

Inclusivity and Diversity in Music Education



A Position Statement of the National Association for Music Education

Music is a culture bearer, and the study of music includes the study of the people, places, and cultures involved in its creation and performance. The 2014 National Music Standards embrace a holistic approach to music education study, encouraging teachers and students to explore a variety of musical styles and music-making traditions from around the world. This goal perhaps will be better served if we are able to recruit a more diverse teacher workforce that more closely resembles the diversity of our school populations.ⁱ

Position

A well-rounded and comprehensive music education program, as envisioned in the 2014 National Music Standards, should exist in every American public school and must include awareness of and responsiveness to the variety and diversity of cultures and music-making within the school's student body and surrounding community.

Counterarguments to this position state that, while music is part of every culture in our world, music education should focus on the best in music-making, particularly the Western classical tradition. This approach would hold that popular music and other traditional or folk music are too fleeting for serious musical study.

Including all forms and types of music, however, from folk to classical, from popular to traditional, allows students to explore and expand their communicational, collaborative and music literacy skills in a variety of formats, structures, and ensembles. Embracing a variety of music-making in a school's music programs helps connect the music educator to the school's community, providing opportunities for parental and community support and participation. Expanding the kinds of music studied and performed invites more students into the music classroom, helping NAfME and its members realize the mission of promoting the understanding and making of music by all.

Plan for implementation

National and state leaders for NAfME can support diversity and inclusivity in music education by:

- Providing members with the skills, information and collegial support necessary to work with and support an increasingly diverse society, including within the music classroom.
- Actively conducting and promoting systematic research into the best practices for delivering music instruction to students, including in a variety of musical styles and genres, and engaging in the dissemination of the results of that researchⁱⁱ
- Including diverse interests, values, and preferences in the work of our strategic plan and inviting member participation
- Encouraging early identification of new and emerging leaders from all groups represented within NAfME and in society as a whole to participate in leadership of the Association.
- Actively recruiting and retaining persons of diverse cultures and ethnic origins to teach music in schools.

Members of NAfME can support diversity and inclusivity in music education by:

- Building music programs that address achievement in all areas set forth in the 2014 Music Standards, including the study of a wide variety of music-making, including styles and genres of music that are broadly representative of America’s cultural diversity.
- Understanding their community’s needs and interest in music-making, including diverse musical styles and genres.
- Including any and all students who want to learn music, regardless of exceptionalism or cultural background.
- Seeking to learn about musical styles and traditions that are not part of the educator’s own musical background through in-person and online professional development opportunities.

ⁱ Relevant Research Studies include:

Hancock, Carl B and Ann M. Porter. Conference presentation at 2016 NAFME Biennial Research Symposium: *A longitudinal analysis of the music teacher workforce in the United States from 1987-2012*. We examined 25 years of data from the Schools and Staffing Survey to compare the demographics for music and arts educators with others from across the US. Subtle, yet profound changes suggest decades of educational reforms and societal changes are reflected in the teacher pool although music remained consistent throughout.

The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce, May, 2016, report prepared by the U.S. Department of Education, with data from the National Center for Education Statistics’ Schools and Staffing Survey. References below are cited within the ED report:

Dee, Thomas. “Teachers, Race, and Student Achievement in a Randomized Experiment.” *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 86 (2004) 195 -210.

Egalite, Anna, Brian Kisida, and Marcus A. Winters. “Representation in the Classroom: The Effect of Own-race Teachers on Student Achievement,” *Economics of Education Review*, 45, (April 2015) 44–52.

Dee, Thomas. “Teachers, Race, and Student Achievement in a Randomized Experiment.” *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 86 (2004) 195 -210.

Klopfenstein, Kristin. Beyond Test Scores: The Impact of Black Teacher Role Models on Rigorous Math Taking. *Contemporary Economic Policy*, 23 (2005) 416-428.

Grissom, Jason, and Christopher Redding. “Discretion and Disproportionality: Explaining the Underrepresentation of High-Achieving Students of Color in Gifted Programs,” *AERA Open*, 2 (2016) 1–25.

Villegas, Ana María, and Jacqueline Jordan Irvine. “Diversifying the Teaching Force: An Examination of Major Arguments.” *The Urban Review*, 42 (2010) 175–192.

ⁱⁱ A bibliography of related research studies will be linked to the final statement online. We encourage reviewers to send additional research studies of relevance to this topic to lynnt@nafme.org for consideration. Thank you.