



North Carolina Music Educators Association

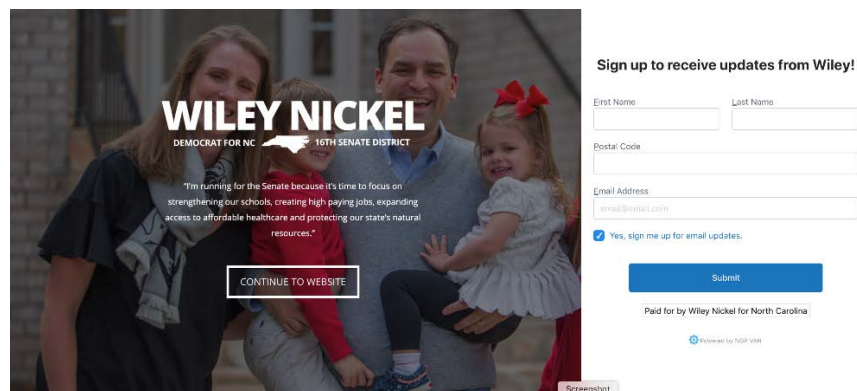
Advocacy Toolkit

Where to Get Information

- NCMEA Advocacy Updates: <https://www.ncmea.net/committees-2/advocacy/>
- Find your legislator: <https://www.ncleg.gov/RnR/Representation>
- National Association for Music Education Advocacy Bulletin: <https://nafme.org/category/advocacy-news/>
- Arts North Carolina email sign up: <https://artsnc.org/support/e-mail-signup/>
- Sign up for legislative updates from DPI: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/>
- Public School Forum's Policymaker's Education Primer 2018: <https://www.ncforum.org/policymakers-education-primer-2018/>

Building a Relationship with Your Legislator

1. **Send a note or e-mail and introduce yourself:** This doesn't have to be long or complicated. A simple e-mail to let the legislator know you are a music teacher in his/her district and that you are engaged. A sample e-mail is included at the end of this section.
2. **Learn more about their policy and personal backgrounds:** You can do some brief research online or you can simply ask the legislator. Most legislators have a website on the General Assembly's site, but they also have a separate site where they communicate more with constituents.
 - a. Sign up for your legislator's updates and/or follow them on social media: Many legislators have weekly or monthly e-mail updates where you can read about their policy priorities and what events they are attending.



Example of a legislative newsletter sign up.

The Budget & Redistricting Among Other Things

Posted on October 23, 2019 by admin in Appropriations, Budget, McGrady, Newsletters

It's mid-October and the legislature is back after a short cooling off period. Leaving town ten days ago, the palpable tension caused by a snap vote to override the Governor's veto of the budget permeated the legislature. While the House overrode the veto, Senate leadership's effort to do the same has been complicated by the way things went down in the House. The conventional wisdom is that there will be no Senate override. Of course, that was the conventional wisdom before the House successfully overrode the veto.

With the budget in limbo, both chambers are proceeding with a series of mini-budget bills — essentially small parts of the **vetoed budget** run as separate bills. In recent weeks, the legislature has passed bills to fund transportation, the Raise-the-Age law, and raises for state employees, among other things. The mini-budgets haven't included any of the harder issues involving the education, human services and capital budgets that were the reasons Governor Cooper gave for vetoing the budget.

On the agenda for this or next week in the House is a mini-budget for salary increases for teachers, instructional support personnel and assistant principals based on years



Example of a legislative newsletter.

- b. **Find some areas in common:** Find ways to connect with your legislator on a more personal level. These areas of shared interest can be policy areas (i.e. support for public schools) or something un-related (the same alma mater, a favorite event in your community).
 - c. **Ask about their experience with music:** For example, ask your legislator if they played an instrument or if their child was in marching band. Maybe they like to attend performances or maybe they just like to listen to music to relax. This is a great way to connect and also creates the foundation for later outreach efforts.
 - d. **Send current research articles on connections between music education and improved academic outcomes.**
3. **Attend legislators' events in your community:** Many legislators hold town halls or community events in their local district. It is a good idea to attend these events if possible to be visible and remind them about music education. Many also share events they will be attending or speaking at in their newsletters.
 4. **Attend advocacy days at the General Assembly:** If possible, come to Raleigh with education or arts organizations and schedule meetings with your legislators. Even if they aren't available, stop by and visit with staff or leave a note behind.

Sample Introduction E-Mail

Dear Representative/Senator NAME,
My name is YOUR NAME, and I am a music teacher at SCHOOL NAME in your district. I teach NUMBER of students each day.

I wanted to send you a note to tell you how important music education is to our schools, our students and our community. Music builds imagination, creativity and curiosity. It develops our

students' problem-solving skills and reinforces math concepts, as well as language and reasoning.

[Insert your own story about the importance of music education or a brief explanation of why teaching is important to you.]

Thank you for your support of music education. If you ever have questions about our work in schools, please don't hesitate to contact me at EMAIL or PHONE.

Events

Inviting legislators to attend concerts or other events in your school or community is another great way to build a relationship while also demonstrating the benefits of music education.

Event Ideas

- Invite a legislator to a special performance or activity
- Invite a legislator to visit a class
- Host a special event
 - Music in Our Schools Events: March (<https://nafme.org/programs/miosm/>)
 - Make Music Day: June (<http://www.makemusicday.org/>)
 - National Arts in Education Week: September (<https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-topic/arts-education/national-arts-in-education-week>)

Before the Event

1. Make sure your principal is comfortable with issuing the invitation and that your school system's protocols are followed.
2. If your dates are flexible, offer several options to maximize the possibility of legislator attendance. Fridays and Mondays are generally the best weekdays for legislators' schedules when they are in session.
3. Issue the invitation with as much information as possible, including date, time, location and other details. Make sure you have student photo releases in advance.
4. Don't be discouraged if a legislator can't make it or has difficulty scheduling a meeting. Their schedules are busy and are often changing because of committee meetings and votes in Raleigh.

During the Event

1. Make sure you or a student, teacher or parent is tasked with making sure the legislator gets where they need to go easily and has any help they need.
2. Keep events brief, 30 minutes to one hour if possible.
3. Introduce the legislator during the program, if appropriate.
4. Be sure to introduce yourself to the legislator and introduce a few students as well, if appropriate.

5. Make sure to thank the legislator for their time and keep the event or meeting to a reasonable time.
6. Take photos of the event.

After the Event

1. Send a thank you note to the legislator. If appropriate, have your students send a thank you card or notes as well.
2. Thank the legislator on social media for attending the event. Share photos if possible. On twitter use the hashtags #ncpol and #ncga.
3. Send photos and information about the event to NCMEA to include in their social media.

General Talking Points

NCMEA Objective: Every child will receive a comprehensive, sequential music education delivered by exemplary music educators.

- Thank you for your support of education and especially music education.
- Arts education is an important part of the school curriculum.
 - Arts, like music, help our students tap into creativity and curiosity.
 - Music education helps students understand math concepts, reinforces language and develops problem-solving skills.
 - Music students can be more emotionally developed, with higher self-esteem and better skills to cope with anxiety.
- Research shows that arts education can have a profound impact on student achievement.
 - Students who are involved in the arts throughout four years of high school score 100 points higher on their SATs and are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement.
 - Low-income students who are highly involved in the arts are five times more likely to graduate high school and twice as likely to graduate from college than their peers with no arts education.
 - Schools with music programs have higher attendance and graduation rates than schools without music education.
- The arts are an economic engine for North Carolina.
 - The nonprofit arts and culture industry generates \$2.12 billion in direct economic activity in North Carolina, supporting almost 72,000 full-time equivalent jobs and generating \$201.5 million in revenue for local governments and the State of North Carolina.
- Please continue to support music education by qualified teachers.

Contact Information

For additional questions or information, please contact NCMEA at pathall@ncmea.net.