

Conducting Advocacy

PMEA District 1's Advocacy Newsletter

Written by Emily Wardle, Advocacy Representative

Quick Facts to Know About ESSA

In December 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was passed as a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). ESSA is being phased in as a replacement for the No Child Left Behind Act. It is great news for us because it provides a window of opportunity for a sequential, comprehensive music education in our schools. Congress passed this Act likely in part from perseverance and diligence of fabulous music advocates across the country, so hats off to all who have posted on social media, communicated with a politician, or have made efforts to have music be appreciated in your community!

Here's what you should know about ESSA, as some school districts or administrators may not be sprinting to the line to change how things are done in your school... or they may not be aware of all the things that ESSA would mean for music education. Enacting changes will take some collaboration and discussion amongst policymakers in your district, but it **will** be worth it in the end. (All of this and more can be found at NAFME's "[Everything ESSA](#)" page, and in particular with their [PDF printable toolkit](#) that you can share with colleagues and administrators.)

Music Education Opportunities in ESSA:

- ✓ **A New and Clear Intent to Support Our Nation's Schools through a Well-Rounded Education** (not JUST reading and math)
- ✓ **Enumeration of Music as a Well-Rounded Subject** (for ALL children, no matter their personal circumstances)
- ✓ **Requirements for a Well-Rounded Education** (federal funding is opened to ensure that well-rounded education is fiscally possible for districts)
- ✓ **Flexibility of Title I funds to support a Well-Rounded Education** (so music can be supported by these funds)
- ✓ **More Professional Development for Music Educators** (Title I, II, and IV funds can support music education PD and your curriculum; use this to support your cause for attending conferences!)
- ✓ **Flexible Accountability Systems** (school performance can now include multiple progress measures, including student engagement, parental engagement, and school culture/climate)
- ✓ **Protection from "Pull Outs"** (THIS IS BIG FOR MANY OF US!!! ESSA discourages removing students from the classroom – including music and the arts – for remedial instruction because it is taking them away from a well-rounded education)

Please take a moment and complete the [D1 MIOSM Activities Survey](#). It won't take long, I promise! (A big HATS OFF to those of you who answered already! THANK YOU! Your responses have been forwarded to Chuck.)



Chuck Neidhardt, Pennsylvania state MIOSM chairperson, has requested that each District Advocacy Representative collect MIOSM activity information from our members. I have created a short and simple Google Forms Survey and would love your input on what you do in the month of March to promote and support music education. Since March is upon us, hopefully we will be able to collect some real-time information. Any activity, big or small, is important and we'd like to document it. We're looking for activities from current teachers, retired teachers, and teachers within all disciplines of music. If your school musical falls in the month of March, that counts – please tell us! Please don't put this on the back burner; take a moment to provide us with some information. The link is <http://goo.gl/forms/WTnBmOquKL>, or you can click [here](#). Thank you so much!

"If I were not a physicist, I would probably be a musician. I often think in music. I live my daydreams in music. I see my life in terms of music... I get most joy in life out of music." ~ Albert Einstein

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

["Why Singing in a Choir is so Good for You"](#)

A great article to quote or point to at your next school program, this article explores the emotional, psychological, social, and physical benefits that singing in a choir has on all people. It's advocacy for community choirs, too!

["Science Just Discovered Something Amazing About What Childhood Piano Lessons did to You"](#)

This brief article can be a tool for private lesson instructors, as well as school teachers who want to encourage their students to take private lessons.

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, is pursuing an ESL certification, and 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!

Emily can be contacted at emily.s.wardle@gmail.com.

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.

February 10 – Please spend a few moments reviewing my information above about changes to school systems because of ESSA. Then, spend time perusing NAFME's ["Everything ESSA"](#) page and its links, and in particular with their [PDF printable toolkit](#) so you can be educated and informed when approaching administrators about funding, requisitions, curriculum offerings, and evaluations. The PDF toolkit helps you determine if your school is eligible for the opened-up funding.

February 24– Please complete my Music In Our Schools Month survey if you hadn't already. This information is being collected to see what schools are doing across the state, which will help future PMEA MIOSM actions and plans. Please see above (1st page of this newsletter) for more information.

March 9– It's March, which means that Music In Our Schools Month is here! Consider doing something with or for your music students, student body, school district, or community that celebrates music and its impact on students' academic, social, emotional, and psychological well-beings. MIOSM falls before the PSSA testing window (for those of you with students who take the PSSAs), so this month could be a great opportunity to connect music with test-taking strategies. Actively and explicitly engaging in discussions with students about how music is important to them is helpful; these notions are not always apparent to students or other teachers. Find or create songs that bolster school pride and motivate test-takers!

March 23 – With the end of the 3rd quarter of the school year approaching (or already passed, depending on your district's calendar!), spend a moment to think about one last advocacy goal for yourself for the final nine weeks. Think about something that you can do to instill the love of music in your students that will last throughout the rest of the school year and will simultaneously keep you motivated. This push can help you – and your students – make it through musical season, when sleep and energy seem to elude all involved! Feed off of their energy if you can!

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!