of the music room, Jim enjoys life with his wife, Megan—also a middle school choir director—and their four children: Ashlyn, Aubrie, Sabrina, and Kadence.



Thad Wilkins is in his 24th year of music education and his 14th year as the Director of Choral Activities at Mount Vernon High School. In this role, he directs a comprehensive range of ensembles, including the Chamber Choir, Concert Choir, Treble Choir, Mixed Choir, and Lincoln Highway Jazz. A respected leader in the state's musical community, Thad currently serves as the Iowa All-State Chorus Chair and is a member of the IHSMA/ICDA Liaison Committee.

Under his leadership, the Mount Vernon choral program has achieved remarkable success. The Concert Choir was twice selected to perform at the Iowa Choral Showcase in 2020 and 2023, while his jazz choirs are perennial top performers at the Iowa Vocal Jazz Championships. To date, his ensembles have earned over 80 Division I ratings, and more than 140 of his students have been selected for the Iowa All-State Chorus.

Thad's influence extends beyond the classroom through his work as a guest conductor and clinician. He directed the 2023 OPUS 7/8 Bass Choir and has served as a conductor and advisor for the Iowa Ambassadors of Music European Tour since 2006.

Thad resides in Lisbon with his wife, Jill, their son, Hagen, and their dog, Archie.



Adam Urban serves as the Wilcox Performing Arts Center Manager and Communications Coordinator for the Algona Community School District. A graduate of Morningside University, Adam earned his Master's in Music Education from the University of South Dakota. Before transitioning into his current administrative and technical roles, he dedicated 18 years to secondary vocal music education.

During his tenure in the classroom, Adam was a driving force in the vocal arts, founding two jazz choir programs and directing award-winning show choirs. Under his leadership, students earned premier accolades, including a 1st Place finish at the 2015 Iowa Vocal Jazz

Championships, numerous show choir finals appearances, and over 50 All-State selections. His expertise has made him a sought-after clinician, with conducting honors that include directing the 9th Grade Mixed Opus Honor Choir in 2013.

Beyond the classroom, Adam is an active composer and arranger for regional show and jazz choirs. His contributions to the field were recognized in 2017 when he won the ICDA Composition Competition. He has since been commissioned by prestigious ensembles, including the Iowa Opus Honor Choir, Salus Vocal Ensemble, and the Morningside Symphonic Chorus.

In his current role at the Wilcox Performing Arts Center, Adam bridges the gap between artistry and execution. He oversees the facility's scheduling, maintenance, and technical production, personally executing the sound and lighting systems that bring performances to life. Adam resides in Algona with his wife and fellow music colleague, Jill, and their four children.



Heather Nail is a graduate of Drake University where she received her Bachelor of Music Education with Vocal Emphasis and Master of Science in Education Leadership degrees. She has been teaching in West Des Moines since 2010. Prior to West Des Moines she was an educator in the Des Moines Public Schools. In her current position, as one of two choral directors at Valley High School she directs the A Cappella auditioned Junior-Senior choir, Select Treble Clef Choir, Vocalese, Vox, and Vocal Vision jazz choirs, and currently serves as the Tri-M music honor chapter advisor.

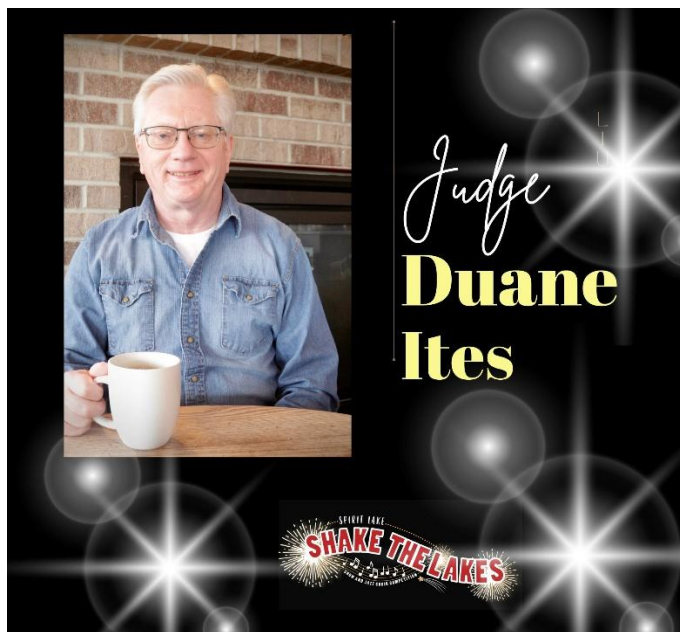
Mrs. Nail is a proud member of the National Association for Music Education, the Iowa Choral Directors Association, the Jazz Education Network, and Jazz Educators of Iowa. She served as the Iowa Vocal Jazz Championships Chair for seven years, the Opus Honor choir chair for three years, is a regular adjudicator and clinician in the state of Iowa, and has had the privilege of conducting several honor choirs. Her ensembles have received several recognitions in Downbeat Magazine, won several awards at the local and regional level, and consistently placed in the top ranks at the Iowa State Vocal Jazz Championships. In 2017, she was the first recipient of the Barbershop Harmony Society/ NAFME Music Educator of the Year Award. Currently, she serves as the Jazz Repertoire and Resources chair for ICDA.



Brent Peterson completed 33 years of directing choirs in Iowa and retired in May 2024 as a Vocal Music Director in the Waukee Community School District, most recently at Waukee Timberline. In addition to his work with choral ensembles, he served as a volleyball and track coach, earning the Iowa Association of Track Coaches Junior High Track Coach of the Year award in 2015. He was also the conductor for the Bass Clef OPUS Honor Choir in 2006 and received the WOI Channel 5 “My Favorite Teacher” award.

Mr. Peterson, known as “Mr. P.” at Waukee, graduated from Northwest Missouri State University in 1991 with a B.S. in Vocal Music Education and earned a Master of Arts in Effective Teaching from Viterbo University in 1999, where he has also served as an adjunct professor. Beyond his work in Waukee, Brent is an active guest director, show choir clinician and judge, accompanist for choral ensembles at Van Meter and Panorama school districts, IHSMA All-State Choir Lead Auditor, IAAE/ICDA mentor, and speaker throughout the Midwest.

He is married to Anne Peterson, an elementary music teacher at Eason Elementary in Waukee, and they are proud parents of Joel Peterson, a freshman at Florida Gulf Coast University studying Professional Golf Management and participating in college choral ensembles. The family enjoys traveling to Florida, golfing, and spending time at their lake home on Sun Valley Lake.



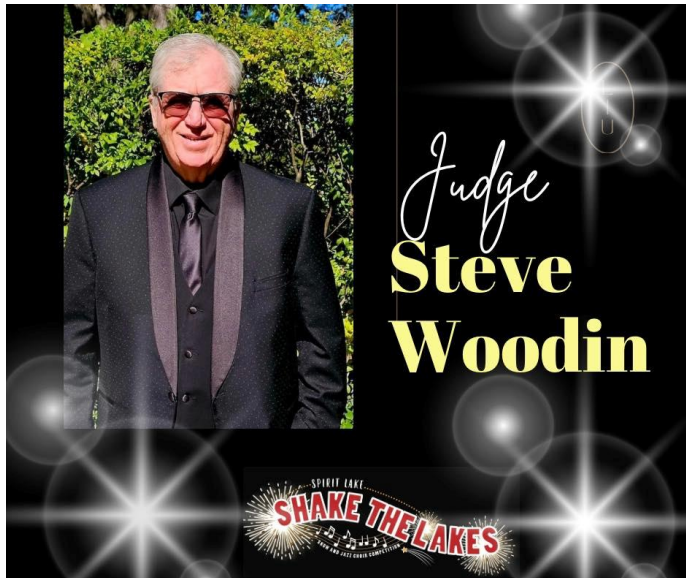
Mr. Duane Ites is in his ninth year of retirement from full-time teaching after a 33-year career as a middle school and high school vocal music educator. The final 21 years of his teaching career were spent at Spirit Lake High School in Spirit Lake, Iowa. Prior to that, he taught at South O'Brien High School and Jefferson-Scranton High School.

While at Spirit Lake, Mr. Ites directed two curricular choirs: Mixed Chorus, a non-auditioned ensemble for grades 9–12, and Meistersingers Choir, an auditioned ensemble for grades 9–12. He also led the show choir and vocal jazz ensembles, directed a drama musical every other year, and conducted the Christmas portion of Messiah with his curricular choirs and community singers. In addition, he taught both individual and group voice lessons at the high school.

Throughout his career, his choirs consistently earned Division I "Superior" ratings at Iowa High School Music Association state contests and achieved strong results at invitational competitions throughout the Midwest, including performances in Florida every four years. Under his direction, the vocal jazz ensemble was invited to compete in the Iowa Vocal Jazz Championships many times, including five of his final six years as director.

Mr. Ites also served as an adjunct professor of voice for six years at Iowa Lakes Community College in Estherville, Iowa. Since 2022, he has been an ICF-Professional Certified Life, Leadership, and Relationship Coach. He continues to support the profession as a mentor for beginning music educators through the Iowa Choral Directors Association (ICDA) and the Iowa Alliance for Arts Education (IAAE).

Mr. Ites earned his bachelor's degree from Northwestern College and holds a master's degree from the University of South Dakota.



Steve spent 28 years as Director of Choral Activities at Urbandale High School, where he conducted Concert Choir, Select Mixed Choir, Urbandale Singers, and Studio, the varsity show choir. He has served as an adjudicator for the Iowa All-State Festival and as an assistant to four Iowa All-State Chairs. His adjudication experience includes State Small Group and Large Group contests in both Iowa and Nebraska.

Steve directed the 2011 OPUS Boys Honor Choir and served as Chair of the 2012 Iowa Choral Directors Association Summer Symposium. He maintains a private voice studio, works with All-State ensembles from several central Iowa schools, and served as Director of the Drake University Choir during the Fall 2025 semester. During the current season, he is adjudicating six show choir competitions across the Midwest.

Steve has been married to his wife, Paula, for 45 years. They have three children—Scott, Greg, and Janelle—and one grandson, Oliver. His personal interests include travel, fishing, hiking, and time with family.



It has been Brett Fuelberth's privilege to serve as the Director of Choral Activities at Iowa Lakes Community College for the past 26 years. At Iowa Lakes, he directs four choral ensembles and teaches Music Theory, Music Fundamentals, Piano Class, Successful Learning, and Music Appreciation.

Brett earned a master's degree in Choral Conducting from the University of Missouri–Kansas City and a bachelor's degree from Wayne State College. Since joining the Iowa Lakes faculty, he has initiated several signature programs, including the annual Elizabethan Madrigal Feasts, Heartland Honor Choir, Night at the P.A.C., Jazz & Show Choir Festival, and All-State Camp.

In addition to his academic and conducting responsibilities, Brett is actively involved with Laker Life Campus Ministry, serving through mission trips, food bank outreach, free community breakfasts, and other campus ministry initiatives.

Brett has been married to his wife, Barb, for 30 years. Together they have three children—William, Matthew, and Anna—and continue to value family, service, and music as central parts of their lives.



David Fog has been a choral music educator in Iowa for 41 years, including 34 years at Emmetsburg High School, where he directed six choral ensembles before retiring in 2014. Following his initial retirement, Dave continued teaching for four additional years at North Union and Bishop Garrigan schools, where he introduced show choir and vocal jazz ensembles to their choral programs.

Under his leadership, the Emmetsburg High School vocal music program was named one of fifty Outstanding Small School Music Programs in the United States by the Standards and Repertoire Committee of the American Choral Directors Association. In addition to earning numerous Iowa High School Music Association (IHSMA) state contest honors, EHS choral groups received superior ratings and overall championships at choral festivals in Orlando, Chicago, St. Louis, Washington, D.C., and Denver during regional performance tours.

The EHS varsity show choir, High Voltage, consistently strove to “raise the bar” for excellence in small-school show choir, earning first-place finishes in its class and advancing to overall championship finals on numerous occasions. Mr. Fog also directed all aspects of 23 musical theatre productions and currently serves as an evaluator for the Iowa High School Musical Theatre Awards program.

In addition to his music career, Mr. Fog has been a football coach since he began teaching and was named Class 1A Assistant Coach of the Year in 2010. He remains active as an ICDA mentor, clinician, and adjudicator for show choir festivals and IHSMA-sponsored state contests. In 2021, he had the honor of directing the ICDA Opus Bass Clef Honor Choir.

David and his wife, Kelley, have been a true team throughout their careers, co-teaching at Emmetsburg High School and supporting one another in all musical endeavors. They enjoy traveling and spending time with their four children and six grandchildren during weekend gatherings, tailgates, and at their home on the lake in Emmetsburg.



Michelle taught vocal music in Iowa for 23 years, retiring from public education in 2019. She is a graduate of Trinity International University in Chicago, where she earned a degree in Vocal and Instrumental Music Education.

Michelle began her teaching career as an elementary music educator in West Des Moines from 1994–1995. She then served as the Vocal Music Director at Center Point–Urbana High School from 1995–2001. From 2003–2019, she was the Director of Vocal Music at Pella Community High School, where she directed the varsity and prep show choirs—AcaPella, Bravo, and Dutch Divas—along with Advanced Choir, Select Choir, two Concert Choirs, Chamber Choir, Madrigal Singers, and the annual musical productions.

Under Michelle’s leadership, more than 60 Pella students were selected for the Iowa All-State Chorus. Her show choirs earned dozens of Grand Championships at competitions across Iowa, received over 100 caption awards, and enjoyed performance tours to Florida, New York City, Toronto, and multiple Caribbean cruise performances.

Michelle lives in Pella with her husband, Wes, where they raised their three children—Nathan, Noah, and Courtney—all of whom were deeply involved in vocal music and show choir throughout high school. Since retiring from the school system, Michelle remains active in the arts community through her private voice and piano studio, serving as a clinician and judge for high school show choir competitions, working in a local women’s clothing boutique, organizing events for downtown Pella’s historic district merchants, singing on the worship team at her church, and joyfully embracing her role as “Mimi” to her grandchildren.