



# PUT THE SPOTLIGHT ON YOUR LOCAL MUSIC PROGRAM

## Frequently Asked Questions



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### 1. What is the Best Communities for Music Education program?

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

It provides music educators, administrators, board members and advocates with visibility and support for their music education programs and their efforts to assure access to all students as part of the core curriculum.

As a national recognition program, it gives districts and schools tools to increase visibility and support for their music programs. Designees can receive either a Best Communities Award (BCME), for their district, or a SupportMusic Merit Award (SMMA), as an individual school.

To be considered for a Best Communities for Music Education or SupportMusic Merit Award, applicants must 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 16-year history, many districts have reported that making the "Best Communities" list has helped efforts to preserve and advance music education programs.



*The two years that Smith River School has received the SupportMusic Merit Award has been an amazing time. The award has started a new attitude about music education in our community. This award has given Smith River the voice to our community, as well as outside our world with our students.*



• MARSHALL JONES, MUSIC TEACHER,  
SMITH RIVER SCHOOL • SMITH RIVER, CALIFORNIA

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

The Best Communities for Music Education Award is an opportunity for a district to be acknowledged for their commitment to and support of music education. If you are applying on behalf of a school district that serves students across grade levels and multiple schools, you should complete the Best Communities for Music Education survey.

[View and download survey here](#)

A SupportMusic Merit Award is an opportunity for an individual school to be acknowledged for its commitment to and support of music education. It is a "school-only" distinction. This award is NOT for a community of multiple schools or buildings, but for a single school and can be used by charter, private, parochial and/or individual schools seeking this designation. If you are applying on behalf of a single school, you should complete the SupportMusic Merit Award survey.

[View and download survey here](#)

### 3. What are the survey categories?

Districts and schools are reviewed by the following nine categories:

- Participation in Music
- Scheduling
- Qualified Faculty
- Opportunity
- Support from Administrators
- Standards Based Learning and Curriculum
- Community Partnerships
- Technology
- Funding

Data are analyzed statistically and are also verified via a follow-up audit. Awardees are announced in the spring.

#### 4. Who should complete the survey?

A qualified district representative should complete the survey due to the very specific information requested. A district administrator should gather and complete the survey on behalf of the district OR school.

School applicants: Review the 2016 SupportMusic Merit Award survey [here](#) to get an idea of the questions and information you need to collect.

District applicants: Review the 2016 Best Communities for Music Education survey [here](#) to get an idea of the questions and information you need to collect.

#### 5. How long does it take to complete the survey?

Due to the detailed questions that are asked and the time required to write responses to the essay questions, participants should allow approximately 30-45 minutes to complete the survey.

#### 6. What are the benefits of being designated a Best Communities for Music Education district or SupportMusic Merit Award school?

The award:

- Recognizes the commitment of school administration and community leaders, teachers and parents who believe in music education and are working to ensure that it is part of a complete education for children.
- Gives communities a sense of pride and competitiveness and provides national recognition to programs that are a source of pride for parents, teachers and school leaders.
- Advances support for music education and sheds light on music education as a national education issue.
- Highlights the high standards of school and community achievements by providing access and opportunity for music learning.
- Is used by schools and communities as an advocacy tool to increase visibility for their program.

#### 7. How many schools and districts apply annually for this honor?

More than 2,000 schools and school districts participated in last year's survey. The NAMM Foundation designated **388** school districts with BCME distinctions, and **120** schools with SMMA distinctions. The survey is heavily promoted to educators and school administrators in every school district in America through The NAMM Foundation website, direct emails, social media and news media. We ensure that all schools and districts have an equal chance to take part. The number of participants grows each year.

Congratulations to the 2015 school districts and individual schools [download to view past recipients!](#)

#### 8. What is The NAMM Foundation?

The NAMM Foundation is a nonprofit organization with the mission of advancing 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](http://www.nammfoundation.org).



*The Best Communities for Music Education designation gave us the opportunity to shine the spotlight on our district. In the true spirit of education, our music teachers passed the recognition to their students and community partners. Programs like Best Communities are critical to the future success of music education.*



**-HEATHER CROCKER,  
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS, BLAINE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT • HAILEY, IDAHO**