



Partnership  
for  
Music Education  
Policy Development  
**A MICHIGAN THINK TANK**

POSITION STATEMENT:

**CRITERIA FOR DESIGNING A VIABLE MUSIC TEACHER EVALUATION TOOL**

**Introduction**

In 2011, the Michigan legislature passed, and Governor Rick Snyder signed into law, Public Act 102, requiring each local school district to develop a “rigorous, transparent, and fair performance evaluation system.” Educators have responded quickly to comply; however, in many districts the quick response has led administrators to use criteria for evaluating music teachers that is neither “fair” nor appropriate. In a number of these cases, music educators have reported being evaluated solely on the basis of non-musical criteria, for example, the math and reading scores attained by their music students on MEAP tests. Such practices undermine the efforts of music educators, the inclusion of music in the school curriculum, and the richness and meaning that music adds to the human experience.

The Partnership for Music Education Policy Development (PMEPD) is in communication with the Michigan Council for Educator Effectiveness (MCEE), and is tracking its current pilot project utilizing various teacher evaluation models across the State of Michigan. The PMEPD hopes to meet with the MCEE at the conclusion of its project and suggest strategies for music teacher evaluation for adoption by the state legislature. The PMEPD is currently working to develop strategies for use in both performance-based (band, orchestra, and choir) and general music classrooms at all instructional levels, K-12.

Therefore, it is the purpose of this position statement to outline those factors that the PMEPD deems essential to developing a “rigorous, transparent, and fair” system of evaluating our state’s music educators.

**The Evaluator**

- Trained music specialists should evaluate music instruction and curricular materials (items such as performance recordings, written assessments, compositions, analytical reflections, etc.) used as part of a music teacher’s evaluation.

- Building Administrators should evaluate other areas of a music teacher’s professional performance (promptness, ability to work with colleagues, communication with parents, and dedication to the profession, etc.)
- Evaluators should have considerable and successful teaching experience.

### **What Should be Evaluated**

- Teaching “effectiveness” should be evaluated on the basis of the delivery of the music curriculum as established by the local school district.
- Teachers should only be evaluated in areas in which they are highly qualified and certified.
- Student growth data from other disciplines (e.g., math, language arts, etc.) should not be directly used to evaluate the music educator.
- For those classes in which large ensemble performance (e.g., band, orchestra, and choir) is a primary part of the curriculum, student growth data as demonstrated in group performance should be taken into consideration

### **Other Criteria**

- It is imperative that evaluation parameters be established at the local level with input from all stakeholders. Locally constructed criteria, based on locally established curricula, will provide the most appropriate and effective means of gathering and analyzing student-growth data to be utilized in the teacher evaluation process.
- Only objective measures of student learning should be used.
- Student assessments used as part of the teacher evaluation process should be consistent with recognized local, state, and/or national standards and should be developed collaboratively by the administrator and teacher at the local level.
- A fair and complete evaluation of the music teacher’s effectiveness should take into account a wide variety of factors, including but not limited to the following criteria: the quality of the local curriculum, the quality of program offerings, the teacher’s service to the profession, the displayed musical growth of performance ensembles, engagement of students, and the strength of the program (as evidenced by successful performances by both ensembles and individual students).
- Although they are outside the control of the teacher, scheduling, instructional time limits, staffing, class size, student-to-teacher ratio, instructional materials, facilities, and student attendance can have a significant impact on student growth and should be carefully considered by the evaluator.