



**Dana Romanello**  
**County Music Hall of Fame & Museum**

As student travel industry professionals, we are fortunate to provide once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to youth organizations worldwide. Though I didn't know it at the time, my years of competitive dance, and being a college athlete provided a glimpse into this amazing future career. Being a Museum Sales Manager for the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, a strong focus is our student performance groups. Our mission statement focuses on education, and I am proud to say we offer exclusive opportunities that are driven for both learning and laughter!

I would like to take a closer look at the decision-making process for our student travelers. What makes a destination appealing to a director, a school board, students, and their parents? As an attraction, it is our responsibility to stay informed and integrate the dynamic levels of educational platforms, while making it fun. Adjudication, clinics at local colleges and universities, and hands-on experiences all come into consideration. We must keep our programs and experiences in line with the needs of everyone involved. To do so, a great place to start is by exploring Common Core Standards in Music Education, and aspects of STEAM (Science and Technology, interpreted through Engineering and the Arts, all based in Mathematical elements) Education.

Constant research is imperative when striving to meet the goals of an attraction's sales department working with student tour operators. A fantastic place for pertinent information is NafME – the National Association for Music Education. Within their website [nafme.org](http://nafme.org), you will find current information and tools, such as links for the updated Common Core Standards and their definitions. From here, you can create effective student programs that will meet, or assist a director in meeting these standards both inside and outside the classroom. Performance opportunities are a huge component of trip planning, and by simply offering a performance option, you are able to meet select standards including MU:Pr6.1.T.IIIb, MU:Pr6.1.E.5b, and MU:Pr6.1.E.IIb. This kind of ammunition will help your clients provide the information they need to seal the deal with a director, school board, or concerned parents.

Another huge topic in education right now is STEM and STEAM curriculum. Even if you or the tour operator is working with a school that does not have the curriculum in place, no one will argue the benefits of relating Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math to experiences on a class trip. STEAM informed discussions and activities foster collaboration and introduce students to future career opportunities. There is more of an emphasis on the learning process rather than test results – a learning process that would benefit from student travel! Your attraction may already have STEM and STEAM-aligned programming in place, and with further investigation, you could create an outline to really emphasize these educational aspects.

It is an honor to do what we do, and represent our institutions to the student travel market with the student's best interest in mind. We have been given a unique opportunity to share a special experience with children, teens, and young adults. It is our duty to keep tour operators as informed as possible so they can provide the most educational, exciting content, and life-changing opportunities.