

What music teachers say about their work

Greatest challenges

“Budget/staff cuts, and trying to maintain the same program with less.”

“Maintaining energy and enthusiasm to inspire, motivate and support the learning of 600 students while carrying equipment from room to room with no breaks.”

“Administrators more focused on ISAT, IGAPS, PSAE, NCLB, and all the testing.”

Most positive aspects of teaching music

“Working with young people and having an impact on their lives.”

“I know that I am reaching the under-privileged children that I work with. They know that I care about them and am trying to help all of them learn to play, practice, and improve.”

“I find my students a place to shine, to be. They use what I give them forever.”

“I love children and music with all my heart.”

“I teach; therefore, I touch the future.”

About the *Illinois Music Educators Association*

The mission of the Illinois Music Educators Association is to promote lifelong music learning and to provide leadership for music education.

With more than 5,000 members, IMEA is one of the largest of the 52 affiliates of MENC: The National Association for Music Education.

IMEA is by far the largest Fine Arts education organization in Illinois.

Music Makes the Difference

The Illinois Coalition for Music Education
An Advocacy Effort by
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**Illinois
Music
Educators
Association**

Teaching Music in Illinois: A Time for Advocacy

The arts have been part of the core of an educated person's life throughout the recorded history of civilization.

Music teachers in Illinois have never worked harder and more intelligently to provide a quality music education to all children in our state.

There are signs that our teachers are being stretched to the point of breaking.

Our children deserve better!

Teaching Music in Illinois, 2005: A Status Report

In April 2005, the Illinois Music Educators Association sponsored a study to examine the status of music teaching in Illinois. The results suggest that much good is happening in our state, but also raises cause for concern.

First the good news. Music teachers:

- Love their work, love children, and sense possibility for musical growth in all.
- Are inspired by helping children grow as musicians and creative, expressive human beings.
- Comfortably integrate children with special needs into their classrooms.
- Are certified and hold college degrees in music
- Engage in continued professional development.
- Assume a wide range of non-teaching responsibilities throughout the school.
- Align their curricula to state standards.

But, there are also signs that our teachers are being stretched thin. For example:

- One out of three (33%) music teachers teach more classes and nearly half (47%) teach more children than they did five years ago.
- Over half (52%) have seen their budgets decline.
- 50% feel more pressure than ever before to advocate on behalf of the survival of their music program.
- 31% (nearly one of three) are frustrated with limited time and scheduling problems within the school.
- 17% cite issues pertaining to the motivation and management of large groups of children as being their greatest challenge as a teacher.

Download a free copy of *The Status of Music Teaching in Illinois* at www.ilmea.org or contact the state office for a hard copy. (The address is on the back of this brochure.)

Support music teachers

Each year:

- Music teachers present an estimated 30,000 live performances throughout our state for our communities and their families.
- Every day tens of thousands of children come to school early or stay late to participate in music ensembles and classes.
- Music teachers work with more children than ever -- 27% work with 400 or more different children each week.
- Music teachers work with children at every grade and age level.
- Nearly 100% are engaged in continuing professional development.

Nonetheless, music budgets are declining and music programs are routinely under siege. One of the most demoralizing challenges cited by over 30% of our state's music educators is the need to constantly defend their program to parents, administrators, counselors and fellow teachers.

When music teachers are overwhelmed by the magnitude of their responsibilities, they forfeit years of education and abandon the profession early.

Support the Illinois Arts Alliance recommendations for change

The arts are necessary. They are one of the six fundamental learning areas. The Illinois Arts Alliance has developed eight powerful recommendations for change. Each may be addressed at state, district and local levels. Supporting this initiative will bring real policy change that will assure that the arts remain part of the core of the education received by children in Illinois. We lose too much when we lose the arts. Find a copy of *Arts at the Core: Every School, Every Student* at www.artsalliance.org. Also see www.illinoiscreates.org.

Insist on a standards-based, curriculum-driven music education program.

The goal of standards-based music education is to promote life-long engagement in the arts. It is a sequential, step-by-step process for **all** children. Insist that your child receive step-by-step instruction. There's only one chance for each generation. The results last a lifetime!

- Music education provides a meaningful use of leisure time or an engaging career.
- Music mirrors our emotional lives and accompanies us in times of celebration and sorrow, love and loss.
- Music is one of our nation's largest exports.
- Parents bond with children through music. Social identity grows through music.
- Music builds emotional health, stability and happiness.
- Music helps create school and home environments conducive to learning.

Strive to build music programs that meet MENC guidelines.

Children will not learn in threadbare programs. MENC, The National Association for Music Education, is a source of detailed guidelines for school music programs. Built upon best practices, they provide guidance in areas such as appropriate teacher contact time, standards, curricula, music teacher credentialing and more. This important document can guide long-range planning and strategic initiatives at the local and district level. Find the *Opportunity to Learn: Standards for Music Instruction, Grades preK-12* on the index at www.menc.org.