

Retired Members – Supporting PMEA, NAFME and the Music Education Profession

Annual Report by Paul K. Fox, PMEA State Retired Member Coordinator

For eleven years (and counting), it has been my pleasure to serve as *your* Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) Retired Member State Coordinator as well as member (2016-2024 State Chair) of the PMEA Council for Teacher Training, Recruitment and Retention. I believe my responsibility to our state association continues to be two-fold:

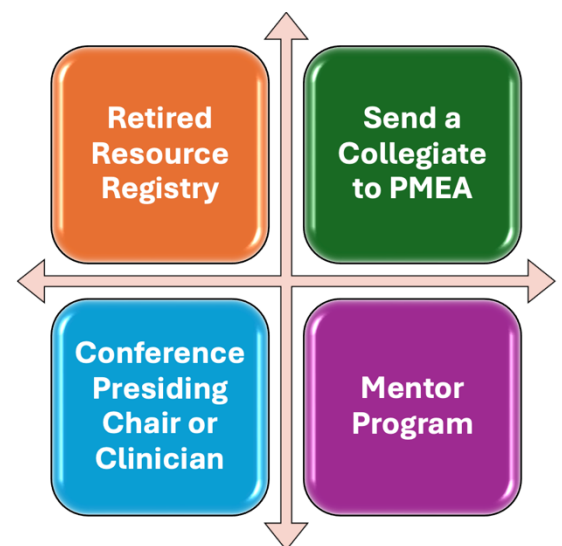
- Assist soon-to- retire professionals in achieving a smooth transition to a happy and satisfying retirement; to help them cope with the commonly-experienced emotional ups-and-downs of this life passage, wrestling with the question “what do you want to be or do when you grow up?” and making new *life lesson plans* and personal goals.
- Reach out to and build meaningful connections with retirees in order to fully engage them towards becoming active in their professional association; to recount, represent, and revitalize the activities of our post full-time employed music educators.

Retired members continue to be a major “cog” in the smooth-running wheel of PMEA and music/education programs throughout the Commonwealth. Most of you are already involved as financial supporters, Retire Resource Registry (informal) consultants or official PMEA mentors, officers/council reps, content advisors, or conference volunteers. With many years of “boots on the ground,” we have at our fingertips numerous ideas to solve issues in education. In 2026, we can re-energize our contributions (the 3-Ms of monetary, manpower, and/or music/ed support) and continue to “make our mark” in helping the profession.



I reached out to **Elizabeth Welsh Lasko**, NAFME Assistant Executive Director for Membership, Organizational Development, and Marketing Communications and “volunteered” OUR assistance. I suggested that, in keeping with the NAFME 2022 Vision Statement – “...an association where all people are heard, seen, and feel they belong throughout their lifelong experiences in music” – we should all intentionally recruit more hands-on involvement of our retirees. She was supportive and suggested I write an article to galvanize our efforts. I did my best to clearly layout the benefits of participation in PMEA and NAFME as well as what our professional organizations need in return. **Please review this NAFME blog at <https://nafme.org/blog/engaging-retiring-retired-educators/>.**

What’s next? At the 2027 NAFME Eastern Division Conference, I propose we hold a meeting of retired members and also connect with all available state MEA retired member coordinators (those states that have them). In September, I was privileged to “Zoom in” a conversation with the newly appointed **CTMEA State Retired Member Coordinator Tom Kessler** in order to collaborate and share future plans and resources! It was hard not to brag a little about what we already offer our retirees on the PMEA website (take a look!): <https://www.pmea.net/retired-members/>



Just a few ways a PMEA Retired Member can help our organization make a difference!

Retirees can always say, “It’s not my sandbox, anymore!” However, most of us have spare time and can lend a hand when needed! I would like to challenge YOU to make a New Year’s Resolution and choose one new thing you can do this year to help PMEA: help fund a PCMEA member to attend the conference, sign-up for the R3 or become trained as a PMEA Mentor, write an article for PMEA News, volunteer for a PMEA committee or serve as a presiding chair, etc. Need more motivation? READ THE ARTICLE REPRINT ON THE NEXT PAGE. We appreciate your dedication to the cause!

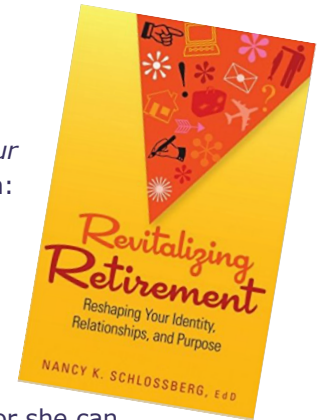
Let’s make plans to meet in April when we return to Kalahari Resort (Poconos) and “break bread together” for another PMEA Retired Member Breakfast on my birthday – Friday, April 24, 2026. Who’s bringing the cake?

Keeping Our Hands in it!

From the Spring/Summer 2025 issue of *PMEA Retired Member Network eNEWS*

Do you feel “needed” and know you “make a difference?” Research has showed that the one of the most important motivators for involvement in a professional association is that its members feel they are essential for its success. This quote is from *Revitalizing Retirement: Reshaping Your Identity, Relationships, and Purpose* by Nancy Schlossberg, attributed to Rosenberg/McCullough:

“It has been suggested that one problem of retirement is that one no longer matters; others no longer depend on us... The reward of retirement, involving a surcease from labor, can be the punishment of not mattering. Existence loses its point and savor when one no longer makes a difference.”



Retired members DO MATTER, and we NEED YOU! Even though anytime a retiree wants to, he or she can say “NO!” or “Not interested,” there may be a few areas to offer some assistance. Here’s a quick brainstorm... and we hope you’ll pick at least one or two! Ask Abi Young or Paul Fox how you can get more involved!

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PMEA VOLUNTEERISM

1. Write an article or share a news announcement for *PMEA News* or this e-newsletter.
2. Participate in the PMEA Advocacy Day & make your voice heard by writing to your state/federal representatives.
3. Submit a proposal for the conference or a regional workshop session (with you as the presenter or on a panel).
4. Serve on the conference planning committee and judge sessions or performers online via the Submittable app.
5. Register for the annual conference and become a presiding chair for the sessions/concerts or a registration aide.
6. Nominate a colleague for the PMEA Citation of Excellence, James R. Stewart, or Hall-of-Fame awards.
7. Donate to the “Send a Collegiate to the Conference” to help music education majors attend our big event.
8. Contribute funds to the Irene Christman Scholarship or Margaret Bauer Grant programs.
9. Become an All-State Program Patron or assist any local/regional/state PMEA festival, MPA, or workshop.
10. Run for office or accept an appointment to your PMEA District/State Boards/Councils (Advocacy, C/I, PD, SPEC).
11. Become an official PMEA Mentor. (Register for the next one-hour training session with Co-Chairs Lisa or Susan.)
12. Volunteer to serve on a mock interview panel for future educators (listing your name on the PMEA website).
13. Assist the State Retired Member Coordinator in updating several databases on the PMEA website:
 - PMEA Member Compositions Library
 - Community Bands and Orchestras
 - Community Choirs
 - Community Theater Groups
14. Continue to help your local school music programs as an accompanist, chaperone, composer, conductor, music coach, etc.
15. Sign-up for the **Retired Resource Registry** to be available to offer advice to PCMEA, transfers, and newcomers to a specialty.



What Retired Members Should Expect from Their Professional Associations! What Can PMEA and NAFME Offer Their Retirees?

Excerpts from <https://paulfox.blog/2025/10/01/engaging-retiring-retired-educators/>

You have devoted your entire life to inspiring the development of personal artistry and “ah-ha” musical moments in others. Now it is your turn to reap the benefits (and privileges) of this commitment to the profession. NAFME and PMEA can provide the resources and motivation of “sharing and caring,” directing retirees “places to go, people to meet, and things to do” for fulfilling that “next chapter” or (perhaps better terms) the “refirement” or “rewirement” of senior living.

Most people who are one to five years away from “pulling their pin” and putting in their walking papers “do not know what they do not know.” Experts agree: “Retirement preparation is not only about the money!” Our silver-haired colleagues who have already Crossed the Rubicon and are now “living the dream” in retirement can share their trials, tribulations, and (more importantly) numerous success stories about coping with this transition!

NAFME, PMEA and the <https://paulfox.blog/for-retirees/> sites have archived an exhaustive number of self-help articles. Check out this omnibus NAFME blog on Retirement Prep: <https://nafme.org/blog/retirement-prep-top-ten-treasures/>.

The benefits of retired MEA membership are numerous. Besides providing helpful transitioning advice, these advantages also come to mind:

1. Answers to questions like “What have you always wanted to sing, compose, play, record, conduct, write, publish or present?” and “Where can I share my hard-won expertise and help others in the field?”
2. Networks and contacts to help you develop “encore careers” in other musical or educational arenas (e.g., higher education, music industry, festival organization, travel/tour planning, composition, guest conducting, private studio teaching, church music, etc.)
3. Opportunities to “rekindle your expressiveness” by participation in adult community or full/part time performance groups (playing “gigs”)
4. Places to go/things to see/hear: NAFME/MEA conferences, workshops, and concerts
5. Exclusive discounts and other benefits (reduced dues and registration fees)

GOALS OF PMEA: **A**ssess the needs and interests of PMEA Retired Members. **C**ollaborate on various new projects and programs. Help soon-to- retire members to **T**ransition the passage to a happy and healthy retirement. **I**nform them of news and happenings from PMEA and its retirees and active members. **V**alidate and archive their contributions to the profession. **A**dvocate for them and their views and goals. **T**rain them towards meaningful self-reinvention and personal growth. **E**ngage them to continue “making a difference” in PMEA and the music education profession.

Assess
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Membership Privileges – These Tools Are “Free” at www.pmea.net

From rookies and newcomers entering the profession... to active “veteran” teachers and those contemplating retirement, music educators have a plethora of resources available to them on the PMEA.net website. We hope you take full advantage of them. What is that saying? “You can lead a horse to water, but...” Be sure you check out these links:

- Past retirement preparation articles in *PMEA News*
<https://www.pmea.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/PMEA-Retiree-Library-s081223.pdf>
- Retirement 101 Annual Conference Presentation
<https://www.pmea.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Retirement-101-PMEA-conference-revised-s041125.pdf>
- Ultimate Retiree Resource Guide
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Rz9tTHD0pXWeUBJJjgogrWit3O2fEw2G_dYTsTWjmCE/edit?usp=sharing
- Prepping for Retirement
<https://www.pmea.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Retire-Prep-Revised-102219.pdf>
- The How-To-Retire Webinar
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LluJ_0ctC4o