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# Fall 2020 Guidance for Music Education

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This guidance was prepared by the National Federation of State High School Associations  
and the National Association for Music Education.

## Introduction

The mission of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) is to advance music education by promoting the understanding and making of music by all. The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) provides leadership for the administration of high-school based activities, emphasizing health and safety to develop leaders and increase opportunities for all. In the time of COVID-19, we collectively believe that music programs are more vital than ever, given their ability to support the social and emotional wellbeing of students and their ability to foster community.

This document provides practical guidance for PreK-12 schools as administrators and music educators seek to provide meaningful music instruction for students of all ages and grade levels during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this unique time, music educators are modifying their practices not only in teaching, but in classroom orientation, cleaning, spacing and management. It is understood that, as trained professionals, music educators want to offer the very best instruction so all students can learn and grow in their knowledge, understanding, and love of music. This guide asserts that music educators can still do that, but also acknowledges that *how* we deliver teaching may be different than in the past.

By maintaining access to safe and meaningful music-learning, music educators will continue to support the artistic, academic, social and emotional development of students, schools, and communities across the United States.

To that end, the two most important things to bear in mind about *Fall 2020 Guidance for Music Education*:

1. *The guide does not purport to replace or contradict the guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) or your state or local public health departments regarding the timing or protocols for how schools should operate in our new normal of education.*
2. *There is no expectation that all schools in all states and districts will or should follow every recommendation included here. Every state is handling the pandemic differently and those differences may even vary district to district. Perhaps your school will return to classes and you will be able to restart your music program in a very similar way as in the past. Conversely, you may initially be conducting your classes entirely through a virtual platform. Either way, this guide seeks to support you.*

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## KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR ADMINISTRATORS

1. CBDNA, NFHS, NAFME, the NAMM Foundation and over 125 performing arts organizations are supporting a [scientific study](#) to learn how COVID-19 may spread in the course of music activities. The study is examining possible mitigation techniques to prevent or lessen aerosol distribution during singing and playing of wind instruments. The results of this research will inform our understanding and, subsequently, the development of effective mitigation strategies for music education. We encourage you to check [here](#) for updated information.
2. The following safety guidance is suggested as a result of preliminary results from the aerosol study:
  - A. Well-fitting masks should be worn by all students and staff in the music classroom.
    - a. Wind instrumental players should use bell covers lined with MERV 13 material.
    - b. Wind instrumental players should wear masks with slits for their mouths during rehearsal. Outside of rehearsal, regular masks which fully cover nose and mouth should be worn.
    - c. Singers should wear masks at all times.
  - B. A 6x6 foot distance between students should be used in all music classrooms with 9x6 foot distance for trombone players.
  - C. Rehearsals should be limited to 30 minutes of sound production (playing or singing) both indoors and outdoors
  - D. At least 3 Air Change rates per Hour (ACH) should be set as the minimum; more is better
    - a. Use of HEPA Filters is recommended to increase ACH
  - E. Good hygiene norms should be followed, and school approved disinfection strategies should be used.
3. Music Education encompasses more than just musical performance, as outlined in the [2014 Music Standards](#), on which most state music standards are based. Based on available time, scheduling and space constraints, face to face music education may focus more heavily on the other musical processes – responding, creating, and connecting - with. Students continuing to work on musical performance skills at home.
4. There are many scheduling models being developed across the nation (e.g., block scheduling, flipped classrooms, small group pull-outs, and staggered scheduling). **Music education can and should occur in all scheduling models.** Examples are provided for various models later in this document.
5. If a school district allows students at high-risk to opt out of in-person attendance, and virtual learning is provided for those students, music should be part of the well-rounded education provided to those students.

6. High-quality, content-valid music assessments can be conducted virtually, allowing music educators and administrators to determine the progress of students in meeting state music standards, regardless of how instruction is delivered this school year.

7. If school performances are permitted, they may be streamed online without live audiences. However, the school must have a proper public performance license<sup>i</sup>.

## **MUSIC EDUCATOR INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE**

### **Return to Music Education Activities**

The NFHS and NAFME believe it is essential to the physical, social, emotional, and mental well-being of K-12 students across the nation that students return to regular, face-to-face music activities as soon as it is deemed safe to do so. The NFHS and NAFME also recognize the likelihood that all students will not be able to return to – or sustain – music activities at the same time in all schools, regions, and states. There will likely be variations in which activities can be held in the various parts of the country. While we would typically have reservations regarding such inequities, the NFHS and NAFME endorse the return to school-based music activities in all situations where a return can be done safely.

### **Rationale**

The COVID-19 pandemic created challenges and opportunities that were unforeseen when the 2019-2020 school year began. We have witnessed an unprecedented transformation of the education system as we knew it in March of 2020. As schools develop plans for the new school year, the health, safety, and security of our students, faculty, and staff is the predominant consideration. As a result, we are now faced with a potential need to continue a distance learning environment in some capacity for the foreseeable future. The guidance below considers possible scenarios and potential solutions. There will be more guidance as science continues to provide more information.

### **[COVID-19 Aerosol Study](#)**

CBDNA, NFHS, NAFME, the NAMM Foundation and over 125 performing arts organizations are supporting a scientific study to learn how COVID-19 may spread via aerosol distribution in music and develop mitigation techniques to prevent or lessen aerosol distribution during singing and playing of wind instruments. The results of this research will inform our understanding and, subsequently, how to safely resume face-to-face music performance activities. We encourage you to check [here](#) for updated information.

### **Additional Resources to support Music educators**

This document was made possible by the ongoing collaboration that exists between the NFHS and NAFME. Leaders and volunteers from each organization contributed to its contents at a time when much is still unclear. We encourage anyone who wants to explore further the topics discussed here to visit the NFHS and NAFME websites for more information, including:

- [NFHS Music Directors Resources](#)
- [NAFME COVID-19 Resources](#)

## RETURNING TO FACE-TO-FACE MUSIC INSTRUCTION

### Social Distancing and Music Instruction

Social distancing will most likely be a part of the return to school across all grade levels and content areas. This will have an impact on music classes that are often much larger than a typical class. **This may mean each class will be smaller than traditional large ensembles** unless facility space is available to support the social distancing of large groups of students.

If providing in-person, indoor ensemble experiences, teachers may focus on chamber music with smaller groups of students due to social distancing constraints.

Transportation will present challenges for every school district. School staff will need to accommodate social distancing while transporting students to school, field trips, and other events.

Audition, contest, festival, and All-State event organizers will need to be cognizant of all current social distancing safety measures in planning for events. Online auditions and/or events may need to be utilized for the sake of safety.

### General Safety Guidelines for Face-to-Face Music Instruction

The following general safety guidelines are suggested for all music educators. For additional guidance specific to General Music classrooms, click [here](#).

#### Classroom Preparation and Hygiene:

- Instruments should not be shared.
  - However, if shared, a cleaning should occur between each use.
- Percussion students must not share mallets without properly disinfecting them--or students can wear gloves.
- Wind instrumental students should have masks with slits at the mouth to fit mouthpieces for playing their instruments only. At all other times when not playing, the students should wear a well-fitted mask that covers nose and mouth.
- Choral students should have their own well-fitted masks which allow for proper vowel formation while keeping the mouth and nose covered.
- When using recorders, each student must have their own instrument. Recorders must not be kept in a common storage area in the classroom.
  - Bell covers should be used for recorders.
- General music teachers should consider providing each student with a personal music kit that includes common classroom instruments (rhythm sticks, mallets, etc.).
- Training and proper PPE must be provided to those who are responsible for cleaning.

#### Music Classroom/Ensemble Classroom:

- Measure classrooms to determine the best setup for each class to adhere to social distancing requirements. Straight rows in all music classrooms will allow for more space between students than the traditional arch shape.
  - Suggest 6X6 feet for all music students; 9X6 feet for trombone players.
- Consider use of larger facilities as available, and measure and pre-set these spaces as well.
- Create a template of the desired length that will meet CDC, state and local guidelines for social distancing, and mark spaces on your floor where chairs and stands will be placed.
- Create a procedure for students entering and exiting the classroom and accessing materials such as instruments, sheet music, and stands. Proper planning can help reduce person to person contact and follow the recommended social distancing.

#### Equipment and supplies may need to be expanded:

- Students must not share music stands.
- Students must not share sheet music. Additional sheet music may need to be purchased to ensure all students have their own copies.

#### School Performances:

- If school performances are permitted, they may be streamed online without live audiences.
  - The school must have a proper public performance license. In most cases, a performance license held by the school is sufficient to allow for streamed online performances, so long as the video is only streamed live and is unavailable for viewing after the conclusion of the live performance.
- Student performers should adhere to Instrument and vocal hygiene and social distancing protocols, as directed by local and state health departments.

#### Hydration:

- Water bottles must not be shared. Students shall bring their own water bottle.
- Hydration stations (water cows, water trough, water fountains, etc.) should not be utilized.

**Budget Implications.** As the above lists indicate, additional costs may be incurred to safely provide music instruction under social distancing guidelines. These additional costs may include:

- Additional sheet music
- Additional music stands
- Additional recorders or other shared instruments for general music
- Additional instruments for personal music kits for general music class students
- Additional woodwind, brass, percussion, or string instruments to eliminate sharing



- Additional class sections may be needed to properly social distance students and allow for shorter music-making rehearsals
- Appropriate air exchange for the music rehearsal and classrooms, at least 3 ACH per hour minimum
- Well-fitted masks for students and teachers
- Masks with slits to fit mouthpieces for wind instrumentalists
- Masks that allow proper vowel formation for singers
- Bell covers for all wind instruments
- Appropriate cleaners per the recommended guidelines from the research, and based on the total number of students

The best time to begin a conversation about the budget with your administration is now. There is a lot of uncertainty in the coming months. Planning ahead and letting school administrators know what the potential needs may be will help ease those conversations later once the reality of the coming school year becomes more focused.

### **What Best Fits In-Person Given These Recommendations?**

While certain types of online music instruction are possible and effective, face-to-face music learning is optimal and preferred, provided the above-described practices are implemented. Large and small ensembles are most effective because individuals perform and collaborate as a group to produce a quality musical product. Beginner instrumental instruction is best in-person for optimal success and to promote long term commitment from the student. Virtual instruction can be very successful.

### **What Might Be Missing?**

Large in-person music classes such as band, choir, and orchestra produce creative, nurturing, and collaborative environments where students can thrive intellectually, emotionally, and socially. Due to social distancing and group size limits, large groups divided into smaller ensembles could provide the opportunity to implement new instructional strategies to achieve the same outcomes.

### **Beginning Instrumental Demonstration and Fittings**

As school buildings closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many instrumental music programs were unable to carry out their instrument demonstrations and sign-ups for students interested in starting a new instrument. Here are suggested ways in which in-person demonstration and fitting can occur, if these fall within the suggested health and safety guidelines of your state and local health departments:

- Provide detailed information to parents about any potential restrictions regarding entry and participation during instrument demonstrations.
- Host an online pre-screening for students to confirm interest prior to in-person instrument trials.
- Post signage prominently indicating no one should attend or participate if they currently have symptoms or have been in contact with anyone with a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis in the last 14 days.
- Be prepared to work appropriately with students who have pre-existing health conditions and work with school nurses or other health officials to take additional precautions as needed.

- Suggest masks for all participating in the instrument demonstration.
  - If possible, provide slitted masks for the students trying out instruments.
- When possible, conduct instrument demonstration and fitting outdoors.
- If outdoors is not possible, schedule instrument fittings using 30-60 min sessions with up to 12 students per 60-minute session (one every 5 minutes) per classroom.
  - If possible open windows and use fans to circulate the air.
    - If a larger space such as a gymnasium is used - multiple stations may be set up as long as each station is separated from the other stations by a distance ranging from 20-30 feet. A minimum of one air change with a preference for 3 air changes buffer between sessions is recommended to allow the air to refresh before beginning the next session. Older buildings may require a longer buffer between sessions to allow the air to refresh.
- If parents and guardians are allowed into the school building and/or the outdoor demonstration area, designate a taped off area 10 feet away from any fitting station for parents to sit and observe the instrument demonstration and fitting. Once the session is concluded the student should walk to the parents' seating area and both the parents and child should vacate the area together.
- No more than 2 seats should be available per student for parents, guardians, and siblings, and these seats must also be properly distanced. In some cases, the students' family may have to wait outside the school building. This expectation should be communicated in advance.
- Clean and sanitize instruments/mouthpieces properly between each student.
- Consider the use of wind instrument trial kits rather than actual instruments when conducting instrument demonstrations and fitting for potential band members. After each instrument fitting, the student should then place the mouthpiece in a tub of hot soapy water. A volunteer should take the mouthpiece out of the water, dry and then spray with a 70% isopropyl alcohol disinfectant and allow to air dry.
- Ensure social distancing is maintained between students as much as possible. This means that students must be separated by at least 6 feet in any small group setting. Teachers should wear a mask if they need to approach the student within that 6-foot setting to facilitate the demonstration.
- Provide hand sanitizer on site. Students and teachers should use hand sanitizer before and after each instrument fitting and/or demonstration. Encourage students to provide their own hand sanitizer to help get into the practice of bringing sanitizer to class.
- Pre-fit all instruments with bell covers lined with MERV 13 filter material prior to beginning instrument demonstrations.

## SCHEDULING CONSIDERATIONS FOR FACE-TO-FACE OR MIXED MODEL MUSIC INSTRUCTION

Music educators' teaching schedules may need modifications due to the impacts of COVID - 19. If this is the case, music teachers should share ideas now that administrators can use to adapt schedules to maintain student safety and support music teaching and learning. Music educators should initiate conversations to: 1) Provide multiple solutions for administrators to consider and be sure to include zero-budget options; 2) Look for ways to maintain in-person learning opportunities for students that include virtual and in-person class structures; and 3) **Prioritize in-person experiences for students who are in the critical stages of building fundamental skills (Grades 4-8)**. Additional considerations are provided below.

- If schools stagger student access to buildings, music educators will need to be prepared to teach both in-person and via distance learning.
- Music educators may need to be prepared, especially in elementary school settings, to teach “music on a cart”, bringing music education into classrooms to limit student movement throughout the building. Administrators will need to provide music teachers with proper equipment (working cart, instruments, access to technology, portable sound system, and small classroom instruments) and sufficient time to travel between classrooms. Cleaning of materials (rhythm sticks, mallets, etc.) may need to be factored into travel time.
- If music classrooms and rehearsal rooms remain open in the fall, music educators will need to work with their administration and other leadership to devise cleaning protocols and cleaning schedules between each set of music students using the room.

Following are suggestions to help mitigate the challenges presented by different types of music teaching schedules:

- If travel between school campuses within one school day is not permitted:
  - Create a schedule that rotates staff between campuses not on the same day (ex MWF campus 1, TTh campus 2)
  - Create options for students to learn virtually
  - Staff may have to supervise the virtual learning when off campus.
  - If a daily rotating schedule is not allowed (ex MWF campus 1, TTh campus 2), create a weekly rotating schedule using the same virtual learning and supervision options.
- If two or more teachers team teach large ensemble classes, and all students enrolled are not permitted to meet, the class can be divided into smaller groupings where facilities allow. Some content can be delivered to both groups through virtual means.
- There may be situations that create a need to move to a fully virtual model. Teachers who teach multiple grade levels and/or contents may find it helpful to consolidate virtual instruction to meet the individual needs of all learners. Classes may require two different types of instruction:
  - As an example, a teacher offers a live virtual like-instrument or like-vocal ranges sectional for all students in the program in grades 5-12 focusing on one common

objective that can be differentiated. Students turn sound off for independent practice while the teacher gives feedback to smaller groups based on skill level.

- A second example could require an asynchronous instruction where the teacher creates a lesson and students would complete the lesson at their pace and time.

### **Number of Students/Session**

Due to group size limits, a rotating timed schedule (or more sections) may need to be developed so all music students receive some face-to-face musical instruction. Some points to consider:

- Large ensembles may need to be reorganized into multiple classes that meet at different times to satisfy social distancing guidelines. Class splits can occur by creating sections led by a head director and assistant directors. If circumstances permit staff from other levels of music education to be available within the school district, these staff members could help split large ensembles into smaller groupings, provided there is adequate rehearsal space.
- Small music groups can meet in many different areas in and outside of the school building if facilities space is limited due to the creation of multiple smaller classes.
- Work proactively with administration in determining the space available vs. the space needed, depending on projected music enrollment. This may lead to discussions of shorter classes and more periods throughout the day or week.
- Instruction may need to occur through “pull outs” where ensemble students leave other scheduled classes for short periods of time, similar to the familiar practice of pulling small student groups out of a rehearsal for sectional work.

If it is determined that face-to-face or virtual beginning instrumental music instruction is not possible or must be delayed, it may be necessary to advocate to administrators to retain existing music educator staff and temporarily re-allocate the time they are scheduled to teach beginning students to “resection” or team teach middle or high school music classes that exceed the limit for social distancing guidelines. Almost all states license music educators to teach PreK-12.

## **VIRTUAL MUSIC INSTRUCTION CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Viability of Online Instruction**

Music educators have demonstrated that online instruction can continue to support music learning when students cannot be present together. There are several questions educators need to ask while preparing for online instruction. Answers will vary by educator, school, and administrative policies:

1. What have I learned from virtual instruction this spring that can be applied to the fall, if needed?
2. How can I help my students progress in the curriculum and meet the standards?
3. How can I assess student learning?
4. How can I meet the needs of all learners?
  - a. How can I provide accommodations for students with Individualized Education Programs?
  - b. How can I provide accommodations for students with 504 plans?
  - c. How can I provide differentiation and specific learning interventions?
5. How do can I reach my students who do not have internet access?
  - a. What are school policies that relate to this?
  - b. What will be the level of in-person contact time?
  - c. What are the alternative methods of instructional delivery if internet access is unavailable?
6. How can I foster student engagement?
7. How can online instruction be used to prepare for a return to ensemble instruction for secondary students?
8. What resources do I need to effectively deliver virtual music instruction?
9. What professional development do I need to deliver various forms of music education effectively?
10. Do I have proper copyright permissions<sup>ii</sup> in place for my instructional materials being used in a virtual learning environment?

### **Opportunities in Virtual Instruction**

With proper planning, many of the objectives that are taught in a face-to-face environment can be taught in a virtual setting. Virtual instruction provides some unique opportunities to provide an individualized approach that will benefit all learners, including video modeling and differentiation opportunities. As with all instruction, teachers should embed appropriate accommodations for students with Individualized Education Programs and 504 plans. The following instructional strategies and ideas may be helpful in developing music fundamentals in a virtual setting through web-based programs and teacher driven instruction.

- Plan time to teach students how to use selected learning platforms.
- Consider providing opportunities for parents to learn how to use selected platform. This could be accomplished through short instructional videos.
- Provide video demonstrations and lessons that provide high quality performance examples for students to emulate.

- Assign short excerpts that allow for easy assessment and immediate detailed feedback.
- Lead small group, interactive lessons on musical excerpts that can be discussed and refined as you would in a sectional rehearsal, through video conference applications approved by administration.
- Host virtual discussions on music related topics, recordings, or performances.
- Use video modeling techniques to help students build skills: Ex. basic video modeling or point of view modeling which can be particularly helpful for students with autism or developmental disabilities.
- Use video prompting to help students engage in guided practice.
- Provide peer tutoring opportunities for struggling learners and students with disabilities, following district procedures and guidelines for student safety.
- Establish digital office hours for students and parents.
- Send personalized feedback of educational advancement.

Music educators must account for various technology limitations such as microphone or audio quality, internet connectivity, etc. Equity issues must also be considered by educators, administrators, and district level personnel. Students could be sharing technology with siblings, parents, and others in their household and may have limited access to a computer for assignment submission, video lessons, etc. Educators must consider each of these issues when planning lessons and assignments for their students.

The ability to participate in collaborative music making creates community and connections with and between students. These types of connections are difficult to replace in a virtual setting. Educators must continue to build community and connection with students through timely feedback that helps students build individual skills and create worthwhile music. Educators are encouraged to seek professional learning opportunities through various organizations in order to teach effectively in an online environment.

### **Limitations in Virtual Instruction**

Live ensemble rehearsals and performances are nearly impossible to produce virtually due to the time lag created between persons connected over the internet. Technology to facilitate remote ensemble playing in a real-time virtual setting does exist but is prohibitively expensive. If face-to-face instruction is not possible due to social distancing guidelines, in-person rehearsals of large ensembles and performances with large audiences may need to be postponed until a time when those restrictions are lifted or modified.

### **Virtual Ensembles**

Virtual ensembles are created through a series of individual performance recordings that are subsequently combined to produce a final product. Focusing solely on this type of content as an instructional goal is not educationally beneficial. Rather, a focus on individual musical improvement through the medium of ensemble music could lead to the creation of a virtual ensemble as a byproduct of the instructional process. In order to achieve this the following will be needed:

- Significant additional time commitment by educators to edit and synchronize multiple performance tracks.
- Proper copyright permissions
- Appropriate technology to edit and produce each selection.

## STANDARDS-BASED INSTRUCTION IN FALL, 2020

### Standards-Based Music Instructional Ideas for Fall, 2020

Music Education encompasses more than just musical performance, as outlined in the 2014 National Music Standards on which most state music standards are based. Standards-based music instruction, focused on the artistic processes of creating, performing responding and connecting to music, can occur regardless of how music is taught this fall. In addition, high quality, content-valid music assessments can be conducted virtually, allowing music educators and their administrators to understand the progress of students in meeting state music standards regardless of how instruction is delivered this school year.

Collaborative planning and conferencing with other music educators is encouraged at the school and district level to ensure that students receive consistent instruction. Music educators are also encouraged to connect with colleagues from other schools, districts, and organizations to share ideas and improve music instruction for this fall, whether modified face-to-face, mixed model, or virtual instruction. Below are just a few examples of standards-based music instruction that can be taught safely and effectively face-to-face, virtually, or in both settings.

	Face-to-Face Instruction	Virtual Instruction	Face-to-Face and/or Virtual Instruction
<b>Creating</b>		Student Technology Projects using looping software using found sounds and sampling techniques.	<p>Students create short musical patterns within specific constraints. Gradually build student skills.</p> <p>Student Composition Project: Students develop their own ensemble and personal “Warm-Ups”.</p> <p>Students learn basic improvisational skills and put their improvisation with a simple animated video.</p> <p>Students compose music for their instrument or vocal part.</p>



	Face-to-Face Instruction	Virtual Instruction	Face-to-Face and/or Virtual Instruction
<b>Performing</b>	<p><b>General Music Classes.</b> Suggest focus on percussive, rhythmic, pitched instruments to limit time singing as needed. Sing only when masked. Play recorders using bell covers.</p> <p><b>Instrumental and Choral Ensembles.</b> Suggest focus on small ensemble and chamber music - with musicians appropriately spaced and masked as noted above and within current safety guidelines. Examples include:</p> <p>Small groups rotating rehearsal on the same music or unique repertoire, depending on age/level</p> <p>Unison or two-equal-part singing may make rotations easier, as balancing voice parts would not need to be considered</p> <p>Consider staggering time intervals of singing with rhythmic exercises involving clapping, to offer a break from singing</p> <p>Jazz combos and jazz ensembles</p> <p>Quartets (i.e.: woodwind, string, etc.)</p>	<p>Teacher provided instructional videos teaching concepts, literature, or any material that can allow for students to practice at home prior to or following a live lesson at school.</p> <p>Technique and skill building from home for wind instrumentalists and choral singers. If students are meeting in person, students will be rehearsing masked. Virtual instruction will allow teachers to work on technique and positioning that may not be visible when students are masked.</p>	<p>Literacy and skill building for all levels, including:</p> <p>Music theory – from note naming, chord building, ear training, and rhythmic dictation.</p> <p>Sight reading either solo or ensembles pieces with guidelines for students to challenge them with key signatures and rhythms.</p> <p>Ear training activities may be introduced in an online format and evaluated in person (or vice versa).</p>

	Face-to-Face Instruction	Virtual Instruction	Face-to-Face and/or Virtual Instruction
<b>Performing (cont'd)</b>	<p>Small Ensembles (string quartets, chamber orchestras, cello choir, chamber choir, brass quintet, woodwind quintet, etc.)</p> <p>Sectionals (i.e.: trombonists, cellists, altos)</p> <p>Flexible instrumentation ensembles - new works or works that students compose and/or arrange.</p> <p>Popular styles achieved through small acoustic groups.</p> <p>Student-led (conductor-less) ensembles</p>		
	<p><b>Face-to-Face and/or Virtual Instruction</b></p> <p><i>All ideas shared below can work either in Face-to-Face or Virtual Instruction</i></p>		
<b>Responding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide students access to recordings of professional ensembles to review and evaluate performances.</li> <li>• Teach techniques that will help students learn music by ear to build aural skills. Students can listen to and learn music that interests them as a special project.</li> <li>• Assign conducting exercises to be done with professional recordings of music appropriate for the grade level.</li> <li>• Demonstrate the process of score study using music in the public domain. Students can then conduct their own score analysis on another piece from the public domain. One resource is the <a href="#">Library of Congress</a></li> <li>• Make connections by researching music of different cultures, historical periods, styles, and genres. Possible resource – <a href="#">Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Resources Units from NAfME</a>.</li> <li>• Students create their musical board game. Area of focus could be anything from theory, to music history, to composers, genres of music, or a mix of anything musical.</li> <li>• Students learn music of interest to support a video, animation, or other music production. Teachers provide techniques that will help students be successful in learning music by ear.</li> </ul>		
<b>Connecting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students reflecting on meaning in their music-making, connecting that meaning to the outside world – whether their community, the country, or the world.</li> </ul>		

## **BEGINNING INSTRUMENTAL INSTRUCTION FOR FALL, 2020**

Maintaining a beginning instrumental program during the Covid-19 pandemic is vital to the future of instrumental music in our nation's schools. It is critical that administrators and teachers partner together to develop plans to continue beginning instrumental music instruction during the 2020-21 school year and beyond. The guidance below is intended to provide an outline of considerations and suggestions if conditions prevent or delay face-to-face instruction in the fall.

### **Beginning Instrumental Instruction Virtually**

In beginning instrumental instruction virtually, the following adaptations may be helpful:

- Start a focused set of instruments during the first year, at the director's discretion.
- Use blended learning strategies that include classroom demonstrations followed by live online sessions in instrument groupings to teach students to properly care for instruments, create beginning sounds, set proper position, etc.
  - Smaller group sessions may be needed during the beginning weeks to establish proper tone production and position. For some learners these may need to continue for longer periods.
- "Point of view" video modeling and individual instruction can be used to provide support.
- Once proper tone and technique have been established, consider having wind students practice with a slitted mask for some of the time at home. While students will not need to be masked at home, practicing how to play with a slitted mask for the mouthpiece will help them acclimate to this practice when face-to-face instruction becomes available.

### **Delaying Beginning Instrumental Instruction until Back to Face-to-Face**

An additional model would delay starting students on individual instruments until face-to-face instruction resumes during the 2020-2021 school year. This option should be discussed with your school administration and should be made for the betterment of the program and not due to budgetary concerns. Face-to-face beginning instruction during the current school year should begin as soon as the situation allows, coinciding with the overall district instructional plan for all subject areas. Possible strategies to keep students engaged in music-making until instrumental instruction begins including:

- Teaching musical fundamentals including note-reading, terminology, etc.
- Incorporating an introduction to each instrument through virtual means (videos, easy initial beginning embouchure exercises, etc.).
- Exploring other modes of music learning including composition, music technology, popular music, etc.

Regardless of the model selected, music educators, in collaboration with their building administrators, can do much to maintain momentum for their instrumental programs – whether beginning students on their instruments virtually or building excitement for when students can start an instrument once back on the school campus. Possible actions include:

- Sustained communication with families of students who are eligible to begin instrumental music instruction during the 2020-21 school year regarding program status and future plans.
- Build excitement for instrumental music opportunities via e-mail and virtual media, even if the start date with instruments is not known.
- Conduct virtual instrument demonstrations.
- Cultivate the message that “We will be together soon” and “We have a place for you in band or orchestra.”

## ADVOCATING FOR MUSIC EDUCATION IN 2020

This document aims to support educators as planning for the various scenarios anticipated, so that solutions are available as decisions are being made. Having plans ready will help keep music programs viable but may not be sufficient to maintain adequate support in every situation. Fall of 2020 will bring with it many challenges. Schools will be asked to do more with less as resources are constrained, leading to concerns regarding potential implications for music programs.

Such concerns are valid and call attention to the perennial need for effective music education advocacy. Music educators should consider how to demonstrate quality in their program, how to remain relevant and visible in the community, and how to stay connected with the most effective advocates for music programs: students and parents. Now is also an opportune time to consider how one articulates the value of music education to education decision-makers. On May 27, NAFME and NFHS joined 52 other national education organizations in signing "[Arts Education is Essential](#)," a statement reaffirming the importance of music and arts education to our nation's schools.

The most powerful benefits of music education are those that are intangible and sometimes difficult to describe. The abilities to confidently perform music, to respond to music in an informed way, to exercise creativity by imagining new music, and connect music to other areas of life are so beneficial that they are sufficient to justify music as a curriculum to be made accessible to all. They also establish a foundation upon which students can pursue personal growth that will serve them throughout their lives.

Recent efforts in research and standards policy lends credence to an argument that music educators have made for years: that music education helps students in their [social and emotional development](#). Even a cursory glance reveals several compelling explanations why this might be the case: music itself and the activities it involves are laden with social and emotional processes; music educators often work with the same students for multiple years, positioning them well to positively impact students' individual growth; all people, especially youth, appreciate some music, and students frequently report that participation in music is their favorite part of school.

Music classes also incorporate community-advancing activities, presenting students with opportunities to develop relationship skills. Students in music work collectively toward shared goals, exercising skills including collaboration, communication, and conflict resolution. Cooperative music-making experiences can also positively impact students' proclivity for empathetic thinking and behavior, leading to them becoming more socially aware. Social awareness and relationship skills, combined with self-awareness and self-management skills, enable students to act and reflect in more informed and critical ways, ultimately supporting them in responsible decision-making.

In addition to music practice and music-making, the lives of students are enhanced and enriched by participation in music education. While it may not be possible to recreate all the conditions that produce all of the extra-musical benefits described here in a virtual platform, music educators must be aware of the need to promote and embed social and emotional learning into instructional practice whether working with students face-to-face, virtually, or both during the next school year.

Additional advocacy support materials for music education, including the [Local Advocacy Action Plan](#), the [Civic Action Field Guide](#), and [Grassroots Advocacy](#) supports, can be found at [www.nafme.org](http://www.nafme.org)

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i and ii Copyright supports for music educators.

NFHS materials: <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/understanding-copyright-and-compliance>

NAfME materials: <https://nafme.org/my-classroom/copyright/>