
Reopening Schools 2020-21: Best Practices for K-12 Fine Arts Programs



Guidance, Suggestions, and Planning Recommendations for Fine Arts Educators

All information in this document is non-regulatory guidance issued for general informational purposes only. This document is not intended to constitute legal advice. Because local school board policy and unique facts make dramatic differences in analyzing any situation, the Tennessee Department of Education advises each school district to consult with the local school board attorney for specific legal advice regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on school operations.

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	4
Introduction	5
School Reopening Guidance	5
General Recommendations and Considerations	6
Arts Education is Essential	6
Arts Education in the 2020-21 School Year.....	6
Collaborative Decision-Making.....	7
Learning Spaces.....	8
Preparing the Learning Space	8
Using the Learning Space.....	9
Ancillary Spaces	10
Materials and Supplies	10
Dance Materials and Supplies	11
Media Arts Materials and Supplies	12
Music Materials and Supplies	12
Theatre Materials and Supplies.....	14
Visual Art Materials and Supplies.....	14
Instructional Delivery.....	16
Reimagining Fine Arts Instruction.....	16
Face-to-Face Instructional Models	17
Remote Instructional Models	17
Virtual Instructional Models.....	17
Hybrid Instructional Models	18
Transitioning Between Instructional Models	18
Designing Engaging Learning Experiences	19
Whole Child & Well-Being.....	19
Student and Teacher Movement	20
Instructional Time and Frequency	21

Program Sustainability	22
Performances, and Events	22
Learning Experiences.....	22
Recruiting and Retention.....	22
Professional Development.....	23
Other Considerations.....	24
Appendix A: Performing Arts Research.....	25
Performing Arts Aerosol Study	25
Reducing Bioaerosol Emissions and Exposures in the Performing Arts	26
Appendix B: Suggested Resources	27
General Resources	27
Health Resources.....	27
Dance Resources	27
Music Resources	28
Theatre Resources.....	28
Visual Arts Resources.....	28
Contact Information.....	28

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[ArtsEd Tennessee](#)
Stephen Coleman, Executive Director



[Tennessee Association of Dance](#)
Bridget Kohnhorst, Executive Director



[Tennessee Music Education Association](#)
Alexis Yatuzis-Derryberry, President



[Tennessee Art Education Association](#)
Melody Weintraub, President



[CMA Foundation](#)
Tiffany Kerns, Executive Director



[Tennessee Arts Academy](#)
E. Frank Bluestein, Executive Director



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Dr. Brad Foust, Chair

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Introduction

This guidance document is intended to support district leaders, school administrators, and fine arts educators in planning for the reopening of schools and guiding effective and informed decision-making for arts education programs that balances health and safety considerations with best practices for standards-based fine arts teaching and learning in classroom, studio, rehearsal, and performance settings.

The best practices, recommendations, and suggestions presented in this document were sourced from a myriad state- and national-level guidance documents from arts and education organizations and were recommended and aligned to Tennessee-specific needs by a focus group of arts education stakeholders representing all regions of the state, multiple locales (urban, suburban, and rural), and all content-strands within the arts (dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts).

This document provides recommendations and suggestions for arts teaching and learning within in the following categories:

1. Learning Spaces,
2. Materials and Supplies,
3. Instructional Delivery,
4. Student and Teacher Movement,
5. Instructional Time and Frequency, and
6. Program Sustainability

Information and guidance about the COVID-19 pandemic, related health and safety concerns, and the school reopening response is rapidly changing. This guidance does not purport to replace or contradict other guidance released by the department, the Tennessee Department of Health, or other national, state, and local health, education, or government agencies. This document, and the suggestions and recommendations herein, is designed to be revised, added to, or eliminated as new information becomes available.

District leaders, school administrators, and educators are encouraged to engage in additional research using a variety of resources to determine the best methods to reduce risk and to provide a safe and healthy learning environment.

School Reopening Guidance

In June 2020, the Department of Education released the Reopening Schools: Overview Guide for LEAs and an accompanying series of school reopening toolkits, including topics such as Academics, Counseling, Technology, and Well-Being & Mental Health. The department continues to post updates about reopening guidance for districts as new information becomes available. The school reopening toolkits and other reopening resources can be found on the [Reopening Guidance webpage](#).

General Recommendations and Considerations

The following considerations and recommendations are applicable across all fine arts content strands (dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts).

Arts Education is Essential

In May 2020, over fifty national arts and education organizations across the United States joined together to sign a statement to support arts education as an essential part of a well-rounded education for all students during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

Three principles are outlined in the [Arts Education is Essential](#) unified statement:

Well-Being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Arts education supports the social and emotional well-being of students, whether through distance learning or in person.
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Arts education nurtures the creation of a welcoming school environment where students can express themselves in a safe and positive way.
Well-Rounded Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Arts education is part of a well-rounded education for all students as understood and supported by federal and state policymakers.

These principles are the foundations to providing students with high-quality, sequential standards-based opportunities in the arts, whether presented in face-to-face, hybrid, or remote/virtual learning models. The fine arts continue to play a pivotal role for all students, including the traditionally underrepresented, those with special needs, and those from low-income families. It is imperative schools provide access to the arts.

Arts Education in the 2020-21 School Year

Arts courses are beneficial for ensuring students' social, emotional, and academic well-being upon returning to school for 2020-21. Fine arts courses can be implemented in a variety of modified and/or virtual settings. Access to fine arts courses are especially important for students who face economic, personal, and academic challenges because they allow students to achieve and thrive in a safe environment. Self-awareness, self-efficacy, self-management, and perseverance, social awareness, and relationship skills are central to all arts education activities, no matter the age and ability of the student or the environment in which the learning takes place. These skills are also deeply embedded in the [Tennessee Academic Standards for Fine Arts](#).

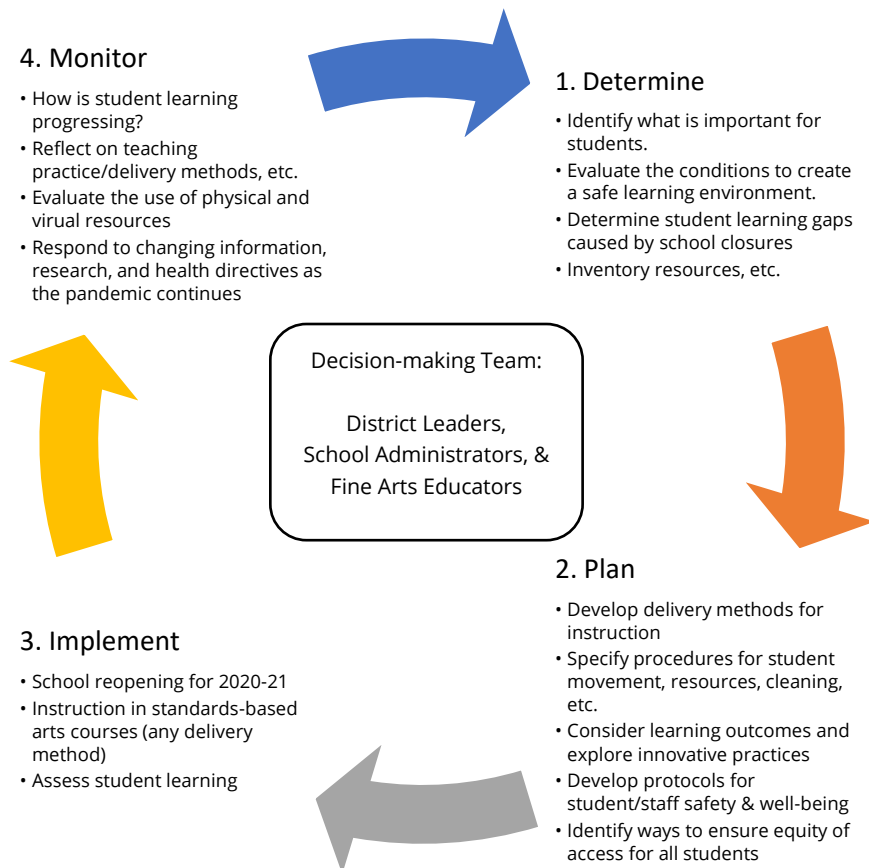
Collaborative Decision-Making

District leaders and school administrators are encouraged to involve fine arts teachers in the decision-making process when considering the health and safety, instructional delivery, and programmatic decisions to be made in support of safely reopening schools for the 2020-21 school year. Fine arts teachers have access to content-specific best practices and research that can help guide the decision-making process and alleviate the burden of planning from school officials. Fine arts teachers are the experts in their respective fields and have invested years of training in art-making, pedagogy, and arts program administration and are professionals in their respective fields.

Explore implementing a collaborative decision-making model rooted in continuous improvement practices that encourages the input of fine arts educators.

Collaborative Decision-Making Model

(tasks listed are examples)



Learning Spaces

Preparing the Learning Space

- Ensuring equitable access to fine arts courses and programming is a best practice for providing a well-rounded education. Social distancing limitations, including limitations of learning spaces, should not be used as a measure by which to cap program enrollments, dissolve programs, or exclude students from participating in fine arts programs.
- Fine arts classrooms, maker-spaces, theaters, studios, music rehearsal halls, and other types of fine arts-specific learning spaces are designed for specialized use. Many spaces are designed with secure storage for course-specific materials and equipment and are optimized for seating/movement arrangements characteristic to learning in the respective arts discipline. District leaders, school administrators, and fine arts educators are encouraged to consider:
 - Developing procedures to ensure that fine arts-specific equipment and materials are secured, especially in shared spaces.
 - Working in partnership with building custodians and maintenance personnel to develop plans for the specialized cleaning and care of fine arts learning spaces. Many fine arts spaces are built and outfitted with custom furnishings or materials, like mirrored walls, sprung floors for dance, tiered seating for choral rehearsal, etc. These furnishings and surfaces can be easily damaged by improper cleaning products, excessive furniture moving, and general misuse. Desks can damage the flooring used in dance and theatre spaces.
 - Collaborating to develop a plan for students to maintain physical distancing while using the available furniture. For example, many visual art rooms have large student tables. Some alternatives could include allowing flexible seating options, limiting the number of students at each table, and mobile teaching options.
- When scheduling and rostering students into fine arts courses, district leaders, school administrators, and fine arts educators are encouraged to pay careful attention to the recommended room capacity, classroom location, and availability of necessary materials and equipment for learning. Fine arts learning spaces are specially designed to facilitate learning in the respective fine arts disciplines.
- Consider using tape to mark the spaces where students can and cannot sit or stand in order to maintain social distancing protocols in large fine arts learning spaces (e.g., band/orchestra room, auditorium, etc.).
- Schools offering one-on-one or small group lessons in music, dance, or other fine arts areas presented by a certified arts educator or an external arts provider may consider designating appropriately-sized spaces that can safely accommodate participants using appropriate social distancing protocols.
- Alternative and overflow instructional spaces may be considered if students are not able to appropriately socially distance within the fine arts learning space.
 - Consider outdoor classes and rehearsals, weather permitting. Priority consideration could be given to spaces that are accessible and weather-resistant (paved, covered,

- good drainage) and those that would create minimal sound bleed into other academic spaces.
- Consider relocating the class to a larger space to accommodate appropriate social distancing. Ideas include cafeteria, auditorium, and gymnasium.
 - If space is available and extra staff is on hand, classes may be split so that the teacher can teach in one classroom and simultaneously present virtually in another (i.e., unused classrooms, classrooms of teachers on a planning period, hallways, atriums, etc.).
 - Another alternative is to separate larger classes into smaller course sections (e.g., a concert band class could be split into brass and woodwind sections). In these instances, administrators, counselors, and course schedulers are encouraged to collaborate with the fine arts teachers to determine the appropriate division of students based on fine arts discipline-specific differentiation practices.
- If students are engaged in virtual learning at home, educators may consider designing an orientation to help students and families prepare the home for learning. Information to consider may include:
 - Access to materials, equipment, and resources. Determine if students will have access to materials provided by the school or if families will need to provide their own supplies/use existing materials available in the home.
 - Creating a safe space to engage in artistic learning (i.e., creating a space that is safe for dance and movement).
 - Educators may consider creating a teaching space that would be similar to students' home learning environments in order to model ways for students to adapt to smaller spaces and how to safely use the space. (i.e., in the absence of portable barres for dance, a kitchen counter or chair back can be used).

Using the Learning Space

- Consider developing procedures for hand-washing or sanitizer stations to be used as students enter and exit the room.
- Consider implementing cleaning and disinfecting schedules into daily classroom routines. Educators may consider teaching students proper cleaning techniques for items like desks, music stands, mats, and other workspaces and equipment. Educators could collaborate with school and district leaders to determine cleaning tasks that are appropriate and safe for students to perform.
- To minimize repeated touch by students, educators may consider propping open doors at the beginning and end of class to allow students to pass without the need to touch door handles. Educators may collaborate with school and district leaders to determine best practices that adhere to regulations (i.e., fire codes, etc.).
- High-touch objects, such as music stands, door knobs, switches, drying racks, keyboards, and faucets could be disinfected appropriately according to their frequency of use and according to CDC and health agency guidance. If any equipment is to be shared, educators, students,

and other school personnel could be trained how to safely disinfect and clean the equipment before, between, and after uses.

- Educators could consider removing non-essential furniture, equipment, and decorations from the classroom other than those things which are effective for the engagement of student learning or essential to the operation of the classroom. This includes items such as furniture, toys, rarely used machinery, and bookcases which should not be commonly accessed or are difficult to clean/disinfect. All posters and wall art could be laminated so that it can more easily be disinfected.

Ancillary Spaces

- Many fine arts programs may utilize ancillary spaces, like storage, workshops, instrument lockers, and changing/dressing rooms. District leaders, school administrators, and fine arts educators are encouraged to:
 - Consider limiting student access to non-essential learning spaces.
 - Develop procedures to control the flow of traffic in-and-out of rooms or consider staggering access with small groups of students. Procedures could be modeled by the teacher and practiced with students at all levels.
 - Post clear signage to indicate traffic flow and social distancing considerations.
- Consider the size of dressing areas (dance, theatre, marching band, etc.) when developing social distancing protocols.
 - Educators may develop procedures to stagger access to these facilities and limit them to a small number of students at a time. Additional groups accessing dressing areas may necessitate additional cleaning and sanitization.
 - Students may be encouraged to consider wearing dance attire underneath school clothes to limit contact.
 - Students could be instructed to apply their own makeup and encouraged to not share cosmetics or cosmetic tools in rehearsals or while preparing for performances.
- Consider closing these types of ancillary spaces until needed if the school will not have public performances for a temporary or extended time frame during the school year. School personnel are encouraged to avoid repurposing these spaces as they are specialized and can be used to store non-essential fine arts equipment, materials, and supplies during times where heightened social distancing preclude their use.

Materials and Supplies

District leaders, school administrators, and fine arts educators are encouraged to work collaboratively to develop a plan that ensures all students have equitable access to needed materials and supplies regardless of the instructional mode and model.

While the urgency and intentionality of cleaning and sanitizing classrooms and materials is not unique to the arts, the use of supplies and materials in fine arts classrooms and the maintenance of the learning spaces will require clear guidelines and procedures. District leaders, school

administrators, educators, and all stakeholders are encouraged to collaborate to develop a plan for cleaning arts learning spaces, supplies, and materials.

Many national arts organizations have developed protocols for the cleaning and sanitization of fine arts discipline-specific materials, supplies, and equipment. District leaders, school administrators, and educators are encouraged to review this guidance, as well as guidance from the CDC and other health agencies, to develop cleaning protocols for district and school arts programs.

National arts organizations with discipline-specific guidance include:

- [National Dance Education Organization](#)
- [National Association for Music Education](#)
- [Educational Theatre Association](#)
- [National Art Education Association](#)

Links to additional suggested resources are included in Appendix B.

Dance Materials and Supplies

- Avoid the sharing of supplies, like journals, notebooks, writing utensils, and other common school supplies. Student devices could be used for journaling or note taking.
- Costumes, uniforms, shoes, and other apparel could be cleaned and sanitized between uses. Consider suspending the practice of rental uniforms. Any clothing items made available for rental could be properly cleaned and disinfected prior to use. If class sets of shoes are utilized, they could be assigned to individual students and disinfected in between uses. Street shoes may be removed before entering the dance floor.
- Props, yoga mats, and other manipulatives should not be shared. If the use of these materials are necessary, each item could be cleaned and sanitized after use. Consider removing non-essential materials from the learning space.
- Sound systems and other instructional technology could be designated for teacher use only. Teachers are encouraged to follow appropriate cleaning procedures daily.
- Ballet barres could be wiped down/cleaned and disinfected after every class session and between uses. Consider removing portable barres from the classroom if not in use.
- In addition to cleaning between uses, consider cleaning and disinfecting dance floors nightly using a designated mop and appropriate sanitation solutions. Educators are encouraged to collaborate with school administrators and custodial/maintenance staff to research and discuss methods of cleaning to safeguard the integrity of the dance floor. These specialized surfaces can be easily damaged if they are misused or if harmful materials are used for cleaning.
- Consider regular cleaning and disinfecting protocols for mirrors. Consider avoiding contact with mirrors or creating a perimeter in front of the mirror that is off-limits to students.
- Schedule necessary time between classes to sanitize shared supplies and materials.

Media Arts Materials and Supplies

- Consider transitioning to digital tools and resources where technology allows.
- Teachers are encouraged to remove community maker tools and supplies. Consider providing storage bags or bins for students to transport their own tools.
- Computer labs may need to be sanitized between each rotation of students. Personnel are encouraged to research appropriate cleaning methods and develop procedures to clean resources between uses.
- In audio/music-based media arts courses, students should use their own headphones with a line-in mic. Any shared microphones or other equipment could be sanitized between students by using manufacturer-recommended cleaning methods.
- Sound systems, LCD projectors, whiteboards and other instructional technology could be designated for teacher use only. Teachers are encouraged to follow appropriate cleaning procedures at regular intervals.
- Schedule necessary time between classes to sanitize shared supplies and materials.

Music Materials and Supplies

- Districts and schools, in collaboration with arts teachers, should develop routine cleaning/maintenance procedures and schedules for musical instruments. Teachers may be trained on proper sanitization practices for safe instrument handling and classroom equipment (music stands, percussion instruments, storage carts). Follow suggested guidance from national arts organizations and manufacturers regarding the cleaning, sanitization, and disinfection of musical instruments.
 - See NFHS, NAFME, and the NAMM Foundation [instrument cleaning guidelines](#).
- A typical practice prior to the COVID-19 pandemic was for students to share larger school-owned musical instrument.
 - This practice may not be advisable in accordance with guidance from health agencies. Follow specific guidance from the [Tennessee Department of Health](#) and [Centers for Disease Control](#).
 - Some instruments may be able to be shared if following appropriate cleaning and sanitization protocols before, between, and after uses.
 - Under no circumstances should students share mouthpieces, reeds, etc.
- Avoid shared classroom equipment like accessory percussion, mallet instruments, recorders, keyboards, etc. Distribute instruments to individual students for use in class. Materials should be cleaned and sanitized between uses.
- Consider the availability of multiple sets of instruments, equipment, and supplies that can be rotated, with one set being cleaned while the other is in use.
- Use one-to-one digital tools such as Chromebooks, iPad, and cell phones to access online learning resources.
- Consider increasing access to and usage of digital music education curriculum resources and platforms.
- Instructional technology including tablets, laptop devices, SMART Boards, piano keyboards, digital audio workstations, microphones, and digital recorders may be disinfected through

the use of isopropyl alcohol wipes. Research manufacturer-recommended cleaning techniques to avoid damage to surfaces and equipment.

- Sound systems, LCD projectors, whiteboards and other instructional technology could be designated for teacher use only. Teachers are encouraged to follow appropriate cleaning procedures at regular intervals.
- Music stands, electronic pianos, computer keyboards, and other similar equipment could be sanitized between uses.
- Consider utilizing non-teaching personnel and repair vendors to assist with ongoing instrument sanitization and cleaning.
- Consider the following guidelines for recorders and wind instruments:
 - Do not share mouthpieces, bows, or reeds.
 - Before distribution, instruments could be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized using appropriate cleaning techniques.
 - Plastic recorders can be washed with warm, soapy water and should be swabbed after each use. Disinfectant solution and alcohol wipes may also be used. Alternatively, many plastic instruments like recorders may be able to be sanitized using dishwashing equipment in the school's kitchen. Educators are encouraged to research the appropriateness and proper cleaning techniques if this method is considered.
 - Research manufacturer-recommended cleaning techniques to avoid damage to the instrument.
 - Wooden instruments present fewer hygienic issues that may be solved by students washing their hands before and after use for a minimum of twenty seconds.
 - Mallets with plastic or wooden handles may be sanitized between uses with appropriate cleaning wipes.
 - Consider providing receptacles for emptying water keys and removing condensation from instruments.
 - Old and discarded reeds can be disposed in the trash and kept out of instrument cases.
- Consider providing non-shared instrument maintenance supplies and accessories or asking students to provide their own, such as valve oil, reeds, rosin, disinfectant spray, etc.
- Maintain an accurate inventory of instruments and sign-out procedures.
- Consider discontinuing the sharing of garments such as marching band uniforms, choir uniforms, etc. Uniforms could be cleaned prior to distribution, between uses, and upon return.
- Consider providing individual copies of sheet music, following applicable copyright guidelines. Additional music stands and folders may be needed in order to adhere to social distancing protocols.
- Schedule necessary time between classes to sanitize shared supplies and materials.

Theatre Materials and Supplies

- Consider using digital scripts and materials, following applicable copyright guidelines.
- Consider providing digital access to textbooks, if available.
- Masks can be worn during scene and monologue work to maintain social distancing protocols.
- It is recommended to remove shared materials (classroom materials, props, costumes, make-up, etc.). Consider assigning or providing individual sets of materials for student use or have students provide their own materials.
- If sharing must occur, tools, equipment, and materials could be cleaned and sanitized between uses by using appropriate cleaning methods. Remove all equipment except that which can be cleaned and sanitized.
- Sound systems, LCD projectors, whiteboards and other instructional technology could be designated for teacher use only. Teachers are encouraged to follow appropriate cleaning procedures at regular intervals.
- Schedule necessary time between classes to sanitize shared supplies and materials.

Visual Art Materials and Supplies

- It is recommended to remove community supplies. The sharing of art supplies may not be possible and should be limited. Supplies, implements, and tools could be cleaned according to recommended guidelines after and between usages. If shared supplies are necessary, consider using designated bins for clean and used supplies. Community supplies are considered high-touch and frequent cleaning is encouraged.
- Work surfaces could be cleaned and sanitized between uses. Consider cleaning tables and stools throughout the day or between classes, if possible.
- Consider assigning, providing, or having students provide individual art supply kits including high-touch supplies like pencils, erasers, drawing materials, scissors, and brushes which can be used at school or remotely. If individual art supply kits are not possible, consider cleaning protocols for materials that can be cleaned and limiting use for those that cannot.
- Consider structuring lessons with choice-boards that allow students to select a variety of learning experiences based on personal interest as well as aligning to access to available supplies both at school and at home.
- Materials and supplies used for in-person instruction where students may rotate between art stations, if used, should be cleaned and sanitized between uses.
- Consider using alternatives to sculptural materials. Allotments of single-use packaged wet material (e.g. clay, paper mâché, plaster, plasticine clay, etc.) could be provided to students.
- If tools are shared, they should be sanitized and cleaned between uses (brayers, paint brushes, photography tools, scissors, etc.).
- If equipment and tools are shared, (e.g. enlargers, pottery wheels, 3-D printers, etc.) they should be cleaned and sanitized between uses.
- Sound systems, LCD projectors, whiteboards and other instructional technology could be designated for teacher use only. Teachers should follow appropriate cleaning procedures at regular intervals.

- To ensure the most hygienic environment possible and to maintain the supply of carefully budgeted supplies for all learners, consider allowing only art teachers access to art room supplies and equipment for the purpose of visual art instruction.
- Schedule necessary time between classes to sanitize shared supplies and materials.

Instructional Delivery

It is a best practice that all students have access to an equitable delivery of arts education that includes dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts taught by certified professional fine arts educators in partnership with community arts providers. Learning opportunities in the fine arts support students' educational, social, and emotional well-being. Culturally responsive and rigorous instruction in the fine arts are possible whether students are in the classroom or engaging in learning from home.

Arts Educators are encouraged to...
Design curricular options for face-to-face, remote/virtual and hybrid learning within all four domains of the Tennessee Academic Standards for Fine Arts.
Craft learning experiences that engage students in the artistic process, cultivate creativity, and provide opportunities to document and share personal artmaking with others.
Develop formative and summative assessments that offer flexibility for face-to-face, remote/virtual, and hybrid learning models and provide timely feedback to students.
Prioritize relationship building, social-emotional learning, and well-being with students and families.

Reimagining Fine Arts Instruction

The challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and school reopening constraints may shift thinking away from the more “traditional outcomes” of arts education programs (i.e., performances, art galleries, etc.). Work products, course work, engagement, and instructional delivery will likely not look the same during the 2020-21 school year. Students and teachers will experience school in a variety of non-traditional ways, including in-person (with precautions), remote (students and/or teachers out of school buildings, with or without technology supports), virtual (technology-enabled, internet-based engagement), and hybrid (a mix of modalities).

District leaders, school administrators, and arts educators are encouraged to explore innovation in instructional design, delivery, and assessment while prioritizing personal artmaking, creativity, and deep engagement in all domains of the fine arts standards.

Best practices to consider:

- Determine the essential learning outcomes students need during this time.
- When delivering lessons in any format, include clear and concise directions and engaging questions to activate creative thinking and artistic processes.
- Fine arts learning will look differently for a while; it is okay to reimagine the curriculum.
- Make connections to students and personal life experiences to engage creative idea-making.
- Include study of a variety of diverse artists to be culturally responsive.
- Design lessons with all learners in mind, including students in special populations.

Face-to-Face Instructional Models

For successful face-to-face instruction with precautions, school administrators are encouraged to collaborate with fine arts educators to determine ideal class sizes relative to the types of activities experienced in the course, equipment needs for student safety, and reduced number/alternative modes for presentation of student work this academic year.

Best practices to consider:

- Reimagine group projects so that shared materials and tools can be avoided. Facilitate classroom activities that are non-contact.
- Utilize instructional strategies that do not require students to gather in small spaces (rethink carpet time, gathering around the teacher for demonstrations, etc.).
- Consider substituting small ensemble work for large ensemble work.
- In a situation where a large room is unavailable for large ensemble work, small ensemble work can still take place while other students complete work aligned to non-performance-based [standards](#) (Respond and Connect domains).

Remote Instructional Models

For successful remote instruction (students and/or teachers out of school buildings, with or without technology supports) to take place, schools are encouraged to determine a system for the equitable delivery of content to students. These considerations could be based on students' access to devices and internet connectivity at home:

1. Digitally: using a web-based application
2. In print form: teachers prepare packets that students complete from home. An internal system for creating/copying material and a pick up/return system could be developed and communicated.

Best practices to consider:

- Consider creating choice-boards so that students may choose learning experiences based on at-home resources.
- Implement flexibility to allow students to take an assignment into another direction and to express their views, interests, and feelings.

Virtual Instructional Models

For successful virtual instruction (technology-enabled, internet-based engagement) to take place, district leaders, school administrators, and educators could identify common web tools that will be used by teachers of all content areas (including the fine arts) and ensure equitable training opportunities for all educators.

1. Communication apps: Determine how teachers and school leaders will communicate with students and parents when away from school. Examples are district email, Remind, Class Dojo, and others. Many ensemble-based (chorus, band, theatre, etc.) classes may already utilize these tools.

2. Platform for instruction: Identify one platform or instruction or learning management system that all teachers (including fine arts educators) will use to deliver content virtually to students.
3. Presentation apps: Identify appropriate presentation/interactive learning apps to increase student engagement with virtual learning. Some of these may be better-suited to fine arts subjects. Leaders are encouraged to consult with fine arts educators to determine the best apps and platforms for fine arts courses.
4. Conferencing apps: Specify apps and platforms educators may use to conduct synchronous classes (“live” teaching).

Best practices to consider:

- Divide classes into teams that can meet virtually to work on and complete collaborative assignments.
- Create simple enrichment activities that can be led by parents/guardians at home and provide opportunities to involve the family in the artistic process and learning.

Hybrid Instructional Models

For successful hybrid instruction (a mix of modalities), district leaders and school administrators are encouraged to carefully consider the ways fine arts classes differ from other academic subjects. Fine arts educators could proactively plan lessons and units that can flex between modalities to prevent loss of learning and instructional time.

Best practices to consider:

- Virtual assignments can be created, worked on at home, and performed in individual/small group assessments and/or digital submissions.
- Flipped classroom models where instruction occurs at school and practice occurs at home could be considered. Flipped instruction can include a focus on analysis and response, with students collaborating to evaluate performances recorded at home, developing criteria and subject-specific rubrics.

Transitioning Between Instructional Models

Instruction and authentic assessment in the fine arts may require special considerations.

Questions for leaders, administrators, and educators in determining/changing modalities:

- How might transitions in instructional models affect the accommodations implemented for fine arts courses in the current model?
- How will students access supplies/materials/equipment to continue participating in the arts?
- In what ways can inequities in access to fine arts courses be mitigated during transitions between instructional models?
- As they serve students across all grade bands, is the instructional load on fine arts educators (sets of standards, number of grade levels, number of students, in-person/hybrid/digital) commensurate with that of teachers of other academic subjects?

Designing Engaging Learning Experiences

District leaders, school administrators, and arts educators are encouraged to explore innovation in instructional design, delivery, and assessment while prioritizing personal artmaking, creativity, and deep engagement in all domains of the fine arts standards. Virtual, remote, or hybrid learning experiences may differ from traditional in-person classes by necessity.

Suggestions for educators:

- Consider student interest, attention span, and class learning goals when designing instruction aligned to grade-level or course-specific standards.
- Ensure that scheduled virtual engagements balance direct instruction (teacher lecture, instructional video, etc.) with authentic experiences in the art form (creating, practicing, experimenting, etc.), opportunities for peer engagement, and transitions. An in-person class time of 90 minutes may not translate effectively to 90 minutes of a video-conferencing lecture. Educators could provide a commensurate amount of time engaging in the art form through a variety of learning activities.
- Use this opportunity to grow students' skills of analysis, reflection, and critique. Virtual and remote learning lend themselves to "talking/reading about" the fine arts more than "doing/making" in the arts. Teachers may find themselves aligning lessons and instruction to the Respond and Connect foundations of [Tennessee Academic Standards for Fine Arts](#), rather than Perform (Dance, Theatre, Music) or Create (Visual Art, Media Arts).

Whole Child & Well-Being

Whole child competencies are essential to student success in in-person, remote, virtual, or hybrid learning environments in all academic content areas. While social-emotional learning happens authentically in fine arts learning experiences, teachers are encouraged to consider using a variety of available tools and practices to ensure social-emotional learning is embedded during this school year.

Best practices to consider:

- Create opportunities for social-emotional connection regardless of the instructional model. Social-emotional learning in a virtual fine arts classroom is essential to maintaining student engagement. Some examples of providing additional opportunities for social-emotional connection include making time for break-out rooms, general check-ins, and prioritization of connecting activities.

Student and Teacher Movement

- District leaders, school administrators, and fine arts educators are encouraged to consider the amount of time necessary to complete the cleaning and sanitization of learning spaces. This time is important to consider when ensuring enough instructional time is built into the day.
 - Consider the amount of prep time available to educators between class sessions. Many elementary fine arts teachers indicate schedules prior to the pandemic that required back-to-back class times with little or no time between classes to prep the room or reset equipment. This practice could be avoided in order to ensure the educator has enough time to prepare a safe learning space for each class.
- If schools are equipped with designated fine arts learning spaces, every effort should be made to utilize the learning space as intended and have students transition to and from the dedicated fine arts classrooms, while adhering to social distancing protocols. If fine arts educators must travel to classrooms “on a cart,” consider the following:
 - The transition time needed to clean up from the previous class, travel to the next class, and set up in new environment.
 - Providing mobile technology for the arts teacher use.
 - Allowing space for drying and storage for artwork in each classroom.
 - Facilitating collaboration between the arts teacher and the classroom teacher for use of the board, instructional technology, etc.
 - Designing projects that would be most effectively facilitated in a regular classroom.
 - Determine which materials students may be expected to provide and what materials will need to be supplied by the school.
 - Storing individual sets of watercolors, markers, and other supplies in each classroom to reduce the amount of supplies being transported on the cart.
- Authentic and equitable participation in the arts at all grades and development levels often requires the use of specialized materials, supplies, tools, and safety equipment that may not be accessed in a regular classroom. Additionally, itinerant teachers or teachers restricted to a mobile cart may be unable to safely and effectively provide the full range of experiences for students.
- District leaders, school administrators, and fine arts educators are encouraged to consider the consistency of expectations between schools across the district, especially to facilitate the ease of transition for itinerant fine arts teachers serving more than one school. This includes collaborating to determine the supplies and materials needed to deliver instruction with equity and fidelity.

Instructional Time and Frequency

- As a best practice, students should receive equitable and frequent instruction in the fine arts in order to experience the full depth and breadth of learning required in the [Tennessee Academic Standards for Fine Arts](#). Not only is class time important, but a regular frequency of class meetings is essential for sequential skill- and knowledge-building.
- Consider alternatives to removing students from fine arts, physical education, exploratory, or other special rotations to facilitate remediation or intervention activities.
- Course scheduling could allow time for cleaning of multi-use surfaces and for the transition of students in and out of instructional and storage spaces.
- When possible, consider providing longer transitions for cleaning arts learning spaces, supplies, and materials between classes. Additional strategies include incorporating cleaning time into the instructional time, rotating teams of students to help clean, provided training of appropriate cleaning techniques has occurred and proper supervision is available.
- Large ensembles (instrumental and vocal music courses are excluded from class size requirements) that historically meet in a single class period may need to be divided into multiple periods. Such divisions could be determined by instrument, ensemble size, voicings, development level, and limitations of arts learning spaces as determined by the fine arts educator.
- Programs such as after-school ensembles and class piano or guitar can be held virtually or in a hybrid setting in smaller groups while maintaining social distancing protocols. Schedules may need to be adjusted to ensure equity.

Program Sustainability

Performances, and Events

Traditional outcomes like public performances, plays, dance concerts, recitals, art galleries, and maker showcases may not be advisable during part or all of the 2020-21 school year.

District leaders, school administrators, and arts educators are encouraged to explore innovative and non-traditional methods of showcasing student work and engaging students, families, and the community within the artistic process.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Photograph/digitize all artwork created throughout the year, encourage students to create digital slideshows of personal and class work, and develop non-traditional methods to engage students, families, and the community in online or virtual exhibitions.
- If the district/school is operating in a face-to-face model, have students curate exhibitions for display on school walls (while practicing social distancing protocols).
- Host a display at the district office, city hall, public library or other community space without an opening or closing reception.
- Share information with students, families, and the community about the precautions implemented by the school and fine arts programs.
- Use a common district location for the staging of performances. If an audience is unable to attend due to restrictions on large gatherings, a large gym or auditorium may serve as a location for the live streaming or recording of music performances.
- Virtual and/or live streamed performances. Choose plays (reader's theatre style) or musicals (concert style) where students can maintain social distancing protocols and perform with limited or no audience that is broadcast via livestream or taped for viewing on various platforms.
- Outdoor concerts and performances may be an option for small groups in areas where outdoor amphitheatres or performance spaces exist. Performances can be live streamed and social distancing protocols implemented for in-person attendees.

Learning Experiences

- Employ virtual field trips until it is safe to travel. Be mindful of the appropriateness of some artwork in galleries for younger students.
- Collaborate with local artists and agencies to design virtual artist residencies or artist talks to provide students with extra-curricular experiences. Consider exploring opportunities to seek additional collaborative experiences across artistic disciplines and connections with other content areas.

Recruiting and Retention

- Many middle school and high school arts programs (instrumental and choral music, theatre, etc.) engage in recruitment activities (informational meetings, instrument placement, and

other events) with feeder schools during the spring. Because of the school closures during the 2019-20 school year, many of these activities may not have been able to take place in person. Educators and administrators are encouraged to collaborate to determine solutions since these activities did not occur as usual and course enrollments may be down.

- Consider having educators work with school administrators and counselors for access to contact information to facilitate communication with families.
- Consider shifting recruitment activities to the summer or start of the school year.
- Consider the use of virtual recruitment practices such as videos, virtual parent meetings, collecting information via virtual forms, etc.
- Consider purchasing or developing materials to allow virtual instrument tryouts.
- Changes in recruitment practices may delay registration, scheduling, and class rostering for the 2020-21 school year. Flexibility with the recruiting process, including scheduling and course rostering, is encouraged to ensure all students have the opportunity to access and participate in robust arts education experiences.
- District leaders, school administrators and arts teachers are encouraged to collaborate to work towards vertical alignment of arts instructional modalities and scheduling between elementary, middle, and high school programs to ensure continuity of a sequential standards-based instruction in the arts discipline beginning with early learning and elementary arts experiences through advanced high school study.

Professional Development

- Consider what types of content-specific professional learning would be most beneficial to support the continued development of fine arts teachers in the district. District leaders are encouraged to survey fine arts teachers to assess professional learning needs and provide flexibility and variety for teachers to engage in professional learning that is either targeted to all fine arts teachers or to specific content-areas within the fine arts (dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts).
 - Examples of fine arts professional development focus areas include but are not limited to: standards, developing and using assessment in the arts, virtual and distance learning in the arts, classroom management, methods and pedagogy, cross-curricular connections, whole child/child well-being and the arts, culturally responsive teaching, anti-bias and anti-racism training, curriculum/lesson-planning, fine arts portfolio implementation, resource-related skills (technology, software, etc.), administration of fine arts programs, supporting the needs of special populations, etc.
- District leaders and school administrators are encouraged to establish and maintain recurring professional learning communities (PLCs) for fine arts teachers, offering opportunities for fine arts teachers to collaborate across arts disciplines, break out into content-specific focus groups, and support opportunities for vertical planning between grade-bands.
- In the event the district is unable to provide content-specific professional learning for fine arts teachers, district leaders and school administrators are encouraged to consider how the

district might leverage partnerships (i.e. through a consortium of districts) with nearby districts or organizations to either provide in-house professional learning experiences for teachers from multiple districts or provide flexibility for teachers to engage in professional learning externally with other districts or external partners.

- Teachers may need guidance and training in order to implement virtual teaching and learning platforms

Other Considerations

- Many fine arts programs rely on fundraising efforts to support providing high-quality arts learning opportunities to students. District leaders, school administrators, and fine arts educators are encouraged to explore innovative options for fundraising while adhering to school financial laws, policies, and regulations.
- District leaders, school administrators, and fine arts educators should consult with the local school board attorney for specific legal advice regarding questions about copyright. Educators are encouraged to look to creative commons-licensed and public domain materials, as needed.
- School personnel may need to review applicable student and parent waivers for online materials and media when designing instruction and assessments in the arts, as well as implementing online or virtual exhibitions of student artwork.

Appendix A: Performing Arts Research

There are several ongoing and concurrent studies to research the distribution of respiratory aerosol generated in performing arts activities and to provide recommendations to mitigate the risks associated with the activities. Below is an overview of two performing arts studies.

Performing Arts Aerosol Study

Updated July 20, 2020

An international coalition of arts and education organizations, organized by the [National Federation of High Schools](#) and the [College Band Director's National Association](#), has commissioned the [Performing Arts Aerosol Study](#), led by scientists from the University of Colorado-Boulder and the University of Maryland.

About the Study

The study focuses on the distribution of respiratory aerosol generated while playing wind instruments, singing, acting, speaking, dancing, and in a simulated aerobic activity, which may potentially contain virus. The study has not used a live virus and therefore cannot be used to determine specific infection rates. However, the study is based on previous research that shows the virus which causes COVID-19 can travel in respiratory aerosol. This study is designed to identify performing arts activities that generate respiratory aerosol including volume, direction, density, and mitigation strategies.

Preliminary Recommendations Based on Initial Testing Results

As of the date of publication for this guidance document, the coalition has released a series of preliminary recommendations based on the initial testing results. These results are preliminary and will be further defined as the study continues. The study is in the early stages of a comprehensive six-month study and results may change over time. The preliminary results are provided to assist in the safer return to performing arts activities.

Preliminary Mitigation Recommendations

- Wind instruments produce aerosol, which vary by instrument as well as intensity. Trends discovered include:
 - Woodwind instruments have aerosol coming from the keyholes and bells.
 - Brass instruments have aerosols coming from the bells.
- At this time, it appears aerosol emission is reduced if musicians wear surgical-style masks with a slit for mouthpieces and use bell covers. Flute players can put the headjoint between their mouth and mask and use a “flute sock” to cover the foot.
- Singers produce aerosol, which vary with consonants, vowels, and intensity.
- At this time, it appears aerosol emission is reduced if singers wear surgical-style masks.
- Face shields are only effective at close range to stop large droplets; they do not prevent aerosol from being inhaled or released, so it is recommended a mask is also worn.

- Plexiglass partitions or barriers between musicians are not recommended because the room HVAC system cannot properly exchange the air as designed. “Dead zones,” or areas where aerosol can build up, are a concern.
- Rehearsal space recommendations include (in order of preference):
 - Outdoor rehearsals using individual mitigation techniques;
 - Outdoor gazebo-style tents with open sides and a high-pitched ceiling, in addition to individual mitigation techniques;
 - Indoor rehearsals with elevated outdoor air exchange rate from the HVAC system (or indoor rehearsals with typical outdoor air exchange rate from the HVAC system plus recirculation air through MERV 13 filters or addition of appropriately sized HEPA air purifiers), in addition to individual mitigation techniques;
 - Indoor rehearsals with outdoor air exchange rate from open windows supplemented with appropriately sized HEPA air purifiers when airflow is reduced under certain outdoor wind conditions.

General Procedure Recommendations

- Masks should be worn at all times
- Observe the CDC guidelines or social distancing (6x6 feet, with 9x6 feet for trombone players)
- Indoor rehearsals should last for thirty minutes followed by clearing the room for twenty minutes for the HVAC system to exchange the air indoors with outside air

Please refer to the Association for Heating, Ventilating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) [guidance on ventilation during COVID-19](#).

For more information and for updates about the study, additional findings, and recommended mitigation strategies, refer to the [NFHS Performing Arts Aerosol Study webpage](#).

Reducing Bioaerosol Emissions and Exposures in the Performing Arts

A multidisciplinary team of researchers from Colorado State University are conducting the [Reducing Bioaerosol Emissions and Exposures in the Performing Arts Study: A Scientific Roadmap for a Safe Return from COVID-19](#). The study aims to quantify the problems and identify mitigating strategies to reduce infectious spread. To learn more about this study, read the white paper linked [here](#).

About the Study

The goal of the Colorado State University study is to reduce the risk of human exposure and co-infection to COVID-19 by answering the following questions:

1. What is the rate (and size) of bioaerosol emitted by performers of varying age and gender when engaging in music, voice, and dance?
2. How effective are active and passive control measures at reducing bioaerosol emissions and exposures?
3. Can the risks of co-exposure be reduced to acceptable levels using these active and passive controls?

Appendix B: Suggested Resources

The following suggested resources link to a variety of state- and national-level arts and education organizations and provide specialized, discipline-specific guidance, suggestions, and planning considerations in the fine arts.

Note: Reference to any resource, organization, activity, product, or service does not constitute or imply endorsement by the Tennessee Department of Education.

General Resources

- Tennessee Department of Education | [Link](#)
 - [Reopening Guidance](#)
 - [Tennessee Academic Standards for Fine Arts](#)
 - [State of the Arts/Fine Arts](#)
- State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education | [Link](#)
 - [Arts Education is Essential Statement from Arts and Education Organizations](#)
- Americans for the Arts | [Link](#)
- Tennessee Arts Commission | [Link](#)
- ArtsEd Tennessee | [Link](#)
- ArtsEd New Jersey | [Link](#)
 - [September Ready Fall 2020 Guidance for Arts Education](#) (extensive guidance for fine arts education programs with helpful considerations applicable beyond New Jersey)
- National Federation of High Schools | [Link](#)
 - [Performing Arts Aerosol Study](#)

Health Resources

- Tennessee Department of Health | [Link](#)
 - [TDH COVID-19 Resources for Educational Organizations](#)
 - [TDH Recommendations for the Management of COVID-19 in Schools](#)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | [Link](#)
 - [Interim Guidance for Administrators of US K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs](#)
- American Academy of Pediatrics | [Link](#)
 - [COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-Entry](#)

Dance Resources

- National Dance Education Organization | [Link](#)
 - [Link to COVID-19/Reopening Resources](#)
 - [Teaching Dance in Fall 2020](#)
- DanceUSA | [Link](#)
 - [Link to COVID-19/Reopening Resources](#)

Music Resources

- National Association for Music Education | [Link](#)
 - [Link to COVID-19/Reopening Resources](#)
 - [Fall 200 Guidance for Music Education](#)
- American String Teachers Association | [Link](#)
 - [Link to COVID-19/Reopening Resources](#)
 - [Resuming Instruction During COVID-19 Planning Guides](#)
- American Choral Directors Association | [Link](#)
 - [Link to COVID-19/Reopening Resources](#)
 - [COVID-19 Response Committee Report](#)
- College Band Directors National Association | [Link](#)
 - [Link to COVID-19/Reopening Resources](#)
 - [COVID-19 Response Committee Report](#)
- Percussive Arts Society | [Link](#)
 - [Managing COVID-19 Protocols in Administering Percussion Performance Curriculum](#)
- AMRO Music | [Link](#)
 - [Considerations for a Safe Return to the Instrumental Music Classroom](#)

Theatre Resources

- Educational Theatre Association | [Link](#)
 - [Link to COVID-19/Reopening Resources](#)
 - [Recommendations for Reopening School Theatre Programs](#)

Visual Arts Resources

- National Art Education Association | [Link](#)
 - [Link to COVID-19/Reopening Resources](#)
 - [Preparing for School Year 2020-21](#)

Contact Information

With questions about this guidance document or for more information about fine arts programs in Tennessee schools, visit the [State of the Arts webpage](#) or email Arts.Education@tn.gov.