



Washington Music Educators Association

Position Statements

The Washington Music Educators Association (WMEA) Executive Board has adopted the following positions on topics critical to music education.

- Washington State Graduation Requirements
- Funding for Music as Part of Basic Education
- Qualified Music Educators and Music Administrators
- Literacy as the Primary Goal
- Administration
- Elementary Music
- District Music Budgets

Questions should be directed to the WMEA President (president@wmea.org), Advocacy Chair (advocacy@wmea.org) or Executive Director (director@wmea.org). The WMEA Office is located at 19707 64th Avenue West, Suite 101, Lynnwood WA 98036. Phone 425-712-9632; fax 425-776-1795; website www.wmea.org.

Washington State Graduation Requirements

WMEA believes that every child should have equal access to rigorous music classes taught by highly qualified music educators, that those classes meet every day and that students may enroll in these classes every term of their high school career.

To achieve that end, Washington state graduation requirements, when combined with district graduation requirements and college entrance requirements, should not impact this access with unintended consequences by limiting students' abilities to maintain continuous enrollment in sequential terms of music classes, such as band, choir, and orchestra.

Funding for Music as Part of Basic Education

WMEA believes that a comprehensive, sequential and standards-based arts education program must be provided for all students as described in the Basic Education Act (RCW 28A.150.220). It is the responsibility of the Legislature to amply fund Basic Education as mandated in the Washington State Constitution. When difficult financial times cause reductions in education funding, arts education should not be cut at percentages disproportionate to other core subject areas.

Qualified Music Educators

WMEA believes that all K-12 students must receive music education, provided by highly-qualified, certificated educators, who have earned a specific State Music Endorsement as it relates to the particular teaching assignment.

Literacy as the Primary Goal

WMEA believes that all K-12 students must receive music education, provided by highly-qualified, certificated educators, who have earned a specific State Music Endorsement as it relates to the particular teaching assignment.

WMEA believes the primary goal of a district music program is to provide all students with the necessary literacy skills that will enable them to participate in musical activities throughout their lives. Being able to understand and interpret symbols in a way that can be shared and communicated is a process that is essential to the development of the whole child. To ensure that students understand and are able to use the language of music, WMEA encourages student assessment at all grade levels using the national and state standards.

Administration

WMEA believes that because of the complex learnings involved and the need for coordination to ensure a complete and comprehensive music education, all school districts should have a qualified music-certificated administrator overseeing the music program. These administrators must be involved in the decision-making process in determining music staffing, budget, standards-aligned curriculum, assessment, and scheduling. In smaller school districts, a part-time music administrator may be more reasonable. The other option is to provide released time that will allow a certificated music teacher to oversee the program. At a minimum, in all instances before administrative decisions are made that affect the music program, certificated music teachers should be consulted as to the possible short- and longer-term impacts.

Elementary Music

WMEA believes that beginning in Kindergarten all elementary students should have the benefit of the skills of a certificated general-music teacher who is specifically knowledgeable in the treatment of the child voice, developmentally appropriate instruments, developmentally appropriate movement activities, and the Washington state music standards and GLEs. As learning music is a complex set of skills requiring much repetition and practice, all students should have two, or preferably three, regular general-music classes each week with the music teacher. The length of each class should be age-appropriate.

District Music Budgets

WMEA believes a comprehensive school district music program is funded with a yearly budget allowing for a minimum of the following:

- Purchase of sheet music and instructional materials (books, software, recordings);
- Instruments for band and string classes for students who cannot afford them;
- Quality, costly instruments and percussion equipment needed to fulfill traditional band and orchestra instrumentation;
- Budget for the repair and replacement for music instruments and equipment;
- Music stands, choir/instrumental risers, shells, storage racks and secured storage areas in music rooms as appropriate;
- Quality equipment for listening and recording;
- Pianos/keyboards in each music classroom;
- Computers, midi-capable keyboards, and document cameras that can be incorporated in the curriculum at all levels;
- A variety of melodic/percussion instruments in elementary general music classrooms.