



NORTH CAROLINA BANDMASTERS ASSOCIATION

A division of the North Carolina Music Educators Association

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EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

PRESIDENT — Jason Barclift
Cornerstone Charter Academy
band_chair@ncmea.net

PRESIDENT-ELECT — Jamie Bream
Spring Hill Middle School
jbream@scotland.k12.nc.us

PAST-PRESIDENT — Rodney Workman
Asheville High School
rodney.workman@acsgmail.net

SECTION DELEGATE — Alyssa Montgomery
Leesville Road High School
amontgomery@wcpss.met

SECRETARY — Jim Kirkpatrick
T. C. Roberson High School
james.kirkpatrick@bcsemail.org

FINANCE OFFICER — Fran Shelton
Retired
shelton@ioa.com

HONORS BAND TREASURER — Rodney Workman
Asheville High School
rodney.workman@acsgmail.net

DISTRICT CHAIRS

CENTRAL DISTRICT — Jeremy Ray
Grimsley High School
rayj2@gcsnc.com

EAST CENTRAL DISTRICT — Matthew Pellas
F. J. Carnage Middle School
mpellas@wcpss.net

EASTERN DISTRICT — Robert Parker
Ashley High School
robert.parker@nhcs.net

NORTHWEST DISTRICT — Jason Childers
South Caldwell High School
jchilders@caldwellschools.com

SOUTH CENTRAL DISTRICT — Joshua Potter
Providence High School
scdbachair@gmail.com

SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT — Olivia Dove
Corinth Holders High School
oliviadove@johnston.k12.nc.us

WESTERN DISTRICT — Karen Williams-Lanning
Swain High School
kwilliams@swainmail.org

Fellow Band Directors,

I hope this letter finds you safe and healthy this summer. I know this has been an extremely difficult time. Some of us have been affected more closely than others by this pandemic. I know some directors across our state have lost loved ones to this awful sickness, while others have been stricken with COVID-19 themselves. The NCBA Executive Board and the Jazz Section Executive Board and worked closely with NCMEA throughout these past months to advocate for music programs across our state. I cannot thank Pat Hall and Carol Earnhardt enough for their quick responses to any threats of job loss across our state. We continue to keep the safety of band directors and students alike at the forefront of all decisions.

While none of us are medical experts, we wanted you all to know we are behind you and are here to support each and every one of you. We all understand the importance our classes are to the social and emotional health of our students. Our governor has announced we will be going with "Plan B" as a state, but some school systems will still go with "Plan C." As an organization, NCBA wanted to provide each of you with a document you can share with administrators and parents that shows we are definitely making an effort to keep students and directors safe. There is no way to guarantee safety, but we want to do all we can to protect band students and directors across the state.

Disclaimer

The North Carolina Bandmasters Association (NCBA) and the North Carolina Music Educators Association (NCMEA) do not offer mandates nor directives to its membership. The suggestions given in this document are by no means mandates nor should be taken as such. The guidelines and suggestions given are simply "best practices" and suggestions to consider when offering face-to-face instruction during the 2020-21 school year. The information in this document is provided in good faith and further, we make no representation of warranty of any kind, express or implied, regarding the adequacy or completeness of these guidelines.

Under no circumstance shall we have any liability to you for any loss or damage of any kind incurred as a result of the use of these guidelines or reliance on any information provided in this document. Your reliance and use, or your non-reliance, on any information provided in this document is solely at your own risk.

Recommendations for all Face-to-Face Band Instruction in Fall 2020

First and foremost, directors must always follow all regulations established by local and state government officials and their school administrators.

- Self-isolation – if you are sick, stay home.
- Everyone must wear a mask at all times. When possible, a mask with a small slit for the mouthpiece should be worn while playing.
- Please see the *International Coalition Performing Arts Aerosol Study*¹ which says, “bell covers are highly recommended as “masks” for the instruments. Bell covers can be made of multi-layered high denier nylon material and provide a barrier for aerosols.” Their study provides some examples.
- Practice social distancing of at least six feet to the greatest extent possible.
- Wash hands frequently (20 seconds with soap and water or use of a sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol).
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces or remove unnecessary frequently touched surfaces.
- Limit numbers of students in storage areas at any one time. Students should use 70% alcohol wipes to clean up touched surfaces in the storage room and discard the wipe on the way out of the storage room.
- Avoid touching of eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze and throw used tissues away immediately after use.
- Avoid sharing of any equipment (i.e. percussion mallets, sticks, and accessories). Any equipment that must be shared (i.e. keyboard instruments, etc.) needs to be disinfected before and after each use.
- Minimize the use of soft surfaces like cloth covered chairs or area rugs that are more difficult to clean or disinfect.
- Do not release water and “spit” from instruments onto the floor. Consider using disposable “puppy pads.”
- Directors consider using a portable amplifier to keep your voice at a low conversational volume with a mask.
- Teachers should use the most effective mask possible since they are assumed to talk the most in a classroom. While an N95 mask is best, there could possibly still be a shortage, so use the closest to an N95 you can find available.
- Students should all face the same direction to minimize exposure.
- Trombones should have an additional three feet of distancing to accommodate the extension of the slide making their space 9x6 instead of 6x6.
- Outdoor rehearsals are best when possible - for marching and concert bands. A large outdoor tent would help shelter students from the sun while maintaining better circulation of air.
- Limit rehearsals to 30-45 minutes to allow the HVAC to circulate air from outdoors or filter air through the room.

¹ <https://www.nfhs.org/articles/unprecedented-international-coalition-led-by-performing-arts-organizations-to-commission-covid-19-study/>

Special Considerations for Marching Band

- It is recommended that marching band directors use the forms developed by the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) that can be found on their website (www.nchsaa.org).
 - Initial Screening Form
 - Return to Play Form (if a student is tested for COVID-19)
 - Daily Monitoring Form
- Students should not share water bottles or receive water from a communal source.
- Specific suggestions when designing drill:
 - All students must maintain 6 feet between one another.
 - All guard/auxiliary members must only handle their own equipment throughout rehearsals and performances.
 - Minimize the use of props and large equipment.
 - Front ensemble percussion instruments should be permanently assigned to an individual performer and be minimized in a way that allows individual percussionists to personally transport their own equipment at all times.
- Avoid sharing of any equipment (i.e. percussion mallets, sticks, and accessories). Any equipment that must be shared (i.e. keyboard instruments, etc.) needs to be disinfected before and after each use. If non-performers must move equipment or props, masks and gloves need to be worn.
- Everyone must wear a mask at all times. When possible, a mask with a small slit for the mouthpiece should be worn while playing.
- Plan for entry and exit procedures that reduce the number of students and parents congregating and/or mixing in hallways and around parking lots. Staggering start and end times may be necessary.
- Students should report to practices and rehearsals in proper attire and immediately return home to change clothes and shower at the end of each session.

NCBA does not have all of the answers and has no way of knowing exactly what the future holds. We, as an organization, understand the importance of a music education for our students across the state. Now more than ever, we see the need for the social and emotional benefits of music in a child's life demonstrated as well. While it may be challenging for a while longer, finding a way to provide a music education for all students is more important than ever. Directors, we must continue to be an advocate for music education in our own communities and beyond. We will get through this and I know we will be stronger on the other side.

Sincerely,



Jason M. Barclift, President
North Carolina Bandmasters Association