

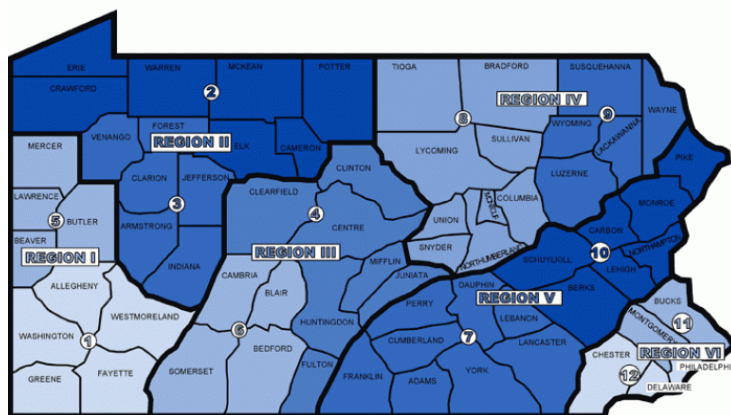
PENNSYLVANIA MUSIC EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION



# *2021 POLICY PLAYBOOK*



The Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (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 association promotes and supports quality music education, learning and performance as well as promoting and supporting music education in schools and communities. PMEA is affiliated with The National Association for Music Education, NAfME.



The association is made up of twelve geographic districts and six geographic regions serving the needs of members and students in their area.

### Vision

The Pennsylvania Music Educators Association will be the leading voice and advocate for music education in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

### Mission

The mission of the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association is to advance comprehensive and innovative music education for all students through quality teaching, rigorous learning, and meaningful music engagement.

# Pennsylvania Music Educators Association

## Fundamental Beliefs

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

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
- Develop social and emotional learning skills that are more necessary than ever as the world emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic

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

- That music and arts education is offered as core curricula
- That the music and arts curricula being offered to them are based on a balanced, comprehensive and sequential pre-K-12, standards-based music and arts education
- A music and arts education taught and assessed by certified music and arts educators





# PMEA State Legislative Priorities and Recommendations

In order for PMEA's fundamental beliefs to become reality for all Pennsylvania students, PMEA encourages the legislature, the Governor, the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the State Board of Education to be proactive in ensuring that all school districts and charter schools receive adequate and equitable funding, 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), and support for the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

We are presenting eight policy recommendations for which PMEA is advocating in 2021. There are sure to be other issues at the federal, state, and local levels where PMEA will work to ensure access to music education. These eight recommendations represent the current policy landscape and current issues as of March 2021.

## 1. Increase in Basic Education Subsidy Funding

The **Pennsylvania General Assembly** should work with **the Governor** to 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 \$1.152 billion to the basic education subsidy that would be run through the Basic Education Fair Funding Formula. In addition, we support an addition of \$200 million to ensure every school district in Pennsylvania receives some increase to their funding. Any increase in funding



should consider the rising mandated costs school districts are facing as well as costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Beyond the 2021-2022 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 and we hope we can count on their support as they craft the 2021-2022 budget.

### *Context:*

PMEA continues to ask for an increase to the basic education subsidy year after year as do most education groups visiting Harrisburg. At one point, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania provided over 50% of funding to school districts. That percentage

has significantly dropped over the years and school districts are required to make up the difference with local tax dollars, which causes a great inequity among school districts.

Governor Wolf has proposed a significant increase in education funding for the 2021-2022 budget year. This funding increase would provide school districts with the funds necessary to begin to make up for several years of inadequate funding from the state. An increase of \$1.3 billion is a necessary step for school districts to adequately educate the students of Pennsylvania with less reliance on local property taxes. According to the Education Law Center and the PA and Public Interest Law Center, an additional \$4.6 billion is necessary to educate students across the Commonwealth moving forward.

The COVID-19 pandemic put a magnifying glass on inequities in education. Increasing the Basic Education Subsidy is a starting point to remove funding barriers.

## 2. COVID-19 Mitigation Efforts in Schools

**School Administrators**, the **Pennsylvania Department of Education**, and the **Pennsylvania Department of Health** should disseminate and enforce mitigation efforts to allow music making to continue in school settings.

### *Context:*

In its ongoing task of identifying ways to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in performing arts activities, a third set of preliminary results have been released in the unprecedented aerosol study commissioned by the National Federation of

State High School Associations (NFHS), the College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA) and a coalition of more than 125 performing arts organizations.

Led by research teams at the University of Colorado and the University of Maryland, the research study looked at vocal and instrumental music situations and determined their safety and appropriate mitigation strategies.

Among the findings from the study is that foremost, masks must be worn at all times, and multi-layered bell covers must be used by all wind instruments. Regarding masks, the best-case scenario would be no gaps in the mask, nose covered and tight enough around the edges that an outline appears when it is removed.

The Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) has released [guidance](#) to all school districts in Pennsylvania based on this research study. With the realization that every school district has unique circumstances, this guidance is a way for school districts to ensure schools are offering music education safely to their students.

The guidance released by PMEA is for school music settings and other places where there is live music happening. This guidance applies to both indoor and outdoor gatherings.

1. CDC guidelines related to hand washing, hand sanitizer, and clean surfaces are recommended in all music making activities.
2. Students, teachers, performers, and any support staff should always wear masks that are well-fitted. This includes anyone that is singing.
3. Instrumentalists playing a woodwind or brass instrument using air for production of sound should wear masks that have a slit cut in them for the mouthpiece of their instrument.
4. Woodwind and brass instruments should have tight fitting bell covers.
5. Everyone involved should maintain a six foot distance from each other. Trombone players should maintain a nine foot distance from others.
6. Anyone playing an instrument that releases spit or condensation on to the ground should use a puppy pad to absorb the spit or condensation and then dispose of the pad properly.
7. Sharing of music, instruments, and other equipment should be kept to an absolute minimum and proper hygiene should be in place when sharing does occur.
8. Rehearsals and performances should not last longer than 30 minutes at a time to allow for one air change before the start of the next rehearsal or performance.
9. Outdoor performance/rehearsal spaces are recommended over indoor spaces. Tents may be used outdoors but must have all four sides of the tent open.



### 3. Fair Charter School Funding

The **Pennsylvania General Assembly** should adopt a funding formula for brick and mortar, and cyber charter schools that allows these schools to maintain their original intent – a place for innovative education that can be shared with traditional public schools. PMEA calls upon members of the General Assembly and Governor Wolf to rethink the current charter funding structure to allow all charter schools and all traditional public schools to thrive through a funding formula that supports the principles of equity, adequacy, accountability, and predictability for charter school and school districts.

#### *Context:*

Several years ago, PMEA worked to advocate for a fair funding formula for school districts. We see the charter school funding system the same way. Charter schools can provide a valuable alternative for students. However, some charter schools have come under scrutiny for a variety of reasons including: financial mismanagement, receiving more special



education dollars than actual incurred costs, and an imbalance in the amount of funding cyber charter schools receive. These concerns not only hurts students in charter schools but also students in school districts that are forced to pay charter schools higher amounts of money per student than actual costs.

We feel it is in the best interest of all parties for the Governor and members of the General Assembly to come together to discuss ways to create a system that provides equitable funding for school districts, brick and mortar charter school, and cyber charter schools.

Governor Wolf has proposed a variety of measures that he says would provide financial relief to school districts. These measures include reforms to cyber charter school funding and the way charter schools are reimbursed for special education students by school districts.

It is important to stress that we are not advocating any specific charter funding proposal. Rather we feel a dialogue is necessary to create a funding formula for charter schools that is fair to charters as well as school districts.

A fair funding formula can be created in a similar way that a fair funding formula was created several years ago for school districts. All stakeholders should be brought together to find an equitable and workable solution.

## 4. Support Physical Education Credit for Marching Band Participation

The **Pennsylvania General Assembly** should pass legislation allowing students that participate in high school marching band to receive physical education course credits. Other states ([Alabama](#), [Florida](#), [Illinois](#), [Louisiana](#), [Mississippi](#), [Nevada](#), [Ohio](#), [Tennessee](#), and [Texas](#)) have policies in place that allow for at least some credit for student participation in marching band in place of a physical education credit. Local boards of education would determine if their school district would offer such a credit.

### *Context:*

Students participating in high school marching band programs are as physically active as students participating in interscholastic athletic programs. In many places, a marching band season is longer than any individual sports season. The physical demands and expectations placed on marching band students can meet and exceed requirements of a physical education course. Other states have realized that marching band participation can satisfy physical education requirements. Now is the time for Pennsylvania to realize that as well.

Pennsylvania House Bill 191 has been introduced to allow students participating in interscholastic athletics to satisfy physical education course requirements by participation in athletics. We are asking for the bill to be amended before passage to include high school marching band participation.

## 5. Increase the Allocation to the State System of Higher Education

The **Pennsylvania General Assembly** should increase funding for the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE). 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.

### *Context:*

Pennsylvania is 47<sup>th</sup> in the nation in state investment in higher education. 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.

Much like the work we do for K-12 education, we want to make sure the institutions receiving state funding as part of their normal funding stream are funded adequately. Governor Wolf has proposed a new scholarship program for students attending any of the 14 schools in the state higher-education system. He'd cover the costs by repurposing a subsidy to the state's horse-racing

industry. We are not opposed to this proposal, known as the Nellie Bly scholarship, however we feel it is crucial for Pennsylvania to **also** provide additional funds directly to PASSHE schools to make attendance at these institutions affordable for all students.



As Pennsylvania taxpayers, we own the PASSHE system. And it is important to protect our investment. PASSHE is currently undergoing a system re-design. Goals of the redesign are increased efficiency, cost savings, and better serving the needs of students. While details of the re-design are currently unclear, there is no question the transition through any re-design will cost more money – even if the end goal is saving money. It is all the more important to provide funding to the system to survive and thrive through the re-design.

Any funding increase to PASSHE (be it via direct funding increases or student scholarships) should represent and benefit all students and prevent tuition increases in the short term and reduce tuition costs in the long term.

## 6. Review Current Pennsylvania Standards in the Arts

The **Pennsylvania Department of Education** and the **Pennsylvania State Board of Education** should review content area standards as outlined in 22 Pa. Code, Chapter 4. A review and update of these standards is necessary to bring them into alignment with the current state of education in Pennsylvania and the nation. The Pennsylvania standards should be brought into closer alignment with the 2014 National Core Arts Standards and should include standards in media arts.

### *Context:*

The Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania State Board of Education are the first step in the review process.

The standards need updated. PMEA has worked to provide a [crosswalk document](#) to help members bridge the gap between current Pennsylvania arts standards and other national versions of the standards. We feel it is time for PDE and the SBOE to review the state standards to modernize them and more closely reflect the national standards. Any new Pennsylvania standards should also include standards in media arts.

The best course of action would be for PDE and the SBOE to convene a group of stakeholders to begin the standards review.



## 7. Reinstate the Governor's School for the Arts

The **Pennsylvania General Assembly** should reinstate the Governor's Schools of Excellence – specifically the Governor's School for the Arts. Pennsylvania House Bill 539 has been introduced calling on the return of the Governor's Schools of Excellence.

### *Context:*

For many years, the Pennsylvania Governor's Schools program provided educational enrichment opportunities to students. Generally held during the summer months, these camp-like programs allowed students the opportunity to further explore areas of their particular academic interest while meeting colleague students from across Pennsylvania with similar interests. The five-week programs were designed for gifted high school students and were funded publicly.

Funding for the Pennsylvania Governor's Schools of Excellence was cut in the 2009-2010 budget. While some programs remained with a different funding strategy, the programs were not the same as they were originally. House Bill 539 calls for the resumption of the Governor's Schools with the goal of host sites covering at least 50% of the cost. This proposal makes sense because of the potential benefit to host sites, which are generally universities. These universities have the opportunity to show off their facilities to potential students.

We specifically support House Bill 539 because language in the bill assures that students are not denied entry based on socio-economic factors while maintaining a competitive process for entry.

Those that have attended the Governor's Schools speak of the value they received from these programs – specifically those that were part of the School for the Arts. In a time when we're coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, finding ways for students to connect is more important than ever. The return of the Governor's Schools for the Arts would be valuable for

students – not only because of the education and networking that are a major part of the experience, but also to offer another place of connection as we emerge from the pandemic.

If the Governor's School for the Arts were to be reinstated in Pennsylvania, PMEA stands ready to assist to promote the schools and provide other technical assistance.

## 8. 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 five content areas: *Music, Visual Art, Theatre, Dance and Media Arts*. The **Pennsylvania Department of Education** should work with the **Pennsylvania General Assembly** to reinstate this staff position that was removed from the PDE Curriculum staff in the 2011-12 state budget. PDE leadership are encouraged to review key pieces of 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.

### Context:

The essence of this ask is make sure the arts have someone available to support and disseminate information from the state level to arts teachers. Other content areas have advisors 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
- Development, monitoring, and support professional online learning communities

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.





# Federal Legislative Priorities and Recommendations

PMEA is affiliated with the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) and support legislative priorities at the federal level as laid out by NAfME.



National Association  
for Music Education



MUSIC EDUCATION  
POLICY ROUNDTABLE

## Support Music Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Every Student Succeeds Act's (ESSA) enumeration of “music” as part of a “Well-Rounded Education” provides opportunities to increase student access to music education. This commitment to a well-rounded education, that includes music, is more important than ever as students will return to school increasingly in need of environments that support their social and emotional development.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly harsh on states' ability to balance their budgets and adequately fund social services. According to the [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#), state budget shortfalls expected from COVID-19's economic fallout will total a cumulative \$615 billion over state fiscal years 2020-2022. These shortfalls will have extremely negative consequences for education, which is often a target for budget cuts.

We know how vital music education is for our students at a time of difficulty, isolation, and uncertainty. The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) and the Music Education Policy Roundtable support the following provisions to help deliver an equitable, well-rounded education that includes music.

For the next COVID-19 relief package, Congress should appropriate:

- At least \$130 billion in funds to **provide flexible resources for K-12 schools** to reopen or provide distance learning.
- At least \$350 billion in **aid to state and local governments** to backfill state education budget shortfalls.
- At least \$7 billion in dedicated funding to the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) **E-Rate program**.

Congress should support access to Music Education as part of a well-rounded education by appropriating:

- \$1.6 billion for **Title IV, Part A's** formula-funded block grant that may be used to improve access to music education.
- Adequate funding for **Title I, Part A**, which, through both school-wide and targeted assistance programs, can provide supplemental funds for a “Well-Rounded Education,” for the most disadvantaged students in our country. (*Awaiting President's Budget for funding numbers*)
- \$2.295 billion for **Title II, Part A** to support professional development for music educators, as part of supporting a “Well-Rounded Education.”

Congress should pass the **Reopen and Rebuild American's Schools Act**:

- This legislation, introduced by Representative Bobby Scott (VA-3), would create a \$100 billion investment targeted at high-poverty schools to address school infrastructure to address COVID-19 health and safety risks of COVID-19 to students and staff. The bill includes the renovation or development of music and arts facilities as an allowable use of funds.

# How To Advocate

Your voice is more important now than ever to advocate for music and arts education. As we see hope to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, your voice is crucial to ensure music and arts programs continue as part of education for every child in Pennsylvania.

Conversations in your local community are crucial to future success. Making school administrators aware of the good things happening in music and arts classrooms is the best form of advocacy you can do. Advocacy is marketing. Remember these points as you market your program:

- Know your audience. What will resonate with them?
- Arts are important on their own – it's important to create well rounded citizens who can appreciate culture
- Promote the academic benefits but also promote those benefits that can't be measured on a test like teamwork, self-esteem, problem solving
- Tell stories of student successes
- Use different communication channels. Social media, websites, emails to parents, emails to administrators, and communication with your local media are all important ways to communicate the value of your program.
- Even in the face of adversity in your school, your program and your classroom – it is important to stay relentlessly positive to those you tell about your program

Visit [advocacy.pmea.net](https://advocacy.pmea.net) There you can learn about current funding opportunities in Pennsylvania. Learn about opportunities and how to work with your administrators to access these funds.



While you are at [advocacy.pmea.net](https://advocacy.pmea.net), you can take action on some of the policy issues raised in this document. PMEAs makes that process easy by asking you to enter some basic contact information and you'll be able to send a pre-written letter to your representatives in the Pennsylvania General Assembly. PMEAs will send out email alerts when those opportunities are available.

For national funding and advocacy issues, visit the NAFME Grassroots

Advocacy Center at: <https://nafme.org/advocacy/grassroots-action-center/>



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Arts ARE Education is a new grassroots campaign in support of arts education for all students.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW:

- **Embrace the Arts ARE Education campaign.** Encourage your school board to pass the Arts ARE Education Resolution and encourage community members to SIGN THE PLEDGE.
- **Speak with school leaders in your district about the power of arts education.** Share the campaign talking points page and stories of how arts education has continued successfully throughout the pandemic in your schools and supported students' well-being and a positive school climate.
- **Celebrate with other school districts that embrace the Arts ARE Education campaign.** Share your wins on the Arts ARE Education website, along with your district's resolution.

[artsareeducation.org](https://artsareeducation.org)





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