





2018 | Best Communities for Music Education and SupportMusic Merit Award

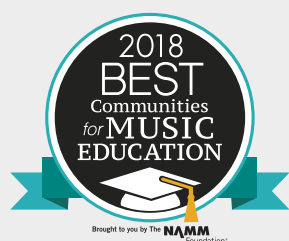
Promotional Toolkit

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. The best way to publicize this national recognition is to encourage local media to cover the news 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 designation by The NAMM Foundation. If your district has a Public Information Officer/communications department, please share this kit with them.



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SupportMusic
Brought to you by The NAMM Foundation
2018 Merit Award

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Section 1

What are the Best Communities for Music Education (BCME) and SupportMusic Merit Award (SMMA) Programs?

BCME is a signature program of The NAMM Foundation that recognizes and celebrates school districts and schools for their support and commitment to music education and efforts to assure access to music for all students as part of a well-rounded education.

The BCME Award for school districts and the SMMA Award for individual schools offer opportunities to increase awareness and support for music programs. The materials in this PR toolkit help recognized districts and schools spread the good news about this national recognition and raise the visibility of music education offerings.

A variety of nationally known organizations act as advisors for the BCME program, including [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 recognizes a school district for its commitment to and support of music education.

A SupportMusic Merit Award recognizes an individual school (public, private, parochial or charter) for their commitment—and support of—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 received the designation?

The award recognizes and celebrates 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 well-rounded education for all children. Over the 19 years of the survey, this 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 (NAMM) and its approximately 10,300 members around the world. Our 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 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.

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



- **Stand Out:** Customize the press release template (pages 4 & 5) 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 improvements, student or ensemble awards, recognition in county or state honors ensembles, and/or partnerships with local music establishments and/or community organizations. Be sure to note the number of students who participate in the music program and emphasis curriculum offerings that engage students.



- **Reach Out:** Send the release via email to local newspapers, TV and radio stations, blogs and community websites. Also consider sending to your local elected officials. If available, work with your district's communications office to reach these outlets.



- **Tell a Story:** Consider including a written quote in the release 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) or a link to video(s) taken of your music program and participants. Be sure to check that your student photo releases are up to date.

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



- **Make the Media Part of Your Community:** Follow up on your press release by inviting local media to attend and photograph 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:** For your event, customize the media alert (page 6) to include details about the event. Be sure to list the type of visuals and interview opportunities that media can capture.



- **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.



- **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.



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.



- **Announce the Award Designation:** A simple announcement that features the award logo and/or social tiles found on nammfoundation.org along with text about the award posted on a social media platform has the opportunity to be seen by thousands of people. Encourage your community and students to share the post(s).



- **Post Photos:** Photos of the music program, award presentation, student performances and musical events, and other music-related opportunities have the chance to create excitement for families and the local community. Consider multiple posts, spaced out, as to keep the designation top-of-mind.



- **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.



- **Ask your Students to Participate!** See what creative, musical ideas students share 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) 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 8 & 9).



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

[Contact: Insert name]

[Email]



[School Name] Receives National Recognition for Music Education Program

CITY, STATE - April XX, 2018 – [City/Town]’s [School] has been honored with the SupportMusic Merit Award from The NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education.

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 learning opportunities as outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The legislation guides policy implementation in the states and replaces the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) which was often criticized for an overemphasis on testing - while leaving behind subjects such as music. ESSA recommends music and the arts as important elements of a well-rounded education for all children.

["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. A series of landmark studies by scientists and researchers at Northwestern University found a link 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 as learning how to give and receive constructive criticism to excel.

A 2015 study supported by The NAMM Foundation, **“Striking A Chord,”** 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]

About the NAMM Foundation

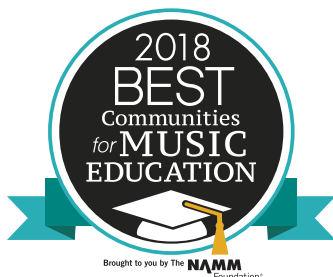
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Press Release Template for Best Communities for Music Education Recipient—School Districts Only

[Contact: Insert name]

[Email]



[District]'s Music Education Program Receives National Recognition

CITY, STATE - April XX, 2018 – [District] has been honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education.

The Best Communities for 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 learning opportunities as outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The legislation guides implementation in the states and replaces the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) which was often criticized for an overemphasis on testing while leaving behind subjects such as music. ESSA recommends music and the arts as important elements of a well-rounded education for all children.

“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 supported by The NAMM Foundation, “**Striking A Chord**,” 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]

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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/Certificate Presentation] recognizing [name of school/district] for receiving the 2018 SupportMusic Merit Award/Best Communities for Music Education Award from The NAMM Foundation.

The award recognizes the commitment and dedication of [name of school or district] to music and the arts as innovative learning opportunities for a well-rounded education.

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

When: [day, date and time]

Where: [location, address, city]

Why: [School] has been named one of [number] schools 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.

Opportunities for Media: [Interviews with administrators/faculty/staff/students/parents, etc., witness music program in action]

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

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Opinion-Editorial Template

Tips for successful Op-Ed placement:

1. **Adapt the suggested draft** (see page 8 & 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/Letter to the Editor Template #1

More than Music

By [name]

At [school/district], we are honored to be recognized as [SupportMusic/BCME] by The NAMM Foundation for our [school/district]'s commitment to music education for our students. The NAMM Foundation, a global non-profit 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. With the support of our parents, teachers and our community, our students are benefitting from music education in more ways than meets the eye, or the ear.

Leading research continues to demonstrate that music education builds skills which span a lifetime, enriching our children beyond their school years. After two years of music education, researchers found that participants showed larger improvements in how the brain processes speech and reading scores than their less-involved peers*, and that students who are involved in music are not only more likely to graduate high school, but also to attend college as well**.

Later in life, individuals who took music lessons as children show stronger neural processing of sound: young adults and even older adults who have not played an instrument for up to 50 years show enhanced neural processing compared to their peers***. Not to mention, social benefits include conflict resolution, teamwork skills, and how to give and receive constructive criticism.

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. As our state readies for implementation in the coming 2018-2019 school year, [school/district name] remains committed to keeping music education as part of our core curriculum.

Music is an essential part of life, and we couldn't be prouder of the students, parents and teachers in our community who recognize that the cognitive, social and behavioral benefits of music education are designed to last a lifetime. -

*Nina Kraus, director of Northwestern's Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory, quoted in Melissa Locker, “This Is How Music Can Change Your Brain,” *Time*, December 16, 2014.

**[Source: Krause N., Slater J., Thompson E.C., Hornickel J., Strait D.L., Nicol T. & White-Schwoch T., (2014), “Auditory learning through active engagement with sound: Biological impact of community music lessons in at-risk children.” *Frontiers in Auditory Cognitive Neuroscience*.]

***(2017). Music, hearing, and education: from the lab to the classroom; quoted in Northwestern University, September/October, 2017.



Op-Ed/Letter to the Editor Template #2

A Sound Investment

By [name]

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, policy recommendations outlined in ESSA will be implemented based on our state level plan; and represents our ongoing 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 2018 [SupportMusic Merit/Best Community for Music Education] award. The NAMM Foundation, a global non-profit 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 prouder 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-Schwoch, 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-Schwoch 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).]

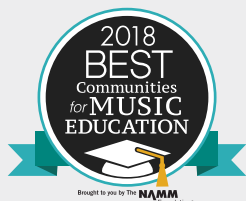
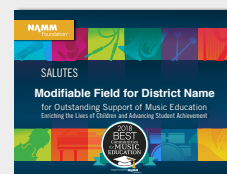
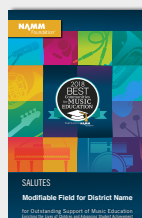


Section 4

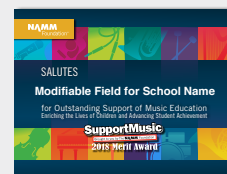
Marketing Collateral

[Download Marketing Collateral](#)

Please download the official 2018 high-resolution certificates, posters, logos for print, email signatures and promotional web and customizable social media use. All materials can be found on the NAMM Foundation website.



Official 2018 BCME Poster 4'x8'
 Official 2018 BCME Poster 22"x28"
 Official 2018 BCME Poster 11"x17"
 Official 2018 BCME Certificate 8.5"x11"
 Official 2018 BCME Logo



Official 2018 SMMA Poster 4'x8'
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