

# **MENC Strategic Plan**

Approved November 3, 2007

## **MENC's Preamble**

Music is a universal expression of the human spirit; a basic human need. It allows us to communicate our deepest ideas and feelings; to explore and preserve our cultural heritages; and to celebrate the realms of emotion, imagination, and creativity that result in new knowledge, skills, and understanding. Therefore, every individual should be guaranteed the opportunity to learn music and to share in musical experiences.

## **MENC's Mission**

The mission of MENC: The National Association for Music Education is to advance music education by encouraging the study and making of music by all.

## **MENC's Strategic Vision**

MENC shall be the most inclusive, influential, and authoritative voice for music as an essential part of education.

**MENC Strategic Plan**  
*A National Blueprint for Music Education*

**MENC's Goals**

**To advance music education by encouraging the study and making of music by all, MENC has four major goals.**

- Every student in our nation's schools shall study music as part of the core curriculum.
- All school music programs shall be balanced, comprehensive, and sequential, as defined in the National Standards for Music Education and shall be provided with resources as defined in the Opportunity-to-Learn Standards for Music.
- All music instruction shall be delivered by well-prepared professional music educators, each of whom meets state requirements.
- Music educators and those who support music education shall view MENC as the primary association for ensuring the widespread advancement of the profession.

**MENC's Strategic Directions**

A national professional association must focus its energies on those directions for which it has the capacity to successfully engage and in which its members have a strategic interest. With the recognition that MENC must use its energies and resources to meet its mission, MENC has focused its strategic plan on seven areas in which it intends to concentrate:

- Advocacy: Soliciting widespread support for quality music education.
- Music Educator Recruitment, Preparation, Retention, and Professional Development: Recruiting sufficient numbers of new teachers, providing leadership in teacher preparation, and improving professional development opportunities for beginning and experienced teachers.
- Curriculum and Assessment in Music Education: Identifying the curricular impact of the National Standards and providing models/strategies for standards-based assessment.
- Serving the Profession: Improving and expanding MENC services for its members.
- Organization and Governance: Reviewing MENC's organizational structure and governance process to meet the needs of its membership.
- Long-Term Financial Stability of MENC: Establishing cost efficiencies, ensuring an effective investment program, and developing new funding sources.
- Alliances, Partnerships, and Sponsorships: Developing mutually beneficial relationships with educational associations, businesses, and other entities.

## Strategic Direction: Advocacy

- **Challenge:** Advocacy is a strong focus for our professional association. Advocacy efforts by the MENC national office and the individual state associations strengthen music education by educating various constituencies about the value of music in the lives of children and adults, the importance of highly qualified teachers, and standards-based instruction. Advocacy also informs music education professionals about the advantages of membership in MENC and the federated state associations.

Music education has benefited from the support of local communities and policy makers for decades, but strong evidence points to the fact that support has eroded in recent years. Music programs in some communities are thriving, while other communities struggle to maintain or preserve the scope and quality of their programs. Instructional time, student access, and adequate funding for strong music programs have been compromised as a result of aspects of the implementation of federal and state legislation.

- **Objectives:**

- Establish clear and widespread public support for music education so that no decision maker takes actions that will materially harm music programs in public schools.
- Create and sustain widespread public support for music education so that a strong music program is expected in every school in the nation.
- Establish parity for music education in all legislation dealing with subject-specific education.
- Establish parity for music education in all federally funded research dealing with education.
- Develop clear criteria, disseminated publicly, for the quality of music education in all schools.
- Ensure requirements that all students have substantive music experiences (as defined in the National Standards and in the Opportunity-to-Learn Standards).
- Ensure high school graduation requirements in music.
- Promote college and university admission requirements in music.

- **Potential Actions:**

- *Develop a strategic plan for advocacy with strategies such as: promoting high visibility performance opportunities, establishing recognition programs, and arranging for Public Service Announcements or press placements.*
- *Develop and disseminate data that can be used to document the status and value of music education at the national level.*
- *Work with MENC leaders to develop advocacy skills, particularly in how to inform others through data-driven research.*
- *Design and distribute resources, information, or strategies for advocacy.*
- *Educate decision makers.*
- *Monitor and influence proposed legislation and administrative initiatives.*
- *Refine the effective definition of a Highly Qualified music educator.*
- *Align advocacy efforts between the national and state associations.*
- *Align advocacy efforts with other associations and entities when such alignment will accomplish significant advocacy goals.*

## **Strategic Direction: Music Educator Recruitment, Preparation, Retention, and Professional Development**

- **Challenge:** High quality music education at the national level is dependent upon the availability of sufficient numbers of well-qualified teachers. Teacher supply and demand vary across the United States, and individual state policies for teacher licensure or certification are different as well. The quality of preservice teacher education and professional development opportunities for beginning and experienced teachers is also uneven. The music education profession needs to recruit new teachers to the field, contribute to high quality teacher preparation programs, and support career teacher professional development. Many policy bodies are involved in regulating teacher education and professional development. MENC needs to promote the profession and provide leadership and support for music teachers at all stages of their careers.
  
- **Objectives:**
  - Determine whether sufficient numbers of well-qualified music teachers are available to meet supply and demand, and support efforts for teacher recruitment and retention where needed.
  - Ensure the preparation of sufficient numbers of music teachers to meet demand.
  - Determine those factors that lead to music educators leaving the profession.
  - Provide leadership regarding music teacher preparation to bodies that accredit or license music teachers.
  - Support and promote best practices, research, and policies that contribute to strong music teacher education programs.
  - Strengthen professional development for beginning and experienced teachers.
  - Promote the profession to qualified potential teacher candidates.
  
- **Potential Actions**
  - *Monitor music teacher supply and demand, and provide the resulting information to the field.*
  - *Develop strategies for providing information about employment opportunities in music education.*
  - *Pursue strategies for identifying individuals who might become successful music educators, such as those in other fields seeking a career change; develop strategies to promote the profession to these individuals.*
  - *Implement programs to increase the sociocultural diversity of the teacher force.*
  - *Identify and disseminate model and innovative practices for preservice music teacher education.*
  - *Identify and disseminate model and innovative practices for the professional development of beginning and experienced teachers.*
  - *Support research-based induction programs and mentoring for beginning teachers.*
  - *Prepare professional development materials, workshops, and other strategies to support beginning and experienced teachers.*
  - *Align with other associations to monitor and influence policies that affect teachers and teacher preparation.*
  - *Develop professional materials for the discipline-specific evaluation of music educators.*

## Strategic Direction: Curriculum and Assessment in Music Education

- **Challenge:** While standards have been adopted in some form in all states and curriculum is based nominally on the national standards, the extent to which actual instruction is based on the standards is unclear. In addition, there is insufficient data about the extent to which standards-based assessment is aligned with curriculum as it is taught. Without this data, MENC cannot determine when the goals for developing knowledge and skills in students have been met. This is especially true in an educational climate in which non-traditional settings and modes of delivering music education are growing alongside strong traditional approaches.
  
- **Objectives:**
  - Determine the extent to which the National Standards are reflected in teaching practice across the nation, and provide for the periodic review of the currency and relevancy of the National Standards, Opportunity to Learn Standards, and related performance assessments.
  - Develop a national consensus regarding the importance of assessment in music education.
  - Develop a range of standards-based assessments consistent with the National Standards that music educators can use.
  
- **Potential Actions:**
  - *Improve P-12 curricula by evaluating the extent to which the National Standards (or their state equivalents) have been implemented and increasing the variety and scope of music education offerings for all students.*
  - *Develop a range of curricular offerings for students who are interested in music beyond the more traditional coursework.*
  - *Develop standards-based models for assessing student knowledge and skills in performing ensembles.*
  - *Identify strategies to convey what students learn in traditional and non-traditional settings and modes of delivering music education.*
  - *Educate all providers of music education services to ensure that curricula and programs are standards-based.*
  - *Engage more students in active music making in new and innovative ways.*
  - *Develop mechanisms for disseminating models and strategies for assessment.*
  - *Create the necessary vehicles for periodic review and revision of the National Standards, Opportunity to Learn Standards, and related performance assessments.*

### **Strategic Direction: Serving the Profession**

- **Challenge:** It is important to emphasize that our members are MENC. Responding to members, valuing their areas of professional emphasis, and providing services that meet the needs and interests of members is a principal goal of the association.
  
- **Objectives:**
  - Serve as the association for all music educators, delivering exceptional services and accommodating the diverse interests of all.
  - Provide needed services to music educators so that they can provide better delivery of music education to all learners.
  - Recruit and retain MENC members.
  - Expand and serve new membership segments among underserved groups of music educators and new types of members.
  - Solicit input from all members about their professional needs on an ongoing basis.
  
- **Potential Actions:**
  - *Conduct demographic research about member needs.*
  - *Provide differentiated services to specific member groups to better meet their specific professional goals and needs.*
  - *Publish materials in service of the mission and goals of MENC that would not otherwise be available to members.*
  - *Provide for appropriate, educationally viable, high-visibility performance opportunities.*
  - *Support the initiatives and activities of societies, councils, and other content-specific groups within MENC.*
  - *Identify new member segments that can benefit from engagement with MENC.*
  - *Explore new areas of communication between states, with members, and the national office.*
  - *Promote new areas of collaboration and communication with allied associations.*

### **Strategic Direction: Organization and Governance of MENC**

- **Challenge:** MENC is a comprehensive music subject-matter organization with a geographically elected National Executive Board that attends to matters of national importance to all members, and state boards that attend to matters of more local importance. The effectiveness of MENC depends on a governance structure that best accommodates the aspirations of the association and the needs of members.
  
- **Objectives:**
  - Ensure that MENC’s organizational structure and governance responds to its diverse membership.
  - Articulate relationships that enable national and state associations, societies and councils, and individual members to accomplish differentiated goals within a unified national structure.
  
- **Potential Actions:**
  - *Communicate effectively among members, leadership, and staff.*
  - *Increase the cohesiveness and efficiency with which the national and state organizations work, establishing a clear understanding of the different roles each level of the association fulfills in accomplishing the goals of the profession.*
  - *Provide orientation and information to state, division, and national leaders so that they can be effective in their differentiated roles.*
  - *Regularly review a governance structure that will best accommodate the views of a diverse membership as they seek solutions to common goals.*
  - *Recognize and develop leaders to ensure the future vitality of the association.*

**Strategic Direction: Long-Term Financial Stability of MENC**

**Challenge:** MENC must address issues of financial efficiency and revenue development because of ever-increasing costs, growing needs of the field, and expanding expectations among members. Member dues currently provide approximately 50 per cent of MENC income, so the association cannot support all of the activities expected by its members without increasingly developing alliances, partnerships, and sponsorships to seek additional resources. Current non-dues revenue initiatives are inadequate to meet the needs and expectations of the members of the association.

- *Objectives:*
  - Ensure long-term financial planning for MENC.
  - Improve cost efficiencies, implement an investment program, and seek new streams of revenue.
  
- *Potential Actions:*
  - *Examine the organization’s goals, structure, and expenditures for possible cost efficiencies.*
  - *Ensure a dues process to support the goals of MENC that is equitable, periodic, predictable, and comparable to dues in similar national organizations*
  - *Ensure a suitably performing investment program.*
  - *Seek new streams of non-dues revenue.*

**Strategic Direction: Alliances, Partnerships, and Sponsorships**

- **Challenge:** MENC benefits by forming relationships with educational associations, businesses, and other entities. Strategic alliances maximize our influence and efforts to sustain and strengthen our association. Forming and maintaining alliances require significant efforts on the part of our association. Through these alliances, partnerships and sponsorships, the association develops appropriate funding sources. These relationships are based on current policies and procedures developed by the National Executive Board, which ensures that additional resources meet our strategic goals and uphold our essential values as an association.
  
- **Objectives:**
  - Provide adequate staff and other resources to serve development needs in order to accomplish the strategic goals of the association.
  - Maintain and seek appropriate strategic alliances, partnerships, and sponsorships.
  
- **Potential Actions:**
  - Regularly review the “Guidelines for Partnerships with Outside Organizations.”
  - Monitor and refine the processes for evaluating partnerships used by the Partnership Review Committee of the National Executive Board.
  - Communicate the benefits of alliances, partnerships, and sponsorships to the general membership and leadership of MENC.
  - Sustain existing relationships and develop new partnership opportunities to support MENC strategic goals.
  - Expand efforts in development of non-dues revenue.
  - Utilize the resources of MENC to help states develop alliances, partnerships, and sponsorships.