

# Conducting Advocacy

## PMEA District 1's Advocacy Newsletter

Written by Emily Wardle, Advocacy Representative

### Advocate with Your Experiences!

Attendance at the PMEA Annual Conference can sometimes be seen as a luxury for teachers whose districts don't have spare expenses or students that advance to the All-State Ensemble level. If you were fortunate enough to attend the professional development and music-making event last week, I implore you to use your experiences to advocate for music education. It may be one of the easiest advocacy efforts you make!

Administrators and school board members appreciate knowing that your conference attendance was worth the money and time spent therein. Send a thank you letter outlining what you'll use from the conference to them; that will make a mark that may be remembered next year when you ask for conference attendance again. You may choose to implement some of the things you saw, heard, or learned; tell your supervisor what you've done, and why! Share your findings with other music department staff in your building and district, and share the new knowledge with your students. In this way, you are fulfilling your role in the professional development continuum and are advocating for music and music education.



PMEA's mission includes supporting quality music education in schools and communities, so the experiences you had at the conference promote our mission statement everywhere you go. Advocate with your experiences – it's one of the easiest ways to be a music education advocate!

### PA Budget News

Keep tuned into what's happening in Harrisburg regarding the releasing of funds for '15-16 and the budget for '16-17. With the crisis we had for this school year, your quick note to a legislator could have a major impact for next year. [PSEA's site](#) has a ready-made e-letter that will take you under a minute to send. Emailed PMEA Advocacy Updates are great summaries of urgent info, so please don't immediately delete them!

**Every voice  
matters!  
VOTE!**

Are you up to your eyeballs with campaign information, ads, slogans, and the like? There's a reason why politicians and candidates are reaching out to you in every way possible (even retweets reach out to in a secondhand way) and plastering their message across every platform they can glean: **they want your vote.** If you've watched the televised broadcasts after the primary elections you know that every vote truly does count. Your vote can be a vote of advocacy for education, the arts, and music.

So do your civic duty on April 26<sup>th</sup>! Do some research for all of the candidates that are running – and not just for President, as we also have other offices up for election. **VOTE.** If you strongly believe in a candidate, encourage peers/family/friends/coworkers to get out and vote too!

Even if you just go and vote for one particular office, you have done your duty and have made your voice heard. **We want our students to actively participate in class and commit 100% to our ensembles; why should we do any less ourselves, when our vote could ultimately affect the education and world that our students live in?**

A few sites to visit for information on political candidates include comparisons from [Inside Gov.](#), [On The Issues](#) (presidential), [On The Issues](#) (PA politicians), [PBS](#), the [Washington Examiner](#), the [NY Times](#), [US Elections: PA](#), and [Politics1](#). You can easily find more by searching online! ☺



**“I would teach children music, physics, and philosophy; but most importantly music, for the patterns in music and all the arts are the keys to learning.” ~ Plato**

*Check out these sites for relevant advocacy and music education information:*

["Science Shows How Piano Players' Brains are Actually Different From Everybody Else's"](#)

This study connects to my last newsletter's featured article and shows how those who play the piano long-term actually have different brain compositions than others (even other musicians!). It's a great article to share with students, administrators, and teachers, as it positively advocates for all musical endeavors, not just the piano!

["Science Shows How Drummers' Brains are Actually Different From Everybody Else's"](#)

This fascinating article explores the science of percussionists' processing and communication. It's a great expansion upon the above piano brain research!

**Get to know your advocacy rep!**



**Emily Wardle**

Emily is a K-6 General Music/Choir teacher in the Washington Area School District. She attended PMEA District 1 events throughout her education at Belle Vernon Area and studied music education at Duquesne University. She earned a Curriculum & Instruction Master's Degree through Clarion University and is certified as an ESL Program Specialist. She is also the treasurer of PMEA District 1. Emily is committed to sharing positive music advocacy news and ideas with District 1's musical members!

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## Five Minutes to Advocacy

Take a few minutes out of your week to positively affect your music program and protect its future! An idea: write the task in your calendar so you'll be more likely to complete it. If you already do these suggestions regularly, spend a few minutes to improve your program via another action.

**April 6** – Last call for MIOSM activity data input! Now that MIOSM – March – is over, please reflect upon activities, lessons, or presentations that you have done to increase appreciation and awareness of music education in your school or community. **Please** take a moment to complete the [D1 MIOSM Activities Survey](#) (click the embedded link). It won't take long, I promise! For more details about the survey please refer to my previous newsletters from this school year.

**April 20** – This month is Jazz Appreciation Month. With just a few days left before the month ends, incorporate some jazz into your students' lives and your own! Rhythmic jazz elements or the idea of improvisation in even the simplest of forms – such as students improvising lyrics to a four beat given rhythm – begin expanding your students' minds and opening their ears and eyes to creativity. Use [this site](#) to give you ideas and resources!

**May 4** – Put the [PMEA Summer Conference](#) on your radar now, District 1! It's going to be closer to us than usual, with the two-day event being held at Seven Springs! As of late March, the schedule hasn't yet been released but do consider attending; it's a great little professional getaway that won't break the bank!

**May 18** – You've made it to the home stretch! Enjoy the last few days or weeks of the year and take an inventory of all you've accomplished. Give a survey, ask for a short writing composition (bonus points from the ELA teachers for that one!) or have students draw a picture to show you what they've learned this year, what they love about music, or whatever else you'd like to learn from them. This activity serves as feedback for you but also can be an advocacy piece that can be sent to administrators or displayed in the hallways. Have a great end to your year, and enjoy the summer. See you next school year! ☺

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me with advocacy questions or concerns. I'm here to help you and to be an active resource! Thank you for your support!

**Please feel free to share this newsletter with non-PMEA music teachers in your district and any other music supporters who may benefit from the information or ideas. Thank you!**