

WMEA COVID-19 Reopening Statement

The Washington State Music Educators Association affirms that music education is a critical component of a basic education for all students and must continue, uninterrupted, as we face the challenges of reopening school for the 2020-2021 school year. While the COVID-19 pandemic raises some legitimate concerns about the safety of traditional models of music instruction, WMEA maintains that viable instruction in all music disciplines can and should be adapted to conform to the health and safety parameters in effect at any given time and place. **Washington state law identifies the arts as a core content area and an essential part of the basic education goals of all school districts.**

Washington's Pre-K-12 Music Learning Standards, adopted in 2017, identifies four artistic processes that contribute to music literacy and competency: Creating, Performing, Responding, and Connecting. The music teachers of Washington share a common concern about the health and safety of our students and communities. Our national partner organizations are in the process of conducting scientific research on disease transmission in music environments, and devising safety protocols for rehearsals and performance that can be implemented in a variety of potential scenarios, including face-to-face, remote, and hybrid learning. Even in circumstances where performance-based learning must temporarily be paused, our students are still able to engage in creating, responding and connecting through standards-based activities and assessments. We recognize that music education might look different in the upcoming year, and with the guidance of our local, state, national and world leaders, our music teachers will be prepared to deliver high quality music instruction that conforms to health guidelines.

Music classes are a welcoming and inclusive school community that emphasizes teamwork and positive self-expression. With all of the uncertainty and trauma in our world at this time, it is essential to the social and emotional well-being of our students that this community stays intact. If cuts are made, it will take years for our music programs to recover, and our students will be deprived of an activity that connects them to school and to each other, during a time of isolation and crisis. Now more than ever, schools must offer stability, inspiration, and a framework of support that will enable students to thrive. Music education fosters character development and learning in creativity, literacy, cooperation, teamwork, and humanity. For many students, music is a lifeline in times of trouble.

WMEA remains committed to ensuring that music education is available to all students in the state of Washington, regardless of geographic, ethnic, or socio-economic demographic. Every student must have the opportunity to learn and participate in the joy and power that music education brings in uplifting the human spirit and fostering the well-being of society. Because of the diversities in geography, culture, and population density throughout our state, WMEA recognizes that each district, region, or county may have different approaches when schools reopen in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. WMEA encourages all music teachers to adapt their teaching practices as necessary to maintain a safe and hygienic climate in their physical classrooms, and to be flexible and open to innovation as they explore the digital landscape of remote learning. WMEA implores state and local leaders to recognize the enormous value of music as an irreplaceable art form, and to ensure that all students in every region of the state are provided the opportunity and the necessary tools to experience the healing and unifying power of music, now and into the future.

[Arts Education is Essential Unifying Statement](#)
[ACDA COVID-19 Response Committee Report](#)
[International Coalition on COVID-19 Aerosol Study Commission](#)
[ASTA Task Force: Returning to School During COVID-19](#)
[WMEA Strategic Plan](#)
[Washington K-12 Learning Standards for Music](#)
[Music Education and Social Emotional Learning](#)