

WVBA and WVMEA COVID-19 Recommendations

July 23, 2020

The West Virginia Bandmasters Association along with the West Virginia Music Educators Association recommends band directors adopt the following priorities during the COVID-19 pandemic:

1. Ensure the safety of every student in your band program. Follow all CDC, NFHS, WVDE, and SSAC guidelines for maintaining social distancing, hygiene, rehearsal, travel, and performance.
2. Teach MUSIC. We understand and respect how important marching band is to our students, communities, and programs. However, in these extraordinary times, many aspects of marching band are either difficult or impossible due to the restrictions placed upon us. WVBA and WVMEA recommends emphasizing the musical aspects of our programs...whether it be via marching music, concert music, jazz, chamber music, or other ensembles. If your school district is set up to handle remote learning, emphasize that as much as possible. Directors need not feel obligated to spend time, money, and energy on marching shows that are unlikely to be performed due to travel and social distancing restrictions. Use the time usually dedicated to marching band for teaching fundamentals, musicianship, etc. At this point, we do not recommend doing a "field show / competition show." It is also strongly recommended that each band director also take band uniforms out of consideration, and seek an alternate uniform that can be cleaned after each use.
3. Be mindful of the long-term health of your program. We are all eager for things to return to normal, but for the time being, we are in a holding pattern along with the rest of the world. However, we should take any necessary steps to ensure that when we are able to return to normal, we have healthy, eager groups that are ready to get back to the business of rehearsing and performing in the manner to which we are accustomed.
4. Be willing to adapt to change. No two schools or communities are the same, and each will have different ideas and expectations. Be willing to change to meet the needs of your students, communities, and schools, but again, always place the safety of your students before anything else.
5. Communicate. Talk to colleagues, administrators, etc. Whether you need assistance or have advice for others, ask questions, share concerns, and/or offer advice. We all benefit from open lines of communication.
6. Preventative measures. Please refer to the preliminary studies by the NFHS, University of Colorado Boulder, and University of Maryland in making decisions based on aerosol spray during performance on wind instruments. Please become familiar with the studies presented here:
<https://www.nfhs.org/media/4029952/preliminary-testing-report-7-13-20.pdf>

Each district and school will have a unique approach to navigating these historic times. We must all follow the directives of our local administrators, but it is the hope of the West Virginia Bandmasters Association, along with the West Virginia Music Educators Association that these suggestions help band directors in their decision-making process. Please refer to www.wvbandmasters.org for links that will provide direction in making these decisions possible.