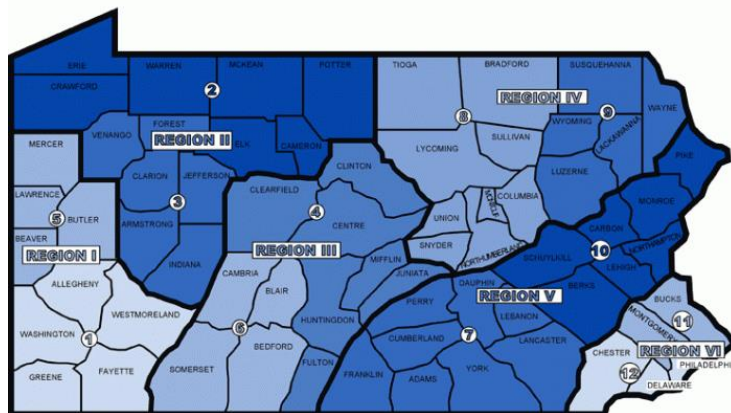




2022 POLICY PLAYBOOK



The Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) is a statewide nonprofit organization of over 3,000 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 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.

The following eight policy recommendations represent the current policy landscape and current issues as of March 2022, for which PMEA is advocating.

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 \$1.25 billion to the basic education subsidy that would be run through the Basic Education Fair Funding Formula. In addition, we support an addition of \$300 million to ensure those school districts in Pennsylvania needing the most support receive additional 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 2022-2023 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 2022-2023 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. The state's share of total district spending is 38%, which ranks the state 45th in the country. The national median is 48%.

Governor Wolf has proposed one of the most significant increases in education funding for the 2022-2023 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 \$1.5 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. 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 hurt 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.

3. 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 local education agency 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.

As Pennsylvania has standards in subject areas, including physical education, any legislation should require the adherence of standards in physical education for any marching band credit awarded. Local education agencies would have the option to decide if they would offer this credit in their schools. A blanket state mandate is not our goal, rather we hope the General Assembly would give schools the option to decide to implement this credit program as they see fit.



As Pennsylvania has standards in subject areas, including physical education, any legislation should require the adherence of standards in physical education for any marching band credit awarded. Local education agencies would have the option to decide if they would offer this credit in their schools. A blanket state mandate is not our goal, rather we hope the General Assembly would give schools the option to decide to implement this credit program as they see fit.

One goal of this proposal is to ease the burden of music students that are often forced to make a choice between music

courses and other areas of study because there is a limited amount of course time during the school day. By allowing a marching band student the option to receive course credit for another subject (while fulfilling the requirements of that subject in marching band), student will have more opportunities to study other courses offered in their school.

Other states have realized that marching band participation can satisfy physical education requirements. Now is the time for Pennsylvania to realize that as well.



4. 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 47th 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 ensure that institutions receiving state monies as part of their normal funding stream are adequately funded. Governor Wolf has proposed a new scholarship program for students attending any of the 14 schools in the state higher-education system. The program, known as the Nellie Bly scholarship, would repurpose a subsidy to the state's horse-racing industry and also utilize federal pandemic relief funds to cover the cost. 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 redesign with the goals of increased efficiency, cost savings, and better serving the needs of students. There is no question the transition through any redesign 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 redesign.

Any funding increase to PASSHE (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.

5. 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. The **Pennsylvania General Assembly** should pass legislation requiring a cyclical review of standards in all academic areas. 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. Specifically, the Pennsylvania arts 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 to be 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.

To ensure standards in the arts and all academic areas are reviewed, the General Assembly should pass legislation requiring standards in all areas to be reviewed on a rotating basis. These reviews should consult stakeholders in the field to provide relevant and current information.

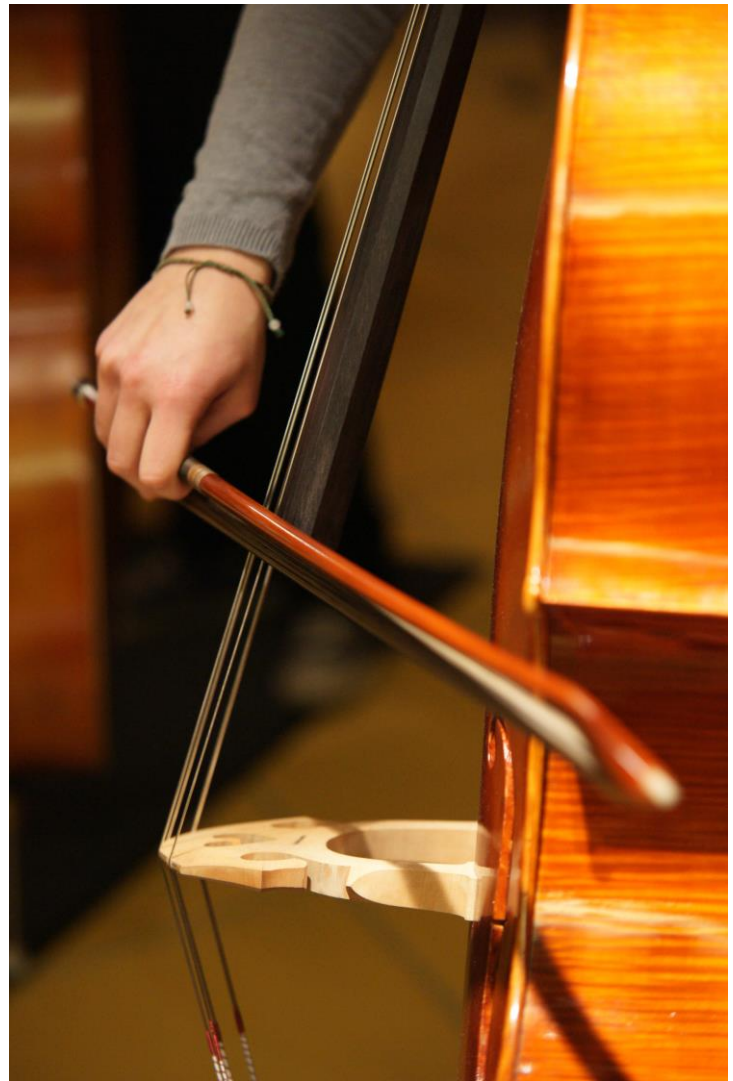
6. Reinstate the Governor's School for the Arts

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 for the return of the Governor's Schools of Excellence.

Context:

For many years, the 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 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 School 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.

7. 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 is 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.

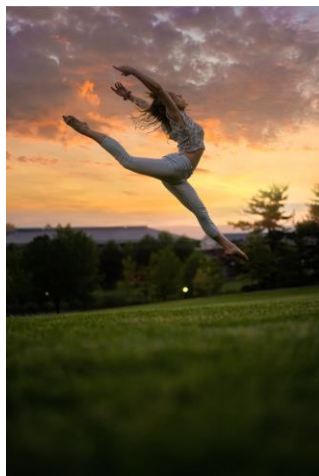
Context:

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, 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

There is currently a part-time contract position at PDE serving this purpose. We feel strongly that this should be a full-time staffed position in the future. In 2023 Pennsylvania will have a new governor and with that comes changes in executive branch departments. We want to make sure that the arts maintain a position at PDE in any new administration.

8. Direct Path to Dance Teacher Certification



PMEA supports the **Pennsylvania Department of Education** enacting a direct path to dance teacher certification. The **Pennsylvania General Assembly** should direct PDE to change the dance certification process to allow for dance educators to receive certification without having to pursue it through other subject areas.

Context:

Although Pennsylvania has certification for dance educators, there is no direct path that allows educators, with a dance education, to pursue certification. The current route to dance certification requires an individual to be educated in communications, physical education or vocational education – none of which specifically prepares teachers with the discreet pedagogical skills necessary to be highly qualified dance educators. The process should be simplified so dance certification has parity to music and art certifications.

While PMEA is a music focused organization, we see the value in all artistic areas and we are supporting our dance colleagues in the Pennsylvania Dance Education Organization (PADEO) in calling for this direct path to certification.

How To Advocate

Your voice is more important now than ever to advocate for music and arts education. As we 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 and 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/or your classroom – it is important to stay relentlessly positive about your program

Visit 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, you can take action on some of the policy issues raised in this document. PMEA 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. PMEA 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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