



NORTH CAROLINA MUSIC EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATED WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
AND AFFILIATED WITH THE
THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MUSIC EDUCATION
AND THE NORTH CAROLINA ARTS EDUCATION LEADERSHIP COALITION

Position on Music Education Environment Due to COVID-19

January 2021

Core Belief and Ask

- **Music and arts education** must remain central to a well-rounded, equitable, and accessible education for North Carolina students and **fully funded** to support the **well-being of all students** and the entire school community.
- We ask the General Assembly, the Department of Public Instruction, local school boards and administrations, and community members throughout the state to **support funding for school based music and arts programs** in 2021-2022 and beyond.

Current Efforts and Means to Support

- **NCMEA is grateful for the new Arts Education Graduation Requirement enacted in Session Law 2020-78. We now look forward to partnering with NCDPI and the State Board of Education on the implementation of the requirement.**
 - This new law will ensure that music continues to be a strong part of the well-rounded education available to all students.
 - Music education is even more important now during these uncertain times as students increasingly need environments which support their social and emotional development.
- **NCMEA is supporting local public school units with all aspects of remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic as they impact the music education of children.**
 - North Carolina experiences local control over how and when students are in or returning to class as well as how music may be made by students of all ages. Many public school units continue to remain remote only with little to no singing or playing by students while other schools are allowed to participate in these music making activities using mitigation strategies.
 - NCMEA supports and is actively engaged in the ongoing task of **identifying ways to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in performing arts activities** in an aerosol study commissioned by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) from lead researchers Dr. Shelly Miller, University of Colorado and Dr. Jelena Srebric, University of Maryland. The final report for [this study](#), which is in the final month of six, is expected in January 2021.
 - NCMEA and our partners seek to **share this critical information** with state and local decision makers in all fields upon completion.
 - NCMEA will continue to **share with music educators the best practices of aerosol mitigation** strategies found in current research supporting a safe restart of music performance for our students across the state.
 - NCMEA is **providing professional development opportunities** and creative ways to recruit, retain, and teach students during times of the COVID-19 pandemic for stakeholders of all socioeconomic backgrounds.
- **NCMEA supports efforts by local and state policymakers to hold school districts harmless during enrollment changes in music programs moving into 2021-2022 as we work hard to recover from COVID pandemic.**

Continued →

- o Leaders, schools, and communities that recognize the value of music and arts education in 2021-2022 and beyond should ensure:
 - Music and arts programs continue to be funded
 - Classes are offered across all grade levels and appropriately scheduled
 - Curriculum and scheduling addresses students' learning loss in music and the arts as well as other content areas
 - Licensed music and arts educators continue to be employed and teach in the discipline for which they were trained
- o North Carolina's "WCCS" initiative (**Whole Child, Whole Community, Whole School**) is a prime example of the power of continued connectivity between the social and emotional learning (SEL) needs of the whole child and music education.
- o It is clear that **supporting a well-rounded education helps the emotional well-being of students.**
- o Music education has a multitude of benefits **to support students' emotional well-being and help students cope with social isolation and the rapidly changing reality.** Research indicates that music education benefits students in a variety of areas of social emotional learning.
- o We must ensure that **students continue to have access to education that fosters *them* and their interests.**
- o We applaud members of the General Assembly for their commitment to supporting students and our schools during these difficult times. As the legislature addresses education budget shortfalls during the long session, we urge lawmakers to **make budget decisions which will bolster students' access to a well-rounded education that includes music at all levels.**
- o NCMEA **encourages local public school units to, at minimum, maintain all music courses for the 2021-22 school year** because they benefit students and their abilities to cope with these troubling times.