

Influential Women Features Cari Martin, M.Ed.: Retired Texas Educator And School Administrator

FAIRFIELD, TX, UNITED STATES, August 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Celebrating More Than 25 Years of Music Education, School Leadership, Student Advocacy, and Service to Texas Education

Cari Martin, M.Ed., is a retired Texas public school educator and administrator with more than 25 years of experience in music education and school leadership. She most recently served as Junior High Principal at FAIRFIELD ISD in Fairfield, Texas, where she concluded her distinguished career in educational administration. Throughout her career, Cari remained committed to supporting students, teachers, fine arts education, and the schools and communities she served.



Cari earned her Master of Education in Educational Leadership and Administration from Stephen F. Austin State University and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education from Ouachita Baptist University, where she was actively involved in band leadership as a drum major.

Her career in education began in 1997, and she spent nearly two decades as Director of Bands at Teague ISD, where she built a legacy of excellence in fine arts education. Under her leadership, student ensembles achieved historic milestones, including earning their first sweepstakes awards and performing at major state-level marching events such as the Alamodome. Earlier in her career, she also served in band programs at Crowley ISD and Fairfield ISD, experiences that strengthened her commitment to student development through music education.

Later transitioning into administration, Cari served as Assistant High School Principal in Hillsboro ISD, followed by roles as Assistant Junior High Principal and then Junior High Principal in Fairfield

ISD. She moved into leadership to better advocate for fine arts and student engagement within schools.

Now retired, Cari continues to contribute to education through UIL concert and sight-reading adjudication and remains dedicated to supporting teachers and students in Texas through her ongoing involvement in music education.

A Family Legacy of Education and Leadership

Cari comes from a long line of educators, which really shaped who she is. Her mother was a teacher, and her grandfather, who passed away before she was born, was a former band director who became an administrator in Baird, Texas.

Cari watched her mother in the classroom when she was little. Her mother would ask her to help with bulletin boards or take erasers to the boiler room so the custodian wouldn't have to do all that work. As a teacher's kid, Cari learned so much and saw great teachers as a little kid. She attributes those fundamentals to her mother.

But another important influence came from her high school band director, Mr. Martinez, who saw something in Cari that she didn't see in herself. She was walking in the hall one day when he stopped her and said he thought she'd be a good band director. He recognized leadership qualities in her before she recognized them in herself, and that ultimately inspired her entire career path.

Music went on to bring Cari tremendous joy through teaching students. Her years in music education allowed her to combine her passion for music with her commitment to student development and leadership.

Listening, Collaboration, and Servant Leadership

One of the most important principles Cari carries with her is the importance of listening to the people she works with. She believes in really listening to what they are saying rather than assuming that leadership means simply making decisions according to one's own preferences.

Cari believes in collaboration and servant leadership. She does not believe that being a leader or being in charge of something means having to be arrogant or power-hungry, or that leadership is all about the person in charge. Instead, she believes it is about the people under a leader's care and genuinely listening to them.

This perspective has shaped the way Cari approaches leadership and the relationships she builds within educational environments. For her, effective leadership involves understanding the people around her, hearing their concerns, and working collaboratively to support them.

Encouraging Young Women to Stand Up for Themselves

When asked what advice she would give to young women entering her industry, Cari emphasizes

the importance of being able to stand up for oneself.

She believes women should not simply allow somebody to plow over them or treat them poorly in any way. Throughout her own career, there have been moments when she stepped in and said exactly how she felt, whether to defend a student, defend a program she was part of, or let a specific boss know what could happen if a particular direction was taken.

For Cari, speaking up is an important part of leadership. Women have to be willing to advocate for themselves and others, particularly when the people or programs they care about need someone willing to step forward.

Her own career reflects that commitment to advocacy, both for students and for the role of fine arts within schools.

Navigating the Challenges of Student Testing

Cari identifies the amount of testing students face as one of the challenges in education today. If a student does not pass the STAR test, they may have to participate in some form of remediation and other requirements. Sometimes, a student has to spend several specific hours meeting those needs. Even if they cannot attend summer school, they may have to make those hours up during the school year.

For Cari, it is one of those situations where there is simply a lot of testing. While staff members engage in collaborative efforts to support students, she recognizes that some students still face difficulties meeting those requirements.

Her perspective comes from years of working directly with students and educators, as well as from her experience in both music education and school administration.

Building a Work Family and Valuing Family Life

At work, Cari genuinely believes that the people she works with are like a work family. If somebody needs something, she is there. If there is a duty that a staff member needed to do but could not, she would simply step in and fill in. For Cari, that is what people do for one another.

She does not get upset about those situations because people have their own lives. Her approach reflects the same collaborative and supportive leadership philosophy that has guided her throughout her career.

Family is equally important to Cari. Her family is very tight-knit, and her husband is an attorney in Fairfield. They help each other and enjoy spending time together, including vacations and visits with their extended family.

During the summer, Cari and her family have their little camper trailer and go on different adventures, or they fly somewhere they have always dreamed of going. They also go to

Stephenville to watch different things her son is doing as he prepares to become a coach and graduate from Stephenville.

At this stage of life, Cari and her family are excited to have the opportunity to do these things together. They enjoy seeing historic places and learning, and they enjoy discovering new places together.

From her beginnings as a teacher's child to a career spanning music education and school administration, Cari Martin has remained grounded in the values of leadership, collaboration, advocacy, and service. Her continued involvement in Texas music education allows her to remain connected to the students and educators who have been central to her professional journey, while retirement provides opportunities to spend time with her family and continue discovering new places and experiences.

Learn More about Cari Martin:

Through her Influential Women profile, <https://influentialwomen.com/connect/Cari-Martin>

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