



a voice for band in Alberta

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Dear Administrator:

Music is a fundamental element in the education of students worldwide. The unique value of ensemble music making is well documented and necessary to students and society. A student's ability to participate in bands, orchestras and choirs is unique and irreplaceable. The future of large ensemble participation must be of paramount concern to teachers and administrators alike, while maintaining the utmost concern for the health and safety of music students and teachers.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, our goal is to retain as much student enthusiasm and educational rigor as possible while we ensure the safety of our students. Teachers and administrators must carefully evaluate all decisions while navigating these uncharted waters. Temporary adjustments cannot set the tone for unplanned long-term consequences. Whatever accommodations become necessary, the goal must be to return to full ensemble instruction in the regularly scheduled school day once health and safety permit.

The COVID-19 pandemic requires us to rethink "how" the school band program will deliver quality music instruction. Whatever the temporary solution, we must be steadfast in our commitment to provide musical opportunities that can only be found as a participant in a large ensemble.

The science behind the care and protection of the general public during this pandemic as well as the opinions of medical professionals are still evolving. The situation is fluid and we realize circumstances change day to day. Several research projects are now underway to study COVID-19 and the performing arts. They include the study of aerosol projection of particles while playing and singing, surface retention of contaminants, appropriate methods for disinfecting instruments and surfaces, and the control of projected air. We hope these studies will provide concrete information and guidelines in the near future. Meanwhile, teachers and administrators must be vigilant. Apply what we DO know and re-evaluate all procedures as we move toward the re-entry and reopening of schools.

Music Educators and the Alberta Band Association are here to help! We know that as administrators and central office staff, you are dealing with massive decisions and innumerable unknowns. Music educators across Alberta and Canada have come together to provide solutions and strategies to deliver quality music education to our students. Here's how Music Educators may be able to help your school through the difficulties of education during the Covid-19 Pandemic, compiled by and shared courtesy of a Red Deer consortium of public and separate school music educators.

Music Educators are confident in their ability to continue music education no matter the circumstance. However education looks for the foreseeable future, music educators are prepared, flexible, and confident in their ability to deliver quality music education safely to all students.

Music Educators lead through uncertainty with ease. Music Educators are a source of calm and consistency for families and students, and can work quickly to solve any new challenges as they arise. Music Educators are intimately familiar with adapting quickly to changing situations.

Music Educators are connected and collaborative. Music Educators are connected with music educators from across the globe which allow them to be up to date and informed on the most recent practices and research in music education safety during COVID-19.

Music Educators work together to create solutions. Music Educators across Alberta are already working together to address issues that may arise in the COVID-19 education setting and they are prepared to adopt new policies and practices to maintain the quality of music education in your school.

Music Educators are ready to be part of the process – they can be trusted to deliver safe, equitable, and valuable music education to support the social & emotional needs of our students and families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Alberta Band Association is committed to providing any assistance and feedback necessary to assist teachers, administrators and policy makers moving forward. Please feel free to contact us if further information would be helpful or if we can be of assistance in some way by emailing our Managing Director, Kimberley Denis, at director@albertabandassociation.com

Regards,

Brent Pierce
President, Alberta Band Association