

Michigan Music Educators Task Force – Strategies for Local Advocacy

The Michigan Music Educators Task Force has compiled a document of talking points and strategies for teachers advocating for their programs at the local level. We understand that advocacy does not come easily to every person and want to encourage all teachers to simply start the conversation.

Basic talking points/philosophies

- Emphasize the STUDENT need, not the PROGRAM for the sake of a program
- Emphasize how music classes positively impact the SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL well-being of our students
- Emphasize a desire to be part of the SOLUTION, rather than creating more problems

Know your situation

- Are the students in your classes supported by administration? Parents? Community?
 - Work with administration first before you mobilize parents.

Make contact with all levels of administration (Superintendent, Curriculum Director, Building Principal, and Guidance Counselors)

- Simple contact: “I want to work with you”, “I have no plan, but I want to be a part of the conversation”. Stay positive. Avoid trying to “fly under the radar”: lay the foundation. Make yourself part of the conversation.
- Reinforce the correlation between music classes and the whole child.
- Make it known you’ve contacted all students and parents in your classes and they are eager to “weather the storm”.
 - Advocate for these students that need your class for both their musical education but also their social-emotional education.
- Make it known your teaching and curriculum can adapt to any circumstances, but music education for the students must remain.
 - Be sure to leave yourself room for flexibility as information, standards, and guidelines are constantly updated. Don’t feel the need to commit to one strategy in initial conversations.
 - Music instruction can exist in any CDC guidelines

Ideas to suggest

- Instead of two large ensembles, be prepared to make four smaller ensembles.
- Make use of large spaces such as auditoriums, cafeterias (when not in use for lunch), common and outdoor areas
- Emphasize you don’t just teach performance. Tell administrators you are ready to focus on other Learning Targets/Benchmarks/Standards (theory, history, cultural impact, etc.)
 - a. These are things you are already doing.
 - b. “Process vs. Product”: Process can be done online or in small groups. The Product can be adjusted.

Make contact with your union president and building representative.

- Again, simply be a part of the conversation.

Know the law

- The Michigan Merit Curriculum requires one credit of “Visual, performing, or applied arts” for graduation.
- Further, the second credit requirement for World Language can be substituted for a second credit of “Visual, performing, or applied arts”
 - This can help create flexibility for school administrations and guidance counselors when creating the master schedule.

Read [statement](#) from Michigan Music Task Force about the impact of COVID-19 on music education in Michigan.

Mobilize local Retired Music Educators for support: They are eager to lend their voices

- Contact Janis Peterson: janispeterson@hotmail.com

Help Advocate at the State and National Levels

1. Contact your state and federal representatives
 - a. www.msvma.org/Advocacy-Resources will let you know how
2. Reach out to members of the “[Return to School](#)” Council