

The Impact of a Statewide Advocacy Day on Preservice Music Teachers' Policy  
and Advocacy Awareness

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## Abstract

Music education requires advocacy to maintain its place in the school curriculum (Mark, 2005). However, preservice music teachers, the profession's future advocates, report feeling uninformed about many music education policy issues at the local, state, and national levels (Burton, Knaster, & Kniste, 2015). Though the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) sponsors many national and statewide advocacy events, no known studies have examined the effect of these events on preservice teachers. Therefore, the purpose of this quantitative pilot study was to investigate preservice music teachers' (N=9) perceptions, understandings, and knowledge related to music education advocacy and policy before and after attending a state-wide advocacy day at a state capitol.

Results from this cohort survey design suggested that preservice music teachers' awareness and understanding of music education policy issues were positively impacted after attending the statewide "Make Music Matter" advocacy day  $t(8)=4, p<.05$ . However, students' attendance did not impact their likelihood to participate in future advocacy events at the local, statewide, and national level or their attitudes toward the importance of advocacy and policy in the music education profession; students valued advocacy and policy before attending the advocacy day.

Preservice and inservice teachers' understandings of advocacy and policy issues in the field of music education are crucial to their own future and to the future of music education. Attendance at statewide and national advocacy days could be a way for both preservice and inservice teachers to enhance their understanding of policy issues so that music education can maintain its rightful place in the school curriculum.

## References

- Burton, S. L., Knaster, J., & Knieste, M. (2015). Staying in tune with music education: Policy awareness among music education majors. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 25(1), 65-77. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083714548587>
- Mark, M. L. (2005) Why does our profession need advocacy? *International Journal of Music Education*, 23(2), 94-98. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761405052399>

## Applications to Teaching

- Attendance at a significant music education advocacy event organized by a professional organization such as the Delaware Music Educators Association (DMEA) can help undergraduate students to feel better informed about music education policy issues at the local, state, and national levels.
- Music teacher educators and professional organizations such as NAfME should consider promoting professional development opportunities for preservice music teachers that can aid students in gaining important understandings related to advocacy and policy.