

North Carolina Music Educators Association

Position Statement on Licensure and Classrooms for the Elementary Music Educator



Overview

Revised in May 2015, the Opportunity-To-Learn Standards (OTL) prepared by the Council of Music Program Leaders of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) set the cornerstone in identifying the resources needed for teachers, schools, and school districts to have consistent information on standards for critical music education areas such as curriculum, scheduling, staffing, materials, equipment, and facilities.

The guidance provided by this document lays the foundation for the core beliefs of the North Carolina Music Educators Association regarding the licensure of music educators within our state.

Teacher Licensure Beliefs and Position

Consistent with the OTL standards, the North Carolina Music Educators Association (NCMEA) believes that for all grades and in all music content areas teachers who are teaching music education courses and subjects should be licensed from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction with a licensure in music education. Beginning on Page 4 the OTL standards outline teacher qualifications for a basic and quality music program.

It must be an accepted and common practice that the responsibility for music education as a part of the overall education of the student rests with the **certified and licensed music teacher**. Teachers who are not licensed in the field of music education are drawn on to expand students' opportunities for arts learning by providing curricular connections among the arts and other subjects.

NCMEA strongly supports the idea that music instruction should be delivered by those with a license to teach music education, not by a generalist with little or no training in the field of music education. Every effort should be made by local school districts to employ licensed music educators to teach music education at the elementary level.

Any additional music education offerings from community arts providers (cultural organizations, community arts organizations, and teaching artists) or classroom generalists should be used to support and not in place of the teaching of a licensed music educator. While abound with many additional resources for students, these non-licensed artists and generalists educators do not have the direct understanding of a sequential, standards based music curriculum that a highly qualified and licensed music educator can offer.

In situations where music instruction is not available by a licensed music educator, every effort should be made to support the classroom generalist with quality resources and support (including professional development) until a licensed music educator is employed. NCMEA advocates for the support of such instruction by licensed retired music educators as mentors for the elementary generalist who is seeking to provide music instruction.

Class Size Beliefs

NCMEA supports that class loads for general elementary music education teachers (K-3) should be aligned to standard class size limitations set forth by the General Assembly. Equitable music instruction for all students cannot take place with class sizes that are significantly higher than set-forth for all other classrooms.

Rationale

Partially adapted from a position statement on Early Childhood Education retrieved December 9, 2016 from <http://www.nafme.org/about/position-statements/early-childhood-education-position-statement/early-childhood-education/>

Why is it important to have a licensed music educator teaching elementary students?

Music is a natural and important part of a child's growth and development. Early interaction with music positively affects the quality of all children's lives. Successful experiences in music help all children bond emotionally and intellectually with others through creative expression in song, rhythmic movement, and listening experiences. Music in early childhood creates a foundation upon which future music learning is built. These experiences should be integrated within the daily routine and play of children. In this way, enduring attitudes regarding the joy of music making and sharing are developed.

Music education for young children involves a developmentally appropriate program of singing, moving, listening, creating, playing instruments, and responding to visual and verbal representations of sound. The content of such a program should represent music of various cultures in time and place. Time should be made available during the day for activities in which music is the primary focus of attention for its own value. It may also serve as a means for teachers to facilitate the accomplishment of non-musical goals.

It is desirable that individuals with training in elementary music education be the provider of music instruction for elementary students. By providing a licensed music educator to our elementary students we can focus on a standards based curriculum of instruction. Just as in our health we seek a specialist (not a generalist) for specific and important medical needs, so should we seek to instruct children by a specialist in music education.