



MMEA Bylaw Changes

Rationale & Impact, January 2018

Prior to these proposed bylaw changes, the MMEA had a two-tiered leadership structure:

1. **Executive Committee:** Comprised of elected officers (5): President, Past President, President-Elect, Treasurer, Secretary, with Executive Director non-voting ex officio. In our bylaws, the EC held all authority in the organization. **Would be changed to “executive board” under the proposed bylaw changes.*
2. **Full Board** of at least 30 appointed chairs and region representatives who worked independently on events (such as elementary general workshop) or tasks (such as advocacy) or interest areas (such as special learners) or employment/age group (such as tri M, collegiate, SMTE). Although it has been our practice to vote on priorities and other important issues (such as this restructuring and set of bylaw changes), this body did not have official power according to our prior bylaws.

In the new board structure, coordinators and representatives are voting board members who appoint chairs who may attend board meetings and who are in turn empowered to appoint committee members as needed for events. The new structure is intended to promote flexibility and autonomy and to allow the organization to grow by increasing our creativity, our reach, and our capacity. Please note as you examine the attached MMEA Board Restructure document that although the coordinators will remain stable, coordinators will be able to create additional chairs within their committees in consultation with the MMEA President and Executive Director.

The proposed bylaw changes are intended to decentralize power within the organization to accomplish the following:

- a. The previous bylaws vested all decision-making power in the executive board. The revised bylaws clarify that the executive board is responsible for all financial and legal decisions, but the full board is empowered to define priorities as well as design, schedule, and execute student activities, professional development, and advocacy.
- b. The new structure specifies renewable terms (2 years for chairs, 3 years for coordinators). We believe that people are more likely to serve in a well-defined role for a specific amount of time.
- c. The new structure specifies 23 voting board members (plus 5 executive board members and the executive director). Most positions on this board are “coordinators” of an interest area. Each coordinator is responsible for overseeing activities of a committee of chairs who run committees. Coordinators ensure that their committees are creating student events, professional development, and advocating for music education in ways that pertain to their area.
- d. The new structure builds in opportunities to collaborate and include additional people as needed for events or projects (such as policy work, advocacy work, and/or research). This means the new board structure not only creates more opportunities to be of service to our profession, it also creates leadership capacity building (whereas in our prior structure, either you were on the board or not... those were the only two options for service or leadership within MMEA).