

The Maine Motif

Maine Music
Educators
Association

New Perspectives: Music in a Pandemic

WINTER 2020
Volume 5 Issue 2



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WINTER 2020
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The official publication of the
Maine Music Educator's Associa-
tion.

Maine Music Educators Association (MMEA)

235+ members including
working music educators,
retired teachers,
and collegiate students
Formally founded in 1917,
MMEA is the oldest recognized
state music educator association
in the USA.

Mission Statement:
*To promote and advance Music
Education by providing a voice
and venue for advocacy and
advancement of Music Educa-
tion in Maine.*

All editorial materials should be sent to:

Hanna Flewelling, Editor
Email: editor@mainemea.org



Submit
materials for
publication
[HERE](#)

All advertising information and orders should be sent to:

Beth Labrie, Executive Director
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2020–2021 MMEA BOARD

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All-State Auditions Chair
Brian Hutchinson
Instrumental Jazz Chair
Becky Mallory

MMEA is still seeking interested candidates to serve in the following positions. These are presidential appointments for a two-year term. Please direct inquiries to Sandy Barry at president@mainemea.org

Vocal Jazz Chair
Collegiate Chapter Chair
Solo and Ensemble Chair

MMEA CALENDAR

There have been significant changes made to the
BOC All-State Auditions.
Click on the box below for more details.

BOC Auditions

11/27/20 Update: Due to some schools moving to remote learning around the state, the Tanner solo for percussion BOC auditions is optional for Fall 2020. Students may submit this for feedback from the judges, but it will not affect the acceptance score. Managers may use this information to decide on part assignments.

MMEA EVENT SCHEDULE

Dec. 4	BOC All-State Auditions due by Midnight	Date TBD	General Music Workshop with the Maine Orff Chapter
Dec. 15	MMEA Board Nominations due		
Dec. 16	Jazz All-State registration forms and payments due	Apr. 9–10 Apr. 22–25	Solo & Ensemble Festival @ USM Virtual Eastern Division Conference
Jan. 8	BOC All-State Acceptance posted	May 19	MMEA Board Meeting, 6pm @ UMaine
Jan. 16	MMEA Jazz Meeting, 10am	May 20–21	MMEA Conference @ UMaine (under review)
Jan. 27	MMEA Board Meeting @ 6:30 via Zoom	May 20–22	MMEA BOC All-State Festival @ UMaine (under review)
Jan. 29	BOC All-State acceptance forms due	May 21	MMEA All-Member Meeting, 3:30pm @ UMaine (under review)
Jan. 29	MMEA Virtual Jazz All-State		
Feb. 5–6	MMEA Virtual Jazz All-State		
Feb. 27	District Jazz Qualifiers due (under review)	June 28	MMEA Board Meeting @6:30 via Zoom
Mar. 9	MMEA Board Meeting @ 6:30 via Zoom		
Mar. 12–13	Virtual State Instrumental HS Jazz Festival (under review)		
Mar. 21	Virtual State Instrumental Junior High Jazz Festival (under review)		
Mar. 26–27	Virtual State Vocal Jazz/Show Choir Fest (under review)		

[Click here for a printable version
of this calendar](#)



SAVE THE DATES!

April 22, 23, 24

Conference and Honors
Ensembles Planned, Hosted
and Managed by
All Eastern Division States

Conference Co-Chairs:

Tina Bennett, PA

Michael Brownell, NY

Division Leadership Team:

Keith Hodgson, President, NJ

Marc Greene, Past President, NY

Sue Barre, President-Elect, ME

Eastern Division Virtual Conference

Thurs. 4/22 - 6-9:30pm

Fri. 4/23 - 6-9:30pm

Sat. 4/24 - 9am-5pm

- 🎧 Open to all NAfME members
- 🎧 Sessions will focus on *Proven Practices* by Eastern Division Music Educators "in the trenches"
- 🎧 Tracks for Band, Choir, Orchestra, General Music, Modern Band, Collegiate, Administration, Urban Music and more!
- 🎧 Conference Focus: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access
- 🎧 Designated Concert Hours
- 🎧 Premiere Concert Debut of the 2021 All-Eastern Virtual Ensembles

2021 EASTERN DIVISION

CT, DC, DE, EU, MA, MD,
ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

ALL-EASTERN HONORS VIRTUAL ENSEMBLES

All-Eastern Honors Ensembles 2021 Virtual Experience

BOCJ Chair: Dennis Emert, PA

- 🎧 All-Eastern Orchestra
- 🎧 All-Eastern Band
- 🎧 All-Eastern Mixed Choir
- 🎧 All-Eastern Treble Chorus
- 🎧 All-Eastern Jazz Band

- December 1-18, 2020 - Nominations from Eastern Division States
- January 16, 2021 - Selection Saturday - BOCJ Ensembles seated
- January 20, 2021 - Directors, Students and Parents notified of acceptance
- February 5, 2021 - Student Forms and registration fee due
- Week of February 8, 2021 - Repertoire sent to students
- March 4-6, 2021 - Virtual Eastern BOCJ event: Keynote, Breakouts, Sectionals, Rehearsals
- March 12, 2021 - Video and Audio Recordings Due managers listen and ask for resubmission if necessary
- April 22-24, 2021 - Feature of Eastern BOCJ Concert as part of Eastern Division Conference.

2021 MMEA ELECTIONS

The following positions will be open for election this February:

General Music 6-12
Chorus VP
Orchestra VP
Secretary

Districts 1, 3, 5, & 7 will be holding their own independent elections for District Chairs.

All board positions are a two year commitment. Board members are able to run for a second term, for a total of four years of service.

Nominations are due by Dec. 15th.

[Nominate HERE](#)

Contact Ben Potvin
(pastpresident@mainemea.org)
if you have questions

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



GRATEFUL FOR LESSONS

Dear Colleagues

Here we are, on the threshold of a new year. If 2020 has done one thing, it has delivered lessons. Growth can be realized if those lessons are recognized and given effort. I am certain I missed many of the lessons 2020 was trying to teach me, and I hope when they make their presence known again it will be during calmer times. However, I do acknowledge what I have learned.

I will never again take health for granted.

I will never complain of boredom, or of not having anything to do.

I will thoroughly enjoy things I once considered simply “tasks”--cleaning, gardening, cooking. Not laundry, though.

I will strive to say thank you and show appreciation for the effort of others.

With that in mind, I am profoundly grateful for the members of the MMEA Board, who are involved in the planning and implementation of our yearly state-wide events. Auditions for Jazz and BOC All-State are in process or just about completed. Work on our Festivals and Conference is well underway, with offerings both familiar and unique for students and teachers alike to engage, perform, learn and connect. As you may imagine, the planning for such events requires consideration of multiple scenarios, needs assessments and costs. Our Managers, Vice Presidents and Chairs have never planned such events in a pandemic before, but the challenge

of the task is no match for the dedicated creativity they bring. We are committed to providing quality experiences for our students and educators this year in a safe, cost responsible and relevant manner. Stay tuned as further details are released and encourage your students to be involved.

Equally deserving of recognition and thanks is the music education community here in Maine. Your creative, brave efforts in reshaping all you’ve ever done to answer the daunting challenge of this time are unmatched. Despite the tough stories of your experiences this year, you are still problem-solving, working to improve conditions at your schools and providing the very best music education possible for your students. I hope you know how very appreciated you are.

Last, I am grateful for this work. In spite of all that is different, we are making progress, and the rewards of teaching can be found every day.

The joy of students--being witness to their insights, breakthroughs, and understanding.

Seeing the quirky little homeroom group I have slowly become a friendly, cohesive unit.

The ability to work with students in music, even remotely, and the success with something new. Even when one of the students is sharing her space with her distracting remote-day classmates and an active dog. At least the dog was well-behaved.

A beginning band student who tells me he would like to have lessons TWICE a week.

Teaching a 6th grade flute player how to fix her flute over the internet. And it worked!

And I finally know why I was talking to myself all those years; it was training for teaching music classes remotely in a school that does not require cameras or mics on!

Sandy Barry
MMEA President
president@mainemea.org

A CLASSROOM VIEW

These continue to be trying times for all of us in the world of music. As we transition to the early stages of winter, many of us are clinging on to the last opportunities to hear our students play and sing outside. I thought this might be a good time to give you all a view of what my classroom looks like these days.

Ear Training: Over the years, I have learned that the majority of my students hear far less than what I assumed they heard. Never was this more apparent than when I started integrating ear training into my rehearsals. Covid-19 has given us a wonderful opportunity to advance our students' listening skills.

Last spring, I developed a number of Kahoot ear training games. I start with unisons, 4ths, 5ths, and octaves. I prefer to play the questions live on the keyboard while students use their phones or laptops to select their answer. It only takes a few attempts before they really start to consistently identify these intervals. Once they have a handle on these

nature of Kahoots. In normal times, we would sing/solfege the intervals of the major scale. This can certainly be done if your classes are fully virtual.

As long as you keep your ear training exercises sequential, you basically have an endless amount of skill that can be taught over the entire year and beyond. Another cool exercise is to have the students listen to a major or minor scale and have to identify the number of incorrect notes in the example- usually from 0 to 2 errors.

Seat Beat: Many of you have moved to rhythm ensembles and bucket brigades. A bunch of years ago, I stole the idea of Seat Beat from Dan Bukvich from the University of Idaho. Seat Beat



arpeggiated intervals, I will then play the pitches simultaneously. That is usually a big stretch for most students. Moving on from the perfect intervals, I move to major 2nds and 3rds. When given just two options, students can quickly hear the differences. Major 6ths and 7ths finish out the intervals of our major scale. At this point, I start to give students four choices of answers for each question. They generally enjoy the competitive

uses drumsticks and music chairs (works best with plastic chairs). You would be amazed at how many different sounds you can create by drumming on the top, chair back, seat, and legs of the chairs you students sit in each day. A bunch of years ago, my version of Seat Beat found a home in a dark auditorium using UV reactive tape on our sticks and LED UV lights. Along the way, I started writing background audio tracks to our routine.



Last year, we were supposed to add laser lights and Boomwhackers to our routine. Unfortunately, our routine was sidelined by the shutdown. If you are wondering about the impact that drumming has on your classroom furniture, I have been doing this on our Wenger chairs for many years without any noticeable impact to the chairs. My challenge this year is going to be adding my band's traditional percussion section to our Seat Beat routine. At some point, I need to start writing the parts!

My List: Other classroom activities that are on my agenda include daily YouTube examples of amazing performances, listening reflection logs, a unit on composition, and a unit on improvisation. I know that this list will need to expand as the months move forward.

Although Covid-19 has flipped our classroom in ways that none of us could have predicted, there are still opportunities to have students make music at home and to advance their music skills in person for those of you who are seeing your students face to face.

Do you have creative ideas to share?

Andrew Forster
MMEA President-Elect
presidentelect@mainemea.org

ALL-STATE ORCHESTRA: A SNEAK PEEK



The good news is, we are in a much better position than we were this past spring. In March, COVID caught us completely off guard. We had not imagined that our festival could be de-railed by a pandemic, and did not have any sort of Plan B in place. We were able to invite the conductors and students to submit individual recordings to be edited into a virtual concert, but this was the extent of All-State 2020.

Many music students (and teachers) were dismayed when COVID-19 forced us to cancel the 2020 All-State Music Festival. We all had high hopes for a strong comeback in 2021. Unfortunately, it has become apparent that there is no guarantee we will be in a position where we can safely host 500 students at the University of Maine by May. Because of this, we have made the decision to host a virtual festival for All-State 2021.

room with instrument, headphones, and recording device, working through their part to record. This year the students will have virtual sessions to help guide them through the music. The conductors have been asked to select a short piece by a living composer. The conductor will lead sessions with their ensembles, talking about the piece and his interpretation of it. In addition, the composers themselves will have a session with the students, talking about the composition process, and their own vision for the piece. Students will also have sectional rehearsals, during which they will polish their part with others in their section, led and in-

COVID-wise, MMEA hopes to sponsor several “video release viewing parties” to gather the musicians by region and allow them to see their results in the company of their local All-State colleagues.

I am excited to announce that Grammy Award-Winning conductor and composer Lucas Richman has agreed to direct this year’s All-State Orchestra. Maestro Richman is very familiar with Maine as a resident of Bangor and conductor of the Bangor Symphony. He conducted the All-State Orchestra back in 2016, and was intrigued with the possibility of leading a virtual group for this year. He has not announced the composer that he would like to perform—stay tuned!



In addition to the work on performing the piece, students from all of the ensembles will be treated to a mini-conference. Our hope is to offer several sessions of interest to high school musicians. These sessions have yet to be nailed down, but some possible topics include auditioning for college, or a Q&A with a person making their career in music and the arts.

All-State 2021 will certainly have a different feel to it, but has every potential to provide a rewarding and memorable experience for our students. Thank you for encouraging your students to audition and participate, and for all of your efforts to keep music alive for them during this time.

2021 will be different. Will we still be putting together virtual ensembles, featuring individual videos from each of our students? Yes. Unlike last year, though, All-State is not going to consist solely of each student, alone in their

structured by a professional musician. After the festival, students will have one week to make their recording and submit it for the virtual orchestra. The final recording will be available in the summer of 2021, and, should we be in a better position,

Linda Vaillancourt
MMEA Orchestra VP
orchestravp@mainemea.org

ENCOURAGING STUDENT VOICE IN YOUR COVID ENSEMBLE

Greetings fellow music teachers!

First, I thank each of you for your hard work at continuing to offer your students a quality music education in this unprecedented and very stressful time.

I know some of you have been able to teach your students in outside classroom/rehearsal spaces, while many of you have had to teach your students online. As the cold weather approaches, and our state is starting to see a second surge in the virus, we all continue to face the daunting task of reinventing how we deliver instruction in our content, while seeking to provide experiences that keep the students involved and motivated as musicians. I think one of the best ways to motivate students is to engage them as part of the decision making and goal setting process.

I have found it helpful to involve my students in the design of my lessons and units. While we all have curricular learning targets to meet to demonstrate student understanding of the standards, I believe there is value in asking the students what they want to learn. For most of us teaching band, our students have chosen to participate in our ensembles. I encourage you to find what they enjoy about band, why they joined the band, and what they want to learn more about. Over the years, I've observed that "students don't know what they don't know", so I've had to ask leading questions to guide the discussion. Such questions could include if they would like to learn more about Garageband, or perhaps write a song, learn more about jazz and improvisation, how to conduct, or learn how their favorite singer got started in music.

As you move on to designing lessons

based on the student suggestions, try to include some open-ended projects and assignments that encourage the students to dig deeper and connect with their natural inquisitiveness. This can feel uncomfortable for those of us that are used to conducting and leading our ensembles; as we transition from the "sage on the stage" to the "guide on the side". This past spring during the remote learning experience, I asked my band students to choose a genre of music they enjoy listening to. Next they chose a song to learn from a composer or musician from that genre. For my advanced students, I had them develop Zoom presentations



about the background of the musician they chose. This school year I've used the All-State instrumental lyrical piece, Pavane, to lead students to individually learn about Fauré, the Romantic period, various interpretations and arrangements of the piece, and how to count the various rhythms contained in the piece. Another strategy I use to promote student ownership is by asking my students for



feedback on the learning experiences I have led them through. We in the music education field rarely get quality feedback on our teaching, perhaps we are the only music teacher in the building, or our administrators don't get many opportunities to do observations. I think that the students may have the best understanding of how successful our instructional choices have been at meeting their learning needs. Seeking feedback can feel awkward at first because it exposes ourselves to criticism. However, as Plotinsky wrote in an Edutopia article,

"Responding to feedback and making changes based on their suggestions communicates to students that we value their ideas and perspectives."

A comfortable way to request student feedback may be to acknowledge that this year has been so out of the ordinary and challenging to everyone that you are curious to know what their experience has been like. Then use an age-appropriate method to gather the students' feedback. For my high school students, I recently had them fill out a Google survey. If you're interested, you can see my survey at: bit.ly/3mJODEs. I found the results

Continued on next page

very affirming and was surprised by some of the compliments that the students wrote. This was especially helpful to me as I was unsure if some of the activities were meaningful to the students, and if my expectations were in line with those they were experiencing in other classes. And yes there are a few changes I need to make.

In conclusion, I would like to share a quote from my department chair that I find focuses me on my mission as a teacher:

“The one doing all the work, is the one doing all the learning.”

As you reflect on how much student voice and choice you use, think about who is doing all the work/learning. Is it you or the student?

In these very challenging times, I think it's appropriate to involve the students more directly in the learning process. As we face significant and frustrating challenges to rehearsing our ensembles this year, perhaps this is the time to focus on encouraging our students to develop skills as individual musicians. These skills will prepare them for a lifetime full of personal music making. And the students will bring these skills to our

rehearsals when they resume.

Bill Buzza
MMEA Band VP
bandvp@mainemea.org
Blog: buzzamusiced.com

Plotinsky, Miriam. “Creating a Classroom Culture of Shared Ownership.” Edutopia, George Lucas Educational Foundation, 10 Oct. 2019, www.edutopia.org/article/creating-classroom-culture-shared-ownership.



The NAFME Student Songwriters Competition invites students to submit original music for the 2021 competition. Up to ten selected composers will receive cash awards. All entrants will receive written evaluations of their compositions.

Age categories:

- Grades K–8
- Grades 9–12

Deadline: April 9, 2021, 11:59 PM ET

Apply: bit.ly/NAfMESTudentSongwriters

Questions? nafme@nafme.org



Are you a retired music teacher?
We'd like to feature you in a
new section of the Motif

**Where are our Retirees &
What are They Doing Now?**

Tell us what you're up to now
(musically related or not).

Contact Sam Moore-Young,
Retired Teachers Chair at
retteacherschair@mainemea.org
or 207-224-7349

We'd love to hear from you!



We can all agree that this past year has been one for the history books. Some of you may be thinking of making a change. Regardless of your reasons, whether it be a desire for a different career path, you have reached the minimum age where you can seriously consider retiring and live the good life, or you just need to step away for a while, you need to have a plan so that you end up in a good place. Whatever you decide to do, keep in mind that you are not the only one to consider. How will this affect your spouse/partner, children, or parents if you are involved in their care? While the decision may seem to be all about you, it isn't.

TIME FOR A CHANGE?

Consider the following:

- Is your spouse/partner on board with you making a change?
- Are you financially able to withstand weeks or months without a paycheck until the next job comes along assuming you have not already found one.
- If retiring, are you able to withstand the considerable loss of income that is a part of moving from a paycheck to a pension?

If retiring, come up with a budget based on your expected pension; practice living on less each month. Determine if you can afford to give up the salary that a job brings.

You may need to rethink your priorities and adjust accordingly.

Sam Moore-Young
MMEA Retired Teachers Chair
retteacherschair@mainemea.org



**TEACHING
music**
Check out the October issue online now





#PANDEMICPROBLEMS- HOW TEACHING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS WEIGHED HEAVILY ON TEACHERS

I think the biggest takeaway from all of this is that we need to give grace and patience to not only our students but also ourselves.

Is this year going to be perfect? No, and that is totally okay.

Teacher burnout is real.

I am still considered very young in the field of teaching, even after entering my 5th year this fall. Many teachers in the field joke with me that they could have been my music teacher, and considering I graduated high school in 2012 (I know, I know) most of them are right. No matter where you are in your teaching career you are needed, hopefully respected, and doing your best, but with the challenges teaching now in the COVID-19 Pandemic, any teacher is just about guaranteed to be worn down. Between shifting to online and hybrid teaching, some of us not even teaching our primary subject, and the general stress and anxiety of teaching during a global pandemic, teachers are feeling more worn down than ever, even if they have not been teaching for that long.

As a profession, a lot is asked of teachers even in a normal year. From looking out for the wellbeing of children to teaching our subject and everything in between, teaching in general can be a difficult task with many things to balance at once. For most of us, we do it because it comes with the job we love and we push through the things we struggle with to continue teaching. There comes a time when it can be too much, and COVID-19 may just be that time for many teachers. Between the added tasks to the obvious safety concerns, teachers are less happy than they have been in years and are finally

speaking up about it. In a poll taken by the National Education Association, 28% of teachers said that they are more likely to leave the profession or retire early due to the pandemic. Of the twenty eight percent who said this, one in five was a teacher who had ten years or less experience, 40% of them being teachers who have twenty one to thirty years experience and are most likely leaders in their schools, and a whopping fifty-five percent of teachers who have been teaching for thirty or more years. These astounding numbers are an unfortunate reality of this pandemic, but only shows us part of the full picture. Some teachers are leaving because of their family, lack of childcare, fear of spreading the disease, and now in a more recent finding, a decrease in the satisfaction of teaching.

In a study conducted by Dr. Amy Vatne Bintliff of Psychology Today, a group of psychologists looked to find the cause of some of the reasons teacher wellbeing had decreased. One of the main causes was something that most did not think about, the mounting teacher concerns for their students. They can not build the relationships they normally would and can not check in on them as frequently or as well as they like. Not only does this the teacher-student relationship, but also ends up in less job satisfaction for teachers, the study indicates. This culminates in secondary trauma in some teachers as they heard and learned about their students' situations, and frustration in many as they could not help as much as they wanted to. Another main factor was

the increase in lack of work-life balance for educators. "One teacher said, 'I don't know how to create a healthy barrier in my life, like calls at 6 am and at 10 pm, I just answer them.' Another teacher said, 'And because of technology needs we were getting contacted by the kids at all hours, the parents at all hours. And so it was really hard for us to turn off. And it's added to our stress levels because if I would get a kid asking me for help at 7 or 9 I was willing to help. After all, here I am getting some engagement,'" (Bintliff). This group goes on to suggest more support and education for teachers regarding work-life balance, patience and grace from the community, and for non-essential tasks to be taken off the plate of teachers, most of which are not currently happening for many. When teachers are told to just be positive or make sure they are practicing self care without resources however, it creates a whole new problem.

Toxic positivity is a problem that teachers have faced for years, but it is affecting them in a whole new way this year with the added stress and demands of teaching during COVID-19. To explain how this negatively affects us, we need to understand it. Toxic positivity is when we focus on the positive and reject, deny, or displace the negative. While this sounds like a good thing to focus on, it can have a huge impact on teachers mental health. "In schools, toxic positivity may look like administrators urging teachers to take time for 'self care,' but then loading them

Continued on next page

down with extra meetings and responsibilities. It may look like someone hanging a 'teacher strong' banner in the hallway, but not paying for enough soap for the bathroom. It may look like conversations that encourage teachers to 'stay positive' while not digging deeper into the issues that really matter, whether it's COVID-19, equity, or school culture," (Mason). While it sounds nice in theory, it can wreak havoc on the mental health and wellbeing of teachers. In a way, it is gaslighting, which is manipulating someone by psychological means into questioning their own sanity. We are told that we just need to be positive and hang on while not given adequate prep time, having no boundaries for work and home, dealing with a global pandemic, not getting hazard pay if in person, being disrespected, and looked down upon for wanting to watch out for our own safety, and more. It is not a surprise that teachers are stressed, tired, and frazzled, but with the addition of toxic positivity it makes us feel like we are not doing enough and are bad teachers when in reality we are just doing the best we can. The stigma of that teaching is your

whole identity and life is just not true and it will just keep getting worse for teachers if it is perpetuated. It is not good for the teachers, it is not good for the students, and it needs to stop with us.

I think the biggest takeaway from all of this is that we need to give grace and patience to not only our students but also ourselves. Is this year going to be perfect? No, and that is totally okay. Are you going to get through all you want to teach? Probably not, but that is just the situation right now. Are you doing what you can do? Yes? Then be proud and keep going. Personally, I am focusing more on building relationships and keeping kids in a welcoming and safe environment more than usual this year. At the end of the day, students are never going to remember everything you've taught them, but what they will remember is how you made them feel and how they felt in your classes. They need this safety in the world of uncertainty right now, and if that is all you can manage then you've done everything you need to. Anything above that is extra and you should be

proud of yourselves for it. Knowing the music teachers of Maine, I know you are all working extremely hard to make this the best you can, and you need to realize that that is enough. If not, you may end up being one of those statistics. Lean on each other, as we are all in this boat together, and as Winston Churchill once said "If you're going through hell, keep on going."

Erin Morrison
MMEA General Music (6-12) VP
gm612vp@mainemea.org

Bintliff, Amy Vatne. "How COVID-19 Has Influenced Teachers' Well-Being." *Psychology Today*, 8 Sept. 2020, www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/multidimensional-aspects-adolescent-well-being/202009/how-covid-19-has-influenced-teachers-well.

Flannery, Mary Ellen. "Safety Concerns Over COVID-19 Driving Some Educators Out of the Profession." *NEA*, NEA, 2020, www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/safety-concerns-over-covid-19-driving-some-educators-out



The NAfME Electronic Music Composition Competition recognizes outstanding compositions and highlights the effectiveness of music technology in the school curriculum. Entries will be judged based on their aesthetic quality, use of electronic media, and the power of the composition.

Association member adjudicators will select a winner in each of the following categories:

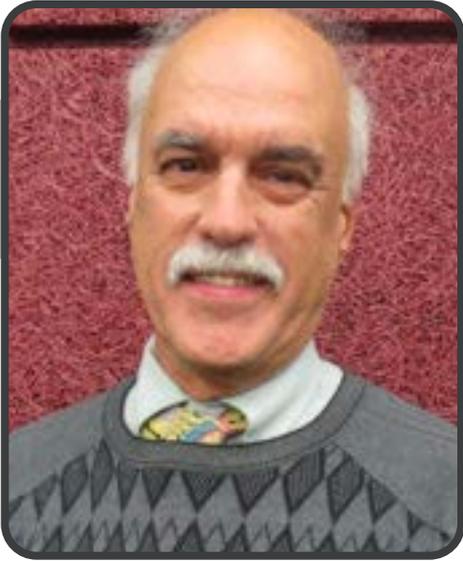
1. Grades K-8
2. Grades 9-12
3. Collegiate

Each entrant must be sponsored by a NAfME member teacher, or be a NAfME Collegiate member in good standing.

Compositions should be 5 minutes or less and should either be composed electronically or include electronic instruments (vocal and/or acoustic instruments may be combined with electronic instruments).

Entries must be received by April 9, 2021
bit.ly/NAfMECompetitions





WE ARE BACKED INTO A CORNER, BUT...

Margaret Mead said it best:

"We are continually faced with great opportunities which are brilliantly disguised as unsolvable problems."

That is precisely where Maine music education is at this moment. The pandemic represents an existential threat to music education as we know it. Make no mistake about it. The pandemic has backed our community into a corner and how we respond to this challenge may very well determine whether or not we have that community. Will we be resilient and creative or will we accept not being considered essential to students' lives? For their sake we need to solve the unsolvable problem. We must.

Covid 19 has exposed a fissure that we all suspected existed -- many (though not all) administrators do not understand that music is core curriculum and is essential to schools educating the total child. This is an opportunity to address this head-on.

The recent survey that Maine Music Educators Assn. reported on preparations for the reopening of schools is in some ways startling. Kudos to MMEA for this important work. The picture isn't pretty, but at least now we understand the issue with clarity.

The survey showed that 56.6% of music teachers were not involved in the planning process. More than half of music teachers statewide were not part of the scheduling process. They were just told how it was going to be. Just 11.2% were involved in planning.

Even more concerning: some 64.3% said their administration didn't reach out to them when redesigning the fall schedule. So 64.3% of administrators had no knowledge of -- and that may be interpreted as no concern for -- the needs, scientific data and advice of music teachers.

This is disheartening, but presents a great opportunity. Down the road this question can rightfully be asked: Why wasn't music involved? That is a question both teachers and parents need to ask.

This crisis is forcing us to confront two things: the attitude of too many administrators that music isn't basic and how we prioritize our time with kids. The opportunity is for us to educate administrators on the importance of music to the total child. In "Music Education of the Future" David Whitwell makes the point that education that limits or is bereft of non-science learning is educating only half the child. The balance is a delicate one and in their zeal to find a solution to difficult scheduling issues (particularly now, but even in the best of times) some administrators take the path of least resistance. The community needs to create pressure so that schools come down on the side of educating the TOTAL child.

The creative aspects of the brain (what used to be referred to as right brain) can not be ignored if students' education is to be complete. Music and art stimulate the creative parts of the brain that science can't, Whitwell argues. Brain studies show this. When principals opt to not replace a music teacher who has retired or resigned and/or not include music in the schedule in a meaningful way, they are deciding not to educate the total child.

Parents need to be convinced of the importance of this and parents and teachers need to be heard. The new normal can't be to let music fall by the wayside. This is an opportunity to recalibrate.

There will be temporary budget cuts necessary because of state and local budget shortfalls. We may have to accept those. But...the time for action is now; the time for advocacy is now. Administrators need to be convinced that cuts in this area are ill-advised and not in kids' best interest. We need to encourage and help them develop a post-pandemic plan that includes the arts in a meaningful way.

Our other opportunity is to rethink what, why and how we teach. Most programs are driven by concerts, festivals and competitions. Think about it. We teach with the destination in mind -- the community response, the rating, the trophy. These are ephemeral, and, as the virus has shown us, very expendable. The magic, the way we can spark imaginations and creativity in our students, is in the journey. This is where we can have lifelong impact.

We spend our careers on a treadmill of events, when our time is better spent enjoying the journey and creating a spiritual, joyful experience for the students. When I finally figured this out (thanks to the legendary basketball coach John Wooden), we started to pull away from evaluated events a bit. We treated concerts as snapshots rather than life and death events, our opportunity to share what we were accomplishing every day. The validation we achieved was in our shared experience. That is all anybody

Continued on next page

needed. It was peace and the realization of what music can be, if only we let it.

My message today is one of hope, leavened with realism. The Maine music education community is strong, enthusiastic and caring. We need to be all that for our students. I'd put money on us being up to the task. The author John Maxwell (who wrote "How Successful People Lead") put it this way: "Problems and opportunities always come together." How will we seize these opportunities?

Tom Lizotte recently retired after 31 years in public education. He is the 2019 winner of the John LaPorta national jazz educator of the year award by the Jazz Education Network and Berklee College of Music. He is a member of the Maine Music Educators Hall of Fame.



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ENTER THE 2021 NAfME STUDENT COMPOSERS COMPETITION

NAfME is seeking original music by student composers the 2021 competition. Cash prizes will be awarded to winners and honorable mentions.

Students in elementary school, secondary school, college, and graduate school are eligible to submit compositions.

Learn more: bit.ly/NAfMEStudentComposers

Entry deadline: **April 9, 2021**



ON THE HILL: MUSIC ADVOCACY IN THE TIME OF COVID

By Ben Potvin & Vicky Cherry

It is very easy to feel defeated right now. Teachers are being asked to constantly reinvent, be flexible, and carry on through this challenging period. We hope to highlight the bright spots where MMEA has continued to advocate for change and what you can do at your school/district level to advance our unified vision for music education.



Executive Director, Beth LaBrie, established a contact with the Maine Principals Association and as a result, the MMEA Exec Committee worked with Dr. William Heinz from the MPA Medical Team to create the [Fall 2020 MMEA Guidance for Music Education guiding document](#). This document was submitted to the MPA Sports Medicine Committee and on Oct. 20, they unanimously endorsed the document. The Maine Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, and Center for Disease Control have all received our document. We are anxiously awaiting a meeting with the CDC and DHHS who would determine a change to the guidance. In addition, NAFME reports that the Colorado Study is expected to be peer reviewed by mid December which will assist efforts to get music performances safely inside across the country.

MMEA remains in constant communication with Jason Anderson, Visual and Performing Arts Specialists at the Department of Education. The Exec Committee, along with Jason, had the opportunity to chat with Emily Poland (School Nurse Consultant), Pender Makin (Commissioner of Education), and Kelli Deveaux (DOE Communications). This was a very positive meeting and the Commissioner was sympathetic to our predicament. Commissioner Makin was supportive and explained that she continues to advocate for our programs, but unfortunately the decision making lies with the CDC Medical Group. The Department of Education looks to support music programs through the purchase of music technology that may allow students to play together in real time. More information to come.

The Arts Are Basic Coalition (ABC) is planning a virtual Arts Advocacy Day during February vacation. Susan Potters, Executive Director of the Maine Alliance for Arts Education, and Melissa Birkhold (MAAE Program Assistant, MMEA Member and Music Educator from SAD #44 Bethel) have reached out to Maine high school music educators to recruit students for the event. Those students will be trained by the existing Student Leadership Group and will communicate the importance of the arts to Maine Legislators from every county. In addition, the MAAE has strongly advocated on our behalf by communicating with the Maine Principals Association, Maine School Management Association and the Maine School Boards Association.

MMEA Advocacy Chair, Vicky Cherry, continues to take part in Advocacy Leadership Force meetings with NAFME. The latest meeting reviewed election results nationwide and the projected impact on education. The NAFME Advocacy Team plans to write to the incoming Biden Administration to offer assistance in all things music education as they react to the pandemic. NAFME is advocating for additional Federal education funding and assistance to municipalities as they work through tax short-falls and increased spending due to Covid-19.

What can I do to advocate for music during this time?

STAY INFORMED

[MMEA Covid-19 Resources](#) - Check out this compiled list of resources to assist you through this year.

[MMEA Music Guidance Flowchart](#) - It is easy to get lost in all of the updates in the various guiding documents. This flowchart is updated in real time with the most up-to-date information. The most recent update includes the Nov. 13 publication of the Colorado Aerosol Study.

WORK LOCALLY

With MMEA continuing to keep music education in the spotlight statewide, we urge you to deliver the message locally. As the effects of the pandemic unfold, here are some actions you can take to advocate for your own program, K-12.

- Stay personally connected and informed. As the science and state mandates continue to change, we need to stay up to date if we are to accurately engage in conversations.
- Share information with your school building leaders and be persistent. Administrators are in the same uncharted territory we find ourselves.
- Approach your administrators with solutions based on the most recent information to move the discussion forward. Don't be afraid to repeat conversations with stakeholders. Example: Ben Potvin was able to convince his principal after several conversations to allow elementary chorus to happen inside at 14 feet distance in the gym rather than freezing outside.
- Talk to your school board and Superintendent. School Boards and Superintendents have direct connections to Augusta and they can amplify our message.
- Example: The RSU5 music faculty spoke to the school board and were able to have a letter sent to Gov. Mills, DOE, CDC, and DHHS. [Here is a copy](#) of the letter if you would like to approach your own school board.

WRITE LETTERS

Write letters. The DOE has no control over the recommendations/requirements set forth by the decision-making organizations, so we need to address the sources directly (CDC, DHHS, etc). In your letter, acknowledge the need for safety. Refer to guidelines put forth by NAFME and MMEA. Emphasize the importance of Social Emotional Learning for students in grades K-12. Remain factual and do not allow emotion to cloud your message.

SEND LETTERS TO:

Dr. Nirav Shah
Center for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
nirav.shah@maine.gov

Robert Long
CDC Communications Director
Robert.Long@maine.gov

Jeanne Lambrew
Department of Health & Human
Services (DHHS) Commissioner
Jeanne.lambrew@maine.gov

Jackie Farwell
DHHS Communications Director
Jackie.Farwell@Maine.gov

Heather Johnson
Department of Economic Community
Development (DECD) Commissioner
Heather.Johnson@Maine.gov

Jason Anderson
DOE Visual & Performing
Arts Specialist
Jason.Anderson@maine.gov

Janet Mills
Maine Governor
[https://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/
contact/share-your-opinion](https://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/contact/share-your-opinion)

Your local school board
members, superintendents
and curriculum directors

BE PRESENT

An effective advocacy tool is to remain in the public eye. Sarah Bailey, MMEA Treasurer, and other MMEA Board members have found themselves in the spotlight:

[Maine Department of Education News Room](#)
[News Center](#)
[Maine Calling](#)
[NPR](#)
[Maine Public News Center](#)
[Bangor Daily News](#) - Brian Sidelinger
MMEA is also investigating the possibility of producing a music education public service announcement.

GOVERNMENTAL ACTION

Talk to your legislators. Right now your local representatives are free to listen to public comment. Reach out and have them start to ask questions as they return to work.

NAFME MEMBERSHIP

[Be a member](#). NAFME supports efforts to promote education at the National Level by communicating with Congressional staff about our needs. Those efforts translate into funding and policies at the state and local level. A new tool kit for local advocacy is set to debut this spring. We are stronger together.

I am NafME, You are NafME,
We are NafME!

We are moving into a different kind of advocacy for music education. With budget shortfalls looming, it is imperative that we continue to communicate the importance of music education for all ages and all students.

Stay in touch and we will get through this together!

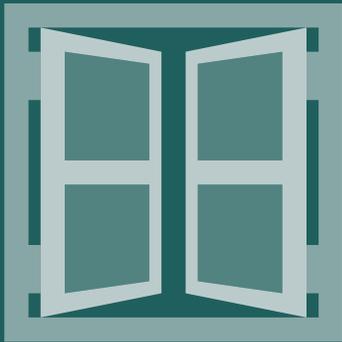
Mask It



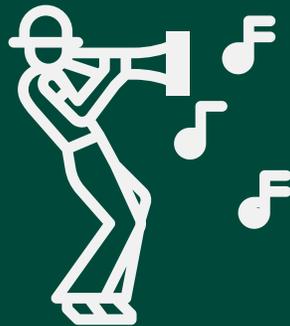
Well Fitting Face Masks
and Instrument Bell Covers

SAFE MAINE SAFE MUSIC

Fresh Maine Air



Three Air Change Rates
per Hour
and HEPA Filters



Keep clean



Wash your hands
Clear condensation safely
Store instruments appropriately

Space



6 to 9 feet between performers

Take a Break



30 Minutes of
Performance time

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT MAINEMEA.ORG

Infographic by Vicky Cherry, MMEA Adovcacy Chair

VC2020



Music Education Advocacy Resource Kit for Fall 2020

Virtual Learning Resources for Music Educators

NAfME Societies and Councils have compiled distance learning and professional development resources from their own original teaching experiences, music educators in their school districts, universities, communities, peers, or other trusted sources. Available to NAfME members at no cost to help you keep teaching, learning, and making music through coronavirus disruptions.

Learn more at [bit.ly/ VirtualTeachingLearningMusicEd](https://bit.ly/VirtualTeachingLearningMusicEd) or [visit nafme.org](https://www.nafme.org).



Click the image above to visit NAfME’s classroom resource page for Diversity, Inclusion, and Access

