

2019

Best Communities for Music Education
and SupportMusic Merit Award 20th Anniversary



SupportMusic
Brought to you by The NAMM Foundation
2019 Merit Award

2019 | Best Communities for Music Education and SupportMusic Merit Award 20th Anniversary

Promotional Toolkit

Congratulations! The NAMM Foundation has recognized your community for its commitment to music education with a Best Communities for Music Education (BCME) or SupportMusic Merit Award (SMMA). 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 raise the visibility of your music education program and to celebrate this important designation by The NAMM Foundation. If your district or school has a Public Information Officer/communications department, please share this kit with them.



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Section 1

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

The Best Communities for Music Education (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 for school districts and the SupportMusic Merit Award (SMMA) for individual schools offer opportunities to increase awareness and support for music programs. This year, the program celebrates its 20th Anniversary of honoring schools and districts across the country.

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 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 (BCME) and the SupportMusic Merit Award (SMMA)?



The BCME Award recognizes a school district for their commitment to and support of music education.

An SMMA Award recognizes an individual school (public, private, parochial or charter) for their commitment to 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 20 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.

About The NAMM Foundation

The NAMM Foundation is a nonprofit supported in part by the National Association of Music Merchants and its approximately 10,400 members around the world. The foundation advances 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.

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



Stand Out: Customize the press release template (pages 5 & 6) 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 the county or state honors ensembles, and/or partnerships with local music establishments and/or community organizations. If your district/school has repeatedly made the Best Communities or SupportMusic list, be sure to include this information. Also, be sure to note the number of students who participate in the music program and emphasize 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 and other local stakeholders. If available, work with your district's communications office to reach these outlets.



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. Also consider alumni who were deeply impacted by music. Remember that people are drawn to human interest stories.



Add Visuals: Include the best 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 a 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 7) to include details about the event. Be sure to list the type of visuals and interview opportunities that the 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 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 by calling **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.

Consider the following:



Announce the Award Designation: A simple announcement, featuring the award logo and text about the award 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) by tagging others who can reshare your post.



Post Photos: Photos of the music program, award presentation, student performances, musical events and other music-related opportunities have the chance to create excitement for student 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. Consider using tools like Instagram or Facebook Live to share your program with others.



Ask your Students to Participate: See what creative, musical ideas can be shared through social media posts, videos and images.



Ideas of ways to share your news:



Your elected official just might share the great news on their social media accounts too. Be sure to tag accordingly.





With all social media posts, please tag NAMM Foundation and NAMM—we'll be on the lookout and share your news!

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 with 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 9).



Facebook:
@NAMM0rg
@NAMMFoundation



Twitter:
@NAMM
@NAMMFoundation

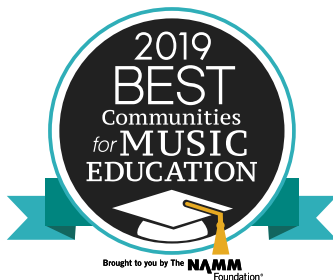


Instagram:
@NAMMShow
@NAMMFoundation



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

[If your district has won this award multiple times, please note it in the title of the release]

CITY, STATE - MONTH XX, 2019 – [District] has been honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education.

Now in its 20th year, 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: After two years of music education, researchers found that participants showed more substantial 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. Everyday listening skills are stronger in musically-trained children than in those without music training. Significantly, listening skills are closely tied to the ability to: perceive speech in a noisy background, pay attention, and keep sounds in memory. 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.

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]

About The NAMM Foundation

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

[Contact: Insert name]
Email]

SupportMusic

Brought to you by The NAMM Foundation

2019 Merit Award

[School Name] Receives National Recognition for Music Education Program

CITY, STATE - MONTH XX, 2019 – [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.”]

Now in its 20th year, the SupportMusic Merit 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 essential 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: After two years of music education, researchers found that participants showed more substantial 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. Everyday listening skills are stronger in musically-trained children than in those without music training. Significantly, listening skills are closely tied to the ability to: perceive speech in a noisy background, pay attention, and keep sounds in memory. 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.

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]

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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 2019 [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:

- Adapt the suggested draft (see page 9) for your school or district or write your own version.
- Keep it 600 words or less. That will greatly increase your chance of placement.
- 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 so you can present the best team that will get your message across.
- 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.
- Look for "newsroom contacts." You're looking for "editorial page editor," "op-ed editor," "community editor" or a similar title.
- 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. Once you've identified the correct person's email, send your article with a short introductory note (one paragraph).
- 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."
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 by calling **760-304-5713**.



Sample Op-Ed/Letter to the Editor Template

Music Lasts A Lifetime

By [name]

At the [school/district name], we're honored to say that it's been recognized with a 2019 [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.

The impact of arts education to exceed the school years is well documented in leading scientific research: After two years of music education, researchers found that participants showed more substantial 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. Everyday listening skills are stronger in musically-trained children than in those without music training. Significantly, listening skills are closely tied to the ability to: perceive speech in a noisy background, pay attention, and keep sounds in memory. 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.

This research-based evidence means that through [describe the school/district's programs, e.g., The Band, guitar class, mariachi,] at/in our school/school district [note number of children who benefit], 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 that give students a lifetime of benefits through the arts and music.



Section 3

Fact Sheet: Benefits of Music Education

Child

Everyday listening skills are stronger in musically-trained children than in those without music training. Significantly, listening skills are closely tied to the ability to: perceive speech in a noisy background, pay attention, and keep sounds in memory.

Strait, D.L. and N. Kraus, Biological impact of auditory expertise across the life span: musicians as a model of auditory learning. Hearing Research, 2013.

Researchers found that after two years, children who not only regularly attended music classes, but also actively participated in the class, showed larger improvements in how the brain processes speech and reading scores than their less-involved peers.

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.

Music training leads to greater gains in auditory and motor function when begun in young childhood; by adolescence, the plasticity that characterizes childhood has begun to decline. Nevertheless, our results establish that music training impacts the auditory system even when it is begun in adolescence, suggesting that a modest amount of training begun later in life can affect neural function.

Adam T. Tierney, Jennifer Krizman, Nina Kraus, "Music training alters the course of adolescent auditory development," Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 2015.

Research shows that making music changes the brain, and that these brain changes have tangible impacts on listening skills, learning and cognition.

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

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.

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



Fact Sheet: Benefits of Music Education *Continued*

Teen

Adolescent-centered studies show that even very basic rhythm abilities, such as tapping to a beat, relate with reading skills, and we have provided initial evidence for how both abilities may rely on common underlying neural mechanisms of sound processing.

Tierney, A.T. and N. Kraus, The ability to tap to a beat relates to cognitive, linguistic, and perceptual skills. Brain and Language, 2013. 124(3): p. 225-231.

Students who take music in middle school score significantly higher on algebra assignments in 9th grade than their non-music counterparts.

Helmrich, B. H. (2010). Window of opportunity? Adolescence, music, and algebra. Journal of Adolescent Research. 25 (4). All ages

All Ages

Musical experience strengthens many of the same aspects of brain function that are impaired in individuals with language and learning difficulties, such as the neural timing precision which allows differentiation between speech syllables.

Kraus, N. and B. Chandrasekaran, Music training for the development of auditory skills. Nature Reviews Neuroscience, 2010. 11(8): p. 599-605.

Musical expertise is associated with distinctive enhancements in how the nervous system encodes sound (such as stronger representation of harmonic information and greater resilience to noise) that emerge with musical training, even in early childhood.

Strait, D.L., et al., Musical training during early childhood enhances the neural encoding of speech in noise. Brain Lang, 2012. 123(3): p. 191-201.

Studies show that even a few years of musical training early in life improve how the brain processes sound, and that the benefits of early exposure to music education last well into adulthood, years after the training has ceased.

Skoe, E. and N. Kraus, A little goes a long way: how the adult brain is shaped by musical training in childhood. The Journal of Neuroscience, 2012. 32(34): p. 11507-11510.



Fact Sheet: Benefits of Music Education *Continued*

All Ages

Researchers found that those who played an instrument for two years showed a stronger “neurophysiological distinction” between certain sounds than children who didn’t get the instrumental training. For instance, the music-makers more easily could tell the difference between the words “bill” and “pill,” a key skill in learning to read.

Skoe, E. & Kraus, N. (2012). A Little Goes a Long Way: How the Adult Brain Is Shaped by Musical Training in Childhood, Journal of Neuroscience, 32 (34) 11510. DOI: 10.1523/JNEUROSCI.1949-12.2012

Both music and language are complex communication systems, in which basic components are combined into high-order structures in accordance with rules. Whether music was an evolutionary precursor to language or merely a byproduct of cognitive faculties that developed to support language, music is pervasive across human cultures and throughout history...

Nina Kraus, Jessica Slater, “Music and language: relations and disconnections,” The Human Auditory System: Fundamental Organization and Clinical Disorders, Vol. 29, 3rd Series, 2015.

Cross-sectional comparisons of musicians to non-musicians have established a variety of musician enhancements in auditory skills and their neural substrates, extending from enhanced perception and neural encoding of speech, most notably in suboptimal listening conditions, to more proficient auditory working memory and auditory attention.

Nina Kraus, Dana L. Strait, “Emergence of biological markers of musicianship with school-based music instruction,” Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 2015.

Musical training is thought to improve nervous system function by focusing attention on meaningful acoustic cues, and these improvements in auditory processing cascade to language and cognitive skills.

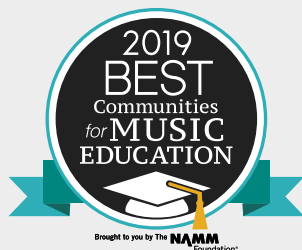
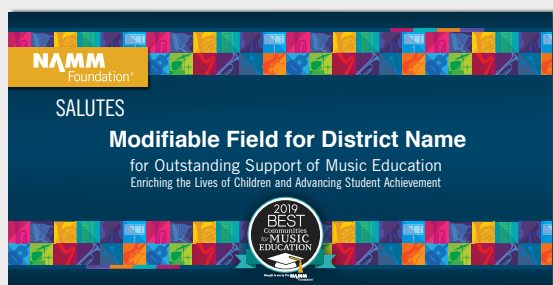
Nina Kraus, Jessica Slater, Elaine C. Thompson, Jane Hornickel, Dana L. Strait, Trent Nicol, Travis White-Schwoch, “Music Enrichment Programs Improve the Neural Encoding of Speech in At-Risk Children,” Journal of Neuroscience, September 3, 2014.

Section 4

Marketing Collateral

[Download Marketing Collateral](#)

Please download the official 2019 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 2019 BCME Banner 4'x8' (48"x96")

Official 2019 BCME Poster 22"x28"

Official 2019 BCME Poster 11"x17"

Official 2019 BCME Certificate 8.5"x11"

Official 2019 BCME Logo



Official 2019 SMMA Banner 4'x8' (48"x96")

Official 2019 SMMA Poster 22"x28"

Official 2019 SMMA Poster 11"x17"

Official 2019 SMMA Certificate 8.5"x11"

Official 2019 SMMA Logo

For additional support in publicizing your Best Communities for Music Education designation, please contact Samantha Prince at samanthap@namm.org or call 760-304-5713.