



National Association  
for Music Education



MUSIC EDUCATION  
POLICY ROUNDTABLE



## 2019 NAfME Legislative Request

### Rebuild America’s Schools with Safe and Effective Music Facilities (H.R. 865 and S. 266)

#### Background

Music plays a vital role in the American educational system. Facilities for music learning should be designed in a fashion that protects the safety of students while maintaining a quality learning environment for the rest of the school. However, the cost associated with creating or enhancing these facilities often leaves students’ health and safety at risk. Some considerations that must be made in preparation of teaching music are:

- **Space.** Music classrooms require more square footage per pupil than other areas of a school.
  - The instructional space must allow for large groups of students to play instruments and stand on choral risers without being crowded.
  - Doors and hallways must be wide enough to safely move through while carrying or wheeling large instruments and equipment.
  - Students need dedicated storage areas for instruments, uniforms, and sheet music libraries, so that equipment is not posing a hazard by being left out in open spaces.
  
- **Acoustics.** Music classroom design should accommodate the volume level of large ensembles.
  - Ceilings must be high enough to reduce the volume in the classroom below the decibel (dB) threshold of causing permanent hearing damage.
  - Flooring must be composed of material that limits decibel levels, while also being easy to clean, as condensation from valves on wind instruments can build up in carpet, causing mold and bacteria to grow.
  - Walls and ceilings must include materials designed to dampen sound to reduce the classroom volume to safe levels and keep sound away from other classrooms.

The renovation and creation of music facilities requires strong commitment, planning, and resources. While most schools provide some form of music instruction, fewer dedicate classroom space specifically for music learning. This reality diminishes the positive outcomes associated with music education.

Investment in quality music facilities is essential to creating a healthy environment for students that is conducive to learning.

### **Rebuild America's Schools Act**

*The Rebuild America's Schools Act* (H.R. 865 and S. 266), introduced by Senator Jack Reed (RI) and Congressman Bobby Scott (VA-3), would create a \$70 billion grant program and \$30 billion tax credit bond program targeted at high-poverty schools with facilities that pose health and safety risks to students and staff. Both the House and Senate bills originally included the renovation or development of arts facilities as an allowable use of funds.

The current version of the House bill specifically includes music facilities as a qualified use of funds. This version has passed the House's Education and Workforce Committee and is slated for debate in the full House of Representatives. It is important that this language remain in any final version of the bill to ensure that state and local governments are clearly aware that these funds can be used for the creation or renovation of music and arts facilities.