



# TOUCHPOINT

The Division of Education Newsletter

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DIVISION of EDUCATION

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## A Note from Dr. Tim

Greetings. In this edition of *Touchpoint*, Michael Stone, President of the California Music Educators Association, discusses several of the amazing grass-roots advocacy initiatives taking place in the state of California.



## Californians Unite to Stand Up 4 Music

By Michael D. Stone

California music education leaders and supporters convened at the State Capitol for the Second Annual Stand Up 4 Music (SU4M) California Music Education Advocacy Day on Thursday, May 22, 2014. After months of planning, the day succeeded in bringing the largest turn-out yet to support the cause of providing all California students access to a sequential, standards-based music education. This year's attendees included music educators, arts advocates, school bands, and California legislators.

### About Stand Up 4 Music

Several years ago, music supervisors from the California Music Educators Association (CMEA) came together to discuss common challenges regarding student access to music programs. The group identified the culprits: (1) a narrowing focus on English Language Arts and Math as a result of high-stakes testing that came from the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act; and, (2) lack of adequate funding for school music programs. After much discussion, the idea of coalition building surfaced as a solution to bringing Californians together to provide a united front for music education advocacy. The result is SU4M, a coalition of eleven music education professional associations and citizens all united to advocate for music education (<http://www.standup4music.org/>). Three years ago, 8 or 9 music educators made informal visits to legislators one morning in May to ask legislators for support of music education. Last year, there were 10-15 advocates at the First Annual SU4M Event which included a press conference and a single high school band performing outside of the Capitol Building.

### This Year's Event

This year, close to 40 representatives from the eleven coalition organizations, as well as the general public, visited legislators. Over 25 legislative offices were visited. CMEA leaders met with key staff in the Governor's Office and throughout the Capitol. A crowd of around 150 gathered at the noontime press conference to hear music sensation Kenny G speak on behalf of music education. Multiple bands participating

at the CMEA State Band and Orchestra Festival held the next day performed outside of the Capitol Building and were introduced by their local legislators.

Each January, the Stand Up 4 Music Coalition meets at the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Show in Anaheim to determine legislative and policy priorities for the year. This year's conversations with legislators focused upon Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), California's new school funding law, compliance with existing law providing music education to all California students, and a push to accelerate California's adoption timeline for the new National Music Standards set to be released next month.

A turning-point in California's advocacy work came in November of last year when CMEA, the lead organization in SU4M, hired its new lobbyist, Ms. Lynne Faulks, to work as our advocate in Sacramento. Ms. Faulks brings years of experience to our collective advocacy efforts, having served several years as a California Teachers Association (CTA) Lobbyist Administrator. CMEA's lobbyist is a key element in the Coalition's new advocacy infrastructure in Sacramento.

### Lessons Learned

The SU4M California Music Education Advocacy Day is just the beginning of our work to provide all California students access to music education. I've come to realize that tangible results in our efforts happen in the days and months between spectacular media events such as the Advocacy Day. The SU4M Coalition must now strategize and coalition-build over the next several months so that we can begin looking at specific legislative solutions to the challenges we face. Key legislators who support our cause have been identified over the past two years. Now, CMEA and SU4M leaders must prioritize our work and seek specific legislation that will help bring all California students access to music education.

We are poised to see real results for the students of California. The sky's the limit!

Registration is now open for Conn-Selmer Institute 2015

June 7—10, 2015

Bethel College

Mishawaka, IN

VIP Discount code: 15csi11

[CSI 2015 Registration Page](#)

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