

Editorial

Most of us have been locked down now for more than two months. Many of you have been working diligently trying to find ways to engage your students in meaningful ways with music.

These efforts have been heroic. Incredible new ways of engaging students have emerged. While nothing can ever replace being together, making music together, and experiencing music together, that does not change the fact that incredibly innovative teaching strategies have emerged.

That said, it is time to get ready for what comes next – our “new reality.” That’s right, a new reality, *not* a new normal, I am tired of hearing people use the phrase “the new normal” because this is not normal at all. Not for you, not for me, not for our colleagues, not for our administrators, not for our parents, and certainly not for our students. We cannot pretend that it will be when we return to our schools.

We must come face-to-face with this new reality and prepare plans for how we intend to open our schools and what music and arts education will look like. To be clear, I do not pretend to be able to predict the future. The actions being taken around the world and being discussed here at home begin to provide some insights which I will try to distill here.

For some context, I come at this not only as a music advocate, but as a sitting school board member and as a board member of the NJ School Boards Association. I am the tables where these discussions are taking place.

The Two-Headed Monster

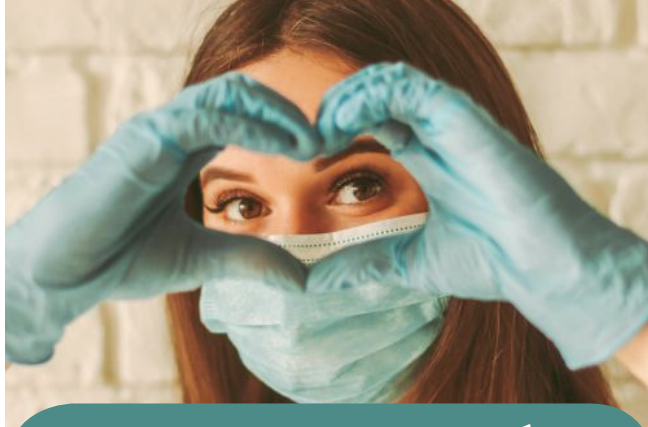
I have come to realize this pandemic is like a two-headed monster. The first head is the **fiscal crisis**. This is the part of this crisis we have the least visibility into since many states have not revised their revenue forecasts for the current year, let alone adopted new budgets for the new year. There will be a financial impact on our schools. We just do not know how much at this point and whether or not the federal government will provide any additional funding to support state, municipal, or school budgets. Follow both NAFME and NAMM for further guidance on the fiscal head of this monster.

The second head is the **public health crisis**. This is the Coronavirus, or COVID-19, pandemic where we find ourselves right now. This is what I will write about today. As we focus on the public health crisis, the question becomes, “How can we open our schools safely?”

For some clues, just look at how our businesses are opening: significantly reduced capacity (25 percent), social distancing, masks and other PPE, outdoors if possible. Why would we expect our schools would be any different? The answer is they won’t be.

Maslow > Bloom

For our schools to be able to reconvene in some fashion, we have to make them safe. Think of this in terms of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. First, there are the physiological needs (food,



Our New Reality

By Bob Morrison

water, warmth, rest), followed by safety needs (security and safety). These are identified as basic needs, which are also identified as universal human needs. Nothing else happens unless a person’s basic needs are met.

That is true in education as well. Bloom’s taxonomy characterizes a way to classify learning objectives into levels of complexity and specificity. This is a popular way to design curricular

learning objectives, assessments, and activities.

For our students to learn (Bloom), we must first make them feel safe (Maslow). When the discussion turns to “how do we reopen our schools,” it must be based on the foundational concept that **the health, safety, and wellness of students, families, educators, and staff must be the priority**. Full stop. No qualifiers. No exceptions. No rationalized shortcuts. If we are not committed to this idea first and foremost, then we should not be educators. If this is something you personally do not believe to be true, you should find another line of work.

Common Health Considerations for Schools

Over the past month, we have been able to see schools begin to open up in other countries, states begin to release guidance for opening schools, and the CDC just released their first set of recommendations that will impact the conditions that must exist to open our schools. Here is a compilation of the major themes from all of these reports:

- Temperature Checks (for everyone entering the school)
- PPE (Face masks for some students if not all, all faculty and staff)
- Social Distancing (smaller class sizes, lower bus occupancy, limited interaction)
- Testing, Contact Tracing and Isolation (being able to track anyone who may have been in contact with someone with the virus)
- Single Classrooms (Students stay together as teachers rotate to them including lunch)
- Recess limited or eliminated / no physical education, assemblies, mass gatherings
- No Parents/Visitors in the building
- Regular Disinfection/Cleaning (multiple times a day)
- Improved Ventilation and Airflow
- Hand washing/sanitizer use/emphasis on hygiene
- Attention to social and emotional learning/student counseling/mental health
- Infection Return Protocol (Plans for if someone in the school contracts the virus or if a closure is required)

All this, and we haven’t mentioned *what* is being taught!

Key Threats

Some will use this crisis to promote “other” agendas. Other agendas include:

Narrowing the Curriculum. Some groups are advocating narrowing the curriculum – using this as a chance to push goals to

change the curriculum to meet some other agenda.

Closing School Buildings. We have heard leaders say we can get rid of school buildings - openly questioning why we even need schools!

Essential vs. Non-Essential. We have seen groups try a backhanded attack targeting the arts by creating two tiers of academics: essential vs. non-essential. Guess where music and the arts fall on this list? They are using this as a way to try to redefine what should be taught in our schools or explicitly to remove arts education.

Remediation. We are hearing about the need for remediation for students due to learning loss over the past few months. We know how remediation has played out in the past. Remember No Child Left Behind (or as I called it "No Child Left in Band")? Where were students pulled from for remediation?

Budget. We will need to prepare for significant budget gaps and the implications for our programs.

Key Messages

To combat these threats, I have found some key messaging to be critical for state and local leaders to help define the next steps and to keep some of the folks with bad intentions at bay.

Quality education has been defined. Most states and the federal government have spent decades defining what comprises a quality education. The Every Student Succeeds Act defines a "well-rounded" education. For decades music and the arts have been included. As a matter of fact, music education has been a part of our public school experience going back nearly 200 years. There is wide recognition of what is in a quality education.

This is no time to redefine educational expectations. There is no need to redefine learning expectations that have taken decades to define.

How we deliver education will change. The delivery of educational instruction will change due to what the health care experts advise us to follow.

Music has proven we can do this. Excellent music instruction has occurred during the past two months. We have proven that we can adapt to this new environment... even with little to no notice. Just think about what we can do if we are actually able to plan!

SEL is where it's at. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) must be front and center for all students.

In essence, we must change the "how," not the "what" - and in doing so, demonstrate what we have learned over the past several months about what we can do well and as we intentionally embed social and emotional learning into our instructional practices. This has resonated strongly with education leaders across all levels of the sector with whom I have spoken. It will work for you as well.

Social Emotional Learning Must Be Front and Center

A recent report by Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) notes that every student will be suffering some sort of loss - a family loss, the loss of milestones, and the loss of contact with friends. The arts must play a central role in healing. In order to do so, we must do it with intention.

It is not the purpose of this article to tell you how to do SEL in music. There have been articles, webinars, books, and new resources to help you revise your curriculum to intentionally include SEL.

I do need to make one thing clear: for any artistic endeavor to impact our students' social and emotional learning (SEL), it must be intentional and embedded into the curriculum. If you are not doing it with intention, you are not doing it. Yes, SEL is inherent in the arts, but it must be activated to have an impact. As SEL comes into focus, and as we contemplate what our schools will look like when they reconvene, we must be authentic in our approach. If you want to impact the social and emotional wellbeing of your students, then get to work embedding it into what your instructional approach will be. There are no short cuts or magical black box that SEL comes out of. Effort and intention are required.

What Should I Prepare For?

As we prepare our strategies for the fall, we must be prepared for a variety of scenarios based on the circumstances in your community. The biggest item to recognize is this: our programs will be different. The research will tell us about what we may do with our students safely and will largely determine what is possible. There are a few elements we can anticipate now.

Prepare for multiple scenarios. These would include in-person, blended (a combination of in-person and online) and online/virtual learning only:

Class sizes will be smaller. In some places, we are seeing 10 students and 1 teacher with social distancing. That being the case, begin to think about what you *can* do with fewer students - chamber music, small ensembles, oddly configured groups, modern band, composition, integration of technology across all, and improvisation (and not just jazz!) to name a few.

14th Annual
*Marching Band Pyware and
Drill Designing Workshops*
Come discover your drill designing talent.
Presented by Dan Ryder and Chuck Wilson
Pyware Workshop Monday, June 29, 2020
All functions will be presented.
Drill Designing Workshop June 30-July 3, 2020
Come and begin working on your marching show.
Bring music scores, recordings and instrumentation.
You will create your best drills.
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Editorial

While we all want to be together, it is far more likely that we will see a blended learning model come into play. This is due to the need to reduce our schools' capacity as we are for our businesses. Most locations are averaging 10 students in a class with one teacher. This will require some sort of rotating schedule to balance the load on the building. When students are not in the building, work will continue in through assignments provided to them.

It will be essential to consider how you use the time you have when you have students in front of you and what they can do on their own. This will help you prioritize your lesson planning.

Additionally, you must be prepared to go completely online with no notice. You should even prepare to start the school year as we ended this one, online. A school could be shut down if a student or faculty member comes down with the virus. The school could be shut down if there is a regional outbreak, and the entire area is shut down. Knowing this is a possibility (and some believe very likely), you should plan your lesson accordingly.

Review what practices you may need to change due to health considerations. The sharing of instruments will need to be avoided. Where it cannot be proper cleaning will be required. Sharing of sticks and mallets and other implements will undoubtedly be discouraged. Consider now how to make your environment safe.

Tools You Can Use Now

Here are some resources that will help you address some specific questions you may have about adapting your program for when school reconvenes:

NAfME and NFHS Guidance for Music Education. A comprehensive guidance document underdevelopment.

Arts Education is Essential. NAfME Unified Statement About the Value of Arts Education developed in collaboration with other national arts organizations this document making the case for the importance of music and arts education in the new reality. https://nafme.org/wp-content/files/2020/05/Arts_Education_Is_Essential-unified-statement.pdf

College Band Directors National Association. COVID-19 Response Committee Report for both high school and college instrumental music. https://www.cbdna.org/covid19/?fbclid=IwAR2tqjAEHr2SzkI7vH_JHxFsE3j6yiPSWZrFsrng7DwXhHortoacd2H6AyxE

American Bandmasters Association (ABA) Student Safety Study. The first draft of guidance for music educators from the ABA. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vqF_PRRU-RKyBjngCKIL-NgtzI0-SuQvo/view

American Bandmasters Association Forums. American Bandmasters Association Covid-19 Response Team responds to questions from around the country with solutions to critical issues and a report of recommendations: <https://band-chat-2020.freeforums.net/>

NFHS/NAMM/NAfME Cleaning Guidelines. Guidelines for handling musical instruments during the COVID-19 <https://www.nfhs.org/articles/covid-19-instrument-cleaning-guidelines/>

NFHS/CBDNA COVID19 Aerosol Study. Major research study to examine aerosol rates produced by wind instrumentalists, vocalists, and even actors, and how quickly those aerosol rates accumulate in a rehearsal space. Results and guidance available late June. <https://www.nfhs.org/articles/unprecedented-international-coalition-led-by-performing-arts-organizations-to-commission-covid-19-study/>

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YOUnison Student Leadership Engagement. Harnessing the power of student voice, YOUnison, the student led organization, has launched a campaign for music students. <https://www.younison.org/student-advocacy>

You can find a more comprehensive and up to date list at: <https://education.musicforall.org/covid19resources/>

Proactive > Reactive > Inactive

There are things you can do right now to help you program.

- Meet with your supervisor, principal, or administration right now. Let them know that you would like to volunteer for any committee developing plans for how schools will reopen.
- Network with your peers. Through online forums (like the ABA on above), Facebook groups, NAfME presentations, and places where conversations are happening, be sure to stay abreast of all the best thinking that is going on about how our programs may need to adapt. Let your administrators know you are developing ideas based on the best information and research available.
- Stay in contact with state leaders.
- Arm yourself with information on social and emotional learning and how you may embed this in your lessons.
- Build your local community network of support. Arm your music boosters and other supporters with information so they may be effective advocates for your program's continuation.

We Have Always Emerged Stronger

Throughout our history, music advocacy has been a part of our profession, going back to the first music class in Boston nearly 200 years ago. And at every crisis moment and threats to our existence... the music community has ALWAYS risen together as one including:

- Great Depression and World War II
- Sputnik and the Space Race
- A Nation At Risk
- The battle to make the music and arts a core subject
- No Child Left Behind
- The Great Recession

And who can forget those old chestnuts of standardized testing and Common Core! We have not only lived through it – not only have we survived – but we have thrived as a result. And so shall we now.

I believe that we will not only survive this current crisis, but it will be positively transformative, resulting in the gift of music-making for more students in more creative ways than ever before... more than ever we could have imagined.

It is not about what we can't do, it's about what we can do, and what we will do!

And we will do it the way we always have... Together!

Bob Morrison is the CEO of Quadrant Research and director of Arts Ed NJ. He has been one of the leading voices regarding arts education and school reconvening in the fall as a result of COVID19 and for the critical role of social and emotional learning and arts