



The Louisiana Music Educators Association
"We are in this together. Together we can do anything."

Colleagues,

"It will be quite a monumental task." "It will be a year unlike any other." These two quotes from Superintendent Brumley resonate with all of us. As music educators, we naturally view what is happening through the prism of our past experiences, current challenges, and future goals as related to our students and music programs.

Administrators, officials, parents, students, and other educators see things through their unique prisms as well. We can collectively be successful this year by listening to one another, finding common ground, and being stronger than the obstacles we face.

So, what is success this year? Success, as always, will be defined by what we were able to do for our children within the environment in which we operated. The good news is that we are musicians. Creativity is in our DNA. We will find a way.

Since my last message, so much has happened. I apologize that this communication will be a bit longer than usual. But I want to touch as many bases as I can, rather than bombard you with a series of messages. Some of what I discuss remains beyond our control. But in other matters, we have already begun to make significant progress.

Like many of you, I watched the presentation on the aerosol study being sponsored by multiple national organizations. The work being done is most welcome and worthwhile. As a result, we are becoming more informed about the science. The data was clearly preliminary and offered us only a limited number of suggestions and best practices to reduce risk. If you have not viewed the presentation, I encourage you to do so. ([Performing Arts Aerosol Study](#))

On the plus side, the most recent update (July 15) of the Start Strong 2020 Guidance, does allow wind instruments and choirs to rehearse indoors with appropriate distancing once Louisiana enters Phase 3. See page nine of the document for specific guidance. ([Start Strong 2020 July 15 update](#))

Recent decisions by LHSAA to curtail certain sports until Louisiana exits Phase 3, reinforces the seriousness of the current situation in our schools. While this “sports” decision does not directly impact music education, it is a strong indicator of “which way the wind is blowing” across our state.

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) recently finalized a “minimum standards” document for all school districts. School districts will be submitting their own independent plans to LDOE for approval.

In the next 30 days, much will happen at the national, state, school district, and school level. Plans for the reopening of schools are going to evolve, shift, pivot, bend, break, and take new shape. The first day of school, in whatever form it emerges, will not reflect what the plan happens to look like today. Likewise, the second day of school, the second week of school, and each new month will certainly bring more changes. That is the reality in which we will operate.

Despite the chaotic atmosphere in which we find ourselves, LMEA has been able to make progress in areas over which we have some control. Yes! There will be an LMEA Professional Development Conference. This will be a virtual conference. We are currently targeting November 20-23, 2020, as conference dates. Many more details will be communicated to you in the near future.

All-State is still on. We have committed to using digital recording in the audition process. A team of LMEA officials are working on procedures and timetables. If possible, the All-State groups will assemble, rehearse, and perform March 28-30, 2021, in Baton Rouge. We also recognize that circumstances might not allow an in-person event. Therefore, we are also exploring ways to bring all-state students together in a virtual manner.

Ensemble assessments as well as the State Solo Festival in the spring are still being planned, though there may be some necessary adjustments in our normal procedures to meet LDOE/CDC guidelines and restrictions.

Our Board of Directors will be meeting in late July to discuss many issues, plot a course forward, and explore initiatives for the upcoming year. An LMEA calendar

of events will be developed. But with so much uncertainty about what will happen over the next 60 days, we will not likely finalize the calendar until September. Even then, it will be subject to change as circumstances change.

In closing, I want you to know that every day I recommit myself to doing all I can for my students, school, and community. I ask that you do the same.

Scotty Walker, President
Louisiana Music Educators Association