



Dear Superintendent of School,

With the beginning of the new school year, we thank you for your leadership through what has been and continues to be a most challenging time in education. As with all subjects and activities in your schools, music education has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this uncertainty, Pennsylvania Music Educators Association has been diligently working with its members and other education associations through the past several months to provide and share professional development, resources, new and innovative curriculum to help guide them through the new school year no matter the mode of instruction.

Although it is difficult to replicate the quality and rigor of in-person instruction in any subject, it is critical that we continue to provide music programs to all of our students, whether it is remote or modified in some way. Meaningful music experiences delivered by qualified music educators has and will continue to be an essential part of our students' well-rounded education. Music plays a vital role in the social and emotional well-being of students; something that they will need now more than ever to help navigate the many emotions and feelings that they may be experiencing.

Preliminary research studies commissioned by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), along with 125 organizations, released on August 6, 2020 shows with proper mitigation measures and safety and hygiene precautions, students would be able to engage in the many life-affirming experiences that are central to the arts including music classes and ensembles normally offered within the school day. We encourage school administrators to discuss strategies for safe in-person music making experiences with your music faculty.

(Link to study: <https://www.nfhs.org/articles/second-round-of-performing-arts-aerosol-study-produces-encouraging-preliminary-results/>)

The safety of our members and their students is paramount and, as PMEA sponsored-events involve students from multiple schools and school districts from throughout the Commonwealth, it is essential to PMEA to limit any potential risk of COVID infection. In recognition of this, PMEA has suspended all **in-person** student events for the school year and is planning virtual opportunities which will be offered at a reduced cost to districts as there will be no housing, meals, or transportation needed for the events.

For 2020-2021, PMEA will be holding a virtual annual conference and All-State event in the spring and will be assisting any PMEA Districts throughout the year in hosting their own virtual events. We hope to open these events to as many students as possible and are asking your assistance in allowing your district's students to participate. We are taking into consideration time out of class, and realize that we don't want to overwhelm students with too many zoom sessions. We are looking at limiting session times to get the most for our students without overloading them in a single day. As soon as a final schedule is created we will share it with both you and our members.

PMEA appreciates your continued support of music education for your students' well rounded education. We are here to assist with curricular resources, professional development, and guidance for music-specific safety measures. By working together music will continue to enhance the lives of our students across the Commonwealth. Thank you for your attention to this important aspect of our students' well being.

Sincerely,

Philip Stattel
PMEA President