

Making your case for time away from your school and financial support to attend a conference requires thorough preparation and articulated benefits to your institution, department, colleagues and professional performance. Use these steps and resources to help make your case to attend the Illinois Music Education Conference 2018!

1. Familiarize yourself with the points in “5 Reasons to Attend IMEC.” Use them as jumping-off points; adapt them to address your own situation.
2. Get the costs together, including travel, hotel, meals and registration. Be sure to outline how much you can save if you register early. (See the sample travel budget that follows.)
3. Review last year’s conference program and list specific ideas or strategies that you brought back and implemented in your classroom, rehearsal or position.
4. Study any preliminary information about the program that is available; identify sessions, events and programs that could help you grow as a music educator. Highlight how these support your professional development in specific areas such as the new Illinois Arts Learning Standards, assessment or the Danielson model.
5. Share available program materials with your supervisor and find out what topics, sessions and programs they think would be of greatest benefit to your workplace.
6. Put together a draft plan for how instruction will continue and how essential tasks will get done while you’re away, including how technology will keep you accessible and in touch as needed.
7. Develop a schedule for after you get back:
 - a) Describe how you’ll share the list of discussion and action items you develop during the conference, how you’ll share notes from sessions, discussion groups, vendors and useful informal conversations.
 - b) Share a timeline for providing a written report for your supervisor.
 - c) Assure your administrators that you will focus on implementing one new idea at a time that pays back the investment of time and money while improving your music department’s programs and services.
 - d) Plan a formal professional development session so that you can share a few selected items with your music department colleagues.
8. Put your request in writing - include a written description (see sample that follows) and a proposed budget (registration, travel, lodging and meals).
9. Schedule a time to sit down with your administrator or supervisor to review and discuss the information in person. Plan what “key points” you will address and emphasize at this meeting, and leave behind your full written description for your supervisor to review after your meeting.
10. Follow up! If a decision was not made in your face-to-face meeting, then contact your administrator a few days later regarding a timeline for the decision. If you were given permission to attend, a word of thanks for your supervisor’s time, consideration, and support would be appropriate.