

Embracing Agency and Activism: Policy and the Future of Music Education

New Directions Conference Announcement – February 27-29, 2020 at Michigan State University

Call for Papers

The word “policy” can seem dry and technical, conjuring notions of quasi-official and impenetrable prose created by bureaucracy for the sake of bureaucracy. Policy scholarship has also been used to study “problems” in schools without much regard for or mention of the people therein. Especially in the recent era of educational reform, policies are often weapons—used to close “failing” schools, to exclude teachers from the profession, to silence democracy, to privatize and commodify, and to work against aims of social justice and equity.

But policy is more than this. Sociologist Stephen Ball noted that policy is both text and discourse and involves tension between agency and constraint. Viewed this way, policy is in everything related to education. Curriculum—both explicit and hidden—is policy. Mentoring, professional development, annual teacher performance evaluations, and school funding may all be evaluated as policy. Additionally, the making of policy is a negotiated enterprise. Music educators are policy brokers, acting as street-level bureaucrats in interpreting directives. Parents and community members coalesce around policy positions.

It is in this spirit that we hold a conference to discuss what policy means for music education. The 2020 New Directions conference seeks to broaden and humanize policy for students, teachers, and communities. We invite submissions from across the spectrum of inquiry on pressing questions, including but not limited to:

- How does music education fit into the broader landscape of schools and educational policy?
- What policies and policy-makers are impacting music education?
- How can music educators have agency in the policy development and implementation processes?
- How can policy support goals around educational equity, justice, and activism?
- What should the future of music education be and how do policies support or hinder this?

Submissions may include, but are not limited to:

- Paper presentations: Individual paper presentations will be organized into sessions, related by topic area and assigned a discussant. (20 min.)
- Panels: Panels may be pre-constituted and include 3-4 individuals including a moderator, plus a possible discussant. (40 min.)
- Poster: Posters will display on-going research, service, advocacy, or activist projects.
- Workshop: A facilitated activity involving 1 or more presenters. (50 min.)
- Facilitated Discussion: Discussion with a set topic and a moderator. (50 min.)
- Musicking: Musicking experiences/facilitations/performances that address the conference theme through a range of media. Submissions could include audio or video recordings if appropriate.

Participants are encouraged to propose alternative presentation formats to those mentioned above.

Please submit an abstract of no more than 250 words to: newdirectionsmusicconference@gmail.com by October 1, 2019. Panel proposals require an abstract describing both the panel and the individual papers. For discussions, describe how the time will be utilized and the topic facilitated. Workshop presenters should address methodology, pedagogy, and desired learning outcomes in their submission. Musicking proposals must connect their work to the conference theme and briefly describe the optimal setting for their work. Conference notifications will be sent out by mid-November 2019.

Papers will be selected through anonymous peer review by the New Directions Editorial Board. Please observe the following procedures to enable the review process:

1. Attach a short biographical note of 50 words on a separate page.
2. Please include your name, institution, abstract, title of session, list of participants (if applicable), and e-mail address with your submission.
3. DO NOT include your name on the same page as the abstract.
4. Type "New Directions 2020 Abstract" in the subject line of your email.

All are welcome! Information on accessibility and accommodations is available. Please contact Ryan Shaw at rshaw@msu.edu.

For further information, please contact the music education faculty at Michigan State University.

Mitchell Robinson (mrob@msu.edu)

Sandra Snow (slsnow@msu.edu)

Juliet Hess (jhess@msu.edu)

Karen Salvador (huberkar@msu.edu)

Ryan Shaw (rshaw@msu.edu) – Conference Coordinator

We look forward to seeing you in East Lansing, MI in February 2020!

