



## Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) Legislative Priorities



### On behalf of Music Educators, Members of the Music Products Industry and Most Importantly, Students

- PMEA is a statewide nonprofit organization of over 3,700 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
- Develop social and emotional learning skills
- Provide a place for students from all backgrounds, genders and races to find community and belonging

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



# 2024 Pennsylvania Music Educators Association Policy Priorities

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.

## 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. During the past nine years, we have seen the General Assembly and the Governor work together to provide consistent and meaningful increases to the Basic Education Subsidy. We hope Governor Shapiro and the General Assembly will see the impact of this funding increase and continue to provide meaningful increases to education funding especially in light of the February 2023 Commonwealth Court decision. Any increase in funding should consider the rising mandated costs school districts are facing. Beyond the 2024-2025 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.

## 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 Shapiro 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. We support Governor Shapiro's proposal to establish a statewide cyber charter tuition rate of \$8,000 per student.

## 3. Support Alternative Credit for Marching Band Participation

The **Pennsylvania General Assembly** should pass legislation allowing students that participate in high school marching band to receive an alternative course credit. 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 these states the credit counts toward physical education requirements). Local boards of education would determine if their local education agency would offer such a credit.

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

The **Pennsylvania General Assembly** should continue to 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.

## 5. Support the Educator Pipeline

The **Pennsylvania General Assembly** should increase funding for the student teacher stipend program and invest in upgrades to the Teacher Information Management System (TIMS) which is crucial for prospective educators to apply for certification.

## 6. Review Current Pennsylvania Standards in the Arts and Humanities

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.

## 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.