



BEING AN ADVOCATE FOR MUSIC EDUCATION

What should I do to advocate for a music program in the local school?

Assuming you are a teacher, parent, principal or interested community member wishing to ensure the local school has a good music program, we offer the following suggestions. This is by no means intended to be a complete guide. There are many other resources available and we note many of these in the following information.

The following action list may help

1. IDENTIFY.

- Begin by gathering information about the school's current music program, if any. Find out what is already in place. Ask questions. The purpose here is to identify what is needed and not currently offered.
 - o Is there a music program at the school?
 - o How much time is given to music for each student per week?
 - o Do all students have music as part of their timetable?
 - o Does the school have a curriculum commitment or policy about music? If so, what is the nature of the commitment/policy?
 - o Does the school involve community musicians or identified community music programs that would be of benefit to the students?
 - o Does the school take advantage of involvement with professional musicians-or performances by professional musicians to extend the music program?
- Our checklist has further suggestions for information gathering.

Link: [Your School Music Program](#) 

2. ORGANISE

Advocacy is easier and likely to be more effective when a group of people is involved. Identify possible allies to help you such as:

- o music teachers
- o music students who are passionate about the skills they are learning
- o musicians in the community
- o employers who recruit music-trained people and value the critical skills they bring: critical thinking and problem solving
- o local businesses that value music in education
- o community leaders-politicians, local councilors etc
- o school principals who are committed to music education
- o school committee/board members who are committed to music
- o parents who want a strong music education program for their children



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3. DISCOVER

Here we need to identify the people in the community who make decisions about school curriculum. Or, identify those who can influence the decision makers. These people might be:

- o school principals
- o school council members
- o other school administrators
- o parents associations
- o teacher associations, especially music teacher associations
- o local media
- o local and state politicians
- o federal politicians
- o teacher unions

4. DEVISE THE APPROACH

By this stage we know what is needed at the school for an effective music program; there is probably a group of supporters gathered to help with the project and the decision makers are known. Now is the time to develop strategies and tactics to approach the decision makers.

- Compile information that will be needed when presenting the case to decision makers.

Information might include the following.

- o The value of music education for children

Link: [Why Music is important](#) ❖

- o Academic and social benefits of a music education

Link: [Music makes the difference](#) ❖

- o Music educators' definition of a good school music program

Link: [Your School Music Program](#) ❖

- o Ask for help from specialists such as music teachers to assemble the information you will present.
- o Consider asking people working in music to help with information.





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- Decide how the case will be presented. What techniques and presentation style will be used.
 - o Decide whether the case will be made at a parent/teacher meeting, or a principals' meeting or other forum.
 - o Musicians and specialist music teachers might help by acting as guest speakers for a presentation. Contact organizations such as:
 - ASME - Australian Society for Music Education - <http://www.asme.edu.au/>
 - aMuse - Association of Music Educators, Victoria - <http://www.amuse.vic.edu.au/>
 - MCA - Music Council of Australia - <http://www.mca.org.au/>
 - o Arrange for decision makers to be present at a music performance by school students, as part of your approach.
 - o Inform decision makers about relevant arts education activities such as Artists in Schools, performance programs etc, to encourage their interest.
 - o Encourage local businesses to sponsor a school concert so that they are included as advocacy partners to support your case.

Further suggestions are at:

Link: http://www.amc-music.org/dr_tim.htm



Essential Advocacy Resources for Music.

5. FOLLOW UP

Assuming that your contact or presentation to the decision makers has been implemented, make sure to follow up and ensure that decisions are put in place. Advocates may need to have regular follow-up sessions with the decision makers to ensure that music programs are maintained. Sometimes programs are cut by budget demands or other curriculum pressures, so it is important to maintain vigilance.

6. OTHER INFORMATION

Help is available in Australia for music education advocates

Advocates who need assistance to advocate for their music education program will be able to consult with consultants who will help with information and advice.

To discuss or arrange consultancies or workshops, please contact the campaign managers, Lou Bacchiella or Frank Panucci at lou.mpfl@mca.org.au or frankpanucci@tpg.com.au

For Teachers, the following article provides further information.
Making a Difference: Effective Music Advocacy

Dr Margaret Barrett outlines the essential advocacy components of the music educator's professional portfolio.



article from Music in Action Issue #1

