



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:

- Adequate and equitable funding for schools that allows for all students to receive a well-rounded education
- 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



2025 Pennsylvania Music Educators Association Legislative Policy Priorities

In order for PMEA's fundamental beliefs to become reality for all Pennsylvania students, PMEA encourages the Pennsylvania General Assembly, 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 and state-related universities.

1. Increase in Basic Education Subsidy Funding

The **Pennsylvania General Assembly** should work with **the Governor** to increase the Basic Education Subsidy and adequacy payments through the Ready to Learn block grant program. By increasing these subsidies 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 ten 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 which ruled that Pennsylvania's school funding system is unconstitutional and must be reformed. Any increase in funding should consider the rising mandated costs school districts are facing. Beyond the 2025-2026 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. Support the Educator Pipeline

The **Pennsylvania General Assembly** should increase funding for the student teacher stipend program, which has already demonstrated high demand and significant impact. By expanding access to this program, more aspiring educators—including future music teachers—will receive the financial support necessary to complete their training and enter the profession.

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

4. Increase Support for Higher Education

The **Pennsylvania General Assembly** should continue to increase funding for the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) and state-related universities. These 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. Licensure of Professional Music Therapists

PMEA urges the **Pennsylvania General Assembly** to support the licensure of professional music therapists in Pennsylvania. Licensure would expand access to music therapy services, protect consumers, and ensure the delivery of high-quality care across the Commonwealth. Increased access to music therapy would promote equity, remove barriers, and enhance the well-being of many Pennsylvanians who benefit from these services.