

February 15, 2022

Dear Principals and School Leaders,

I am writing to tell you about a very exciting opportunity for rich professional growth for your teacher as a part of a collaborative project sponsored by the **National Art Education Association** (NAEA – project lead), the **National Association for Music Education** (NAfME), the **Educational Theater Association** (EdTA), and the **National Dance Education Organization** (NDEO).



Thanks to a grant from the United States Department of Education, we are launching **Connected Arts Networks (CAN)**, a five-year initiative to create nationwide virtual Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) with educators in visual arts, music, theater, dance, and media arts. The **overarching vision** for CAN is to build a sustainable model of professional learning for music and arts educators to strengthen their pedagogy, instruction, and leadership skills in order to better serve students. This project is modeled after the successful structure of the PLC program in New York City, initiated by the Office of Arts and Special Projects (OASP), another partnering organization. More information about this project is available on NAfME's website here: <https://nafme.org/connected-arts-networks-project/>

Music and art educators who apply and are selected to take on the role of Teacher Leader in this project commit to participating in a PLC with peers of their music and arts discipline for 5 years. In years 1-2, Teacher Leaders will receive specialized virtual training to build their capacity to address **Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (ED&I)**, and **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)** within music instruction. In years 3-5, Teacher Leaders continue to participate in monthly PLCs while simultaneously facilitating their own monthly PLCs, coaching peer art educators, and leading the creation of digital resources and toolkits around these content areas. The involvement of your teacher will support their capacity to:

- Integrate equity, diversity and inclusion practices in their music education classroom and your school community
- Create entry points for SEL practices that will benefit student growth and success
- Share promising practices that can contribute to the vision for your school community in advancing culturally responsive and inclusive teaching and learning
- Strengthen their own leadership skills including facilitating professional learning communities and coaching peer teachers



**National Association
for Music Education**

1806 Robert Fulton Drive, Reston, VA 20191
800-336-3768 | www.nafme.org

There is no financial cost to your school for teacher participation in this project. **As a part of the project, teachers will be asked to attend meetings and workshops, primarily outside of school hours, and may be offered an opportunity to virtually observe another teacher's classroom. Support for substitutes may be available upon request.** Teacher Leaders will receive a stipend for their commitment and leadership to creating new frameworks for the field of music education. Teachers will also benefit from a network of ongoing support, quarterly virtual workshops with national content experts, professional development hours, annual leadership certificates, and opportunities to present at conferences, workshops and be featured in publications. Students in the applicant's classroom will benefit from this project as teachers pilot practices they learn.

By signing the **below statement**, you agree to support your teacher's professional growth through their participation in PLC meetings, workshops, webinars, and professional development opportunities through the Connected Arts Networks 5-year project. You also agree to be in communication with the Connected Arts Networks national team annually as we evaluate the progress of Teacher Leaders and project impact on students.

I am aware of _____'s (insert teacher name) application to be a Teacher Leader in the Connected Arts Networks project. If selected, I fully support and recommend them for this project.

Principal/Supervisor Signature

Date

We look forward to collaborating with you!

Best wishes,

John Donaldson

Director, Professional Development and Publications

*Staff contact for NAFME for the Connected Arts Networks (CAN) Project