



# NYSSMA®

A State Unit of NAFME, National Association for Music Education

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July 10, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of New York State  
Dr. Betty A. Rosa, Chancellor for the NYS Board of Regents  
Ms. Shannon Tahoe, Interim NYS Commissioner of Education  
Dr. Kimberly Young Wilkins, NYS Deputy Commissioner of Education

Let me start by saying thank you for all of the time and dedication you have put forth in regard to New York State Public Education. I had the privilege of sitting on all four regional task force meetings and experienced your strong and supportive leadership. The collaboration and confluence of the experts that you have drawn together continue to strengthen the educational process on behalf of the students of New York State.

As President of the New York State School Music Association, I have commissioned three ad hoc committees to gather information from our music educators and administrators from across New York State concerning the possibilities and needs for a potential reopening. We as an organization stand ready to assist the school districts of New York State in supporting the ideal of all students receiving equitable access to a music education. We are aware of your support and understanding of the value that music brings to a well-rounded education. Furthermore, music education provides essential social and emotional learning that serves the best interest of all New York State students.

Knowing that Reopening Guidance will be forthcoming next week and that finalized district plans are due by July 31, 2020, we want to offer valuable direction and focus for inclusion. The following statement is based upon survey results gleaned from over 4000 music educators from across New York State.

### Music Education Guidance

The music educators of New York State are uniquely qualified to provide learning experiences that ensure the development of the whole child, inclusive of social and emotional literacy. Below are music specific guidelines for schools to include in their reopening plans.

- *Maintain program of studies and course offerings to ensure equitable, quality, sequential, standards-based instruction for all students provided by highly qualified music educators.*
- *Provide sufficient instructional minutes to support the NYS Learning Standards for the Arts and district goals.*
- *Schedule large ensembles into smaller groups throughout the day. Shift curriculum focus to solo and small ensemble work. Shift from a concert format to a recital format. Create virtual performance experiences and assessments.*
- *Maintain small homogeneous groupings of instruments and voices for lesson instruction.*

- *Maintain proper spacing when students are singing or performing with instruments by scheduling ensembles in auditoriums, outdoors, cafeterias, gyms, or other large spaces. Focus on maximizing distancing for instruments that require blowing or for singing, compared with string and percussion instruments.*
- *Continue full access to beginning instrumental music, regardless of the mode of instruction (live, virtual, hybrid).*
- *Assure sufficient class time for materials and tools to be distributed by the teacher and to allow for proper cleaning of materials.*
- *For handling musical instruments, consult the National Association for Music Education's COVID-19 Instrument Cleaning Guidelines.*
- *Access to music-specific technology to support remote instruction.*

Evolving guidance from the New York State School Music Association for music instruction may be found under the COVID-19 Resources links at [www.nyssma.org](http://www.nyssma.org)

Thank you so much for your attention to this matter. It is our hope that music education continues to thrive in all New York State schools. Please feel free to reach out to me with any question or concerns.

Sincerely,

*David M. Brown, Ed. D.*

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