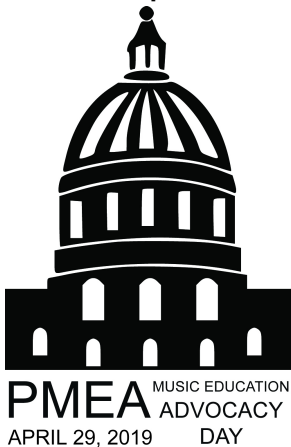




## Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) Legislative Recommendations

**PMEA Represents Music Educators, Members of the Music Products Industry and Most Importantly, Students**



- PMEA is a statewide nonprofit organization of over 4,000 members dedicated to promoting the musical development of all Pennsylvanians. The present membership evolved from a small group of band directors dating from 1933.
- Today, the organization includes those engaged in music instruction at all levels, from preschool through college and university, as well as those in the music products industry.
- The organization promotes and supports quality music education **for all students**, through learning and performing as well as promoting and supporting music education in schools and communities. PMEA is affiliated with The National Association for Music Education, NAFME.

### Fundamental Beliefs

PMEA believes music and the arts effectively:

- Engage students in their creative, cultural, aesthetic, intellectual, social, physical and emotional development—indeed, in the development of their identities as students and citizens
- Develop students' skills critical to 21st century learning for success in school and life
- Develop skills integral to the economy of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the United States

All pre-kindergarten through 12th grade students in Pennsylvania must be guaranteed:

- Music and arts education offered as core curricula
- Music and arts curricula based on a balanced, comprehensive and sequential pre-K-12, standards-based music and arts education
- Music and arts education taught and assessed by certified music and arts educators



**National Association  
for Music Education**





## **PMEA Legislative Priorities**

In order for PMEA's fundamental beliefs to become reality in all Pennsylvania schools, PMEA encourages the legislature and the Governor to be proactive in ensuring that all school districts receive adequate and equitable funding as well as adequate policy support for the well-rounded education of every student which includes music and the arts as defined by the Every Student Succeeds Act.

### **1. Increase in Basic Education Subsidy Funding**

Pennsylvania should increase the Basic Education Subsidy. By increasing the basic subsidy to school districts, Pennsylvania would serve students more effectively by allowing school districts the discretion to use the money as they see fit. We support an increase of \$225 million to the basic education subsidy. We support Governor Wolf's proposal to use \$20 million of an increase in base adjustments for specific school districts. The remaining \$205 million should be provided to schools to use in areas of need determined at the local level and not decided in Harrisburg. Any increase in funding should take into account the rising mandated costs school districts are facing. Beyond the 2019-2020 budget, the General Assembly must provide annual state funding to school districts in an amount, and distributed through a formula, that supports the principles of equity, adequacy, accountability, and predictability. We applaud Governor Wolf and the Pennsylvania General Assembly for their work in recent years to increase the basic education subsidy.

### **2. Maintain Funding for School Safety**

Pennsylvania should continue to focus on school safety and allocate \$60 million to the School Safety and Security Fund. Allocating \$60 million would fund these programs at the same level as the 2018-2019 budget year. There is still a need for school safety improvements in Pennsylvania schools and by allocating a dedicated funding stream for school safety, schools will not be pressured to use other state or federal dollars and instead use that money on educational programs.

### **3. Increase the Allocation to the State System of Higher Education**

PMEA supports Governor Wolf's proposal to increase funding to the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) by \$7 million. PASSHE schools are a valuable resource to Pennsylvania. Some of the finest music teacher preparation programs are housed in these universities. It is critical to provide funding to support adequate resources to prepare the next generation of music educators.

### **4. PDE Arts Content Advisor / Liaison**

PMEA supports reinstatement of the funded Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) staff position that supervises the development of curriculum and standards in four content areas: *Music, Visual Art, Theatre Dance, and Media Arts*.

The position was removed from the PDE Curriculum staff in the 2011-12 state budget. PDE leadership are encouraged to review key pieces of the recently passed federal education law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) for ways to fund this position by way of federally available money. Specifically, Title IV, Section 4104 of ESSA addresses such a possibility.

## TALKING POINTS FOR PMEA MEMBERS

Please use these talking point for background and information as you are talking to your representative about our policy asks.

### **1. Increase in Basic Education Subsidy Funding**

*Pennsylvania should increase the Basic Education Subsidy. By increasing the basic subsidy to school districts, Pennsylvania would serve students more effectively by allowing school districts the discretion to use the money as they see fit. We support an increase of \$225 million to the basic education subsidy. We support Governor Wolf's proposal to use \$20 million of an increase in base adjustments for specific school districts. The remaining \$205 million should be provided to schools to use in areas of need determined at the local level and not decided in Harrisburg. Any increase in funding should take into account the rising mandated costs school districts are facing. Beyond the 2019-2020 budget, the General Assembly must provide annual state funding to school districts in an amount, and distributed through a formula, that supports the principles of equity, adequacy, accountability, and predictability. We applaud Governor Wolf and the Pennsylvania General Assembly for their work in recent years to increase the basic education subsidy.*

PMEA continues to ask for an increase to the basic education subsidy year after year as do most education groups visiting Harrisburg. Pennsylvania is the fifth worst state in the country when it comes to the share of education costs the state funds. That means local school districts are forced to make up the difference.

Governor Wolf has proposed a \$200 million increase for the basic education subsidy – but the proposal is actually less than that – as only around \$168 million of that would be funneled through the basic education subsidy as new money. Wolf's proposal includes raising the minimum teacher salary across the state and moving funds as an adjustment for certain school districts out of a specific fund and into the basic education subsidy. Those funds would be taken out of the basic education subsidy allocation. We have chosen to support an increase of \$225 million (in total \$20 million above Wolf's proposal) while including Wolf's proposal of moving funds as an adjustment for certain districts. That would leave a total increase of \$205 million through the subsidy. Our ask does not include the proposal to raise the minimum teacher salary. We are not against that. However, we have concerns that a state mandate that changes the minimum by such a large amount from the previous minimum could cause havoc for school districts with collective bargaining agreements and school districts should have the ability to use the state basic education funding as they see fit.

Few will argue that the cuts to education in the past few years have not hurt music and the arts. When a school district is asked to do more with less – the arts and music can be among the first targets.

Express your passion for what music education can do for students and how vital it is for students to receive a well-rounded education; and while you know the state will not tell a school district where to spend this additional money, we hope and will encourage school districts to use this money for music programs.

### **2. Maintain Funding for School Safety**

*Pennsylvania should continue to focus on school safety and allocate \$60 million to the School Safety and Security Fund. Allocating \$60 million would fund these programs at the same level as the 2018-2019 budget year. There is still a need for school safety improvements in Pennsylvania schools and by allocating a dedicated funding stream for school safety, schools will not be pressured to use other state or federal dollars and instead use that money on educational programs.*

This line item was funded at \$60 million in last year's budget. Governor Wolf has proposed funding this line item at \$45 million. We support maintaining the funding at \$60 million.

School safety is important and we support these funds based on that alone. However, there are a few other reasons we support maintaining the \$60 million allocation.

- 1) Every dollar spent out of this fund on necessary school safety improvements is one dollar less spent out of the basic education subsidy on safety improvements, which then allows those basic education funds to be used for other priorities including music and the arts.
- 2) Federal Title IV, Part A money as allocated in the Every Student Succeeds Act can be used for school safety initiatives. However, this funding stream can also be used to boost a well-rounded education (which includes music) and we continue to encourage districts to use that Title IV, Part A money towards the well-rounded education area and not be forced to use some of that funding for school security.

### **3. Increase the Allocation to the State System of Higher Education**

*PMEA supports Governor Wolf's proposal to increase funding to the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) by \$7 million. PASSHE schools are a valuable resource to Pennsylvania. Some of the finest music teacher preparation programs are housed in these universities. It is critical to provide funding to support adequate resources to prepare the next generation of music educators.*

Pennsylvania is 49th in the nation in state investment in higher education. State support for PASSHE has been in marked decline since 2006, as state appropriations dropped from 30 percent of the state system budget to 20 percent. Pennsylvania relies heavily on the PASSHE schools to develop students in many career areas – and we know that some of our strongest music education programs are at PASSHE schools.

This is our first step into higher education advocacy. Much like the work we do for K-12, we want to make sure that institutions that receive state funding as part of their normal funding stream are funded adequately. That is why we support Governor's Wolf's proposal to increase funding by \$7 million.

### **4. PDE Arts Content Advisor / Liaison**

*PMEA supports reinstatement of the funded Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) staff position that supervises the development of curriculum and standards in four content areas: Music, Visual Art, Theatre Dance, and Media Arts.*

*The position was removed from the PDE Curriculum staff in the 2011-12 state budget. PDE leadership are encouraged to review key pieces of the recently passed federal education law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) for ways to fund this position by way of federally available money. Specifically, Title IV, Section 4104 of ESSA addresses such a possibility.*

The essence of this ask is make sure that the arts have someone available to support and disseminate information from the state level to arts teachers. Other content areas have advisors who are already in place. This position has been vacant but is necessary to provide support and professional development and technical assistance to educators across the state and to colleagues within the PDE. Some roles of the PDE position include:

- Curriculum support, solicitation and review of materials and resources on the SAS portal
- Implementation guidance and support of content-specific curriculum as it relates to development of the Student Learning Objectives design to be used for teacher evaluation
- Active representation in the State Education Agencies Directors of Arts Education (SEADAE) including direct access to the NCCAS arts assessment item bank.
- Development and review of arts-specific professional development

- Support to arts education organizations regarding Act 48 professional development offerings
- Develop, monitor, and support professional online learning communities

Recently passed federal education legislation, The Every Student Succeeds Act, leaves open the possibility for funds to be used for this type of position.

We currently have a part-time contract position at PDE serving this purpose. We hope to have a full-time staffed position in the future.