Statement by the Music Education Policy Roundtable
On Laconia School District Music Cuts

The Laconia School District of New Hampshire has recently approved its 2016-2017 school year budget plan, which includes a significant budget cut of $1.7 million that threatens music education for students in the district of all ages. Based on projected enrollment in current offerings, the cuts could be felt by 43 enrolled band students, 10 jazz band students, 53 chorus students, 23 concert choir students, 12 for guitar students, and 12 for music appreciation students. In addition, elementary and high school band programs are being cut to after school programs and high school chorus programs are being reduced to a one-semester class. In total, 153 music students could be affected by the cuts, approximately 25 percent of the high school population.

It is the Music Education Policy Roundtable’s continued vision that more resources should be made available to provide all students, regardless of personal circumstance or background, the access to a broad curriculum that includes a dedicated, rich experience with music. Our vision is reflected in current federal priorities in the “Every Student Succeeds Act” (ESSA), a historic piece of legislation that replaces “No Child Left Behind,” and also includes “music” as part of a “Well-Rounded Education.” This major overhaul of federal education policy provides an enormous step forward for music education, focusing on what makes a student whole, and nurturing the skills and assets that are critical to their future success within the 21st century. With music’s strengthened federal status, we have the opportunity to ensure every child has access to a broad and rich curriculum and the ability to become well-rounded students.

The Roundtable encourages the Laconia School District to reflect current federal education priorities and allocate future resources to provide a “Well-Rounded” curriculum, which includes comprehensive and sequential-based school music programs. Furthermore, we strongly encourage the district to offer instruction for these programs during the regular school day. Music programs are highly valuable in engaging students (in particular at-risk students) by improving their overall participation and attendance rates, and correlate with better grades across all subject matters. By removing these courses from
regular instructional hours, Laconia students risk losing these benefits at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The Roundtable strongly encourages all teachers and supporters of the music and arts community to help the School Board recognize the benefits of music education for students. We welcome the opportunity to engage in further dialogue with the Laconia School District regarding this important matter.

Sincerely,

The Music Education Policy Roundtable

National Association for Music Education
American String Teachers Association
American Choral Directors Association
American Orff-Schulwerk Association
American School Band Directors Association
Barbershop Harmony Society
Chorus America
College Band Directors National Association
Conn Selmer
Drum Corps International
Education Through Music
El Sistema USA
The Gordon Institute for Music Learning
GRAMMY Foundation
Guitar and Accessories Marketing Association, Inc.
Jazz at Lincoln Center
J.W. Pepper & Son, Inc.
League of American Orchestras

Little Kids Rock
Music for All
Music Teachers National Association
Music Publishers Association
Music Sales Group/MusicFirst
National Association of Music Merchants
National Association of Music Parents
National Music Council
Organization of American Kodály Educators
Percussive Arts Society
Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia
Progressive Music
Quadrant Arts Education Research
The Recording Academy
Strathmore Hall Foundation
VH1 Save The Music Foundation
Winter Guard International