
MINUTES

March 7-8, 2026 – Hilton Albany, Albany, NY

NYSSMA[®] EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING

Call to Order and Welcome

President Kathy Perconti welcomed those in attendance to the March NYSSMA[®] Executive Council meeting. Not in attendance: Dr. Keith Koster (NAFME, NYSSMA[®] Collegiate Advisor), Adele Bovard (BEDR/Parliamentarian/Advisory Council), Dr. Steven Schopp (Advisory Council), Dr. Jason Berger (Advisory Council).

Nominations

President Perconti announced the opening of nominations for the following positions:

2nd Vice President: Ashley E. Trudell (Zone 5) nominated Scott Cannan.

3rd Vice President: Ashley E. Trudell (Zone 5) nominated Dr. Jennifer L.R. Greene, and Kevin Heathwood (Zone 12) nominated Shelly Bauer.

Zone 2: Scott Cannan (2nd Vice President) nominated Brian Wilkins (Zone 2).

Zone 4: Kevin Upcraft (Zone 4) nominated himself.

Zone 8: No nomination.

Zone 12: Kevin Heathwood (Zone 12) nominated himself.

Zone 14: Jim Uzzi (Zone 14) nominated Anissa Arnold.

Nominations will be open again at the June 2026 Executive Council meeting and will reopen for a final time at the August 2026 NYSSMA[®] General Business meeting.

Appointments

A motion was brought to council to approve the addition of the following individuals to NYSSMA[®] committees:

Motion: President Perconti, sec-

onded by Timothy Hamblin (Zone 9), “That the NYSSMA[®] Executive Council approve the following committee appointments:

Finance - Greg Verheyen (7), member at large.

Classroom - Rob McClimans (11), Asst. Committee Chair; Patricia Billings-Stephens (12), Secondary Co-Chair, Lara Larsson (2), Early Childhood Assistant Chair.

Emerging Ensembles - Kris Gilbert (3), Sondra Braeutigam (12), Steven Underhill (12).”

Motion carried.

Zone Representative Reports

President Perconti introduced the Zone Representatives and asked them to share positive news from their respective areas. The Zone Representatives spoke about a variety of topics including, but not limited to, all-county events, professional development, awards for both teachers and students, guest artist visits, connections to college programs, and forthcoming festival preparations.

Officer Reports

President: Kathy Perconti

- Strategic Plan Committee – Meetings on March 21 and 22, June 14 and 15.
- Formation of Ad Hoc Committee for Manual Fees 2027-2028.
- Headliner announcement for Winter Conference 2026 – NYSSMA's 90th conference: Voctave.
- Eastern Division Conference update.
- NYSSBA – Deadline is April 10 for performing groups.

President-Elect: Daryle Redmond

Winter Conference Call for Proposals and Showcases (Cvent applications, dates):

- Sent via Constant Contact on February 16. (One edit: Winter Conference Concert Hour Deadline is May 30).
- Roughly half of the recipients opened the email.
- 3% have accessed Cvent.
- Call for proposals is also located on the NYSSMA[®] website and in *School Music News*.
- Reminders about the deadlines will be sent periodically via Constant Contact.
- Please share within your zone; help get the word out.

Planning for conference:

- Location of ensemble sessions.
- Tracking attendance (Rates of attendance, brief survey).

Review of Call for Proposal forms

NYSSSA Update: Input is being sought about a committee to discuss the future of New York State Summer School of the Arts.

2nd Vice President: Scott Cannan

Festival Season: 2026

1. Festivals began on March 6
 - All-State applications
 1. Six-week deadline
 - ZR verify, convert to L6 if not completed.
 2. Accuracy of application (used for all-state program)
 - Name
 - Valid NON-SCHOOL email address for student

3. Variances (as of March 7, 2026)
 - Approved: 12
 - Denied: 4
4. Orientation sites
 - Zone 3, 12, 14
 - Canceled: Nassau piano-only site due to low enrollment (Zone 13)
 - 1 applicant, second certificate
2. Joe Sugar Day
 - o AS Jazz performances
 - 11:30 a.m. – Concourse
 - 5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. – Legislative Reception, Meeting Rooms 2-4
 - o Schedule
 - Student rosters
 - Student schedule
 - Student housing (students staying at the Hilton Garden Inn, Albany Medical Center)
3. Festival Season Calendar: 2027
 - o Zone Representative calendar workbook
 - o Considerations based on festival history, geography, facilities, hotels, school calendars, and number of festivals on a weekend
 - o Preliminary deadline for the festival calendar is June 1, 2026
4. Conference All-State 2026
 - o December 3-6, 2026; Rochester, NY
 - o Hotels and rehearsal locations – anticipated to remain the same as 2025
 - o Conductors
 - Instrumental Jazz: Dr. Molly Redfield – Folsom Lake College
 - Vocal Jazz: Cindy Ellis – Miami Arts Studio
 - Treble Chorus: Mary Biddlecombe – Vanderbilt University, Blair School of Music
 - String Orchestra: Adrian Slywotzky – Berklee College of Music

- Wind Ensemble: Dr. William Talley – Ohio University
- Mixed Chorus: Dr. Jason C. Tramm – Seton Hall University
- Symphony Orchestra: Dr. Régulo Stabilito
- Symphonic Band: Dr. Lindsay Bronnenkant – University of Massachusetts, Amherst

5. Zone Representative spring 2026 information (evening session)

3rd Vice President: Shelly Bauer

Update on Jazz @ Lincoln Center Conference:

- Registration is open (\$425 for members, \$700 for non-members). That difference in price is indicative of NYSSMA® subsidizing the cost for members.
- The registration form was presented in the NYSSMA® digital newsletter and is on the NYSSMA® website.
- More precise/concise session listings are forthcoming.
- Hotel options are forthcoming.
- Registration benchmarks will be looked at on May 1, 2026.

Past President: Edmund Chiarello

County Presidents' meeting / General Business meeting

Monday, March 9, 2026 – 3:00 p.m. – Meeting Room 7

Executive Director: Dr. David Brown

- Budget updates: Dr. Brown provided updates on the shift in budget from calendar year to school year, along with other budgetary information.
- Grants update: Dr. Brown shared that he's written two grants: one for \$10,000 to the Nassau Community Foundation for the history book and the other for \$100,000 to the National Endowment for the Arts for all-state. He is looking for one for Joe Sugar Day, since it is an unfunded program, and he asked council members to inform

him if they see one that is applicable.

- Strategic planning: This committee's upcoming meetings will be held on March 21 and 22 in Canandaigua, and on June 14 and 15, after the June Council meeting in Niagara Falls.
- Payroll/payments: Dr. Brown shared that NYSSMA® is moving to a payroll company to facilitate payments and payroll. NYSSMA® is not prepared to move to direct deposit for adjudicators but will move forward here with payments like reimbursements and monthly payroll. He is investigating the possibility of an opt-in process for adjudicators who might want to start this season, but that will not occur until after we test the system this month.
- RFP: Dr. Brown prepared an RFP to explore alternatives to the tech company we're currently using (LMS). He thanked President-Elect Redmond for sitting in on interviews. After comparing costs and receiving a streamlined billing proposal from LMS with significant cost savings (comparable to or better than other proposals), a decision was made to continue working with LMS.
- Electronic voting: President Perconti asked Dr. Brown to look into electronic voting and put out an RFP. He has pricing and processes for this type of voting and also reached out to NAFME, which has been doing this for many years. Our Constitution Chair shared that our constitutions states:

Elections (page C-4): "Elections of Officers and Executive Council members for the Association shall take place by mail ballot during the Fall of the year." Therefore, we will have to do one more paper ballot and U.S. mail process and put on the ballot the request to move to electronic voting, which will require two-thirds approval from those voting. He will be working

continued on next page

on this constitutional change for the fall vote.

- Joe Sugar Day: Dr. Brown shared logistical updates.
- Fee increase: Dr. Brown shared that, per reflection of financial projections and current costs, the price for winter conference all-state students will be raised to \$950.

Committee Reports
Adjudication Festival Committee
Chair: George Smith

The NYSSMA® Adjudication Festival Committee met on December 4, 2025, at the winter conference. This report contains a summary of relevant agenda items discussed at the December meeting and updates since the meeting.

2026 Adjudicator Orientation Seminars: Enrollment for 2026 Adjudicator Orientation Seminars as of February 24:

- o Talent Unlimited H.S. March 13-14 Total - 35
- o East Syracuse-Minoa H.S. April 17-18 Total - 61
- o Half Hollow Hills West H.S. April 24-25 Total - 41

Grand total – 137 (97 reg, 4 2nd, 30 all-state, 6 major org.)

* Of the 97 regular candidates, 12 are “Fast Track” candidates.

- Deadline for applications: March 1, 2026. Final enrollment and specialty area breakdown will be reported at the June Executive Council meeting.

2026 Adjudicator Availability

	Feb. 2026	Feb. 2025	Feb. 2024
Total adjudicators	1,083	1,262	1,202
• Available	615	618	593
• Emergency only	111	108	135

• Unavailable	197	191	210
• Removed	20	29	67
• No Response	140	314	178

A detailed report of 2026 adjudicator availability prepared by Katie Struzik, Assignor of Adjudicators, will be available in Council members’ folders at the meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding the possible need for NYSSMA® to advocate for professional responsibility release time for adjudicators from their districts.

2026 Zoom Adjudicator Refreshers

- Eight Zoom adjudicator refreshers for all specialty areas were provided in February. Attendance was as follows:
 - o Voice and Piano – 28
 - o Instrumental (Br, Perc, Str, WW) – 125
 - o Instrumental and Vocal Jazz – 5
 - o Major Organization – 33
 Grand Total - 191

- 2026 Topics for Adjudicator Refreshers included:
 - o 30 minutes – Discussion of Adjudicator B.E.D.R. document and its application for evaluation festivals.
 - o 30 minutes – Presentation of the Adjudicator Guide to the Electronic Manual and viewing of video made by Andy Kittle-son (specific to adjudicators).
 - o 30 minutes – all-state – focus on the correct use of the check boxes in the adjudicator recommendation (bottom portion of the evaluation sheet).
 - o Major Organization – Overview of the Reminders for Major Organization Adjudicators. Emphasis placed on making positive comments regardless of the award given.

- o Attendance – taken after 10 minutes. Anyone entering after 10 minutes did not receive “credit.”
- o Require that video be on.

2026 Winter Conference sessions

- The following AFC sessions were held at the winter conference (with attendance indicated):
 - o What’s New for NYSSMA® Adjudicators – 36
 - o How to Chair a Successful NYSSMA® Solo (12) or Major Organization Festival (4) =16
 - o Do You Want to Become a NYSSMA® Adjudicator? – 32
 - o The All-State Process: From Audition to Selection – 25
 - o Preparing for NYSSMA® Major Organization Festival – 29

2026 Coordinator emails

- Coordinator emails were sent to all adjudicators in the Assignor’s database before January 15, 2026.
- 2025 Principles of Solo and Ensemble Adjudication were sent with Coordinator email.
- All adjudicators also received the Adjudicator Guide to the Electronic Manual and Adjudicator B.E.D.R. document.
- Topics for 2026 coordinator email were discussed and formulated at the December AFC meeting. The included topics were based on the 2025 festival season. These topics will also be reviewed at the March meeting with Zone Representatives.

2027 Sight-reading: The proposed 2027 sight-reading timeline was reviewed by the committee. A few minor additions/corrections were made to the document. The revised document has been sent to Sight Reading Factory and we plan to follow the timeline as outlined.

Sight Reading Factory has requested additional sets of the current NYSSMA® sight-reading for piano, percussion, guitar, and harp. Coordinators for strings, piano, and percussion may be contacted by Sight

Reading Factory for further guidance moving forward. The timeline is as follows:

January 2026 - April 2026

- Sight Reading Factory (SRF) will provide AFC coordinators with 10 examples for each instrument/voice at each level. Sight-reading examples will align with the established NYSSMA® sight-reading criteria. Coordinators will choose two examples from the 10 submitted for each instrument/voice at each level. The respective book for each specialty area will include the following instruments/voices:
 - o Brass – trumpet, French horn, trombone, euphonium/baritone (T.C. & B.C.), tuba, bass trombone (A.S. only)
 - o Percussion – snare drum, mallet perc., timpani, multiple perc., accessories (A.S. only)
 - o Piano
 - o String – violin, viola, cello, bass, harp, guitar
 - o Woodwind – flute, oboe, clarinet, low clarinet, saxophone, bassoon, recorder
 - o Voice – soprano, alto, tenor, bass
- In addition to two Level 6 examples for each instrument (except piano), four additional Level 6 examples for all-state books will be provided. The all-state examples follow the Level 6 criteria, but require a more rigorous (difficult) application of the sight-reading criteria.
- The instrumental jazz sight-reading was thoroughly rewritten and revised in 2022. Therefore, we don't need to include instrumental jazz in this project.
- Based on past conversations with SRF in 2020, the following instruments may be new for SRF: recorder, timpani, multiple percussion, and harp.

April 2026 – June 2026

- AFC coordinators will review/play through the 10 examples for each instrument/voice and select two for each level, including all-state. Once two examples are selected for each instrument, the coordinators may make suggestions for minor revisions.

June 2026 – September 2026

- Suggested revisions will be made.
- AFC coordinators will ensure all selected examples align with the NYSSMA® sight-reading criteria.
- A final check and proofing of all selected examples will be made by AFC coordinators.

October 1, 2026

- Final examples selected and sent to printer.

November 1, 2026

- Coordinators make final proof of books received from printer.

January 1, 2027

- 2027 Set “A” ready for distribution.

Contemporary Vocal Ensemble

charge: At the December Executive Council meeting, AFC received the following charge: “AFC is charged to investigate the timelines and process(es) connected to transitioning from Vocal Jazz to Contemporary Vocal Ensemble.”

AFC members received a copy of the November 16 NYSSMA® Contemporary Vocal Ensemble Committee Executive Summary. Upon further discussion and dialogue among the committee members concerning how to fulfill the charge made by Executive Council, the following was decided by the committee:

- AFC will formulate a proposal and timeline for implementation at the March 6-7, 2026 AFC meeting.
- Implementation of the Contemporary Vocal Ensemble and associated changes will be aligned

with Edition 35 of the NYSSMA® Manual (July 2029).

- Initial ideas discussed for the timeline and process included:
 - o Adding Level 5 vocal jazz solos that could be incorporated in the existing Level 6 vocal jazz sheet. Level 5 repertoire would be added to Edition 35 of the Manual.
 - o Creating a Level 4 vocal jazz sheet based on the 28-point scale. Level 4 repertoire would be added to Edition 35 of the Manual.
 - o Sight-reading for all levels of vocal jazz would be the same as regular and all-state voice sight-reading.
 - o Improvisation as a separate category would be eliminated. Since solos are sung through twice, with the second time including an improvisatory interpretation of the tune, improvisation is demonstrated.
 - o A style demonstration, similar to drum set evaluation, would be implemented. This category would replace the 10-point improvisation category. Students would select two contemporary styles for their demonstration. Possible contemporary styles could include: hip-hop, rock, pop, musical theatre, folk, gospel, and R&B.
 - o A video on how to prepare students for a contemporary vocal audition would be prepared for teachers.
 - o Once the proposal is instituted, additional adjudicators will need to be oriented.

Classroom Music: Gina Costanza

- On-boarding:
 - o Meeting with committee members and potential committee members.
 - o Reading and reviewing CMC historical documents.
 - o Understanding the relationship with past sponsors and what

those sponsorships provide to clinicians and participants.

- Current priorities:
 - “Re-engaging and reinvigorating the community” (quote from Walter Harris, CMC Secondary Co-Chair) and tapping into “unrealized potential” (quote from Ashley Moss Fox, CMC Early Childhood Chair)
- Calling in new official and ad-hoc committee members.
- Session proposal outreach.
 - Reviewing CMC mission and goals.
 - Updating website to reflect the current committee’s vision.
 - Collaborating with other NYSSMA® committees.
- NYSSMA® Academy.
 - Supporting NY-GIML for Summer Conference in 2026.
 - Radical dreaming for CMC Summer Conference in 2027.

Urban Chair: Jasmine Britt

- Urban Schools/BEDR Affinity Space:
 - Held an Urban Schools Affinity Space where the specific needs of urban educators were discussed and ideas on current successful practices exchanged at our 2025 Winter Conference.
- Initiatives that our group would like to see from NYSSMA® included access to online materials via the website specific to urban teachers, opportunities for inter-city connections and continued engagement between NYSSMA® and urban school teachers.
- Urban Schools Inquiry Form update
 - Responses from Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Yonkers and New York City.
- Mirrored similar sentiments from the Urban Schools Affinity Space at winter conference but with additional calls on how urban educators can get more involved with general music education advocacy.

- Urban Music Educators Workshop
 - Monday March 30, 6-7 p.m. on Zoom, RSVP by March 28.
 - RSVP Link: tinyurl.com/urbanMEW.
- Urban Schools Inquiry link/QR code
 - I am still collecting responses for those who want to share thoughts/get involved with our work.



Link for the survey, as well:
tinyurl.com/urbaninq

BEDR: Submitted by Adele Bovard, Chair (Jasmine Britt, presenting)

The BEDR committee is working on getting the Institute for Composer Diversity (ICD) website as part of the electronic manual.

Rob Deemer is also working to get access to the manual database so he can analyze selections in the manual like he did for a previous presentation he gave to the NYSSMA® Executive Council. He will do a comparison of the diversity in composer selections in the electronic manual and do a comparison report for Executive Council to measure progress. You can access his earlier presentation here:



We would like to measure progress over time to celebrate the areas that have increased in diversity representation as well as identify any areas that need continued attention.

The template that was used for our Affinity Spaces at winter conference has been shared with NAFME and will be part of its equity resource page.

The committee took a fresh look at its goals to identify systems in need of a BEDR lens. The Monroe 1 BOCES

music library — and the requirement that festival chairs have to task their conductors with choosing a piece of literature from the library — became a topic of discussion. A committee was formed to start to take a look at this.

A report on progress will be given in June.

Emerging Ensembles:

Lindsey Williams

- Review 2025 Showcase. Discuss Modern Band Feedback Form. Thank you for making it happen!
- Suggestions for next year’s showcase, suggested by the group:
 - Bigger rehearsal room, rehearsal sound gear, formal sound check.
 - Rehearsal studio, The Hochstein School, Eastman, Rochester School of The Arts.
 - More publicity for all of the showcases (in SMN, in brochure) and concert hours.
 - Modern Band Showcase crew.
 - Presider at EE sessions.
 - 2026 Modern Band coach.
 - Create documents with chair’s duties.
 - Continued communication with chaperones.

Take 2026 coach nominations: Collegiate level suggested by Kris:

- Bryan Powell - Montclair, Music Will, All-Eastern - seconded by Kevin, Ashley, and Brian.
- Skye Hale - NYC - seconded by Kevin.
- Matt Clauhs - Ithaca College, seconded by Brian Ellison.
- David DeAngelis - Syracuse, Scott Bernstein - LA, Steve Holley - Former executive of popular music education, seconded by Brian Ellison.
- New crew and committee - Sondra Braeutigam and Steve Underhill.
- Presiders - Brian Ellison - Big thanks for this year! Tom Z - back up.

Updates:

- Announcement to go out in *School Music News*.
- Audition requirements - David has made requested updates to the portal.
- Website updates - Add links to past presentations.
- Share this form with committee, modern band teachers and affiliates (APME/Music Will).
- Chair to-do:
 - o Send updates/approval to President.
 - o Share forms.
 - o Reach out to new members, coach, crew, affiliates.
 - o Reach out to other states: Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Vermont.

Social Media & Communications:

Dr. John Gallagher

- News release - 2026 Joseph R. Sugar Day in Albany
- White paper - Music In Our Schools Month
- Published news stories
- 2025 Winter Conference
- Awards
- Area all-state festivals

C-NYSSMA/NAfME: Sophie Wood - Collegiate President

Part 1: Overview

- The Collegiate Executive Board members are working on projects related to the following:
 - o The spring newsletter, circulated to collegiate members in New York.
 - o Collegiate rosters have been updated.
 - o Collegiate chapter officer rosters will continue to be updated with student leadership from chapters per each province.
 - o Membership recruitment strategies, increasing collegiate membership, upcoming conferences and related events, awards opportunities, state leadership and election information.
 - o The 2026 State Collegiate Conference.

Part 2: Activities and updates

- We are pleased that so many collegiate members attended the 2025 Winter Conference! Approximately 400 collegiates attended this past December.
- We are pleased to announce that Hofstra University chapter members will host the 2026 State Collegiate Conference on their campus in Hempstead, NY. Dates for the conference are March 27 and 28, 2026.
- Registration for the Collegiate Conference is \$35 and the link to register can be found under the 'Collegiate' tab at www.nyssma.org. All collegiate students are invited to attend the entire conference, and local high school students are welcome to attend the Saturday portion of the conference.
- Friday, March 27 will consist of registration, a collegiate member dinner/business meeting, and a Hofstra faculty Latin jazz concert.
- Saturday, March 28 registration will begin at 7:30 a.m. followed by educational sessions from 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. There will be three different sessions during each session block, and a keynote from 2:30-3:30 p.m. by Dr. Peter Boonshaft.
 - o Previous state collegiate conference hosts include:
 - 2024 NYSSMA@ Collegiate (a virtual event)
 - 2022 Syracuse University (cancelled due to the global pandemic)
 - 2020 College of Saint Rose
 - 2018 Queens College – CUNY
 - 2016 Houghton University
 - 2014 SUNY Fredonia
 - 2012 Nazareth University
 - 2010 Hofstra University

For more information, please reach out to State Collegiate President Sophie Wood at swood11@pride.hofstra.edu

- Collegiate members are promot-

ing Joe Sugar Day. We hope to have collegiate representation at the event. Thank you to Michael Mastrangelo, Chair of the GRC, for sharing the itinerary for the event!

- The Nazareth University Chapter is hosting a collegiate mini conference on April 12, 2026, in Rochester, NY. Members of the Greater Rochester American Orff Schulwerk Association will be one of the featured presenters at the event. Information about this mini conference will be circulated through social media. The chapter hopes that collegiates from other chapters will attend.
- Several council members will participate in a virtual meeting with the Ithaca College chapter members in April. The presentation will be about navigating leadership considerations and opportunities after graduation. Nelli Cordi, Province Representative, has coordinated the event.
- State Collegiate Executive Board elections for the 2026-2027 academic year will take place in early April 2026.
- In preparation for the 2026 Winter Conference, the newly elected board and the Advisor will meet to clarify scholarship expectations. For example, ushering of concerts and assisting with the NYSSMA@ merchandise booth. We will explore ways to get more collegiate students involved with the scholarship opportunity in order to sustain conference-related obligations.
- To subscribe to collegiate chapter social media accounts, visit the Collegiate Chapter page: www.nyssma.org.

We value and appreciate NYSSMA's commitment to current and future collegiate members. If anyone else would like to pursue a presentation opportunity with NYSSMA-Collegiate, please let us know.

President Perconti presented

Sophie Wood with a plaque in honor of her service to the NYSSMA® Executive Council during the 2025-26 school year.

Curriculum: Susan A. Davis

The Curriculum Committee met virtually on February 21, 2026. Gratitude was expressed for Fred Weingarten's steadfast leadership over many years. Susan A. Davis was welcomed as new chair of the committee.

The committee members debriefed about NYSSMA® Winter Conference 2025:

- More than 250 attendees participated in the seven sessions offered. Attendees expressed enthusiastic support for the session content and materials.
- The two highest-attended sessions were "Navigating Your First Years of Teaching – Roundtable" and "Developing a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum for Music."

Setting Goals for 2026 included recommendations for NYSSMA® Winter Conference 2026; plans for redesigning the Curriculum Committee web page; inquiry into curriculum implications of the NYS Portrait of a Graduate, and consideration of ways to partner with the BEDR, Classroom, and Neurodiversity Committees in order to provide meaningful and inclusive curriculum resources and experiences for NYSSMA® members.

School Music News Editor:

Dan Bilawsky

- Masthead additions/corrections/changes: Please check over the masthead information as it appears in the January/February 2026 *School Music News*, and then let Matt Gagliardi (mgagliardi@nyssma.org) at the NYSSMA® office know if there are any changes that should be made (e.g. names, addresses, phone numbers, email contacts, etc.). Updated masthead information for SMN comes to me electronically each month from the NYSSMA® office.

- Online membership directory: As previously discussed at the December Executive Council meeting, with respect to privacy and practicality concerns, the April 2026 edition of *School Music News* will not contain a printed membership directory. Dan Bilawsky (Editor), Dr. David Brown (Executive Director), and Terry Nigrelli (Web Editor) met prior to this meeting to discuss alternatives and need or lack thereof, and discussion ensued at the meeting. Based on those discussions, moving forward there will be no membership directory created for general membership. But Zone Representatives will have secure access to membership information for professional use.
- April issue - 2026-2027 and beyond: Related to the previous item of discussion, with regard to practicality and financial considerations, discussion ensued about discontinuing the April issue of the magazine in 2026-2027, bringing the magazine count down to six issues and turning the March issue into a March-April issue that will mail slightly later than the current March issue. Matters that have already been considered and addressed:
 - o The minutes from the March meeting are traditionally published in the May-June issue, so eliminating April will have no impact on official business recording.
 - o The Action Research Project Grant information that traditionally first appears in April can appear in March-April with no impact (since it's typically due on July 1).
 - o The Winter Conference Application that typically appears in this issue (for a second time) can now just appear in March-April and, also, in the NYSSMA® Constant Contact email(s).
 - o All other "Official Announce-

ments" that typically appear here can be printed in the March-April issue. The elimination of the April issue will not reduce the number of articles that are published in a calendar cycle. The articles that would appear there can easily be spread across other issues with minimal financial impact.

- o Advertising revenue will not be significantly impacted.
 - o The decision to eliminate this one issue in no way changes the belief in the importance of the magazine for the association and the historical record.
- Online all-state program archive: With consideration of historical preservation and frequent member requests, the Editor is exploring the creation of an online all-state program archive. This would initially involve the posting of PDFs of all-state programs, starting with this past December's program and working backward. The hope, if feasible, is to set up any and all posted programs with OCR so they will be searchable. There are numerous considerations and efforts involved, and this process will take some time. After brief discussion, council indicated a favorable opinion of the idea.

Web Editor: Terry Nigrelli

- The NYSSMA® website is running smoothly.
- We moved some of the links (All-State Application, Major Ensemble Registration, Manual) to the top of the "News and Updates" section on the home page so they are easier to find.
- The most recent festival calendar is always the one that is on the home page. It is updated weekly, usually on Friday.
- Please double-check and update the contact info and the documents on your committee and zone pages.
- If you need help posting or editing

your zone or committee pages, I can give you the instructions to edit them yourself or you can send it to me and I will post it for you.

- If you run into any trouble logging in or editing your pages, please send me an email: webeditor@nyssma.org
- I receive the emails that are sent to info@nyssma.org. I try to respond to as many as I can.
- If I don't know the answer to the question, I send it to the appropriate people so they can reply.
- If you think it would help me answer questions in the future, please include me in the reply.

GRC / ADV: Michael Mastrangelo

Portrait of a Graduate report: Michael Mastrangelo spoke about and presented the report created by NYSSMA's ad hoc committee on Portrait of a Graduate. It's available for viewing on the NYSSMA® website and in the March issue of *School Music News*.

MIOSM/Albany legislative efforts The 53rd Joseph R. Sugar NYSSMA® Day in Albany will occur on Monday, March 9. I am looking forward to a successful legislative visitation day. The talking points are coming together as changes develop in Albany to ensure that the information is relevant when NYSSMA® members visit their legislators.

It is important to remember that the 53rd annual Joseph R. Sugar NYSSMA® Day in Albany is about our political efforts and our annual legislative visitation day. Please remember that this event grew out of the first Music In Our Schools Day that was held at Lincoln Center. The efforts of our predecessors contributed to the Music In Our Schools Month nationwide celebration that continues today.

As music educators, there is still time in March to coordinate local performance activities or promote activities that have already been

scheduled through your school district public relations official and local media to highlight that March is the month when music education becomes the focus of schools across the nation. It is essential for our membership to take the time to educate their local communities (including local legislators) about Music In Our Schools Month (MIOSM) and the values of music education in public schools.

Specific talking points for Joseph R. Sugar NYSSMA® Day in Albany, Monday, March 9 were discussed (e.g. bills in the Assembly, restoration of music representation at NYSED, advocating for full funding and programming of NYSSA).

Advocacy

I have been attending the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) Advocacy Leadership Force (ALF) meetings as the representative for NYSSMA®. Recent highlights include:

- Federal funding update - Federal Title Funds should be level from Fiscal Year 2026 to Fiscal Year 2027.
- January focus topic - Negotiations tactics.
- February focus topic - State highlights related to advocacy days.

I will also be participating in NAfME ALF training for participating in Hill Day on June 24, 2026. NAfME Hill Day occurs annually and it is where members from our state-level professional organizations advocate for music education with members of the House and Senate in Washington, D.C.

I have also been attending the New York State Alliance for Arts Education (NYSAAE) meeting as the representative for NYSSMA®. Highlights include:

- NYSAAE is working to develop advocacy talking points with New York State arts organizations with the understanding that collective-

ly our unified voice can lead to greater success.

Old Business

An inquiry was made about updates on music award nominations.

New Business

None

Next Meeting

June 13-14, 2026 – Doubletree Niagara Falls, 401 Buffalo Ave., Niagara Falls, NY 14303.

Adjournment

The following motion was brought to council:

Motion: Michael Lee, seconded by all in attendance, "that the meeting be adjourned." **Motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:31 a.m., Sunday, March 8, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,
Dan Bilawsky, Official Recorder