



The Louisiana Music Educators Association

"We are in this together. Together we can do anything."

Mixed Messages – LDOE Guidelines

Colleagues,

Two recent communications from the Louisiana Department of Education, have created serious concerns, disappointment, and confusion among music educators in Louisiana.

After the Governor announced the moving of the state to Phase 3, our State Superintendent of Education, in a formal press release, announced that musical wind instruments and vocalist could proceed with indoor rehearsals, so long as appropriate social distancing and precautions were in place. Several days later, the Louisiana Department of Education issued a new guidance document that reversed the Superintendents announcement.

What is even more distressing for music educators is that no explanation was provided to explain or justify the sudden policy change. From the outset of Covid-19, LMEA has closely followed the shifting guidance provided by LDOE.

We are clearly mystified by how various rules and guidelines are crafted and determined. There is almost a "Wizard of Oz" imagery involved, where decisions are made behind a "curtain of bureaucracy." Music educators, parents, and students have been clearly left in the dark.

The most recent guidance document (September 15, 2020) states that: *Athletic activities are allowed to resume with the recommendations put forth in the Louisiana High School Athletic Association's Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities. Band and vocal music must follow the updated outlined guidance below.*

In essence, the updated guidance does not allow indoor activities for singing and wind blowing instruments. This sudden change also reverses earlier LDOE guidance documents that stated indoor activities *"may resume in Phase 3, with physical distance recommendations in effect."*

As many of you know, the LHSAA guidelines closely parallel the National Federation of High Schools guidelines. The NFHS has likewise produced guidelines on music education. While LDOE is following LHSAA (NFHS) guidance for athletics, LDOE is not utilizing NFHS guidance as relates to music education.

I need your proactive assistance in sharing with your administrators and parents our disappointment and frustration with the LDOE processes and decisions. We must be proactive at the grass roots level to force transparency by LDOE decision makers.

Scotty Walker, President
Louisiana Music Educators Association