



*a voice for band in Alberta*

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Dear School Trustee:

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, the most notable of which is a large study currently being done by the University of Colorado which focusses on the study of aerosol projection of particles while playing and singing. Preliminary results regarding concert bands will be available on **July 10**. Other studies that are ongoing are focusing on the surface retention of contaminants, appropriate methods for disinfecting instruments and surfaces, and the control of projected air. The scientific community is working hard to provide health advocates with the information they need to make decisions regarding the health and safety of the population and we strongly encourage administrators, school boards, and government officials to wait for these results before making any decisions regarding the inclusion or exclusion of music studies for the student population.

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. To eliminate musical instruction from the school day would be detrimental to the health and well-being of students. We know from numerous studies that music directly and positively impacts literacy and numeracy skills and aids in the development of a healthy brain, promoting higher cognitive function and making our students better learners. Music Educators are flexible teachers and are actively thinking of strategies to deliver quality music education to our students during these unprecedented times. Music Educators are a collaborative group of people, interested in ensuring that students receive the very best public education has to offer and they are prepared to adopt new policies and practices to maintain the quality of music education in schools across the province. 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. We are asking school boards, administrators and government officials to wait to make decisions regarding the inclusion of music study in schools in the fall until the results of the University of Colorado study are available in July.

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](mailto:director@albertabandassociation.com)

Regards,

Brent Pierce  
President, Alberta Band Association