
On behalf of myself and President-Elect Emma Hookway, we would like to take this opportunity to speak on behalf of the Rhode Island Music Educators Association (RIMEA). We are a professional organization that provides opportunities and support for our members as well as many beneficial activities and experiences for Rhode Island students.

We all know the power that music brings to American society and the human connection made through the Arts. Music has played an important role in supporting, healing and unifying our global societies during this pandemic and it will continue to be an essential part of education as we return to school this fall.

We are well aware that Rhode Island’s educational budget will be strained as we move out of this crisis. RIMEA is here and ready to step up and work with school districts to ensure each child has access to a quality music education. As music teachers continue to provide creative remote learning opportunities, RIMEA and the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) respectfully request that music and arts education programs remain well-funded and scheduled appropriately so all students can continue their Arts learning in the year to come.

Music and arts education have been deemed necessary in federal law in the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act. Music is listed as a core subject within a well-rounded education. The rationale for music instruction is even more relevant today as the benefits of music go beyond academic achievement.

A key aspect of music education is its connection to the Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) it provides for all students. This includes self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making. Following this period of stress and extended social isolation, students will need opportunities to practice these SEL competencies as we try to help them regain their social and relationship skills. RIMEA and NAfME are currently working on guidelines outlining how our music classes and ensembles can fulfill this basic human need while still safely meeting the CDC’s requirements.

A quality music education is essential to our students’ school experience. It is worthy of class time, worthy of a thoughtful curriculum taught by a certified teacher, and worthy of adequate funding. We ask that you continue to fully support music education in Rhode Island and allow our experts a seat at your table as we look towards the new school year.

Respectfully,
Toni-Annette Silveira Emma Hookway
RIMEA President RIMEA President-Elect