

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Membership Referendum Vote in the Spring Semester of 2019

Consideration of Proposed Amendments to the LMEA Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws

When and how will this referendum vote take place?

The referendum vote will be held in conjunction with District Director elections. Voting will open on March 1, 2019, and close at midnight on March 15, 2019. Voting will be done electronically through the LMEA Website (*lmeamusic.org*). A membership login will be required (utilizing your NAFME membership number) when casting a vote.

LMEA members will be notified of the vote through the February 2019 issue of *The Louisiana Musician (Magazine)*, the Spring 2019 issue of *The Louisiana Connections (Newsletter)*, the LMEA website (*lmeamusic.org*), and the LMEA Facebook page. Additional notification will be provided by District Directors.

What is this referendum vote about?

The vote provides the LMEA general membership with the opportunity to approve or disapprove a package of amendments to the LMEA Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws that would (1) allow for LMEA membership dues to be paid directly to LMEA and (2) eliminate the requirement of NAFME membership in order to be a member of LMEA.

Why is the Board of Directors bringing this proposal to the membership?

- For years, Board members have received considerable “grass roots” feedback from LMEA members related to dissatisfaction with the annual increase of NAFME membership fees.
- Many members have expressed concerns indicating that they do not feel the services and functions of NAFME reach the needs and wishes of a sufficient number of LMEA members.
- Likewise, some members point out that LMEA is the main service-provider for music educators in Louisiana yet receives little financial/material support from NAFME.
- As the “grass roots” feedback for change has been substantial, and enduring, the LMEA Board feels compelled to give the membership a formal opportunity to modify the requirement of NAFME membership as an eligibility factor in LMEA membership.
- The Board is aware that not all LMEA members’ opinions align with the proposed amendments. But the Board acknowledges that this matter cannot be finally resolved without a vote from the general membership. Two-thirds of LMEA members who vote must approve the package of amendments in order for the changes to be made.

What was the process followed by the Board of Directors in bringing this package of amendments to the membership?

At two consecutive regularly scheduled meetings of the Board of Directors of LMEA; Inc., the following was passed by a two-thirds vote:

Provide to the general membership the opportunity to vote on the following:

- (1) Any needed amendments in the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws that would allow for the independent collection of LMEA annual dues separate and distinct from NAFME dues.
- (2) Any needed amendments in the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws that would mandate NAFME membership as an eligibility requirement for membership in LMEA.

Why must the general membership vote on the package of amendments?

Any amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws must be approved by the general membership of LMEA by a two-thirds referendum vote.

If the package of amendments is approved, can I be a member of LMEA without being a member of NAFME?

Yes. LMEA would no longer require its members to join NAFME in order to be in LMEA.

If the package of amendments is approved, can I maintain my membership in NAFME?

Yes. LMEA dues would be paid directly to LMEA. NAFME dues would be paid in a manner established by NAFME. NAFME would continue to welcome Louisiana music teachers into NAFME membership, but membership could not be done through LMEA. Rather, it would be done through a new to-be-established Louisiana affiliate organization.

How are my LMEA dues currently paid?

NAFME sends to LMEA an annual payment of \$25 for each person from Louisiana that joins or renews membership in NAFME. NAFME membership fees have increased steadily for many years in order to account for inflation. The amount of money sent to LMEA has remained the same for many years as the LMEA Board of Directors has chosen to keep its portion of the membership costs as low as possible.

How would the payment of LMEA membership dues change, if the package of amendments is approved by the membership?

- Membership dues for LMEA would be paid directly to LMEA.
- The LMEA membership dues for active, retired, and collegiate members would be established by the LMEA Board of Directors on an annual basis.
- NAFME would no longer send any membership funds to LMEA. Overall payment by individuals who wish to join NAFME would be reduced by \$25 (which is the amount that NAFME currently sends to LMEA for each Louisiana member.)

When would LMEA dues be collected?

If the packet of amendments is approved, the Board of Directors would establish the necessary processes for notification of members and collection of dues for the 2019-2020 school year. While an annual “July 1st to June 30th” membership has been discussed, specific guidelines have not yet been established by the Board of Directors. This would be decided at the May 2019 Board meeting. Board members would welcome input from membership prior to the meeting.

What would the LMEA membership annual dues be and how would the money be spent, if the package of amendments is approved by the membership.

- Provided the general membership approves the package of amendments, the membership dues would be subject to discussion and vote by the Board of Directors at their next meeting (May 2019). Board members would welcome membership input prior to the Board meeting.
- The Board of Directors has discussed the possibility of establishing annual dues at \$125, with the understanding that registration fees for the annual State Professional Development Conference (pre-registration at \$65/registration at Conference at \$80) would be eliminated. All current services provided by LMEA would be sustained. There would be ongoing discussion as pertains to finalizing what the annual dues would be, should the amendments be approved by the general membership.
- The Board does recognize that some members cannot or will not attend the annual Conference. So, a \$125 annual dues payment would appear high to those members. Once again, discussion would continue. Board members would welcome input from membership prior to the May 2019 Board meeting.
- Should the package of amendments be approved, the Board would consider the possibility of a \$25 reduction in LMEA dues for the 2019-2020 school year, for those members who renewed their NAFME membership between January 1, 2019, and the initiation of the independent collection of LMEA dues for the 2019-2020 school year.
- The Board recognizes that the consideration of additional budgeting proposals would not be prudent at this time. Even if the package of amendments is approved, the Board cannot automatically predict the total number of LMEA members for the 2019-2020 school year.
- Therefore, the Board would not be able to predict LMEA’s membership-dues income for the 2019-2020 school year with any high level of accuracy. The Board would only be able to validate income from dues after a full year of independently collecting those dues. It follows that the Board would have to approach the initial budgeting process in a very conservative manner.
- Likewise, the fiscal impact from the recent elimination of Regional/State Assessments and the changes in fee structure for the District Assessments is unknown at this time. Once known, the final income for the 2018-2019 school year may influence the setting of dues and budgeting for the 2019-2020 school year.
- If the membership approves the package of amendments, it will take a minimum of one fiscal year to establish a predictable annual income. Board members will accept input from membership as pertains to budgeting items once an annual income has been established.