COVID-19 Response

Guidance for Music & Arts Education
in New Orleans Public Schools

This document does not replace or contradict any guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the State of Louisiana, or local public health and education departments regarding timing or protocols for how schools should operate during the pandemic. All music and arts program activities taking place in New Orleans Public Schools must comply with operational standards provided in the NOLA-PS Reopening Roadmap and all relevant updates.
COVID-19 Response: Music & Arts Education
Summary of Overall Recommendations

Guiding Principles:
1. Music and the arts support social-emotional learning, providing schools with research-based, effective approaches to address critical student needs in response to COVID-19.
2. In New Orleans, music and the arts provide vital connections to community and culture during times of stress and isolation.
3. Access to music and arts education is an equity issue.
4. Expectations for excellence in music and arts education must move forward during the pandemic.
5. Safety and care for our community is the highest priority.

Scheduling:
- Access and Equity – continue to provide opportunity in music and the arts for all students.
- Each arts discipline has different considerations – lean on expertise of music/arts educators in developing schedules.
- Account for extra time needed in schedule (cleaning protocols, delivering and assessing virtual instruction, recording and editing virtual performances, etc.).

Space for Instruction:
- Hold performing arts classes in the largest possible spaces in the building or outside.
- Develop site-based protocols for effective ventilation, which could include opening windows, using air purifiers, fans, AC units, etc.
- Assign seats, areas to move, and separate digital workstations.
- Clearly mark student spaces (stickers, tape, or dots), building in enough room for the teacher to move between students to facilitate.
- Establish clear classroom procedures.
- Consider remote learning within the school building (not visiting every class in person).
- Limit number of students in a music or arts space for a time period (quarter, semester), then rotate.

Support for Students & Educators:
- Manage expectations regarding performances – focus on process over product; explore artistic processes and celebrate alternative ways of sharing student learning.
- Be mindful of requirements for virtual performances (equipment, software, licensing, time to edit).
• Allocate budget and explore funding possibilities for additional materials needed (individual art or music kits, instruments, PPE, recording equipment, software, etc.). ESSA allowances exist for music and arts education funding under Title I, Title II, and Title IV.
• Provide professional development in music & arts content (coaching, PLCs, webinars).
• Continue vital partnerships with arts and cultural organizations, teaching artists and culture bearers.

Safety
• Mask Up! Everyone, at all times, including outside – with bell covers for wind instruments.
• Distance – CDC guidelines (6 x 6 ft) with additional space for trombones (6 x 9 ft).
• Time – Classes may need to be shortened to provide time for all cleaning protocols, and to allow time for air change in the room.
• Air Flow – Outdoor activity remains the best place for air flow. HEPA filters help indoors.
• Hygiene – CDC guidelines with site-base protocols for cleaning/disinfecting all instruments, materials, equipment and shared spaces aligned with CDC and NAfME guidance.
  ○ Wash hands, use sanitizers, and prevent uncontrolled spit valve release.

Band and Choir: At this time, NOLA-PS allows Band (playing wind instruments) and Choir (singing) outdoors as long as physical distancing and group maximums are followed. These activities are NOT allowed indoors at this time.
  ○ Masks for all players and singers and bell covers for wind instruments.
  ○ Students should be in straight lines facing the same direction, with staggered placement. Choir students should sing forward-facing, not in a circle or facing each other.
Executive Summary

Since March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has had complex and rapidly-expanding impacts on K-12 education in New Orleans. The education community has overcome significant challenges to ensure that the 49,500 students enrolled in Orleans Parish public schools continue to learn. Supporting student access to music and arts education is essential in this moment. Music and the arts are part of the core curriculum, and research has established their positive effects on students’ academic and social-emotional needs – particularly in times of crisis. In August 2020, Orleans Parish School Board Member Sarah Newell Usdin put forward Resolution 29-20, establishing a Music and Arts Education COVID-19 Response Working Group to research and provide recommendations regarding policies for continued access to K-12 music and arts instruction during the pandemic. The resolution passed unanimously, paving the way for the recommendations contained in the following pages.

As intermediary service organizations supporting K-12 music and arts education across the district, Artist Corps New Orleans and the New Orleans Arts Education Alliance have led the Working Group initiative, researching national best practices and developing recommendations based on community input. Seventy (70) stakeholders provided input during community sessions and as readers on this policy document, including teachers, teaching artists, school administrators, education researchers, local and national arts and cultural partners, service organization leaders, and community advocates. A full list of Working Group participants is included on the following page, and we are grateful for their expertise, collaboration, and thoughtful feedback throughout this process.

Music and the arts are receiving increased education policy support both locally and nationally. In 2015, the newly reauthorized Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) expanded beyond high-stakes testing in core academic subjects to mandate a “well-rounded education” for American students. Both the federal legislation and Louisiana’s state ESSA framework explicitly include music and arts education as necessary components of a well-rounded education. In 2019, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) introduced the Interests & Opportunities Index. This metric allows schools statewide to count their enrichment programming, including music and the arts, as up to 5% of their School Performance Scores.

Music and the arts can also help achieve citywide youth development goals. In 2018, the New Orleans City Council unanimously approved Resolution R-18-310 calling for more trauma-informed youth development programming in Orleans Parish public schools. The need for these services will only increase as our community recovers from increasingly active hurricane seasons and the devastating impacts of a global pandemic. The time is right to invest in the creative, healing potential of music and arts education. The Music and Arts Education
COVID-19 Response Working Group has prepared these recommendations to offer practical support for teachers, school leaders, and district administrators as they work to provide high-quality arts and music instruction. This document includes:

- **Guiding Principles** that provide key considerations driving all recommendations and suggestions
- **New Orleans Music & Arts Education COVID-19 Response Working Group**
- **Overall Recommendations** for moving music and arts instruction forward during the pandemic, applicable across all arts disciplines
- **Appendix** that will act as a dynamic resource bank for teachers including instructional strategies and best practices, and will be updated with new resources throughout the pandemic and beyond.

## Guiding Principles

Music and arts education are essential to the social, academic and cultural development, health and well-being of New Orleans students. Every child deserves the benefits of an arts-rich education, especially during times of uncertainty. More than one hundred leading national organizations recently came together to declare "Arts Education is Essential" and set policy expectations for the field. Locally, our collective of stakeholders developed five Guiding Principles for music and arts education in response to the pandemic. These Principles emerged through our Working Group discussions, community input sessions, and a review of COVID-19 policy documents from other cities and states. They represent our research-informed understandings of why music and the arts are so important to the well-being of our students, now more than ever. These principles are also applicable well beyond COVID-19, and should inform the ongoing development of music and arts education policy for New Orleans public schools.

1. **Music and the arts support social-emotional learning, providing schools with research-based, effective approaches to address critical student needs in response to COVID-19.**

Music and arts education are vital to students’ social and emotional learning (SEL). Studies have found creative expression reduces cortisol and other stress hormones in the brain, making artistic practice an ideal activity for stress reduction and emotional self-regulation (Droscher, 2014; Kaimal, Ray & Muniz, 2016). The *Arts Education & SEL Framework* explored multiple intersections between standards-based music and arts education and social-emotional competencies (SELVPA, 2020). A study with Chicago Public Schools found that classroom-based arts practices inherently incorporate SEL
components and that students learn skills like self-expression and personal confidence as they develop music and arts skills (Ingenuity, 2019). Creating, experiencing, critiquing, and discussing music and the arts together builds social cohesion among school communities. In periods of heightened stress, schools in New Orleans have increasingly adopted trauma-informed/SEL learning frameworks to address the emotional needs of their students. Music and the arts offer rich, complex opportunities to meet these needs throughout the school day.

2. **In New Orleans, music and the arts provide vital connections to community and culture during times of stress and isolation.**

Music and arts education helps New Orleans students build and maintain deep connections to their communities and cultural legacies, even while they are cut off from traditional ways of experiencing these benefits during the pandemic. From the earliest days of public education in New Orleans, musicians and artists embedded in schools have strengthened the link between rigorous academic music and arts instruction and cultural identity. Today, the New Orleans arts and cultural landscape is responding to COVID-19 with many educational offerings, including virtual resources for educators and students. Schools should continue to partner with local artists, culture bearers, and community arts organizations, supporting students by providing career pathways and opportunities, and bolstering our cultural economy by fueling the creativity of our next generation of culture bearers and leaders.

3. **Access to music and arts education is an equity issue.**

We must ensure equitable, high-quality music and arts opportunities for all young people. This year, the COVID-19 pandemic has uncovered deep systemic inequities including racial, health, and socio-economic disparities, while police brutality and institutional racism have also emerged to public consciousness in a new way. In a majority-Black public school system where 83% of students receive free or reduced lunch, we cannot allow the unique challenges of the current moment to exacerbate further inequities in access to music and arts education (Cowen Institute, 2019). New Orleans has a complex history of resisting injustice through music and the arts, and connecting students with artists and culture bearers exposes them to creative strategies for imagining a more just world. It also aligns with best practices for culturally relevant and responsive education (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995). The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) and the National Art Education Association (NAEA) both recently released policy statements outlining the value of arts-based anti-racist education (Rolling, 2020). Anti-racism and anti-bias should be centered in all music and arts education planning.
4. **Expectations for excellence in music and arts education must move forward during the pandemic.**

As outlined in [OPSB Resolution 29-20](#), the district encourages schools to support continued music and arts instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic through distance learning, in-person, or blended instructional models, prioritizing the teaching of music and the arts on distance learning platforms with equal time and efficacy as when these subjects are taught in person.

National research shows that music and arts education correlate with better grades, test scores, literacy skills, and graduation rates - and that these benefits increase for lower income students (Deasy, 2002; Korn & Associates, 2007; Catterall et. al., 2012). Throughout the pandemic, scaffolded and sequential music and arts instruction taught by qualified educators in partnership with community arts providers must be available to all students as part of the core curriculum. Teachers and schools will need ongoing community support, including:

- Ensuring educators have the staffing, budget, facilities, and supplies needed to provide music and arts education safely to all students.
- Explicitly including music and the arts in school- and district-wide decision making, by seeking out music and arts educators’ expertise during planning.
- Providing music and arts educators with professional learning opportunities.
- Connecting schools with partners, funders, opportunities, and resources.

5. **Safety and care for our community is the highest priority.**

Schools must be provided with guidance and support to ensure music and arts education can continue safely throughout the pandemic. The safety of students, teachers, school staff, and families should be prioritized in all planning decisions. This document captures current best practices and will be updated as further information becomes available. Most importantly, showing safety and care for our school communities requires embracing a radically flexible approach, and a collective commitment to providing high-quality educational experiences whether in virtual, in-person, or hybrid learning environments.
The following local and national music and arts educators, school leaders, arts and cultural partners, community advocates, fine arts content supervisors, and other stakeholders provided input, research, and/or feedback in the drafting of this document. These individuals represent 28 public schools in New Orleans and 22 local and national organizations:


The following recommendations draw heavily from the Arts Ed New Jersey September Ready Fall 2020 Guidance for Arts Education. We would like to thank the September Ready Taskforce for Arts Education for their national leadership and guidance, including compiling research, strategies, and resources referenced in this document, and for making this information available to districts across the country to inform reopening plans. Source material from September Ready has been adapted and incorporated, with regionally specific content developed by the New Orleans Music & Arts Education COVID-19 Response Working Group, to meet the current needs of New Orleans public schools, educators, students, and families.
Overall Recommendations

Overview

The following Overall Recommendations provide district and school administrators with proposed policies and protocols to ensure that students continue to have access to high-quality music and the arts experiences throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This section includes primary recommendations for safety and protocols that are applicable across all arts disciplines divided into the following areas:

1) Scheduling & Spaces
2) Support for Students & Educators
   o Expectations for Process, Performing, and Presenting
   o Equipment, Materials, and Supplies
   o Professional Development
   o Arts and Cultural Partners
3) Safety

Additional items in the Appendix identify and support best practices in music and arts instruction in schools. The following documents will be regularly updated based on input and expertise from local and national experts, including researchers, music and arts educators, teaching artists, and arts and cultural organizations:

- **COVID-19 Response: A Resource for Music and Arts Educators** – including:
  o Specific strategies for teaching music and the arts in four arts disciplines: Music, Dance, Theatre Arts, and Visual Arts.
  o Approaches for hybrid, in-person, and remote learning environments.
  o Suggestions for synchronous and asynchronous activities.

- **Music and Arts Education Resource Database** – Discipline-specific links to online resources that support music and arts instruction, including local teacher-generated content.

- **National Resources** – attachments for music and arts education research, advocacy, disinfecting protocols, and instruction.
Introduction

New Orleans is known worldwide for its rich culture and historical contributions to music and the arts, and students in our public schools recognize their contributions in furthering the cultural legacy of our community. Many of us have met (or have been) that student who struggled in other academic classes but was motivated to stay in school because of a theatre or band program, a dance performance, exhibition, concert, or Mardi Gras parade. We also recognize that music and the arts support the academic and social development of the whole child. Music and the arts, as means of expression, bring joy and creativity into our students’ lives and into the overall culture of the school.

In a time of so much uncertainty due to COVID-19, it is encouraging that so many public school leaders in New Orleans have held fast to their commitment to continue providing students with access to music and arts programs. New Orleans music and arts educators – thoughtful, creative and professional practitioners – have been re-imagining their approaches to pedagogy and instruction since the first days of the pandemic. They are part of a global community of educators who are connecting to address the challenges of this moment, working to ensure that young people can continue to grow and flourish through arts learning.

Rich and diverse music and arts education programs can and must move forward, even as teaching and learning are adjusted in response to COVID-19.

The recommendations that follow are designed to support the partnership between school leaders and music and arts educators as they co-navigate how to successfully deliver music and arts programming in their schools. Open communication and collaboration are essential to applying these recommendations effectively in each school. The Music & Arts Educator / Administrator Check-in template in the Appendix can be a helpful tool to utilize in collaborative planning meetings.

Please note:

● The following are recommendations, but it is expected that every school will handle instruction according to their own unique needs, whether in-person, hybrid, or remote.

● Reference in this document to any specific commercial product, process, or service is for the information and convenience of readers and does not constitute an endorsement by any of the partners involved.
To establish secure learning environments in the school building, administrators and music and arts educators should work together to consider the relationships between facility design and scheduling, to ensure that instructional adjustments and social distancing can be effectively implemented. Music and arts programs must adhere to requirements set by the CDC, State Health Department, State Department of Education, and NOLA-PS Reopening Roadmap, including, but not limited to, physical distancing, group maximums, use of masks and seating arrangements.

Scheduling

- To ensure access and equity, every effort should be made to continue providing students opportunities in music and arts education, even when in-person instruction is not possible (i.e., utilizing flipped classroom, synchronous and asynchronous strategies, outdoor rehearsals).
- Administrators should develop schedules in close consultation with music and arts educators, considering specific, content area adjustments to teaching and learning in response to COVID-19.
  - Accommodations for Talented in Arts and Special Education must continue throughout the pandemic, to ensure that all students are served.
- When planning schedules for music and arts courses, be mindful of significant differences in scheduling needs across artistic disciplines. Examples of considerations include:
  - Simultaneous facilitation of both in-person and remote learning may be more manageable for some visual arts educators than for music educators.
  - Physical distancing requirements will necessitate different accommodations based on artistic discipline. Visual arts classes may be able to stay in their rooms with minimal interruption; dance classes may need to utilize an auditorium or cafeteria; band and choir may shift to outdoors for part of the week when they are singing and playing wind instruments – but hold class indoors to teach or review other areas (i.e. new time signatures, rhythms, fingerings). It’s important to consider the needs of these classes independently.
  - Splitting larger groups into smaller ones that meet for shorter intervals of time can alleviate physical distancing concerns in music and arts classes.
  - Consider schedules that are consistent and straightforward for students and families, while reducing teacher workload. Strategies include grouping classes or grade levels together for asynchronous and/or synchronous instruction (e.g., all 1st graders have virtual music class on Wednesdays).
• Allow additional time in the schedule for music and arts educators to make appropriate adjustments to instruction and protocols in response to COVID-19:
  ○ Build in longer transition times between classes to allow for music and arts educators to follow all CDC guidelines and school-required cleaning protocols for classrooms, equipment, and materials.
  ○ Provide additional time to implement virtual instruction and assess virtual assignments when combined with in-person instruction. The number of class sections taught by a music or arts educator may need to be reduced.
  ○ When considering the option of virtual performances, recognize that many additional hours may be needed to edit and present these events, in addition to other instructional duties.

**Space for Instruction**

• Where possible, hold performing arts classes in the largest spaces in the building or outside. Consider using alternative spaces, such as the gym, multipurpose room, theater, cafeteria, auditorium, etc.
• Develop site-based protocols for effective ventilation, which could include opening windows, using air purifiers, fans, AC units, etc.
• Provide students with assigned seats, assigned areas, and assigned digital workstations for contact tracing needs.
• Mark standing/sitting spots on the floor with stickers, tape, or dots. Also mark spaces large enough for each student to move in performing arts classes, building in enough space for the teacher to move between students to facilitate instruction.
• Establish clear classroom procedures consistent with CDC and State guidelines (e.g., how to enter and exit the room with appropriate physical distancing; how supplies will be distributed; use of materials and equipment in common areas).
• Make door jambs/props available so students don’t need to touch the door handle when entering/exiting.
• Sample adjustments that could occur across different learning environments include:
  ○ Consider remote learning opportunities within the school building. If students are already in their classroom, the art teacher could live broadcast the lesson on the SmartBoard, and monitor learning through the screen. This prevents pushing art on a cart through the whole building.
  ○ Create in-person elementary and middle school schedules which limit the number of students with access to all arts classrooms during a given period. For example, assign students to one arts discipline for a quarter or semester, then rotate to another arts discipline for the next time period. This can also help families juggling between fewer classes regardless of whether schedules are hybrid or in person.
Expectations for Process, Performing, and Presenting:
Developing Well-Rounded Musicians and Artists

This school year provides a unique opportunity for students to focus on the many arts learning standards that exist in addition to performing. Given physical distancing requirements and the avoidance of large gatherings, educators have additional time to focus on artistic processes and to help students grow in the National Core Arts Standards of Creating, Responding, and Connecting in Music, Dance, Theatre Arts, Visual Arts, and Media Arts. The Louisiana Arts Content Standards can also help teachers develop comprehensive, sequenced lessons.

As educators find new ways to guide student reflection and make learning visible to students, parents, and families, they will need support from school leaders who understand the importance of creative, process-driven approaches to music and arts education. Administrators can help to manage expectations, encouraging students that the ways in which they are exploring artistic practices and sharing their work virtually are as important to their creative growth – and as valuable to the culture of the school – as if they were able to present at a large public art exhibition or march in a parade.

Some considerations for this approach are:

- Explore new ways for students to create and respond to music and the arts in virtual formats. Creating artistic works using technology allows for reflection of students’ individual tastes and aesthetics.
- Alternative methods of performance and presentation are recommended in lieu of large group gatherings. These opportunities should amplify student work and demonstrate multiple learning modalities. These may include:
  - Livestream events or performances
  - Pre-recorded and edited virtual performances
  - Creating playlists for students to share created works
- Educators and schools should be mindful of:
  - Equipment and software needed to create virtual performances (microphones, video editing software, etc.)
  - Considerable time necessary to edit virtual performances
  - Licensing songs (including mechanical and synch licenses) used in student performances, compositions, videos, etc.
Equipment, Materials & Supplies

School administrators should collaborate with their music and arts staff to review necessary purchases and determine budget allocations, to ensure all students have safe and equitable access to creative learning. Budgetary considerations may include providing music and arts programs with PPE, individual supply kits, technology, and other additional equipment to ensure teaching and learning can continue. With unforeseen school budget constraints due to COVID-19, including the loss of Mardi Gras parade income, it will be critical for both teachers and administrators to explore alternate funding opportunities to support music and arts programming. Options may include:

- Using new allowances within ESSA legislation to support funding school music and arts programs:
  - **Title I funds** (school level) can be used to supplement state and local support for a well-rounded education, including music and the arts.
  - **Title II funds** (LEA level) can be utilized to support professional development for music and arts teachers, providing them with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to succeed in a well-rounded education
  - **Title IV funds** (LEA/consortium of LEAs level) can be spent providing supplemental support for music and arts education programs in schools
  - See additional guides from [NAfME](https://www.nafme.org), **Title 1 Arts**, and [Americans for the Arts](https://www.americansforthearts.org) for funding possibilities under ESSA

- Fundraising with Parent Teacher Associations and school community drives

- Applying for grants, emergency funding or discounted supplies through Education Foundations and companies such as Crayola, Dick Blick, Donors Choose and Target

Professional Development

Music and arts educators are highly-trained specialists and practitioners. They serve as co-curricular partners with other educators and administrators, working to ensure that all students have access to an excellent, well-rounded education. In order to foster effective teaching and learning environments for their students throughout the pandemic, there must be systems in place for these educators to access targeted, continued professional development in their content areas. The challenges of in-person professional development due to COVID-19 have actually created an abundance of remote learning opportunities. Professional development for music and arts educators should include:

- **Coaching**:
  - Existing coaching models can be expanded to provide access to high-quality coaching for music and arts educators, providing mentorship from accomplished educators in like content areas.

- **Access to Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)**:
● PLCs are especially important for music and arts educators, who may not have any colleagues who teach in their content areas within their school or charter network. As teachers are reinventing curriculum in a year of multiple upheavals, PLCs can bring together teachers across the district to provide support, foster morale, and determine concrete solutions for delivering music and arts instruction.

● Growing out of the Music and Arts Education COVID-19 Response Working Group, PLCs for music and arts education will meet throughout the Spring 2021 semester to more fully address these challenges.

● Formal Professional Development Opportunities:
  ○ There is wide access to a variety of general content professional development throughout the district but less awareness about the many local and national resources in music and arts professional development in response to COVID-19. Schools can lean on arts and cultural organizations to find professional development opportunities that are the right fit for their music and arts educators. The New Orleans ArtLook Map can be helpful in navigating these resources.
  ○ See Appendix for specific suggested topics for professional development.

Arts & Cultural Partners

Community arts organizations, cultural institutions, and culture bearers play a central role in our arts education ecosystem. They offer critical resources, insight, and partnership opportunities for schools, both inside and outside of the formal school day. It is crucial that schools remain connected with community partners and culture bearers throughout the pandemic, to meet the needs of students and ensure the local arts education landscape flourishes. These partnerships can complement the school curriculum with residencies, master classes, field trips and performances, either in-person or virtual.

In a decentralized district, schools, arts education providers, cultural partners, and culture bearers don’t always know how to find and engage with each other – a challenge exacerbated by current limitations on visitors in schools. This can result in inequitable access to community arts programming. Some ways to address these challenges include:

- At the school level, an Arts Liaison could be a teacher or administrator who serves as a contact person for music and arts resources and opportunities in the school and can coordinate with community partners and culture bearers. A district-level Arts Liaison could help coordinate data, programming, services, and professional development across schools and CMOs and establish district-wide exhibition and performance schedules.
- Parents and families as Arts & Cultural Partners – Community surveys document that parents value the arts as a key component of a holistic education, and that
they are crucial supporters of K-12 music and arts programming. Creative practice positively affects family units, and parents’ well-being also benefits by engaging in arts and music with their kids. Provide parents with information about existing arts education opportunities across the city, and engage them as visiting artists, or in advocacy and fundraising efforts to support school music and arts programs.

- **New Orleans Artlook Map** – this new resource maps K-12 arts education programming both in and out of school, allowing schools, families and community partners to find each other, and funders to find programs in need of support.
Safety Protocol Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on current medical knowledge and scientific research, and they are not intended to replace current phased reopening frameworks, restrictions, and/or guidelines set by NOLA-PS, Louisiana Department of Education, Louisiana Department of Health, City of New Orleans, New Orleans Health Department, or the CDC.

Given the uniqueness of the many arts courses that require physical activity in various levels of engagement, these recommendations are guidelines to ensure the health and safety of our students and teachers, as a supplement to the state and district reopening frameworks.

This segment is largely informed by the International Coalition of Performing Arts Aerosol Study led by the National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS) and the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) in partnership with the NAMM Foundation and more than 125 other organizations (Spede & Weaver, 2020). Two independent labs at the University of Colorado-Boulder and the University of Maryland are now entering month five of this six-month study. Initiated to learn how COVID-19 may spread during the course of music and performing arts activities, the study is examining possible mitigation techniques to prevent or lessen aerosol distribution during singing and playing of wind instruments.

It is helpful to consider general safety protocols for music and arts education as organized by the “5 Key Takeaways” from the study: Masks, Distance, Time, Air Flow, and Hygiene:

- **MASKS**
  - Masks must be worn at all times.
  - Separate masks for instrumentalists that have a slit for the mouthpiece should be worn while playing.
  - Multi-layered bell covers must be used by all wind instruments.
  - Note: Face shields are only effective at close range to stop large droplets; they do not prevent aerosol from being inhaled or released unless a mask is also worn.

- **DISTANCE**
  - CDC distancing guidelines (6 x 6 feet) should be followed, with additional space (9 x 6 feet) for trombone players.
  - Distancing guidelines apply for outdoors as well as indoors.
● TIME
  ○ Class periods may need to be shortened in order to:
    ■ provide time for music and arts educators to follow all required cleaning protocols for disinfecting both classroom spaces and instruments/equipment.
    ■ allow time for air change in the room.

● AIR FLOW
  ○ Outdoor activity remains the best place for air flow.
  ○ Indoors, HEPA filters are strongly recommended to increase the amount of clean air and the number of air changes per hour (ACH).

● HYGIENE
  ○ Site-based protocols should be developed for cleaning and disinfecting all instruments, materials, equipment and shared spaces aligned with CDC and NAfME guidance.
  ○ Provide appropriate sanitizing supplies for instruments and equipment.

Additional Safety Considerations for Band and Choir – Instrumental Instruction & Ensembles

PLEASE NOTE: Playing wind instruments and singing in choir indoors are NOT allowed by NOLA-PS at this time. Band and choir may occur outdoors as long as physical distancing measures and maximum group sizes are followed. Additional recommendations regarding masks for instrumentalists, bell covers, and other safety considerations are outlined below.

Considerations for Band:

● Wind instruments produce aerosol, which varies by instrument as well as intensity. The produced aerosol amount is, on average, similar across all instrument types and singing with the exception of the oboe. Most aerosol is being expelled from the bell of the instruments and from the mouth of the performers.

● At this time, it appears that if players wear surgical style masks with a slit for mouthpiece AND bell covers, aerosol emission is reduced between 60% and 90%.
  ○ Bell covers for woodwinds and brass should be made with a multi-layer cover with the center layer being made of MERV-13 filter material, or a 3-layer surgical style mask using a standard such as GB/T32310.
  ○ Flutes and recorders create a minimal amount of aerosol, and it is recommended to play flute with the headjoint between their mouth and mask. Recorder should use the slitted mask used with woodwinds. Both the flute and recorder should use a cloth “mask” at the end of the barrel.
An alternative for flutes and recorders is to wrap the end of the barrel in plastic wrap.

- Practice good hygiene by washing hands, using sanitizers, and preventing uncontrolled spit valve release.
- Straight lines should be used as curved setups can affect the aerosol movement.
  - Students should face the same direction to minimize potential exposure.
  - Students should be staggered in placement to avoid direct contact with another instrument’s airflow.

Considerations for Choir:

- Singers produce aerosols at similar rates as woodwinds and brass. The amount of aerosol varies depending on consonants, vowels, intensity, and pitch.
- Singers wearing a well fit 3-layer surgical style mask reduces aerosol emission to an approximate reading level.
- Choir students should sing forward-facing, not in a circle or facing each other.
- See International Coalition Performing Arts Study, Third Round Results.
References


National Association for Music Education. (2016). How funding works - Title II.


State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education. (2020). Arts Education is Essential.