

The 2022 National Policy Summit:

*A Cross-Sectoral
Look at Music and
Music Education
in Canada*

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The Policy Summit, its subsequent Report and this Brief were brought to fruition through the collaborative efforts of the Co-Chairs:

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Patrick Schmidt, Teachers College, Columbia University;
and Eric Favaro, Past-Chair of the Coalition for Music Education in Canada;
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Conceptualization and Rationale for the Policy Summit

At a time of significant social change, rapid and constant economic disruption, and significant consequences to educational practices and priorities, the Coalition for Music Education (CMEC), with the support of multiple partners, aims to create a new and needed pathway for policy and advocacy action at the local, provincial, and federal levels. In response to great disruption and diminishing resources for cultural and artistic enterprise, there is a need for thoughtful and concerted efforts on behalf of music education across Canada.

With this in mind, the Coalition facilitated a two-stage multiple format national discussion and engaged in a process toward a comprehensive, diverse, and forward-looking agenda. With such a challenge in mind, CMEC invited a myriad of educators, arts administrators, researchers, musicians and music industry leaders to contribute to a national, cross-sectoral discussion and set an agenda for policy and advocacy action for music education in Canada. The symposium and policy summit were a first of its kind, unique opportunity for discussion, sharing of information, and collaboration among a cross-section of music fields acting in multiple areas of Canadian society.

The Context Leading to the Symposium and Policy Summit

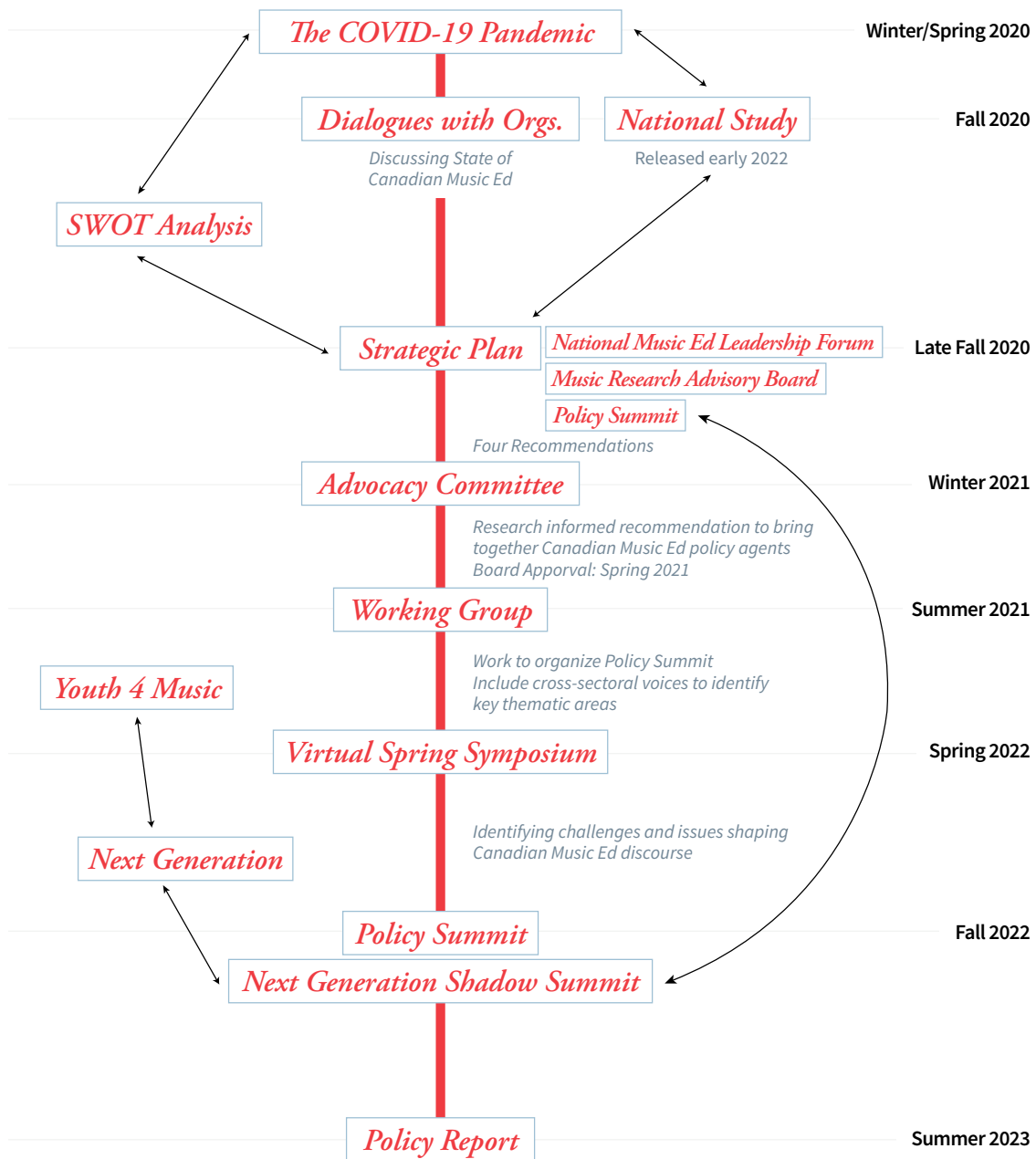
The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 had an enormous impact on music making practices globally, and Canada was no exception. With traditional music making in schools largely sidelined and programs and events canceled due to health and safety protocols, the Coalition for Music Education began to rethink their mission and vision. Under the leadership of Eric Favaro (CMEC Chair 2013-21), the Coalition took the opportunity to turn their focus inward and conducted a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis of the organization in order to better assess where resources were to be allocated, and to identify those projects that the organization could support. CMEC invited leaders from like-minded organizations to come together and planned a series of discussions regarding the state of music education in Canada with the goal of sharing thoughts and ideas to reshape advocacy efforts from a new perspective. From the coalescence of CMEC's internal analyses of the organization, the findings from the recent national study "Everything is Connected: A Landscape of Music Education in Canada," (2021) and the discussions which took place with leaders from the various music education organizations, the Coalition outlined a Strategic Plan in fall 2021 based upon four pillars: a) National Music Education Leadership Forum; b) Music Research Advisory Board; c) Advocacy Committee; and, d) National Policy Summit. Professor Lynn Tucker (University of Toronto Scarborough and CMEC Board Member) agreed to co-chair the advocacy committee with Eric Favaro.

The initial work for the advocacy committee began in late 2020 and continued into the winter. The committee spent three months examining the history of past advocacy efforts from the Coalition and included a critical literature review of Canadian music education advocacy to better understand past practices, what worked, what didn't, and why, and how these efforts should continue in a fast-changing world. The advocacy committee invited numerous guests to come and share their expertise and insights regarding music education advocacy globally. Patrick Schmidt (Teachers College, Columbia University) was one of these guests.

The product of this first phase of literature review and dialogue was a set of recommendations which the advocacy committee put forth to the board for consideration. One of these recommendations was to bring together a diverse and cross-sectoral group of individuals who were interested in, engaged with, and/or studying policy as related to music education in Canada.

A decision was made to strike a working group to prepare a virtual symposium in spring 2022 toward a full summit fall 2022. This group included: Geneviève Cimon, Angela Elster, Eric Favaro, Bev Foster, Virginia Helmer, Glenn Marais, Andrew Mercer, David Peretz-Larochelle, Mary Piercey-Lewis, Kathy Robinson, Patrick Schmidt, Lynn Tucker, Charlie Wall-Andrews, and Lee Willingham. The original intention of this group was to engage in guided thematic conversations to discuss the significant challenges that music faces and how these might be addressed collaboratively. To do this, CMEC brought together a set of cross-sectoral voices from music, music education, industry, higher education, schools, communities, health and well-being, and arts organizations.

Coalition for Music Education in Canada
Figure 1: Timeline of events



The Events

The National Music Education Virtual Spring Symposium (April and June 2022) was designed to gather voices of practitioners, researchers, and leaders across all fields of practice. The symposium consisted of four seminars which privileged interactions across and within each area, offering a platform for keynotes, round-table discussions, and the sharing of forward-looking initiatives in the field. Aimed at gathering insight and information, the goals of the national symposium were aggregative, facilitating a better understanding of the challenges shaping the national music education ecosystem today in four distinct areas:

1. Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility

Co-Chairs: Kathy Robinson and Michelle Allman-Esdaille

The first area centered on questions of who comprises Canadian children and youth, and what possibilities could exist to engage all in a vibrant and accessible music education that caters to their interests and abilities and that celebrates their ethnicity, race, gender, ability, religion and mother tongue. Of equal importance were discussions on the Eurocentricity of music curricula at all levels. The participants explored possibilities for broadening ideas about music and music making which could include popular and contemporary musics, and various global songs and instrumental/ choral pieces that could be taught alongside western classical music. Also central to the discussions in this area were issues of music transmission (traditional staff notation, oral/aural), identification of music that is appropriate for curricular inclusion, creating opportunities for bringing the lived experiences of students into the classroom, and the importance of equity and access.

2. Health and Wellness

Co-Chairs: Bev Foster and Virginia Helmer

The second area focused on the value of music education to health and wellness. Considering health in all its aspects, and as an overriding organizer of our lives and as the basis of rich human experience, music education has an important role in helping young people lead happy, healthy, productive lives. Central to the sessions were discussions aimed at bringing clarity to challenges shared by teachers, researchers and health professionals, as well as opportunities, models and practices that are emerging across various practices in the area.

3. Music Impact in Community and Society Today

Co-chairs: Glenn Marais and Zoë Cunningham

This seminar focused on technological and social development, growing accessibility within music production, participation, and consumption on a global level. The ability for music to inspire and connect people has expanded, and with that, so has the capacity to affect change and enhance a developed consciousness throughout the world. The impact of music has experienced modest but consequential support by research documenting cognitive, social and personal development. Its commercial value, however, has been reduced significantly, as has the ability and capacity of workers in the industry to make a living creating music—particularly in the face of pandemic contraction and restrictions. Emergent focusing questions included: How can we create a viable economy for musicians and a social structure that values not only the aesthetic but the economical worth of music? Just as significantly, how can we foster an environment of enriched development and opportunity for future generations of Canadian musicians and stakeholders in the music industry, while inspiring young artists to pursue music education with equitable access to all demographics and socio-economic sectors of our population?

4. Reimagining and Innovating Professional Practice

Co-Chairs: Lloyd McArton and Geneviève Cimon

This section of the symposium was dedicated to re-imagining the professional practice of music educators. Three main areas of inquiry framed research, discussions, and presentations: 1) the current and future states of music education; 2) critical areas of need; and, 3) pathways to innovation. Special attention was paid to aspects of cyclical and problematic paradigms pertaining to curriculum, formal education, prevalent approaches to pedagogy, as well as provocative ideas for future practices. The seminar focused on four areas of need: *mindsets, skill sets, networks/resources, and research-informed training*.

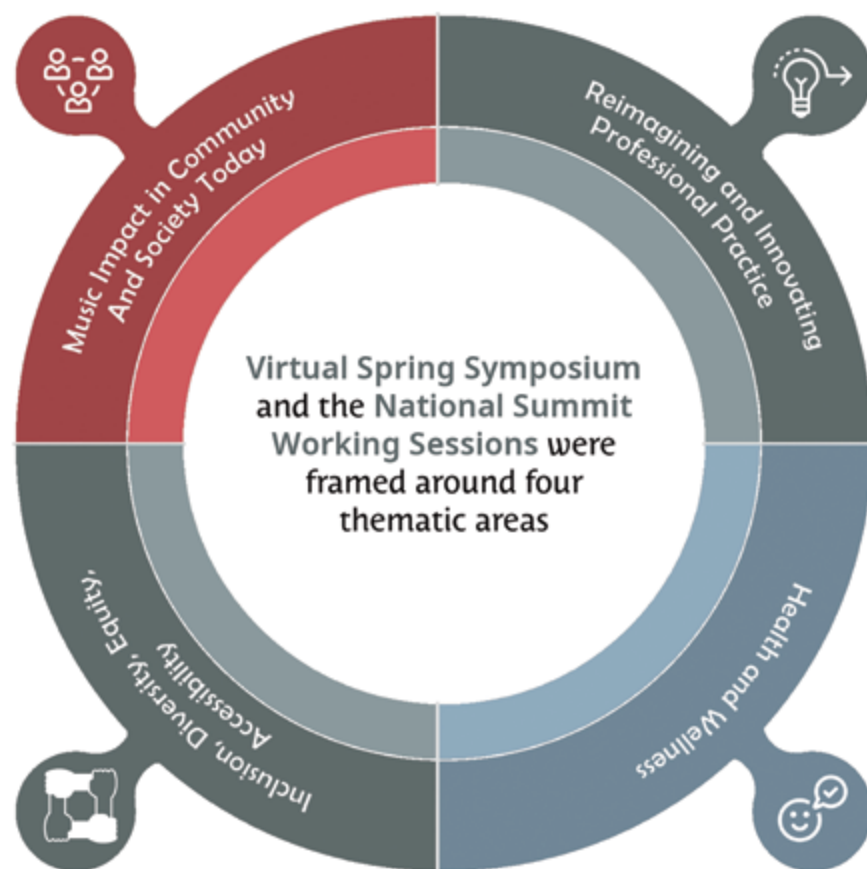


Figure 2. Four Thematic Areas for Spring Symposium and National Summit Working Sessions

These conversations provided insight and facilitated a broad understanding of the challenges shaping the Canadian music education ecosystem today. With the coalescing of these voices and the collection of key issues which emerged from the Spring Symposium, the next step for the Advocacy Committee was to plan and implement the fall 2022 summit, co-chaired by Lynn Tucker, Eric Favaro, and Patrick Schmidt.

The Summit. Following the thematic discussions and data gathered at the Spring Symposium, an in-person National Music Education Policy Summit was organized for fall 2022. The policy summit brought together representatives from a broad range of sectors for a series of small and full working sessions, where the outlines of a strategic plan for action and a multi-pronged national advocacy agenda were discussed.

The 2022 National Policy Summit featured eight working sessions (see Figure 3) with a diverse group of delegates focused on connecting these thematic areas and the emergent issues with a policy directive. Through the generous support of the NAMM Foundation, this summit included the Next Generation Shadow Summit which brought together post-secondary students, community music makers, and early career professionals representing various sectors. The summit took place October 14-16, 2022 and brought together forty representatives from various sectors, as well as ten participants for the Next Generation Shadow Summit co-chaired by Delicia Raveenthirarajan and Sarah Veber. Altogether, the Spring Virtual Symposium and Fall Summit included hundreds of participants from a wide range of sectors to offer their expertise and perspectives, working towards a detailed action plan focused on the implementation of recommended actions.



Figure 3. Policy Summit Session Outline

The Next Generation Shadow Summit showcased the powerful voices of the next generation of Canadian music educators, performers, practitioners, and advocates, providing an important perspective for the direction of the National Policy Summit. Their discussions were adjacent to and embedded in the overall summit and had a significant impact on the direction of conversations surrounding policy development and advocacy for all ensuing discussions. From their interactions within the summit as well as conversations within their own working

sessions, the Next Generation delegates highlighted a short list of main goals for what they wished for music education to look like in the year 2030:

- A music education that is culturally responsive
- A music education that is reflexive
- A music education that centers on health and well-being
- A music education that cultivates a sense of self-identity

Following the two working sessions, the Next Generation Shadow Summit delegates came together to share their thinking and ideas with the national policy summit delegates. They presented a visual representation of their discussion, which is included below:

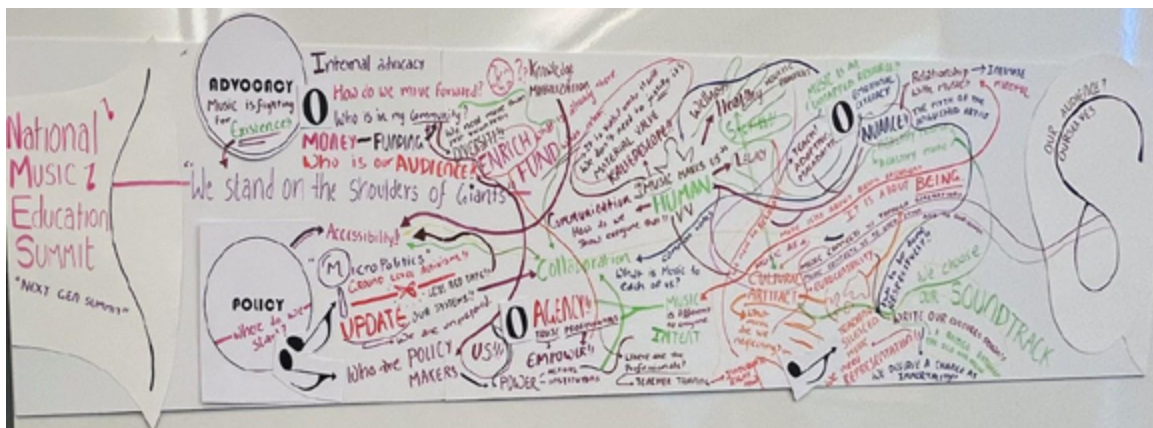


Figure 4. Visual Representation of the Conversations and Questions of the Next Gen Summit Group

Characterization of Processes and Themes

The Spring Symposium revealed a host of themes which saw tremendous overlap in the various areas of discussion. Results from the LUCID boards were consolidated, and six connected themes emerged from the four seminars which highlighted critical challenges and opportunities among all thematic areas. These are:

- Shifting mindsets in curriculum
- Shifting mindsets in pedagogic practice
- Community engagement and meeting local / community needs
- Breaking down barriers: cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary, internal
- Research and communication
- Advocacy

More information about the particular themes can be found in the full report.

The first seminar working group positioned opportunities to meet inclusion, diversity, equity, accessibility aims by:

- a. Developing dispositions in music educators to creatively meet and address 'IDEA' practices
- b. Broadening knowledges of diverse musics and musical practices
- c. Exploring potentials of technology to meet inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility needs creatively
- d. Breaking down barriers to access within tertiary music education programmes

The second seminar group highlighted the importance of:

- a. Valuing long-term connections;
- b. Shifting assessment practices;
- c. Recognizing shared values across music teacher training programs; and
- d. Broadening who is included in these conversations.

The third seminar group looked ahead to the year 2030 for the purposes of reimagining and innovating professional practice, highlighting:

- a. Barriers and opportunities for entry within higher education;
- b. The role of technology for providing access to music education;
- c. The dispositions and capacities needed to foster and lead vibrant, accessible, inclusive music education; and
- d. The role of professional development and leadership formation.

The fourth seminar group explored music impact in community and society today, considering:

- a. The complex nature of aims and practices working alongside and within community;
- b. The importance of forming, sustaining, showcasing and upscaling community music programs across Canada; and
- c. The role and importance of community music/music in community in facilitating mental health development.

Connections: Spring Symposium and Fall Summit

This section highlights the connections, key findings and points of consideration within the thematic areas of the Spring Symposium and the Fall Policy Summit discussions.

#1: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access:

- Participants stressed the importance of rethinking inclusion and performance-centric music education practices.
- We must also break down barriers to access for higher education in music.
- There is the potential of including Indigenous musics and ways of knowing and being to facilitate a less performance-oriented approach to music education and the negative health outcomes that accompany it, such as performance anxiety.

#2: Re-Imagining and Innovating Professional Practice:

- Encourage long-term, on-going partnerships within and across sectors, such as academia, industry, and community organizations. Short term partnerships may not lead to the sustainability needed. Effective, long-term partnerships require time, space and professional development.
- Communication within and among cross-sectoral groups must be improved in order to break down barriers and silos.
- Pre-service music educators must be supported by policies and improved infrastructure that can ensure the development of multiple musical competencies.
- Music educators require support in the selection of curriculum and pedagogical materials which are most relevant for their classrooms.
- Language and terminology (words and concepts) must be clarified for effective policy direction.
- The participants stressed the importance of including a broader range of voices in the conversation for realizing creative, long-term partnerships.

#3: Music Impact in Community and Society Today:

- We need to rethink Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy models which often underserve the learners in our communities.
- This requires us to break down barriers and build collaboration between community music education and traditional music education in schools.
- This also requires us to develop dispositions and capacities to seek out and share the rich cultural and musical resources within our local communities.
- We must realize the importance of active listening and collaboration between educators and the community to create meaningful impact.

#4: Health and Wellness:

- The participants stressed the importance of understanding what “wholeness” looks like and how music and music education might support it.
- We need to build interdisciplinary connections. (eg, music therapy).
- We must learn how to communicate evidence-based practice, not only to funders and the public, but also to our students / participants.
- We must understand the environment leading to “health” challenges in music.
- In order to achieve sustainability within classrooms, it is necessary to rethink how modes of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment might contribute to “holistic” music education.

Major Challenges from all Datasets

The rich dialogue from both the Spring Symposium and the Fall Policy Summit reveals four major challenges requiring future policy and advocacy action. While not an exhaustive list, these four intersecting challenges emerged among all four thematic areas as key points of interest for policy directives to come.

1. Improving Communication

Conversations pointed to the existence and perpetuation of silos and barriers within and across different sectoral groups which participants argue are limiting partnership opportunities. Moreover, language and terminology are inconsistent and not aligned, making past policy and advocacy efforts difficult.

2. Building Long-Term Sustainable Partnerships

The importance of long-term, sustainable partnerships was continually raised throughout delegate discussions. Participants noted that the significant and ongoing investment from groups, which is necessary for success with these partnerships, was not always understood or valued.

3. Investing in and Engaging with Community

A central theme which emerged from the data is the importance of community partners to meaningfully meet local needs. However, participants suggested that there is little information available about successful community partnership structures and forms within music education, as well as insufficient resources available for developing the know-how and capacity to identify and meet these needs.

4. Broadening the Voices in the Conversation

A continual tenet of all four thematic areas was the importance of bringing in and valuing new voices. Participants pointed to the importance for engaging with inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility needs effectively, including vulnerable and marginalized populations. This was made even clearer from the tremendous contributions by the delegates of the Next Generation Shadow Summit.

These four identified areas of challenge play a key role in shaping our following recommendations for action, which we share below.

Recommendations for Action

1. Establishing a context-independent language of description for future policy and advocacy direction.

We recommend the development of a publicly available language of description for future policy and advocacy direction. This involves establishing a singular source for terms, concepts, and language which can be understood among a wide range of stakeholders—including academia and industry—to underpin future policy and advocacy efforts. We recommend that this process be collaboratively undertaken with a cross-sectoral group of participants in order to maximize its reach and scope.



2. Establish recommendations for supporting sustainable and long-term partnerships.

We recommend establishing resources to support sustainable and long-term cross-sectoral partnerships. Data revealed that a lack of understanding and capacity amongst participants resulted in unsustainable partnerships, disconnection between education and local communities, and limited communication which has led to siloing. We suggest that active or passive supports might build necessary capacity and willingness for organizations, academia, government, and industry, assisting in the establishment and maintenance of lasting and meaningful partnerships.

3. Establish a working document for professional development opportunities for Canadian university faculties and departments.

We recommend establishing a working document for Canadian university faculties (including music, music education, education, and beyond) which offers clear, actionable steps for professional development opportunities to build dispositions and capacity for policy and advocacy action. Data revealed that Canadian graduates and pre-service teachers are missing skills and knowledges necessary for engaging and interacting meaningfully within their local communities. Participants revealed that university programs are not sufficiently preparing these students with development opportunities to build these dispositions and capacities, resulting in disconnection between local community and academic contexts.

4. Formalize a Next Generation Advisory Council to provide a platform for the voices of the next generation of music creators, makers, educators, and advocates to be heard and to influence policy development.

We recommend that a Next Generation Advisory Council – a cross-sectoral group of post-secondary students, community music makers, and early career professionals – be formalized and become part of the governance structure of The Coalition for Music Education in Canada. In its goal of ensuring quality music education for all, the Coalition created Youth4Music (2016) as its platform for hearing the voices of emerging music creators, makers, educators, and advocates. The Next Generation Shadow Summit reinforced the urgent need for these voices to be amplified so they can play a critical role in influencing and shaping policy development as music education changes and adapts to the needs of an ever-changing society. The Council will create spaces of practice and scholarship as it acknowledges and respects the unique life experiences of the next generation and welcomes them to be seen and heard, and to participate in meaningful, constructive ways.

