



Alabama Music Educators Association

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AMEA Presidents Report August 15, 2009

The Alabama Music Educators Association continues to work on plans for the Annual In-Service Conference on January 21-23, 2010 at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. Dr. John Feierabend will be our keynote speaker and will work with our Elementary Division on Kodaly techniques.

We will continue with our traditional awards including the Outstanding Music Educator Award, the Outstanding Administrator Award and the Barbara Odom Outstanding Service Award, and Young Composers Award. Also we induct our third class to the AMEA Hall of Fame.

Mary Jo Lakin has been appointed the interim treasurer to fill that position due to the resignation of Cindy Pass.

On June 17-22 I had the privilege of attending the first annual Music Education Week in Washington DC. This was an incredible experience for me and I was honored to represent you at this important gathering in our nation's capital. MENC had arranged a meeting with Secretary of Education Arne Duncan where we presented him with the Petition for Music Education. I also had the opportunity to visit Capital Hill and the office of Senator Richard Shelby to meet with his legislative assistant, Laura Friedel; the office of Senator Jeff Sessions where I met with Andrew Newton, another legislative assistant; and the office of Representative Parker Griffith where I was able to actually meet with the congressman. Dr. Griffith's staff took me to the Rayburn Room in the Capital Building and got him off the "floor" of the House of Representatives to talk with me. That was very impressive and he looked me square in the eye the whole time and listened attentively as I talked to him about supporting Music Education and several issues regarding the ESEA Act (Elementary Secondary Education Act) that is being written to replace NCLB. We want to make sure that Music Education remains a part of that important bill.

Along with performances by the Army Jazz Band, Marine Band, Air Force Band and the Singing Sergeants, I received guidance from MENC members and leadership on music advocacy. The focus of the entire conference was on advocacy and I challenge you to be more active in promoting music education in our great state. We elected our national, state, and local officials and we must make sure they know the issues we face and deal effectively with them on behalf of the students of Alabama. I have a summary of the four key requests by MENC for you:

- First, in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, we need to keep the definition of the arts as a "core academic subject."

- Second, as teachers of a core subject, we would like the revision of ESEA to clarify the fact that the music teaching profession, like the teaching profession as a whole, needs to be held to high professional standards. Specifically, we would like clarification that “paraprofessionals” from the community who contribute to the music classroom experience be hired and administered as paraprofessionals, as defined in the current law. We understand the value of musicians and others in helping reach children with new and exciting experiences, but we want to make certain that these valuable resources are directed to well-planned educational goals.
- Third, we are proud of the benefits of music education for children, but we need more and better data to help us give the benefits of music education to all children. We ask your support in asking the Department of Education to carry out more complete research on the Nation’s Report Card in the arts and in other data-gathering.
- Fourth, and finally, we understand the limitations of the Federal role in education. One way that the revision of ESEA could help is by requiring that the state and local accountability provisions, already in place to help the public know how well the schools are serving their children, include some significant but locally-chosen measure of the strength of the music program in those schools.

Our website has been updated and now includes a “Job Vacancies” page.

Notable items:

1. **The 2010 AMEA Conference** is planned for January 21-23 at the University of Alabama.
2. **Future AMEA Conferences** are planned in Montgomery for 2011 and 2012
3. **Current Issues-State Funding and Teacher Retention:** Due to the poor economy, our state is in what is called “proration” which means a reduced budget for the next fiscal year. Many programs are in jeopardy because of reduction in force policies. We are monitoring, but have very little recourse.
4. **Leadership Training-**We are currently looking for ways to better prepare the incoming leadership of each division so that a smooth transition and continuity of plan will be developed. A training program is in the developmental stages and should add greatly to smoother transitions of office in each division and each district. Better communication is the key and we are looking for opportunities to implement this training at our state conference (leadership breakfast) and our division meetings.

Respectfully Submitted
 Pat Stegall
 AMEA President