



Advocacy Calendar & Proactive Marketing Tools

Special thank you to Pennsylvania MEA's Advocacy Team for the adaptation of their [Marketing Toolkit](#)

Advocacy doesn't have to be overwhelming or take hours of your time. This year-long advocacy calendar is designed to make advocacy **accessible, manageable, and part of your regular practice as a music educator.**

Each month offers a few simple, actionable steps you can take to build relationships, share the impact of your program, and make your voice heard on behalf of music education. You don't have to do everything! Choose what fits your time and circumstances, and remember that **small, consistent actions throughout the year can make a big difference.**

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August: Prepping for the Year

Easy	More Advanced
• Ensure your performance dates and details are shared with the school newsletter team; check in to make sure that there is a plan to highlight those performances. • Share any dates with your district-level communications team, or simply email them to make a connection	• Check the school board calendar and reach out to the board manager to schedule a performance or testimony date • Complete NAFME's Grassroots Advocacy Inventory • Complete NAFME's Local Advocacy Action Plan

September: Getting Things Rolling

Easy	More Advanced
• Back to School Night: When speaking to parents, include information about how they can support music programs at your school and in the school district. ◦ Tip: Specific asks are much more impactful. "Help us fundraise for a new _____", email the school board with happy/positive stories • Map out a social media plan around how often to post/share for the year. A good goal – once a week. • Give your administrators complimentary music department gear (t-shirts, stickers)	• Back to School Night: If there is an opening assembly, arrange with your principal to perform for all parents • Welcome your colleagues back to school with a performance by your ensemble. • Make a social media post around National Arts in Education Week. This week occurs every September, spearheaded by Americans for the Arts. Their toolkit is full of resources, including an extensive collection of data around Public Opinion About the Arts. • Send music department gear to staff at the central office (superintendent, security personnel, etc)

October: Engage With Your Principal

Easy	More Advanced
• October is National Principals Month – Thank your administrators for supporting music in your school district • Encourage people to vote!	• Hold an "Informance". Invite a cross section of stakeholders into your classroom to observe a rehearsal (dept chairs, admin, community officials, school board members, parents, etc). Provide a packet for each to help them understand what it is they are actually witnessing, and hold a 15 minute debriefing afterward to clarify and answer questions. ◦ Here's a great example from Pennsylvania.

November: Share All-State News & Elections

Easy

More Advanced

- Publicize the names of the students who have been accepted into All-State:
 - Template: [All-State Ensemble Acceptance Press Release](#)
 - School newsletters/school-wide social media
 - Local media: [List of Newspapers Published in Oregon](#)
 - Alumni associations and booster groups
 - School boards
 - Thank parents for their support
- After Election Day: Reach out to your State Representative and/or Senator to request to perform at a Capitol Opening Ceremony. This needs to be scheduled directly with their office as each office is allotted a specific number of slots for performance. Find your school's elected official here: bit.ly/ORLOOKUP

December: Strategic Concert Advocacy

Easy

- Formally invite your administrators, school board members, and even elected officials to your Winter Concert. Recognize them from the stage and [thank](#) them for their support and/or invite them to [participate](#)!
- Incorporate [research, data, & quotes on the benefits of music education](#) into your winter concert presentations! This is in the form of a program insert, slideshow presentation, posters, etc.

January: All-State & Conference

Easy

More Advanced

- Attend the OMEA Conference and participate in the Advocacy & Public Policy Roundtable
- Request a personal day if you are planning to participate in OMEA's Capitol Day in February
- [Highlight](#) All-State students through school and district level communications and in local media
- Encourage All-State students and their families to share their experience with their elected officials and ask for their support this legislative session
- January is School Board Directors Recognition Month.
 - Honor your school board members with a brief [informative performance](#) before a January board meeting.
 - Send them [thank you notes](#) for serving their communities and/or for supporting music education in their schools
- Apply for NAMM's [Best Communities for Music Education](#)
- Investigate getting your principal, school board, superintendent, or PTA to pass a [resolution or proclamation](#) for Music In Our Schools Month® in March

February: Capitol Day

Easy

- Gather a list of your upcoming performances to share with your elected officials, either in person at Capitol Day or through the Virtual Capitol Day campaign
- Participate in OMEA's Capitol Day in Salem, either in person or virtually. **February 18, 2027!**
- Prepare for Music In Our Schools Month® in March:
 - Plan a [special project to highlight MIOSM](#) or a MIOSM Concert/Event in your school district
 - Prepare a program insert/graphic for your March performances, including any district-wide events, or use on from [NAfME](#).
 - Formally invite your administrators and school board members to [speak](#) about the importance of music in the schools

March: Music in Our Schools Month®

Easy

- Change your social media profile picture to highlight MIOSM.
 - [MIOSM Shareable Graphics – NAfME](#)
- Create short videos to share on [social media](#), asking students, parents, teachers, and administrators:
 - What does music mean to you
 - How does music impact your life
 - Why is music at school important to you
- Ask students and/or parents to write the school board, superintendent, and other decision makers with brief stories of inspiration, academic success, or motivation, etc.
- Include MIOSM graphics in any March performance program, including all-district festivals.

More Advanced

- Investigate getting your principal, school board, superintendent, or PTA to pass a [resolution or proclamation](#) for Music In Our Schools Month or simply have them make an announcement
- Incorporate a MIOSM lesson plan from NAfME in your classroom
- Along with MIOSM, March is also Youth [Art](#) Month, [Theatre](#) In Our Schools Month, and [Dance](#) In Your Schools Month. Consider a united approach to advocacy for all visual and performing arts in your school.

April: Collect & Highlight Data

Easy

- Arrange with your principal to perform at any “incoming student/future parent night” event
- Share a Music Department “State of the Union” with your building/district administrators
 - Emphasize the data – current enrollment, anticipated enrollment, retention statistics, future needs, program successes, etc.

More Advanced

- Send your music department’s newsletter to your state legislators and/or local school board members. Include facts about how music study benefits children and opportunities to see the program in action.

May: Teacher Appreciation

Easy

- May is Teacher Appreciation Month! Have your music department perform a mini-concert for the teachers in your building before a faculty meeting.
- Send the teachers thank you notes for supporting the arts in your school, and encourage your students to do the same.
- Invite your building faculty and staff, administrators, school board members to your Spring Concerts.
- Use the [pre-concert slideshow](#) (template) to recognize your students and help build audience capacity for advocacy

June: Looking Ahead

Easy

- Collect perspective data from [students](#) and [student families](#) - share with your administrators
- Foster relationships between current music department students and those not yet involved
- Think about your successes and learnings from the past year around advocacy and make a plan for next year.

July: \$\$

Easy & Advanced

- Explore [funding options](#) for the upcoming school year to increase access and equity in your program. Bookmark application dates!

Before Any Performance

- Ensure dates and details are included in school-wide communications
- Create and share a social media invite and tag your school board, superintendent office, and any local decision-makers/politicians
- Have students create reels/short videos to share, inviting the community to the performance.
 - Take a video of a rehearsal and share it as a “preview”

Any Time of Year Activities

- Schedule “faculty and friends” (music teachers who live in the district, parents and other interested community members who are musicians) recitals.
- Broadcast school performances on radio and/or local access television.
- Partner with a neighboring school district to hold concerts, workshops with guest artists, and/or professional development opportunities. Events of this type help to build strong relationships between districts and might provide a means of support if an area music program needs assistance.
- Work with music booster organizations to ensure that such organizations are supporting all music programs in a school district at all levels.
- Create a network of “interested individuals” within a school district who would be willing to take on advocacy roles. Such “interested individuals” could be music teachers living in a district, graduates of a school district’s music program, parents of current and former music department members, local business leaders, local civic leaders.
- Schedule “vertical” concerts within a school district so that families can see the growth of musicians and programs.
- Invite local legislators to events that involve performances by music students (i.e. football games, concerts, musicals, etc).
- Have school music groups perform at local parks and/or retirement communities
- Have school music groups perform in a side by side concert with an adult community musical group
- Have regular meetings with your music department staff to discuss the issues in your district. Take the results of those meetings and share them with administrators from time to time.
- Have conversations and partnerships with music related businesses. They are in a unique position to help you advocate and help your program in many other ways. (As a side note, this could be a good issue for further exploration and discussion.)
- Maintain contact with music program alumni. Ask them to share the importance of their participation in the school music program. Share their current career successes with the community so that everyone can see that the benefits of participating in music can be lifelong.
- Hold a festival event for students in grades five through eight. Have festival conductors speak to the audience about the importance of supporting quality music programs.
- Get current students to write letters to elementary school and/or middle school musicians to encourage them to sign up for band, choir, and orchestra. (i.e. recruitment letters)
 - [TEMPLATE: Recruitment Letter – Music Buddies](#)

Social Media: Do's and Don'ts

- **DO follow your district's social media policy.** If you're not sure, ask for help from your admin – don't assume.
- **DO tell the story of the learning, not just the performance.** Share rehearsals, student growth, creative projects, new skills, reflection, collaboration, and “aha!” moments, not just the polished concerts.
- **DO show what students are doing.** “Today we learned syncopation” is less compelling than a 15-second video of students demonstrating it.
- **DO make your program look welcoming.** Highlight beginners, different musical styles, student leadership, community, and the fact that there is a place for every student.
- **DO celebrate people, not just events.** Student accomplishments, section leaders, alumni, guest artists, accompanists, custodians who help with concerts, administrators who support the program, etc.
- **DO connect music to the larger school community.** Tag the school, district, other teachers, clubs, feeder schools, and community partners when appropriate. Make music look like an integral part of the school, not an activity happening in a separate building.
- **DO create recurring content.** Examples: Music Monday, Meet the Section, What We're Learning, Behind the Concert, Student Spotlight, Instrument of the Week, or 5 Things You Didn't Know About Our Music Program.
- **DO think like a marketer:** Ask yourself, “If a parent who knows nothing about our program saw this post, what would they learn about why their child should participate?”
- **DO use students as storytellers when appropriate.** NAFME specifically recommends involving students in promotional and recruiting efforts because their authentic voices can be powerful. *Remember to get permission!*
- **Do find more tips for social media strategies in music education at [NAfME!](#)**

- ⚡ **DON'T: Turn your account into a digital concert calendar.** DON'T only post: “Concert tonight! Come see us!” Instead, give people a reason to care before the concert.
- ⚡ **DON'T make every post an announcement.** Aim for a mix of celebrate + educate + invite + advocate.
- ⚡ **DON'T post only your best ensemble.** A flawless performance demonstrates quality; showing the process demonstrates educational value.
- ⚡ **DON'T assume people know what music education looks like.** Explain it! “Students are learning to...” is advocacy.
- ⚡ **DON'T use social media to vent about budgets, administrators, parents, or students.** Keep your public presence positive, professional, and focused on students and the program. NAFME likewise emphasizes maintaining professional boundaries online.
- ⚡ **DON'T post student photos/videos without following your district's policies and permissions.** Review your district's social-media and student-photo policies first; privacy guidance recommends using appropriate consent/opt-out procedures.
- ⚡ **DON'T worry about posting constantly.** A few meaningful posts are better than flooding your feed. NAFME's recent guidance for music educators similarly emphasizes quality and purposeful content over simply producing more content.

OMEA Is Here To Help

What does OMEA actually do for you and your students when it comes to advocacy?

Advocacy can feel overwhelming, especially when you're already balancing teaching, rehearsals, concerts, grading, and everything else that comes with being a music educator. You don't have to do it alone. OMEA works throughout the year to advocate for music education at the state and national levels and to give you the information, tools, relationships, and support you need to be an effective advocate for your students and your program.

OMEA advocacy includes:

- **Keep you informed** about legislation, policies, funding, and emerging issues that affect music education through email, the OMEA website, social media, and other communications.
- **Provide practical advocacy tools and resources** so you can communicate effectively with legislators, school leaders, families, and your community without having to start from scratch.
- **Host monthly [Advocacy Committee meetings](#), open to all OMEA members**, where you can learn about current issues, share what's happening in your community, ask questions, and help shape OMEA's advocacy priorities.
- **Support you when you need it** by helping you understand how policy decisions are made, develop an advocacy strategy, prepare for conversations with decision-makers, or respond to challenges facing your program.
- **Represent and amplify music educators at the state level** by building relationships with policymakers and education leaders, communicating OMEA's priorities, participating in statewide and national advocacy networks, and sharing the stories and successes of Oregon music educators and students.
- **Build your capacity for proactive advocacy** by providing opportunities to engage directly with policymakers and helping you develop sustainable advocacy habits so we're ALL demonstrating the value of music education *before* our programs are threatened.

Most importantly...

You're not alone – OMEA is here to help you and your students, however we can!

Links

- NAFME's [Grassroots Advocacy Inventory](#)
- NAFME's [Local Advocacy Action Plan](#)
- [National Arts in Education Week](#)
- [Public Opinion About the Arts](#)
- [Proactive Advocacy Scripts – OMEA Marketing Toolkit](#)
- [Informance Example from Pennsylvania](#)
- [All-State Ensemble Acceptance Press Release](#) – Media Conacts
- [List of Newspapers Published in Oregon](#)
- Find your school's elected official here: bit.ly/ORLOOKUP
- [Research, data, & quotes on the benefits of music education](#)
- [School Board Meeting Presentation of Elementary Music Program](#)
- Apply for NAMM's [Best Communities for Music Education](#)
- [MIO SM - How to Get a Proclamation/Resolution Passed – OREGON](#)
- [10 Projects for Music In Our Schools Month](#)

- [Youth Art Month \(YAM\) - National Art Education Association](#)
- [Theatre In Our Schools](#)
- [How NDEO Advocates](#)
- [MIOSM Shareable Graphics – NAFME](#)
- [Pre-concert slideshow template](#)
- Template: Data collection from [students](#) and [student families](#)
- [TEMPLATE: Recruitment Letter – Music Buddies](#)
- [Funding options](#)
- [Harnessing Social Media for Music Education](#) – NAFME
- [2026-2027 OMEA Advocacy Committee Information](#)

Link to this calendar: [/tinyurl.com/omea-advocacy-calendar](https://tinyurl.com/omea-advocacy-calendar)

