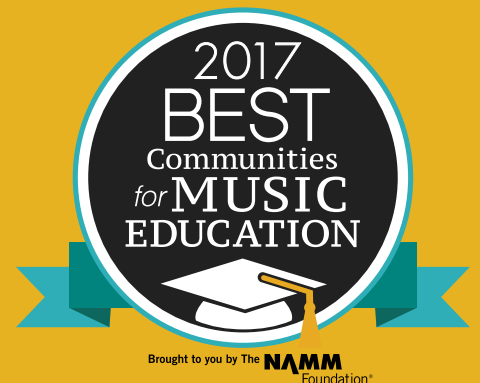
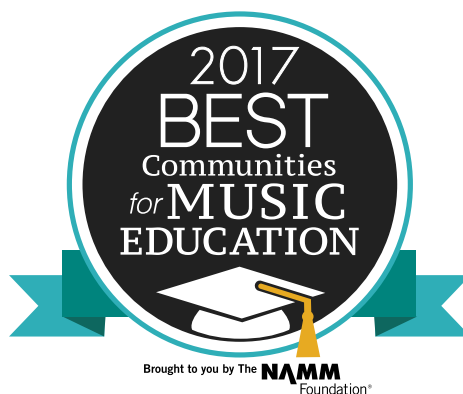


2017

**BEST COMMUNITIES
FOR MUSIC EDUCATION AND
SUPPORTMUSIC MERIT AWARD**

A National Music Education
Recognition Program

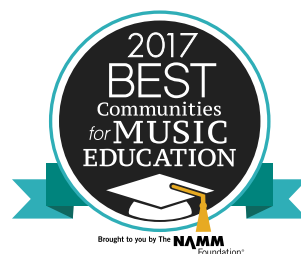
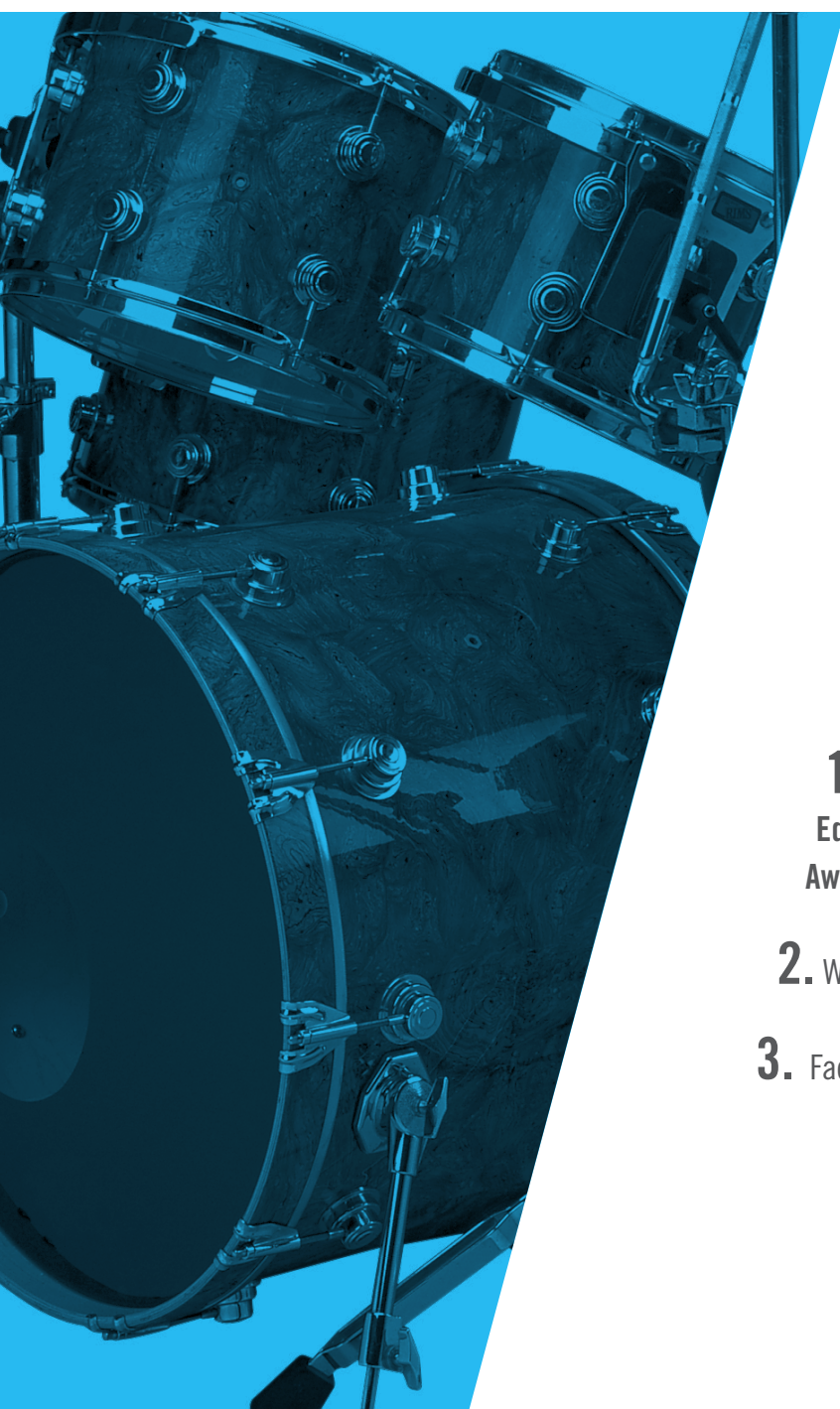




PROMOTIONAL TOOL KIT

Congratulations! The NAMM Foundation has recognized your community for its commitment to music education with a **Best Communities for Music Education** or **SupportMusic Merit Award**. Spread the news; encourage your local media to share the news of this national recognition in print, broadcast and online stories.

To help you with media outreach, we are providing materials to help you raise the visibility of your music education program and to celebrate this important award from The NAMM Foundation.



SupportMusic
Brought to you by The NAMM Foundation
2017 Merit Award

CONTENTS

1. What Are the **Best Communities for Music Education (BCME)** and **SupportMusic Merit Award (SMMA)** Programs?
2. Ways to Engage the Media
3. Fact Sheet: Benefits of Music Education

SECTION 1: WHAT ARE THE BEST COMMUNITIES FOR MUSIC EDUCATION (BCME) AND SUPPORTMUSIC MERIT AWARD (SMMA) PROGRAMS?

Best Communities for Music Education (BCME) is a signature program of The NAMM Foundation that recognizes and celebrates **school districts** for their support and commitment to music education.

BCME gives recognized district music educators, administrators, board members and advocates visibility and support for their music education programs for their efforts to assure access to music for all students as part of a well-rounded education.

As a national recognition program, **BCME** provides **school districts** with tools to increase awareness and support for their music programs. The **SupportMusic Merit Award** (SMMA) recognizes **individual schools** for their commitment to music education and provides all of the same tools as for the BCME districts.

To be considered for a Best Communities for Music Education or SupportMusic Merit Award, applicants complete a survey and answer detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program and other factors in the community that affect access to music education for all students.

Survey responses are verified with district officials, and advisory organizations review the data. Throughout the survey's 18-year history, many districts have reported that making the "Best Communities" list has helped efforts to preserve and advance music education programs.

A variety of nationally known organizations act as advisors of the Best Communities for Music Education program. These include [Americans for the Arts](#), [League of American Orchestras](#), [The Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation](#), [Music for All](#), [Music Teachers National Association](#), [National Guild For Community Arts Education](#), [Yamaha Corporation of America](#), [Young Audiences and VH1 Save the Music Foundation](#).

What is the difference between the Best Communities for Music Education Award and the SupportMusic Merit Award?



The **Best Communities for Music Education Award** is an opportunity for a **school district** to be acknowledged for their commitment to and support of music education.

A **SupportMusic Merit Award** is an opportunity for an **individual school** (public, private, parochial or charter) to be acknowledged for its commitment to music education. It is a "school-only" distinction awarded as part of the Best Communities for Music Education program.

How was my community or school selected?

Your program was selected based on an application submitted by a representative of your district or school, which provided information about funding, staffing, commitment to standards and access to music instruction. Data was analyzed statistically and verified via a follow-up audit by researchers at the University of Kansas.

What does it mean to my community or school that we made the list?

The award recognizes the commitment of school administrators, community leaders, teachers, and parents who believe in music education and are working to ensure that it is part of a complete education for all children. Over the 18 years of the survey, the designation has helped school music programs maintain and in many cases, increase funding for music education programs. The award highlights music as a national education issue and shows what your school or community is doing to provide opportunities for music learning. The award also enables educators to draw attention to music programs that are sometimes overlooked or not fully understood by members of the public beyond the school community.

What is The NAMM Foundation?

The NAMM Foundation is a nonprofit organization supported in part by The National Association of Music Merchants and its approximately 10,300 members around the world. Its mission is to advance active participation in music making across the lifespan by supporting scientific research, philanthropic giving and public service programs. For more information about The NAMM Foundation, please visit www.nammfoundation.org.

SECTION 2: WAYS TO ENGAGE THE MEDIA



The Best Communities for Music Education designation provides an important opportunity to publicize your community's commitment to music education. Media coverage helps to boost local awareness of music education in your community, potentially increasing support for and awareness of music programs in schools.

Consider the following:

1. Send out the Best Communities for Music Education or SupportMusic Merit Award press release

- **Stand Out:** Customize the press release templates (pages 7 & 8) with information specific to your district or school. **Be sure to highlight what is unique or new about your music program**, such as music students' academic improvement, student or ensemble awards, recognition in county or state honors ensembles, and/or partnerships with local music establishments and/or community organizations.
- **Reach Out:** Send the release via email to local newspapers, TV and radio stations and community websites (coordinate and secure contact information from district communications staff, if available or coordinate media outreach with district or school administration).
- **Tell a Story:** Consider including a quote from a student or teacher about the impact that music has had in school and in their own lives. Remember that people are drawn to human interest stories.
- **Add visuals:** Definitely include the best digital photo(s) taken of your music program and participants. Ask your media contact for sizing and resolution requirements.

2. Create Connections: Invite local media to witness your music program in action

- **Show Off Your Program:** Invite local media to visit your school or after-school program to take photos, shoot video and meet music students, teachers, administrators or advocates. Be sure to check that your student photo releases are up to date.
- **Make the Media Part of Your Community:** Follow up on your press release by inviting local media to attend a student musical performance or your music program's BCME or SMMA certificate presentation. Set up interviews with one or two students who exemplify your music program's goals and objectives.
- **Send Special Invitations:** If you are holding a special event to celebrate the designation, follow up your press release with a customized media alert (page 9) that includes details about the event.
- **Enlist Students to Tell the Story:** Ensure that your spokesperson is well prepared to answer questions. Also consider having an articulate student speak to the media about why music education is important to them.
- **Get Media Savvy:** For a broader perspective on the BCME program, members of the media can contact Samantha Prince, at samanthap@namm.org or call 760-304-5713.

SECTION 2: WAYS TO ENGAGE THE MEDIA

3. Maximize your social media outreach

Social media is a wonderful way to communicate the unique aspects of your program to your local community and beyond. Consider the following:

- **Announce the award designation:** A simple announcement, featuring the award logo and/or social tile found on nammfoundation.org and text about the award on a social media platform has the opportunity to be seen by thousands of people.
- **Share photos:** Photos of the award presentation, student performances and musical events and other music-related opportunities have the chance to create excitement for student families and in the local community. The more photos the better!
- **Video:** Consider filming teachers, administrators and students talking about the award, what music means to them, and/or what they like most about making music at school. It's best to post a series of short videos (30 seconds to 1-minute each) on the school/district's social media platforms. Make sure you get permission from your administration before posting on official school platforms.
- **Ask your students to participate!** See what creative, musical ideas can be shared through social media posts, videos and images.

With all social media posts, please use the hashtag, #SUPPORTMUSIC.

4. Share media coverage with the community

- Share media coverage via newsletters, district-affiliated websites and social media with parents, other teachers, administrators, local politicians, and school board members.
- Frame news articles and display them prominently throughout the district and/or school and administrative buildings.
- Post the BCME or SMMA logo ([available on nammfoundation.org](http://nammfoundation.org)) on all websites and in music department email signatures.

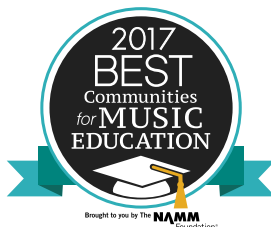
5. Keep the media and community updated on your program

- Continue to share news about your program to your local area media through social media, email updates, a letter to the editor of your local paper, or similar.
- Offer an Op-Ed. Opinion-Editorials are guest features in local newspapers which offer perspective, information and of course, an opinion. Consider signing and offering an Op-Ed to your closest city's daily newspaper or sending as a Letter to the Editor. (page 11)

Press Release Template for Best Communities for Music Education Recipient—**School Districts Only**

[Contact: Insert name]

Email]



[District]'s Music Education Program Receives National Recognition

District is one of 4% of school districts in nation to receive distinction

CITY, STATE - Month XX, 2017 – [District] has been honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education. [District] is one of 4% of districts across the nation receiving the prestigious award in 2017.

The Best Communities Music Education designation is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students. To qualify for the Best Communities designation, [District] answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program, and community music-making programs. Responses were verified with school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

“Insert quote from school official on how music education is important to this district and its students,” said District Official. “Insert quote on the impact that receiving this designation will have on the district’s music education program.”]

This award recognizes that [District] is leading the way with music learning opportunities as outlined in the new federal education legislation, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The legislation, signed into law in December 2015, and awaiting state implementation designates music and the arts as important elements of well-rounded education for all children.

As [district] finalizes its 2017-2018 budget, The NAMM Foundation’s Best Communities for Music Education Award and the state level implementation of the federal ESSA law bring attention to the importance of keeping music education part of curriculum offerings and available to all students. It also highlights music’s vital role in students’ overall success in school and the personal benefits of making music.

["Optional student/teacher quote about WHY music education is important."]

Research into music education continues to demonstrate educational/cognitive and social skill benefits for children who make music. In a series of landmark studies by scientists and researchers at Northwestern University a link was found between students in community music programs and life-long academic success, including higher high school graduation rates and college attendance. In another study from the University it was discovered that the benefits of early exposure to music education improves how the brain processes and assimilates sounds, a trait that lasts well into adulthood.

Beyond the Northwestern research, other studies have indicated that music education lays the foundation for individual excellence in group settings, creative problem solving and flexibility in work situations, as well learning how to give and receive constructive criticism to excel.

A 2015 study, “**Striking A Chord**” supported by the NAMM Foundation, also outlines the overwhelming desire by teachers and parents for music education opportunities for all children as part of the school curriculum.

[Add information about school district]

About The NAMM Foundation

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Press Release template for SupportMusic Merit Award – For Individual Schools Only

[Contact: Insert name]

Email]

Insert School Logo Here



[School Name] Receives National Recognition for Music Education Program

[School] is one of 1% of schools in nation to receive distinction

CITY, STATE - Month XX, 2017 – [City/Town]’s [School] has been honored with the SupportMusic Merit Award from The NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education. [School] is one of only 1% of schools in the nation to be recognized with this prestigious award in 2017.

The SupportMusic Merit Award recognizes individual schools that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students. To qualify for the SupportMusic Merit Award, [School] answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program, and community music-making programs. Responses were verified with school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

“Insert quote from school official on WHY music education is important to this school and students,” said School Official. “Insert quote on the impact that receiving this designation will have on school’s music education program.”]

This award recognizes that [School] is leading the way with music learning opportunities as outlined in the new federal education law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The legislation, signed into law in December 2015 and awaiting state implementation, designates music and the arts as important elements of a well-rounded education for all children.

As [School] finalizes its 2017-2018 budget, The NAMM Foundation’s SupportMusic Merit Award and the state level implementation of the federal ESSA law bring attention to the importance of keeping music education part of curriculum offerings and available to all students. It also highlights music’s vital role in students’ overall success in school and the personal benefits of music making.

["Optional student/teacher quote about WHY music education is important."]

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[Add information about school]

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MEDIA ALERT

[NAME of School/District] Recognized as One of the Best in the Nation for Music Education

What: [Concert/Celebration/Press conference] recognizing [name of school/district] for receiving the [SupportMusic Merit Award/Best Communities for Music Education] in 2017 from The NAMM Foundation.

With this prestigious accolade from the global non-profit foundation, [name of school/district] is demonstrating its commitment to innovative learning opportunities for all children as outlined in the new federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which lists music and the arts as recommended subjects, important for a well-rounded education for all students.

Who: [number] [grade number] students from [name school or after-school program/district] [insert activity/visual] led by [insert music teacher or administrator's name].

When: [day, date and time]

Where: [location, address, city]

Why: [School/District] has been named one of [number] [schools/districts] across the nation to be a SupportMusic Merit/Best Communities for Music Education recipient by The NAMM Foundation. [School/District] demonstrates an unwavering commitment to providing comprehensive music education for all students.

For more information, please contact [name and contact].

About The NAMM Foundation

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###

Opinion-Editorial Template

Tips for successful Op-Ed placement:

1. **Adapt the suggested draft** (see page 9) for your school or district. Or write your own version.
2. **Keep it 600 words or less.** That will greatly increase your chance of placement.
3. **Who is best to sign the op-ed?** It should be a person who is credible in the community and knowledgeable in this subject area. Examples: District superintendent, school principal, music department chair, music teacher, parent of a music student. More than one person can sign (probably no more than two) so you can present the best team that will get your message across.
4. **Visit the websites of daily, weekly and community newspapers** in your city or region. Look at the bottom of the site for “Contact us” information.
5. **Look for “newsroom contacts.”** You’re looking for “editorial page editor,” “op-ed editor,” “community engagement editor” or a similar title.
6. **If you don’t see contact info on the publication’s home page, look at the opinion page.** This often has information on submitting an op-ed or guest commentary.
7. **Once you’ve identified the correct person’s email, send your article with a short introductory note (one paragraph).**
8. **Include your credentials (or those of the writer(s)) at the bottom of your submission:**
“Sally Jones teaches band and orchestra at Smithville High School.”
9. **It’s OK to submit to more than one paper at a time.** If/when one publication accepts your article, you should inform others that you are withdrawing from consideration.
10. **Consider a Letter to the Editor.** If the publications you’ve contacted have declined to run your Op-Ed, consider sending it as a Letter to the Editor of your local and state daily publications.
11. **If you have problems identifying the right publication or contact person, or if you have any other questions,** please contact: Samantha Prince, at samanthap@namm.org or call 760-304-5713.

Op-Ed Template

A Sound Investment

By [name of school principal]

As any successful business owner can attest, to build a business that can stand the test of time, one must make critical investments in its infrastructure and product to stay competitive. Such investments provide stability and longevity, setting up a business for success.

The same philosophy of investment can be applied to our schools and students, albeit a bit more creatively, through music and the arts. In 2015, the U.S. Congress passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which gives states and school districts more local control, and recognizes music and arts as part of a “well-rounded” education for every student. It also protects the classroom time for these classes.

Currently, this law awaits statewide implementation here in [STATE]; a much needed investment in our students. However, our school/district has already made the investment for our students to learn and perform music, and we’re honored to say that it’s been recognized with a 2017 [SupportMusic Merit/Best Community for Music Education] award. The NAMM Foundation, a global nonprofit organization that promotes opportunities for people of all ages to make music, in cooperation with researchers at The University of Kansas, examined information on hundreds of schools and school districts across the nation to identify those, like ours, who are making investments in arts education.

At school/district name, we recognize that the impact of arts education well exceeds the school years. In fact, research demonstrates that students who are involved in music are not only more likely to graduate high school, but also to attend college, and only a few years of musical training early in life improves how the brain processes sound, even later in life. Social benefits include conflict resolution, teamwork skills, and how to give and receive constructive criticism. This research-based evidence means that through (detail school/district’s programs, eg. The Band, guitar class, mariachi,) at/in our school/school district, we’re giving our students cognitive, social and physical benefits that will last a lifetime.

Music is an essential part of life, and we couldn’t be more proud of the students, parents and teachers in our community who have worked so hard to make sure that in our students, we’re making a sound investment.

SECTION 3: FACT SHEET: BENEFITS OF MUSIC EDUCATION

According to the results of a July 2014 Harris Poll®:

- **Seven in ten Americans (71 percent)** say that the learning and habits from music education equip people to be better team players in their careers.
- **Two-thirds (66 percent)** of Americans say that music education prepares someone to manage the tasks of their job more successfully.
- **Three in five Americans (61 percent)** say music education provided a disciplined problem solving approach, and **59 percent** say it prepared people to manage tasks more successfully.
- **Four out of five Americans (80 percent)** believe their music education has contributed to their level of personal fulfillment.

Educational Benefits

- **87 percent of teachers and 79 percent of parents** strongly believe music education has a positive impact on overall academic performance and improves cognitive function. [Source: NAMM Foundation and Grunwald Associates, LLC, (2015), *Striking a Chord: The Public's Hopes and Beliefs for K-12 Music Education in the United States.*]
- A 2013 study published in *The Journal of Neuroscience* found that **adolescent centered studies show that even very basic rhythm abilities, such as tapping to a beat, relate with reading skills.** [Source: White-Schwock, T., Woodruff Carr, Anderson, S., Strait, D.L., Kraus, N., (2013), "Older adults benefit from music training early in life: Biological evidence for long-term training-driven plasticity," *The Journal of Neuroscience.*]
- According to Dr. Nina Kraus's work with the Harmony Project, **students who are involved in music are not only more likely to graduate high school, but also to attend college as well.** [Source: Krause N., Slater J., Thompson E.C., Hornickel J., Strait D.L., Nicol T. & White-Schwock T., (2014), "Auditory learning through active engagement with sound: Biological impact of community music lessons in at-risk children." *Frontiers in Auditory Cognitive Neuroscience.*]

Cognitive Benefits

- **A few years of musical training early in life improves how the brain processes sound,** and the benefits of early exposure to music education last well into adulthood, years after the training has ceased. [Source: Strait, D.L. Kraus N., (2014), "Biological impact of auditory expertise across the life span: musicians as a model of auditory learning." *Hearing Research.*]
- According to research published in a 2014 article in *Parents* magazine, **learning how to play percussion instruments helps children develop coordination and motor skills** because they require movement of the hands, arms, and feet. [Source: Kwan, A. (2013), "6 Benefits of Music Lessons," *Parents.*]

Social Benefits

- **Taking music lessons offers a space where kids learn how to accept and give constructive criticism,** according to research published in *The Wall Street Journal* in 2014. [Source: Lipman, J. (2014), "A Musical Fix for American Schools," *The Wall Street Journal.*]
- A 2014 Harris Poll® found that music education lays the foundation for individual excellence in group settings, **creative problem solving and flexibility in work situations.** [Source: The Harris Poll®, (2014).]