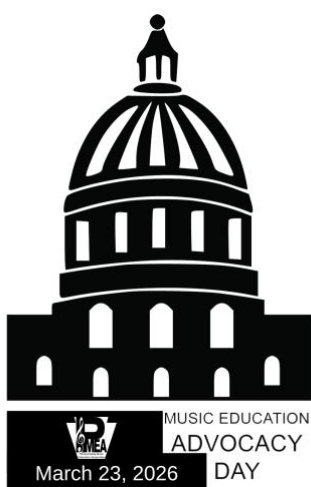




Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) Legislative Priorities



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



2026 Pennsylvania Music Educators Association Legislative 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 and adequacy payments through the Ready to Learn Block Grant program. Increasing these subsidies will allow school districts the discretion to use funds as they see fit to meet local needs and serve students more effectively. Over the past decade, the Governor and General Assembly have provided consistent and meaningful increases to the Basic Education Subsidy, and Governor Shapiro's 2026-27 proposal continues that trajectory with a Basic Education Funding (BEF) line of approximately **\$8.312 billion**, an increase of about **\$50 million** over 2025-26, alongside roughly **\$565 million** in new "adequacy" and related supplements targeted to underfunded districts. We urge Governor Shapiro and the General Assembly to recognize the impact of these investments and to continue providing meaningful increases to education funding, especially in light of the February 2023 Commonwealth Court decision that ruled Pennsylvania's school funding system unconstitutional and in need of reform. Any increase in funding must also reflect rising mandated costs that school districts face, including special education, charter tuition, transportation, and student mental health supports. Beyond the 2026-27 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. Currently a system is in place, funded at \$30 million, to support future educators. The program provides stipends approved through budget-related legislation. Student teachers are eligible for \$10,000 stipends and can earn an additional \$5,000 if they work in a district with high turnover. Governor Shapiro has proposed a \$5 million increase to this program to support future educators.

3. 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.

4. Licensure of Professional Music Therapists

The Pennsylvania General Assembly should support the licensure of professional music therapists in Pennsylvania, and 2026 is an opportune moment to advance this long-overdue step. Licensure would align Pennsylvania with a growing number of states that formally recognize music therapy as a regulated health profession and would help keep highly trained practitioners in the Commonwealth.