

Dr. David Gaines – NYSSMA® Executive Director

# NYSSMA® Fees and Information Moving Forward

When discussing the recent history of an association that is 90 years old, there are certain moments in time that can be used as demarcation moments. In the early years of our association, World War II had a significant impact. We were a mere 10 years old when this event impacted the entire world, and NYSSMA® was not exempt from its impact.

Another seminal event, and the one most critical to the history of this current discussion, would be the ice storm at the Concord Hotel during the all-state of 1991. History informs us that this was a time when NYSSMA® was at risk of folding due to some financial obligations. Fortunately, we were able to negotiate positive terms with our partners and successfully weathered the storm.

In the aftermath of this event, NYSSMA®, realizing the potential exposure to unforeseen events, undertook a series of motions and targets to “self-insure” the Association against any such event in the future. To “self-insure” is defined in non-profit governance as maintaining one year’s budget assets in reserve accounts. After 1991, NYSSMA® embarked on this goal with a motion to move to 50% of the budget in reserve accounts. Around 2010 we had eclipsed this goal and Council revisited the motion and voted to move the target to 100%.

Those of us who work in non-profit governance know that NYSSMA® is unique in having achieved this goal. This was due to careful budgeting practices, careful spending practices, and a stock market that performed to our advantage. As the 2010s progressed, NYSSMA® found itself in a position where we continued to see our assets grow and we were able to maintain relatively small, if any, fee increases.

### Unforeseen circumstances

Beginning in 2019, NYSSMA® became aware that an event was about to occur that would have a significant budgetary impact. For the previous number of years, we were able to hold the cost of all-state from expanding. We were housing students in the Riverside Hotel with three students per room. With the closing of the Riverside Hotel, we were exploring a variety of options for student housing. It became clear that we would no

longer be able to house three students per room, and this alone would cause a 50% increase in student housing costs.

Add onto this situation other affiliated considerations, better hotels, better food options for students, additional transportation concerns, additional chaperones, nurses, etc. With this incident alone, we knew we would be facing some considerable fiscal headwinds.

Then in March of 2020 we experienced a global pandemic. Like all other aspects of life, NYSSMA® needed to adjust to a changed world. Added to this was the implementation of NYS Ed Law 2-d and the significant associated annual costs, to remain compliant.

During, and in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic, NYSSMA® made the decision to use our reserves to continue to produce new and innovative programs without passing every cost onto schools and students. Some of these include a new all-state application program and the development of a newly formatted Electronic NYSSMA® Manual. Since each of these are custom technology builds, they each come with significant initial costs. Once the build is complete, NYSSMA® will still be responsible for the cost of hosting and maintaining each new platform.

We have experienced additional costs that are unseen by the public. Due to NYS Ed Law 2-d, we have needed to increase our technology infrastructure, which has almost tripled in cost since 2020; we are required to carry cyber-insurance; we have had to expend more funds on legal counsel; we have needed to become more compliant with copyright law for recordings of all-state, and the cost of clearance of rights for Instrumental Jazz, Vocal Jazz, and Modern Band repertoire exceeds the cost of clearance of rights for large ensemble repertoire.

There is another issue to consider as we look at our current situation. The cumulative inflation rate from 2017 – 2022 was generally calculated at 20%. That means that \$100 worth of goods and/or services in 2017 would cost \$120 in 2022. That calculation continued to grow in 2023 and is expected to continue into 2024 and beyond. The implication for NYSSMA® is clear; we need to consider less subsidy and pay close attention to revenue.

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### Necessary increases

To maintain fiscal health and to continue to address the many concerns that have been discussed, the NYSSMA® Executive Council at the March 2024 meeting adopted necessary fee increases to ensure the future of the programs that our students and teachers utilize. To help schools, districts, and parents prepare, we list these anticipated fees here. NYSSMA® members should feel free to reach out to their Zone Representatives with any questions.

#### NYSSMA® festival student registration fees, effective March, 2025

- Level 1- 4 Regular Solo \$20.
- Level 5 - 6 Regular Solo \$30.
- Level 1- 4 Piano Solo \$26.
- Level 5 - 6 Piano Solo \$36.
- All-State \$36.

#### Major Organization fees effective, March 2025

- Level 1 - 3 \$210.
- Level 4 \$245.
- Level 5 - 6 \$315.

#### School participation fees, effective July 1, 2025

School Size	Fee
1 - 250	\$250
251 - 500	\$500
501 - 1,000	\$750
1,001 - 1,500	\$1,000
1,501 - 2,500	\$1,250
2,501 - 5,000	\$1,500
5,001 - 10,000	\$1,750
10,000 +	\$2,000

#### NYSSMA® Winter Conference All-State Student Fees

Conference Year	Registration Fee	Housing Fee
2024 (\$800 total)	\$225	\$575
2025 (\$900 total)	\$275	\$625



## Tips to Share with Parents

Parents wield extraordinary influence over local principals, school boards, and other decision makers. Encourage them to become involved in the advocacy process and make a significant difference in the quality of their child's music education program.

Schools that have music programs have significantly higher graduation rates than those without music programs (90.2 percent compared to 72.9 percent).

On average, students in music performance scored 57 points higher on the verbal and 41 points higher on the math section of the SAT than did students with no music participation.

Here are some simple, time-effective ways parents can assist their child's school music educators:

#### Access the Status Quo:

- Study the ways that music education develops creativity, enhances cooperative learning, instills disciplined work habits, and statistically correlates with gains in standardized test scores.
- Speak with your local school board about your desire to have a strong music education for your child.

#### Communicate Effectively

- Be in touch with local music teachers on a regular basis. Offer to help out.
- Ask yourself why your children need high quality music education. Be able to articulate the answers to teachers, administrators, and other parents.
- Take part in your school's music booster organization.

Visit [www.nafme.org](http://www.nafme.org) for more Parent Resources.

