

GEORGIA MUSIC EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION
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Dear Principal:

Each year during the last weekend of January GMEA provides an In Service Conference for its members. Of our 3,000 teacher members we usually have 1,600-1,800 of our members present at this conference. Obviously many of our members feel that the conference has great value for them. Allow us to offer what we believe are some of the main reasons our members attend in such large numbers.

We offer more than 150 continuing education sessions in all areas of music instruction including general music, band, chorus, orchestra, piano, music technology, and music theory. The clinicians for these sessions include our own members who share their expertise with their colleagues for no compensation while attending the conference at their own expense. We also bring in nationally known educators, conductors, and performers in all areas of music to discuss topics of importance to music teachers.

There are more than thirty musical performances during the conference by some of the best school bands, choruses and orchestras in our state as well as performances by our All College Band, Chorus and Orchestra, our High School Sight Reading Chorus and our High School All State Jazz Ensemble. This gives our attendees the opportunity to hear some of the best musical literature available, both old and new, and to observe some of the best practices in conducting and teaching.

Our trade show features 150 exhibitors of school music merchandise, publications, instruments, uniforms, fund raising, and school travel opportunities, as well as college and university schools of music and summer music camps. It would not be possible for the teachers attending to have access to this amount of valuable information in one place anywhere else.

Unlike teachers of many other subjects, music teachers are responsible for generating their own teaching materials and, to some extent, their own curriculum. They are also responsible for purchasing instruments, music, supplies and uniforms for their programs. The sessions and concerts offered and the exhibits available to them here are an invaluable asset in doing this work that goes far beyond what is expected of teachers in other disciplines.

We are able to offer two Professional Learning Units through Georgia State University for members attending the entire conference.

This year the Georgia Department of Education has written new Georgia Performance Standards in music (with GMEA providing some of the funding and many of the writers of these standards). These standards will be in place for the 2011-2012 school year. At this year's conference we will hold sessions on the standards in each of the areas for which standards have been written. These sessions will be delivered by the people who actually wrote those standards. This will give the teachers a good start on understanding the standards and how they are to be implemented.

May we urge you to do everything in your power to make it possible for your music teachers to attend this important event. Georgia is known nationally for having some of the finest music programs anywhere. We believe this conference and the other opportunities we make available to the music teachers and students of Georgia play a major part in sustaining this reputation. We thank you for your continuing support of these music programs, especially in these challenging economic times. If we at GMEA can be of any help to you in supporting and sustaining your music programs, please feel free to call on us.

Kindest regards,
Cecil Wilder, Executive Director
Mary Land, President