Addendum 7

Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together

Connecticut State Department of Education

COVID-19 Reopening Considerations for Connecticut K–12 Music Programs

August 14, 2020 (Revised March 1, 2021)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential for Connecticut schools to maintain challenging and rigorous programs of study in the arts across all grade levels. However, for the safety of our staff and students, music instruction in the fall of 2020 should consider transformational practices. A focus on music literacy ensures a continuation of performance preparation whether in smaller groupings or solo work. As detailed in the Connecticut Arts Standards, meaningful music learning equally include the artistic processes of creating, responding, performing, and connecting. See page 6 of this document for further explanation of the anchor standards for each of these processes.

This document provides districts and schools with additional considerations regarding General Music, Choral, and Instrumental instruction based on the preliminary results of the international University of Colorado study, American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), and recommendations of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS) Guidance on Returning to Marching Band, and New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) Guidance for School Ensembles.

The University of Colorado study examines aerosol rates produced by wind instrumentalists, vocalists, and actors, and how quickly those aerosol rates accumulate in a space and examines the risks that exist in performing arts classrooms and performance venues as a result of COVID-19. Further guidance from the University of Colorado is expected to be released in the beginning of August 2020. Based on these preliminary results and recommendations from ACDA, NAfME, NFHS, and NYSSMA, the considerations in this document may reduce but does not eliminate exposure to COVID-19. These considerations are fluid that will evolve based on the public health trend data as well as updated information from the University of Colorado study. Schools and districts should continue to comply with their local departments of public health to safeguard the health and safety of students and staff.

Arts Instruction in a COVID Environment

The impact of arts instruction on the well-rounded education of a child is critical and necessary during this time of a pandemic. As stated in the Connecticut State Board of Education (Board) Position Statement on the Implementation of the Connecticut Arts Standards, arts learning should occur through education focused on the whole child in order to promote artistically-literate citizens well equipped with the creativity, communication, and critical thinking skills needed to live rich, meaningful lives. An artistically literate citizen has the knowledge, skills, and understanding to actively engage in the arts throughout their lives. This citizen has practice in processes unique to each of the five art's disciplines: dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts. In many communities statewide, arts education is intricately woven into the fibers of each school community and families touched by the district programming.

The arts have a profound positive effect on contributing to students' socio-emotional needs (e.g., self-expression, self-regulation, positive interactions/engagement) and joy crucial to their individual growth and development. The arts allow students to develop and realize their own creative potential

while acquiring lifelong skills in creative thinking, social and emotional awareness, collaborative work, effective communication, logical reasoning, and meta-cognition. These skills and experiences have been identified as key characteristics for lifelong learners and have a powerful and positive effect far beyond the arts experience (Connecticut Guide to K-12 Program Development in the Arts).

The arts allow students to express ideas, feelings, and human experiences through a variety of media. Participation in the arts, especially during the formative years, can aid in the development of students as culturally-responsive, compassionate, creative, and contributing members of society. Teachers from all disciplines are committed to the transmission of knowledge and culture from one generation to the next. The Arts are integral to linking students to the past and connecting them to the future. The Arts challenge us to rethink perspectives in the pursuit of creating a better world.

Our present and future normal expect educators to innovate from the inside out and operate using responsive practices while serving our core beliefs. The CSDE COVID Music Guidance has been designed with equity at the center; providing an equitable learning environment for all students returning to school this fall. Furthermore, the guidance allows for reversibility and flexibility. By moving forward with a decision that has reversibility and flexibility, we can take action and provide Arts programming rather than delay.

The CSDE Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening document contains important requirements and guidance for public schools and was used as the foundation for this document, which highlights specific requirements and guidance for students and the Arts in Public Schools beginning on page 37. As always, be safe and vigilant as many factors affect the extent to which aerosols generated in the K–12 performing arts education setting can increase the risk of spread of COVID-19, including the environment in which the activity is being performed (outdoor vs. indoor, ventilation rates in practice rooms, large spaces vs. smaller rooms, person-density), the duration of the activity, appropriate distancing, source controls (wearing of face coverings, instrument coverings, excluding symptomatic individuals), and many other mitigation strategies.

Universal Considerations for General Music, Choral, and Instrumental Instruction

Required: Facial Coverings should be worn at all times.

Considerations:

- Face masks for performing arts teachers at all times.
- Maintain minimum indoor physical distance of 9x6 feet between instruments, including wind instruments with bell covers, each singer and/or player, instructors, and any other people such as conductors, other musicians, audiences, or accompanists. If bell covers and other mitigation strategies are not in use, wind instrumentalists should observe spacing of 12 feet or more.
- Indoor rehearsals should be limited to 30 minutes followed by at least 20 minutes to allow the central HVAC system to provide appropriate dilution air into the space.
- Classes meet in either the music classrooms, theater, or larger area depending on their instrumentation and class size. Schools should consult DPH Guidance to ensure that practice and performance spaces have ventilation systems that are well maintained and operate as designed, in line with Department of Public Health (DPH) guidance.
- Larger groups that preclude appropriate distancing should meet in a larger area (e.g., theater, cafeteria, gym, etc.)
- Use of any outdoor space that meets mandated student distancing requirements
- Indoor wind and choral performance should only occur in spaces where proper ventilation systems are compliant with DPH guidance.
- Involve teachers in discovering and utilizing various digital solutions for music instruction.

- Use digital platforms during in-person instruction to promote a seamless transition to at-home learning if necessary.
- Maintain minimum indoor physical distance of 9x6 feet between instruments, including wind instruments with bell covers, each singer and/or player, instructors, and any other people such as conductors, other musicians, audiences, or accompanists. If bell covers and other mitigation strategies are not in use, wind instrumentalists should observe spacing of 12 feet or more.
- Students should not share classroom materials such as pencils, sheet music, music stands, rosin, etc.
- Doors should be opened at the beginning and end of class to ensure students are not touching door handles.
- One-way traffic patterns should be established for entering and exiting the room, pick-up, and storage of instruments.

Considerations for General/Applied/Classroom



Required: Facial Coverings should be worn at all times

Considerations:

- Indoor rehearsals should be limited to 30 minutes followed by at least 20 minutes to allow the central HVAC system to provide appropriate dilution air into the space.
- Shift K-8 General/Applied/Classroom Music to occur in blocks of extended time periods (e.g., every day for 4-6 weeks). This will limit teacher/student exposure while maintaining appropriate instructional time for students.
  - For example, traditionally a third grade class would have music one day a week for the entire year. This means that one elementary music teacher works with (potentially) hundreds of students a day. In future planning, some districts/schools are changing the schedule to be a block schedule, meaning that a few classes will have music a few times a week, and in some cases every day for 4–6 week cycles). In this block schedule, students will receive music instruction three times a week for eight weeks. In doing so, the block schedule reduces number of students going through the classroom and limits exposure for teachers and students.
- If cohorts are being utilized, teachers may travel to academic classrooms to provide instruction in order to maintain these cohorts.
- It is strongly recommended that recorders not be taught indoors. If recorders are to be taught, ensure that spaces have proper ventilation systems that are compliant with DPH guidance.
- Hand instruments such as rhythm sticks, shakers, world percussion instruments, Orff instruments, and other shared items will not be used unless the teacher has the time and ability to clean and disinfect each barrier using approved cleaners after each use.
- There should be no clustering of students in close singing groups, close proximity games, or physical contact.
- Students should be forward-facing throughout the class.
- Create individual music kits for each student to bring to school and home each day. This limits exposure, allows for easy transition to distance learning, and provides music tools at home (e.g., rhythm sticks, scarf, egg shaker, etc.).

Considerations for K–12 Choral Ensembles

Required: Facial Coverings should be worn at all times.

Considerations:

- Transition to small group experience when facilities and space considerations are limited.
- Focus on solo and small ensemble singing when the ability to maximize physical distancing is limited.
- Use of physical barriers (e.g., face shields, free-standing acoustic shields) between rows and/or between individual singers, if available. (Always ensure compliance with fire codes). Clean and disinfect each barrier using approved products after each use.
- Pivot instructional strategies to reduce the number of singers singing at any given time (e.g., small ensembles sing while others listen and assess).
- Each singer should have individual copies of music; do not share materials.
- Ensemble formation should be forward-facing at all times.
- Extend use of audiation as an instruction strategy.
- Equip singers with resources for self-directed learning (these will also be useful should the need to pivot to remote learning occur).

Considerations for K–12 Instrumental Ensembles

Concert Band, Orchestra, Jazz Ensemble, Indoor Marching Band Rehearsals

Required: Facial Coverings should be worn at all times.

Considerations:

Outdoor Rehearsal Guidelines (Outdoor is Recommended)

- Outdoor rehearsals using individual mitigation techniques (e.g., instrument bell covers, masks, appropriate distancing).
- Outdoor gazebo style tents with open sides and a high ceiling with mitigations.
- Consider use of field speakers to limit yelling and loud talking by directional staff.
- All warm-up activities, discussions achieved with social distancing.
- Facial Coverings should be worn by all performers at all times unless they are physically playing a wind instrument. A mask that can be pulled up and down quickly is recommended. Masks specific for use during wind instrument playing (i.e., a second mask) with a slit cut to allow a mouthpiece to be played may be utilized as well.
- All Colorguard, Pit/Front Ensemble Members and Drum Majors should wear masks at all times.
- All Pit/Front Ensemble members should face forward.
- Drum Majors should refrain from yelling commands. Microphones should be used when possible.
- Shared microphones should be disinfected after use.

Indoor Rehearsal Guidelines

- The number of individuals playing wind instruments and the number of people inside a space while this activity is being performed should be reduced to the extent possible.

- If cohorts are being utilized in grades K–8, administrators should consider scheduling instruments groups into cohorts so lessons groups can be maintained. While it is not advisable for cohorts to mix, it is appropriate for students in the same cohort to travel to a music teacher to receive instrumental instruction.
- No discharge of water valves should occur on the floor. Absorbent pads or dedicated containers to discharge valves should be provided in rehearsal locations. Water valves should be positioned as close to the absorbent pad as possible prior to clearing (lift pad to position in front of valve, if possible).
- Large ensembles can be broken down into smaller ensemble groups if needed, but teachers should be involved in this planning to ensure ensemble or section groups are maintained.
- All students should be assigned instruments (if obtaining instruments from the school) and no sharing should occur.
- All percussionists should be individually assigned sticks/mallets.

Further Considerations for High School Marching Band

High School Marching Bands (groups that perform outdoors at football games and competition, jamborees and festivals) may begin practices and resume activities that comply with preventative guidance as outlined below.

Required: Facial Coverings should be worn at all times.

Considerations:

Field Show Design and Execution — If the band performs a choreographed routine or field show performance at football games, competitions or other events, the following guidelines should be followed:

- All aspects of the performance including on/off field, warmups, seating in football stadium stands should occur outdoors and may be done with nine feet spacing.
- All Colorguard, Pit/Front Ensemble Members, and Drum Majors should wear masks at all times.
- Pit/Front Ensemble members should be forward-facing at all times.
- Drum Majors should refrain from yelling commands. Microphones should be used when possible. Microphones should be disinfected after use.

Performance Event Considerations

Performances may take place in compliance with local/state guidelines for social gatherings. The State of Connecticut Phased Reopening Plan and local health officials will determine if events are permitted. Events should not exceed the limitations of the State Phased Reopening Plan.

Required: Facial Coverings should be worn at all times.

Considerations:

- Utilize alternate performance venues including outdoor spaces, campus activity centers, etc.
- Produce performances of individual ensembles rather than full program concerts.
- Use live streaming in combination with, or in place of, in-person audience.
- If gathering sizes are restricted in the fall, small performance events, events with limited audiences, and events that are live-streamed are all options that should be considered as opposed to the cancellation of programs or activities.
- Large regional events encompassing thousands of people (including performers and spectators), which is the norm during Connecticut marching band seasons will likely not be a reality this fall based on current health and outdoor event guidance.

- Events that *may be permissible* (with approval from local health officials) include but are not limited to:
  - Single ensemble outdoor performances with limited audiences
  - Events with a small number of ensembles with limited or no audience. Feasibility would be based on ensemble sizes, facility layout to comply with social distancing, and current outdoor event guidance.
  - Performances with virtual audiences
  - Larger events that take place virtually
- All guidelines listed in the Field Show Design and Execution section should be followed.
- If CIAC allows football games, bands may be permitted to perform at these games.
- Audience members may be limited in attending events per the guidance of local health officials and current state event guidance.

Additional Resources

- Connecticut State Department of Education's COVID-19 Reopening Plan: Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together
- Connecticut Arts Administrators Guidance Document
- Lai KM, Bottomley C, McNerney R. Propagation of respiratory aerosols by the vuvuzela. PLoS One. 2011;6(5):e20086. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0020086
- West Point Music Research Center, courtesy of CW2 Jonathan L. Crane and SGM Denver D. Dill, dated May 29, 2020

Connecticut Arts Standards' Artistic Processes and Corresponding Anchor Standards

- Creating
  - Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work
  - Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work
  - Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work
- Performing/Presenting/Producing
  - Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze and interpret artistic work for presentation
  - Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation
  - Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work
- Responding
  - Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work
  - Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work
  - Anchor Standard 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work
- Connecting
  - Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art
  - Anchor Standard 11: Relate artist ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.