

March 28, 2021

Dear Members of VA Board of Education:

This is an Addendum to my March 2021 memo. There are two more parts which wanted to add.

PSAT/NMQST: For several years Fairfax County has offered the PSAT/NMQST, free of charge.

With the shift to virtual learning in fall 2020, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) and many divisions across the United States are making adjustments to ensure safe and appropriate Preliminary SAT testing opportunities for students. **FCPS leadership is planning to offer the PSAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMQST) in October to eleventh grade students free of charge at local high schools**, as long as the local and state health guidelines allow for in-person testing at that time ([PSAT Testing Update | Fairfax County Public Schools \(fcps.edu\)](#)).

As permitted by the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools (8VAC20-131-110), the Virginia Board of Education has approved various “substitute” tests and set the minimum score that must be achieved for the purpose of awarding verified credit to students. The tests listed in this document are approved by the Virginia Board of Education as substitute tests, and verified credit can be awarded when the student achieves at least the minimum score required for a Pass/Proficient rating as shown for each test. All substitute tests are to be completed in an English language version for verified credit.

https://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/substitute_tests/subtests-verified-credit.pdf

Most students take the PSAT/NMQST once—in 11th grade. They can take it up to three times in high school but only once a year. Scholarship programs only look at the junior year PSAT/NMQST score. [How many times can a student take the PSAT/NMQST? – For Parents & Guardians – The College Board](#)

Just a few comments about these three articles:

- 1) Fairfax County has a business partnership with the College Board for PSAT/NMQST.
- 2) VA has partnership with College Board for Substitute tests and other areas. While I appreciate partnerships, it is my understanding that students DESERVE age appropriate testing formats. This involves key rules about age appropriate testing formats, appropriate uses of technology with tests, AND Virginia LAW which allows students ALL day for state tests. Students should NOT have a G3-8 CAT math in a format coming from an analysis of the College Board’s customized decision on the Accuplacer as well as other higher level groups.
- 3) About a year after Loudoun-AOS gave the PSAT/NMQST to eighth graders, the PSAT/NMQST changed the rules from TWO TIMES In high school to three times. (There had been an

inconsistency in at least one classroom and possibly more. There was a response, at that time, that there would be no retakes.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Murphy

PS I would just note that I think one of my previous memos had one word omission/typo. I will make an update on that.

March 20, 2021

To: Members of Virginia Board of Education and Other Groups

4.11.5 Item Review

Early in the development process, Consortium members determined that students should be allowed to go back to earlier questions, review their answers, and revise their answers if necessary. Students can go back and change their answers within a test segment. When this occurs for machine-scored items, the ongoing student score estimate is updated with the new response. This has implications for test design and delivery. If a student takes a test over the course of two or more days, answers from previous days cannot be changed. In mathematics at grades 6 and higher, some items permit the use of a calculator, while others forbid calculator use. Mathematics tests for grade 6 and higher are consequently divided into two segments: one for non-calculator items and one that permits calculator use. Students can change answers within sections but not across different test sections.

[Chapter 4 Test Design | 2018-19 Summative Technical Report \(smarterbalanced.org\)](#)

Sincerely,

Carolyn Murphy

Dr. Lane and Board Members,

My name is Amy Dodson. I am a parent with two teenagers in the public school system in Chesterfield County. I have been deeply invested this year in the return to learn battle. With that time and investment in our school systems came additional interests in other educational subjects. I am just beginning to dive into other issues, but happily, I am a stay-at-home mom with the time to research and a law degree to know how to look.

I would like to understand what exactly the VA EdEquity 52-page pdf is at it relates to Virginia schools if you wouldn't mind. Since I am just now dipping my toes (so to speak) in this area of information, I am confused about its purpose/impact. Is this a new teacher training guide? It is a policy mandated for students? Is it an overarching observation? How exactly does the VDOE hope to achieve EdEquity in county school districts? Is it related to Critical Race Theory? How will you implement your vision?

In addition, I am interested in learning the specifics of the recently released recommendations by the African American Superintendent's Advisory Council (3/18/21). For example, how or why will you incorporate racism and racial equity in the standards of learning? Where is the funding for school districts to create and manage an equity committee? Why or how will you reconfigure school districts such that it may create a blended geography 40 minutes away from their homes? What is a culturally responsive educator? Doesn't this follow the policies of CRT?

I do apologize for the multitude of questions. I am admittedly leery of broad commentary without specifics and if it in any way affects my children's education, I am eager to learn more. Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards,

Amy Dodson

804-837-6655

Daniel A. Gecker, President & others,

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you to voice my concerns about the Virginia Mathematics Pathways Initiative (VMPI). In particular is the part of the description that includes "Improve equity in mathematics learning opportunities".

Recent news stories have reported on something described as "ethnomathematics", which also includes the idea of equity in mathematics learning. I have a grandniece in New Jersey who is already being taught under this paradigm, and I find it very disturbing. For example, one homework problem called for dividing an even number of donuts among an odd number of people. All the answers were multiple choice and none contained fractions! When she queried her teacher about this, she was told to just select the closest answer.

Evidently, this paradigm eliminates showing work and reduces emphasis on the correct answer. This is quite honestly not acceptable. Any time I cross a bridge, fly in an airplane or go up in a tall building I very much hope that the people who designed and built it took the time and effort to get the "correct answers" when doing their work.

This approach is a disaster for students desiring to enter STEM careers, precisely those fields which are the most economically advantageous and likely to help people advance both socially and economically.

In short, I strongly oppose any program which emphasizes "equity" over accuracy. If you want to spend more taxpayer money, spend it on extra instruction for students who are struggling with mathematics and science rather than trying to change the absolutes of mathematics.

Yours truly,

David Reinhart

1701 Rustads Cir

Williamsburg, VA 23188

March 28, 2021

Dear Members of VA Board of Education:

This is an Addendum to my March 2021 memo. There are two more parts which wanted to add.

PSAT/NMQST: For several years Fairfax County has offered the PSAT/NMQST, free of charge.

With the shift to virtual learning in fall 2020, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) and many divisions across the United States are making adjustments to ensure safe and appropriate Preliminary SAT testing opportunities for students. **FCPS leadership is planning to offer the PSAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMQST) in October to eleventh grade students free of charge at local high schools**, as long as the local and state health guidelines allow for in-person testing at that time ([PSAT Testing Update | Fairfax County Public Schools \(fcps.edu\)](#)).

As permitted by the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools (8VAC20-131-110), the Virginia Board of Education has approved various “substitute” tests and set the minimum score that must be achieved for the purpose of awarding verified credit to students. The tests listed in this document are approved by the Virginia Board of Education as substitute tests, and verified credit can be awarded when the student achieves at least the minimum score required for a Pass/Proficient rating as shown for each test. All substitute tests are to be completed in an English language version for verified credit.

https://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/substitute_tests/subtests-verified-credit.pdf

Most students take the PSAT/NMQST once—in 11th grade. They can take it up to three times in high school but only once a year. Scholarship programs only look at the junior year PSAT/NMQST score. [How many times can a student take the PSAT/NMQST? – For Parents & Guardians – The College Board](#)

Just a few comments about these three articles:

- 1) Fairfax County has a business partnership with the College Board for PSAT/NMQST.
- 2) VA has partnership with College Board for Substitute tests and other areas. While I appreciate partnerships, it is my understanding that students DESERVE age appropriate testing formats. This involves key rules about age appropriate testing formats, appropriate uses of technology with tests, AND Virginia LAW which allows students ALL day for state tests. Students should NOT have a G3-8 CAT math in a format coming from an analysis of the College Board’s customized decision on the Accuplacer as well as other higher level groups.
- 3) About a year after Loudoun-AOS gave the PSAT/NMQST to eighth graders, the PSAT/NMQST changed the rules from TWO TIMES In high school to three times. (There had been an

inconsistency in at least one classroom and possibly more. There was a response, at that time, that there would be no retakes.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Murphy

PS I would just note that I think one of my previous memos had one word omission/typo. I will make an update on that.

Good morning,

Hope your weekend is going well.

I read an article from a recent youth experienced educational journey person when she was in a war zone for 2 years. It got me thinking a lot about being a Commonwealth citizen, especially for wealthy/support system resources access.

Okay, I wanted to share my concerns about the incomplete assignments and being compete at Kahoot during the pandemic and lack of internet access. My 9 years old son, Marley, feels oppressed and meltdown often when the internet went down then Marley's grades are not good this quarter. I did my part to encourage him to complete everyday at home. So I feel it's fair if you could give Marley to not grade when it comes to the lack of internet access. Also, there is no needed to announce unattended classroom at my school power app. Due to lack of internet access as I mentioned repeatedly. The Verizon hotspot doesn't work well on our ends. I really don't know if you realized how the satellite is and ineffective hotspot could impact my son's thinking process.

I've talked some of my friends about the rural school system. One school from Rockingham school doesn't give the grades to a 9 years old boy. But he is encouraged to attend the zoom classroom as much as he could. I think it's a good logical when it comes to the lack of internet access and/or underprivileged family.

With that being said, I am concerned that Marley may lost his motivation in your Madison County education system for being forced due to his mindset goal. Your school have praised to some students who have the great resources access in the public eyes while others don't have any great resources access.

I hope that helps you to reconsider how the grades system and internet access are during the ongoing pandemic. Be mindful, I am not only mother but others are struggling as well.

Thank you for understanding.

Til soon,

Alissa Conover
A Mother of Madison County School 4th grader.

--

Alissa

PATRICIA G. ELLER

308 Bertha Farms Road • Barren Springs, VA 24313
Phone: (276)-728-6785 • Email: pat.eller@yahoo.com

April 1, 2021

Ms. Ann H. Manley
Wythe County School Board
1570 West Reservoir Street
Wytheville, VA 24382

Dear Ms. Manley,

My name is Patricia Eller and I am writing to you as my representative on the Wythe County School Board to express my concerns over the upcoming School Board Meeting where issues related to diversity are going to be discussed; specifically I am concerned with the proposed policies related to transgenderism and the schools. As the legal guardian of my nine-year-old grandson who attends Jackson Memorial Elementary School, I find it worrisome that the Board appears to be focusing more on issues that should be handled within the student's home instead of ensuring that students are prepared given the additional challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, I have even seen with my grandson and discussed with other parents how the quality of education has decreased since the beginning of the pandemic as well as the increase in anxiety and depression of our students. This is why the district needs to allow the Therapeutic Daily Treatment Counselors back into our schools because of the issues that have been compounded by the pandemic. These should be the critical issues that members of the Board and other government officials should be focused on.

It appears that the Board, because of our state and federal government, is more focused on a tiny percent of the population that experience gender dysmorphia and the issues surrounding transgender students. I am empathetic to the challenges that these students face and believe that they should have a safe environment to receive an education like any other student. While I could not find the Wythe County's proposal or meeting agenda on the School Board's website, I did find information on what has been proposed in other systems around the country.

- **Bathrooms, Showers, & Locker Room Use** – I do not believe that students of one biological sex should be in bathrooms, showers, or locker rooms with members of the opposite sex. If this is an issue, I would suggest gender-neutral single-occupant facilities.
- **Sports** - Surrounding sports, not only will there be potential for unfair competition within female sports, but you are also fostering an environment in which severe injuries could occur in contact sports given the biological differences in men's and women's physical composition.
- **Discussions without Parental Consent** - In no way, should a school counselor, teacher, or administrator have the ability to talk with a student regarding issues of identity without the consent of parents, except in cases of abuse as already done by state law.

- **LGBTQ School Committee** – As with school officials, in no way should a committee be formed representing the LGBTQ community to hold “discussions” in the classroom or in private about the student’s identity without parental consent.

From my understanding, you and the Board are considering similar measures to avoid bullying of these students within the school system. My questions for you and other members to consider should include: Is this a problem in the district? If so, how many incidents have there been? Are there other incidents of bullying that are being addressed? If so, how many incidents have there been? Without knowing the instances, it is difficult to determine whether this is an issue or not or if this is the liberal “woke” ideology that is plaguing our country’s institutions.

Ultimately, it is not the district, county, state, or federal government’s role to tell me how to raise my grandchild. I, like many parents I know, am raising my grandson to be a respectful, hard-working, God-fearing, patriotic American that will contribute positively to society. However, if members of the Board continue down this path I will have to reconsider whether my grandchild will remain in the Wythe County Public School System in the future.

Sincerely,

Patricia G. Eller

Cc: Charmer L. Frye, Chair of the Wythe County School Board
Scott L. Jefferies, Ed.D., Superintendent, Wythe County Public Schools
Coy L. McRoberts, Wythe County Board of Supervisors Member - District No. 5 - Lead Mines
Brian W. Vaught, Chair Wythe County Board of Supervisors
Jeffrey L. Campbell, Virginia State Delegate, District 6
David R. Suetterlein, Virginia State Senator, District 19
Atif Qarni, Virginia Secretary of Education
Ralph Northam, Governor of Virginia
H. Morgan Griffith, United States Representative, Virginia’s 9th District
Tim Kaine, United States Senator, Virginia
Mark Warner, United States Senator, Virginia

I learned recently that state has changed its guidance on Fine Arts performances. They are now being considered “Social Gatherings” apparently because parents and the public are invited to attend the performances, and are therefore being restricted to 50 people inside and 100 people outside. This change I believe came from this State Fine Arts newsletter - https://content.govdelivery.com/bulletins/gd/VADOE-2cb702a?wgt_ref=VADOE_WIDGET_68. This newsletter references changes to the Virginia Department of Health Guidelines <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/182/2020/09/VDH-Guidance-for-Performing-Arts.pdf>. As I read these guidelines, there is nothing written at all about fine arts being social gatherings or limitation on audience members. It also references [EO72](#), yet on page 10 of EO72, it specifically states that “The presence of more than 50 individuals indoors or 100 individuals outdoors ... or assembled in an educational instructional setting is not a “gathering.”” Page 11 states “Subject to the following requirements, this restriction shall not bar individuals from ... assembling in an educational instructional setting with more than 50 individuals indoors, or 100 individuals outdoors, provided: a. Individuals assembled in an educational instructional setting adhere to the applicable physical distancing and sanitization plan and guidelines of the relevant governing body or educational entity adopted pursuant to the State Health Commissioner’s Order Public Health Emergency (June 8, 2020)

I believe this restriction on audiences is completely inequitable. These Fine Arts students work and practice their crafts just as much as any athlete, yet athletics are not subject to this restrictive gathering limit. What is the difference between 25 students on stage performing, with masks on 6 feet apart, in an auditorium that seats 1200 vs. two volleyball teams playing a match in a gymnasium that seats 1200. Why are the theater students limited to 25 audience members (when you count the actors, tech and teachers), when the sports teams are not? If you analyze it, the gym is most likely a higher risk of spread than the auditorium. The theater students have masks on and are not touching each other or sharing equipment. The audience sits quietly while the students perform. In a sports venue, I’m sure the athletes are all touching shared equipment and spectators will be cheering on their teams.

In my family, and I’m sure thousands of other families in LCPS, this also impacts Marching Band. Our Marching Band has 140 students. How are they supposed to follow these new guidelines? Can they now not practice and perform? Just the students in the organization put them over the 100 person outdoor limit. They have been outside in all kinds of weather since February to prepare a show they will only get to perform 3 times only if these restrictions are lifted. Again I ask what the difference is between the marching band performing, outside spread out of a football field with masks on while they play and bell covers on all instruments, vs. the football team, sharing a ball, tackling each other with no masks? LCPS current buzz word is equity. Please explain the EQUITY in this? If Fine Arts performances are classified as “Social Gatherings” because parents and the public are invited to attend, then why are athletic matches also not classified as “social gatherings” They certainly have invited spectators. In fact I just saw an ad for a football game where concessions would be available as well.

The students in Fine Arts classes work and excel in their crafts as part of the curriculum. Our Advanced Theater class is currently working on a show scheduled for the end of May that is supposed to be delivered on stage with an in person audience. This show is part of their

curriculum. I would argue that having a live audience is definitely part of the learning process for students in theater, or band, or strings, or choir. Why is LCPS treating Fine Arts students differently than athletes? The performances are part of the education in these classes. Playing a sport is not part of a class that I know of. I whole-heartedly agree that athletics are needed, don't get me wrong. Students learn immeasurable skills from being athletes. I only argue that fine art students learn just as much from practicing and performing their crafts.

Please reverse this classification of fine arts performances as social gatherings and set the audience limits to match athletics. It is the only equitable solution.

Sincerely,
Andrea Carroll
Loudoun County Resident

The new "performance standard" the Board adopted on March 18 is so nebulous that it could make teacher evaluations less meaningful, reducing teacher quality and incentives to perform. Depending on how it is applied, it could be used as an illegal ideological litmus test, as the article below points out:

URL: <https://www.baconsrebellion.com/wp/virginias-ideological-litmus-test-for-teachers/>

Virginia's Ideological Litmus Test for Teachers

Posted on [March 29, 2021](#) by [James A. Bacon](#) | [14 Comments](#)

by Hans Bader

Can a state punish its school teachers for not having a progressive ideology? That's what Virginia's Board of Education appears to be doing. Its newly adopted "performance standard" for teacher evaluations [is based on whether](#) a "teacher demonstrates a commitment to equity and provides instruction and classroom strategies that result in culturally inclusive and responsive learning environments and academic achievement for all students."

This standard is full of buzzwords and ideologically-charged phrases that can be used to punish conservative teachers or reward bad teachers for mouthing politically-correct platitudes. Its adoption will make it even harder to get rid of bad teachers and attract good teachers.

A "commitment to equity" sounds nice until you learn that "equity" means something very different from equality and non-discrimination, in "[Virginia's Roadmap to Equity](#)." In that book, "equity" is about racial "outcomes," and it is not about equal "opportunities" or achievement based on "ability." It describes "culturally responsive educators" as those who fight "injustice," not just "racism," or effectively teaching minority children.

This new performance standard [refers to both](#) "a commitment to equity" *and* "academic achievement for all students," so it may not be enough that the teacher effectively teaches all students, including minority students. (A separate performance standard has long evaluated teachers based on "[student academic performance](#)," so this new performance standard is not necessary to give teachers an incentive to effectively educate their students, or their minority students).

So, this new performance standard could easily be interpreted as requiring an ideological "commitment" separate and apart from effective teaching.

But it would be very wrong for schools to require such an ideological commitment as part of a performance standard. People cannot be required to adhere to a particular

ideology or philosophy to teach or study in our schools. As the Supreme Court [once noted](#), “no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein.” (*West Virginia Board of Education v. Barnette* (1943)).

Thus, the Supreme Court [struck down](#) a state’s requirement that a student salute the flag. Similarly, the Supreme Court has struck down state laws requiring commitments to particular ideas or convictions, in the form of loyalty oaths for teachers and other state employees. (See, e.g., [Baggett v. Bullitt](#) (1964)).

In [Cole v. Richardson](#) (1972), the Supreme Court set out conditions an oath for government employees must meet to survive constitutional muster — such as that a government job cannot be conditioned on a commitment by the employee to *not* engage in protected speech activities or activity protected by the First Amendment.

Protected speech activities include a lot of speech that is at odds with a “commitment to equity.”

Schools are not entitled to punish speech about political and social issues just because they think it violates their “values or principles.” For example, a college’s discipline of a fraternity was overturned by the federal appeals court in Richmond on First Amendment grounds, even though the fraternity’s racially insensitive skit was [at odds](#) with the university’s “mission statement” of teaching “values of equal opportunity and equal treatment” and “respect for diversity.” (See *Iota Xi Chapter of Sigma Chi Fraternity v. George Mason University* (1993)).

In [Thompson v. Board of Education of Chicago](#) (1989), a court ruled that a teacher’s remarks to a newspaper about problems in the Chicago school system (such as gang activity) were constitutionally protected, even though “individuals in the community had expressed outrage over the remarks,” and viewed them “as racist and inflammatory.”

Similarly, a federal appeals [court ruled](#) that the First Amendment protected an “assistant fire chief in charge of personnel” from being fired for expressing views at odds with his city’s own “policy on affirmative action” to a minority-advocacy group. (See *Meyers v. City of Cincinnati* (1991)).

And a prison guard’s angry diatribe against his employer’s affirmative-action plan was [ruled](#) protected speech by a California state appeals court. (See *California Department of Corrections v. State Personnel Board* (1997)).

Yet, on March 18, the Virginia Board of Education amended its *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* [to add](#) the new “equity” standard to its existing seven performance standards for all Virginia teachers. Pursuant to [state law](#), teacher evaluations must be consistent with these performance standards.

What does equity mean? It's not defined in the performance standard itself. But elsewhere, it never seems to mean equality. There isn't a single definition, but definitions of various kinds of equity are found in the Virginia Department of Education's book [Navigating EdEquityVA: Virginia's Roadmap to Equity](#) (2020).

One definition of "equity" in this book absurdly [requires](#) "eliminating the predictability of student outcomes based on....ability [or] socioeconomic status." It says:

Education Equity: Eliminating the predictability of student outcomes based on race, gender, zip code, ability, socioeconomic status or languages spoken at home. (VDOE. Adapted from the National Equity Project. Educational Equity Definition.)

But it is entirely predictable that a student with more "ability" will perform better than a student with less "ability." Moreover, if poor students from broken homes "predictably" do worse because they are less prepared for school or have lower IQs, this is not the teacher's fault. This definition of equity is an unattainable goal that no teacher can truly meet, and thus can be used to get rid of even good teachers.

Another definition of "equity" [requires](#) not just "equitable" "opportunities," but also "outcomes" that are equitable for all races, and says the mere "absence of discrimination" is not equity:

Racial Equity (Racial Justice): The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity.

This definition seems to be an indirect endorsement of affirmative action, although its language is so vague and confusing that one cannot be certain. Vague employment oaths and commitments violate the First Amendment. (See [Baggett v. Bullitt \(1964\)](#)).

Moreover, government employees [cannot](#) be punished for disagreeing with their employer's affirmative action policy. (See, e.g., *Cal. Dept. of Corrections v. State Personnel Bd.* (1997)).

The Constitution requires only the absence of discrimination in our schools, not "diversity," affirmative action, or other things that might be seen as "equity." (See [Schuette v. BAMN](#) (2014)).

The *Roadmap to Equity* defines "[culturally responsive](#)" in a nakedly political way that focuses on teachers' belief and perception, not merely their classroom conduct. It requires teachers to "**see** cultural differences as assets" rather than challenges to be overcome, and to challenge "intolerance, injustice, and oppression," without defining those vague terms. It says:

Culturally responsive educators:

- See cultural differences as assets
- Validate the inequities impacting students' lives.....
- Utilize students' cultures as vehicles for learning
- Challenge racial and culture stereotypes, prejudice, racism, and other forms of intolerance, injustice, and oppression
- Mediate power imbalances in classrooms based on race, culture, ethnicity, gender, and class.

Dear LCPS School Board members,

I am writing to address my concerns about the Fine Arts Program in Loudoun County Public Schools and to call for a reversal of current guidelines. I have been made aware that LCPS has changed its guidance on Fine Arts performances. They are now being considered “Social Gatherings”, apparently because parents and the public are invited to attend the performances, and are therefore being restricted to 50 people inside and 100 people outside. This change seems to have come from a newsletter - April Fine Arts News from VDOE, and is likely someone's interpretation of EO72.

This newsletter references changes to the Virginia Department of Health Guidelines <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/182/2020/09/VDH-Guidance-for-Performing-Arts.pdf>. Reading these guidelines, there is nothing written about Fine Arts performances being social gatherings or limitations on audience members. It also references EO72, yet on page 10 of EO72, it specifically states that “The presence of more than 50 individuals indoors or 100 individuals outdoors ... or assembled in an educational instructional setting is not a “gathering.” Page 11 states “Subject to the following requirements, this restriction shall not bar individuals from ... assembling in an educational instructional setting with more than 50 individuals indoors, or 100 individuals outdoors, provided: a. Individuals assembled in an educational instructional setting adhere to the applicable physical distancing and sanitization plan and guidelines of the relevant governing body or educational entity adopted pursuant to the State Health Commissioner’s Order Public Health Emergency (June 8, 2020)

LCPS has spent a lot of time and money this year talking about equity. However, it seems that there is a large amount of inequity when it comes to Athletics and Fine Arts. We just had to rally as parents for our cheerleaders to be able to attend and cheer at football games, and now LCPS wants to prevent band, chorus, and theater students from performing. Band members have special masks they wear, as well as bell covers for instruments. The students are marching in a distanced manner. Yet, football players are on the field, sharing equipment, and touching each other when tackling, and not wearing masks. Where is the equity?

Fine Arts students work and practice just as much as any athlete, yet athletics are not subject to this restrictive gathering limit. The John Champe Marching Band has 140 students. How are they supposed to follow these new guidelines? Just the students alone in the band put them over the 100 person outdoor limit. Can they now not practice and perform? They have been outside in all kinds of weather since February to prepare a show they will only get to perform 3 times, and that is only if these restrictions are lifted.

If Fine Arts performances are classified as “Social Gatherings”, because parents and the public are invited to attend, then why are athletic matches also not classified as “social gatherings”? Athletics certainly has invited spectators. Why is LCPS treating Fine Arts students differently than athletes? The Fine Arts performances are part of the education in their classes or part of a GPA point boost. I believe the restrictions on Fine Arts performances and audiences are completely inequitable.

Please reconsider the guidelines set for Fine Arts performances as they are not social gatherings, and set the audience limits to match Athletics. It is the only equitable solution.

Sincerely,

Rachel Chintala, Blue Ridge District Resident

Good Morning,

The families of this state have worked very hard to help our children understand and work within the rules that our individual school board and the board of education have implemented due to the pandemic. When the rules don't seem to make sense and appear unfair, we remind them it's not just about us, but to help our community stay safe. It's for the greater good we tell them, when one more activity is canceled. It's time for this to end.

I am writing specifically about marching bands, but this really applies to all activities. Consider all of the many hours these student musicians put in during class, practicing at home, and paying for extra lessons on their own time, simply to prepare for practice with their band mates. Now, let's consider the time that these students put in together to learn to play and march together as a cohesive band that is worthy of winning competitions. The dedication that these student musicians have is astounding. They work just as hard as any athletic team, and yet they are categorized as a "social gathering".

For the Virginia Department of Education to classify their competitions and performances as a social gathering is not only wrong, it is demeaning to the young men and women who put so much of their time, effort and heart into this to represent their schools. You are in essence telling them that because they are not traditional athletes, they don't matter as much. I don't know about you, but that is not the message that I strive to give my children.

Due to this ruling, the only live performance that Loudoun county marching bands had scheduled is now cancelled. Please reconsider your ruling, and allow the students to have their performance, for so many seniors it will be their last one. Please!

Respectfully,

Shawna
Parent of an LCPS Senior

Good Morning,

My name is Jennifer Travis and I am the mother of a 6th grader at River Bend Middle School in Sterling Virginia. I am reaching out to you today regarding the recent update from the Governor's office regarding Fine Arts Performances.

Governor Ralph Northam updated Executive Order 72 (EO 72) effective 4/1/21 which includes statewide measures to contain the spread of COVID-19. Portions of Executive Order 72 apply to the public and private schools. The EO states that gathering limits do not apply to "educational instructional settings." This includes classrooms, buses, cafeterias and recess held on school grounds. However, the executive order states that a "gathering" includes but is not limited to, parties, celebrations, or other social events, whether they occur indoors or outdoors." This includes but is not limited to, school activities such as: social picnics, dances, award ceremonies in which degrees or diplomas are not conferred, fundraisers, and fine arts performances to which parents or the public are invited. These activities are subject to the gathering limits in places via the Executive order at the time they occur.

The provisions of Executive Order 72 are inequitable towards schools performing arts programs as school affiliated sports are not considered social gatherings but rather are covered under recreational sports. Outdoor recreational sports attendance has increased from 250 to 500 or 30% capacity whichever is less. Indoor sports were executed throughout the winter for our high school teams and we can confirm, as a whole, that the mitigation strategies in place were successful. Wrestling and basketball are sports that require close proximity and our students were able to compete despite potential risks involved. If our sports teams, like basketball where there are potentially over 40 people in the gymnasium at any time (athletes, coaches, medical personnel, scorekeepers, officials) can hold games, we ask that the same considerations and guidance be made available to those involved in the creative arts, with the same level of importance.

Our athletes have been given their field to practice and showcase their talents. It is time to do the same for our fine arts students who belong on stage and can do so wearing a mask while also following social distancing guidelines. If we can have wrestlers in close contact we can and should put our actors and dancers on stage. I implore you to reach out to the Governor and ask him to reconsider the restrictions on our fine arts students and align school performing arts to the "Entertainment and Amusement Businesses" guidance which includes performing arts venues and concert venues, sports venues, as well as others.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Travis
20777 Riverbirch Place
Sterling VA 20165
Tel: 619-787-2052

2 Attachments



CinemaSafe

Voluntary Health & Safety Guidelines for United States Movie Theater Owners

21 August 2020

NATO Executive Board

Adam M. Aron, CEO, AMC Entertainment Inc.
Robert E. Bagby, President & CEO, B & B Theatres
Joseph Masher, COO, Bow Tie Cinemas
J.D. Loeks, President, Celebration Cinema by Studio C
Mark Zoradi, CEO, Cinemark USA, Inc.
Ellis Jacob, President & CEO, Cineplex Entertainment Limited Partnership
Moshe J. Greidinger, CEO, Cineworld Group PLC
Chris Johnson, CEO, Classic Cinemas
Bo Chambliss, President, Georgia Theatre Company
Daniel E. Harkins, Owner & Executive Chairman, Harkins Theatres
Eddy Duquette, CEO, Kinopolis Group N.V.
David O. Wright, Owner, Linway Plaza Cinemas
Jeff Logan, Owner/President, Logan Luxury Theatres Corp./Huron Theatres Corp.
Rolando B. Rodriguez, President & CEO, Marcus Theatres Corp.
Joseph Paletta, III, President & CEO, Spotlight Theatres, Inc.
Ronald P. Krueger, II, President & COO, VSS - Southern Theatres, LLC
John G. Vincent, Jr., Owner & President, Wellfleet Cinemas

Medical Consultants

Dr. Lisa Saiman, MD, MPH, FSHEA
Professor of Pediatrics, Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases, Columbia University Medical Center

Dr. Daniel Z. Uslan, MD, MS, MBA, FIDSA, FSHEA
Co-Chief Infection Prevention Officer, UCLA Health

CinemaSafe

Voluntary Health & Safety Guidelines for United States Movie Theater Owners

Developed by the National Association of Theatre Owners in consultation with medical and industry experts

INTRODUCTION

- The following is intended to provide guidance related to reopening of movie theaters during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Given the rapidly evolving situation with COVID-19, the following recommendations are likely to be subject to change. Moreover, certain changes are expected based on the phased reopening guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- THIS DOCUMENT IS NOT LEGAL ADVICE. Local and state public health guidance should be followed as relates to timing of reopening, specific protocols, and modifications to this guidance. This will depend on the state and region's phased reopening plan. Consult with local counsel to ensure that your reopening plans are consistent with all federal, state and/or local guidance.
- Exhibitors committing to meet or exceed the CinemaSafe protocols may display the CinemaSafe badge on their website and physical locations.

THIS GUIDANCE IS BASED ON PROTOCOLS DEVELOPED BY THE CDC, OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION (OSHA), DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, AND WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO). IN PARTICULAR, THIS DOCUMENT IS INTENDED TO FOLLOW THE CDC PHASE BASED GUIDELINES FOR OPENING UP AMERICA AGAIN.

PROTECTING EMPLOYEE HEALTH

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

1. *All employees will be trained on the proper way to wear face coverings and required to wear a face covering or mask. Face coverings or masks should be provided to the employee at no cost to them. The face covering must be worn at all times when interacting with the public or other employees.*
2. *If washable, employees will be instructed to wash their face covering daily.*

3. *Gloves should be provided and available to employees. They should be used when contact with potentially contaminated surfaces is unavoidable. Gloves do not substitute for hand hygiene and may provide a false sense of security. Hand hygiene should be performed after removing (doffing) gloves.*
4. *PPE should never be shared between employees.*

HAND HYGIENE

1. *Employees should avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.*
2. *Handwashing facilities with running water, soap, and paper towels (dispensed using a non-touch system when available) should be easily accessible.*
3. *Handwashing facilities should be kept clean and well-stocked.*
4. *Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol (EPA approved ethanol or isopropyl) should be strategically placed around work areas and easily accessible, especially in ticket booths or other enclosed spaces.*
5. *Supplies of soap, paper towels, and hand sanitizer should be stocked and maintained to ensure they do not run out.*
6. *Employees who work in areas without ready access to handwashing facilities or hand sanitizer stations should be provided with pocket-sized hand sanitizer.*
7. *All employees should be trained on hand hygiene practices (20 seconds of duration, scrubbing all surfaces).*
8. *Hands should be washed or sanitized:*
 - *Upon arriving at work.*
 - *After blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing.*
 - *After using the restroom.*
 - *Before eating or drinking.*
 - *After handling equipment or objects that may carry COVID-19.*
 - *After cleaning or disinfecting equipment, tools, or workspaces; and*
 - *At other appropriate times throughout the workday.*

9. *Signage should be posted prominently with instructions on how to stop the spread of COVID-19, including hand hygiene and PPE instructions.*

WORKPLACE POLICIES

1. *All employees should be trained on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 as well as local theatre policies and procedures. Training should be mandatory for all employees as a condition of employment.*
2. *Employees should be instructed to self-monitor for fever or other symptoms of COVID and not to come to work if sick or if they have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19. This should be part of training and reinforced with posted signage and frequent reminders.*
3. *The workplace should have a plan in place for what to do in case of an employee who develops symptoms while working as well as an employee who tests positive for COVID-19. This must include the employee isolating themselves at home. Any other employees who had a close contact workplace exposure will need to self-quarantine. All employees should be familiar with this plan, and it should be part of training.*
4. *Symptom checks should be performed prior to employees entering the workplace. This should, at a minimum, include questions about cough, shortness of breath, diarrhea, loss of smell, loss of taste, and fever. This check can be done in person or remotely (such as electronic survey). If feasible, temperature checks should also be done upon arrival to work.*
5. *Employees should be given breaks to wash their hands. Stagger break times to ensure appropriate physical distancing can be maintained in employee restrooms and breakrooms. Employees should not congregate in break rooms.*
6. *Vulnerable employees, for example those over age 65 or with certain chronic health conditions, should discuss any concerns with their physician.*

PROTECTING PATRON HEALTH

PPE

1. *Patrons must wear a face covering at all times, except as noted by the CDC and herein. Those who are unwilling to wear a face covering will be denied entry.*

2. *Signage should be prominently posted at entrances notifying patrons of this requirement, as well as signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Patrons should be notified of this requirement prior to arrival, such as on the theatre website during ticket purchasing.*
3. *Theatres should develop protocols to handle non-compliant patrons, and all employees who interact with patrons should receive training on this protocol.*
4. *Patrons should be asked to bring a face covering with them to the theatre. Individual theatres should decide whether they will provide disposable face coverings if a patron arrives without one.*
5. *With limited exceptions, patrons must wear a face covering at all times while in the auditorium and common areas of the theatre. Exceptions to this policy include those unable to wear face coverings such as children under 2 years of age and individuals with certain medical/physical conditions that inhibit their ability to safely wear face coverings. In addition, face coverings may be removed for the limited purpose and limited time period necessary to consume food and beverages, if approved by state or local health authorities. If so approved, no food or beverages will be consumed in any area that does not provide sufficient space to ensure physical distancing can be maintained.*

HAND HYGIENE

1. *Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol (EPA approved ethanol or isopropyl) will be liberally placed in easily accessible public areas and patrons will be encouraged by staff and appropriately placed signage to practice hand hygiene.*
2. *Ensure public restrooms are clean, well-stocked, and have adequate supplies for hand washing. Touchless faucets, soap, and paper towel dispensers should be used when available.*

POLICIES

1. *Explore novel options to minimize the number of patrons in an auditorium, for example allowing families or those that attend together to rent out an entire auditorium.*
2. *Appropriate physical distancing must be maintained at all times between patrons, except members of the same household or those that attend together.*

3. *With limited exceptions, patrons must wear a face covering at all times while in the auditoriums and common areas of the theatre. Exceptions to this policy include children under 2 years of age and individuals with certain medical/physical conditions that inhibit their ability to safely wear face coverings. In addition, face coverings may be removed for the limited purpose and limited time period necessary to consume food and beverages, if approved by state or local health authorities. If so approved, no food or beverages will be consumed in any area that does not provide sufficient space to ensure physical distancing can be maintained.*
4. *Provide ample announcements of the theatre's policies to patrons. Options could include instructions on the theatre's website and social media, prominent signage, floor markings, and on-screen announcements prior to screening.*

GENERAL INFECTION PREVENTION ISSUES

DISINFECTION AND MAINTENANCE

1. *High-touch surfaces should be wiped down periodically with EPA-registered disinfectant, following the manufacturer's instructions (e.g., safety requirements, protective equipment, contact time). Examples of high-touch surfaces are countertops, doorknobs, faucets, etc. These surfaces should be wiped down at frequent intervals during operating hours.*
2. *Manufacturer's instructions for cleaning should be followed for sensitive electronic equipment (e.g. ticket machines, projectors).*
3. *Appropriately trained employees will be assigned to perform high touch wipe down, with an emphasis on shared spaces and equipment. Surfaces should be disinfected on a predetermined schedule and monitored by management to ensure compliance.*
4. *Auditoriums should be carefully disinfected between movie screenings. Seat maps of patrons can be used after a screening to help target this activity. This enhanced cleaning will necessitate increased intervals between screenings.*
5. *If employees are required to wear equipment such as radios, headsets, or earpieces, these should be designated for a particular employee and not shared between multiple employees. If sharing this equipment is unavoidable, protocols will be developed to ensure they are cleaned between each employee use as per manufacturer's suggested cleaning instructions.*

6. *Alternatives to paper tickets should be used whenever feasible. If paper tickets are used, the staff person collecting them should wear appropriate personal protective equipment (face covering) and disposable gloves. Hand hygiene should be performed after doffing gloves.*
7. *If items are handed out to patrons, such as 3D glasses, these should either be single use or protocols established to ensure disinfection between uses. Assisted audio devices should be thoroughly disinfected between uses according to manufacturer's suggested cleaning instructions.*
8. *Minimize personal items left in commons areas such as employee breakrooms.*
9. *Theatres that have been closed should be thoroughly disinfected prior to reopening to the public. If a theatre has had a prolonged shutdown, hot and cold-water fixtures should be flushed per CDC guidelines to ensure water systems are safe to use.*

FOOD AND BEVERAGES

1. *With limited exceptions, patrons must wear a face covering at all times while in the auditoriums and common areas of the theatre. Exceptions to this policy include children under 2 years of age and individuals with certain medical/physical conditions that inhibit their ability to safely wear face coverings. In addition, face coverings may be removed for the limited purpose and limited time period necessary to consume food and beverages, if approved by state or local health authorities. If so approved, no food or beverages will be consumed in any area that does not provide sufficient space to ensure physical distancing can be maintained. Consider identifying additional designated areas for eating/drinking outside of auditoriums that have adequate space to permit appropriate physical distance.*
2. *Those responsible for preparing and distributing food must clean their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer prior to beginning food preparation or distribution and regularly thereafter.*
3. *All local public health regulations regarding preparing and distributing food must be followed, including use of appropriate food service PPE (hairnets, gloves), safe food temperatures, etc.*
4. *Minimize the number of people involved in preparing and distributing food.*

5. *Communal food, condiments, condiment caddies, straws, napkins etc., that require shared serving utensils or equipment should be eliminated, offered via touchless technology or provided by appropriately trained employees. Examples include popcorn butter dispensers, saltshakers, popcorn flavoring, straws, etc.*
6. *Consider options for patrons to place orders ahead of time, such as mobile ordering, to minimize the amount of time they must wait in line.*
7. *If patrons must wait in line to place orders or receive their food, they must maintain appropriate physical distancing. Visual reminders should be prominently placed to assist.*
8. *Handwashing facilities and/or hand sanitizer dispensers should be readily accessible at the entrance of any designated eating area and should be used when entering and leaving the area.*
9. *Consider addition of plexiglass (or similar) barriers between cashiers and patrons.*
10. *Minimize cash transactions and encourage credit cards or contactless payments whenever possible.*

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

1. *Ticket lines should be configured to ensure appropriate physical distancing is maintained at all times. Options include visible markers, barriers, tape, etc.*
2. *Tickets sales should be available online or via phone whenever feasible to reduce the need to stand in line for tickets.*
3. *Lines to enter a theatre should be minimized whenever possible. If lines are unavoidable, appropriate physical distancing must be maintained.*
4. *Adequate numbers of employees should be available to direct patron traffic and enforce physical distancing in lines.*
5. *Ensure that, at a minimum, the amount of physical distance defined in all applicable federal, state, and local guidance is maintained in all directions inside auditoriums, except for members of a household or those that attend together. Configure ticket sales systems to facilitate appropriate physical distancing. Occupancy will need to be individualized based on state and local public health guidance and the phased reopening plan.*

6. *Limit and stagger screening times to reduce overcrowding between screenings, particularly in common areas, restrooms, and concession areas.*
7. *To the extent possible, reconfigure restrooms, for example by blocking stalls or urinals, to ensure appropriate physical distancing can be maintained at all times. As patrons may need to line up to enter restrooms, use visual indicators such as tape to identify appropriate physical distancing.*
8. *Use of employee breakrooms should be limited. As face coverings cannot be worn during eating/drinking, limit the number of employees in a breakroom at any one time to ensure distancing can be maintained. Clean countertops and tables between uses.*
9. *If there is an elevator, capacity should be limited to four (4) individuals at a time, families or others that attend together only.*
10. *Unless permitted and protocols in place consistent with local and state public health guidance consistent with each state and region's phased reopening plan, close any on-site lounges, play areas, or other areas where people may congregate.*

HVAC

1. *All HVAC systems should be in working order with increased ventilation whenever possible.*
2. *Upgrade the building's air filters consistent with CDC, state and local health guidance to the extent possible.*
3. *Whenever possible, increase the quantity of outside air.*
4. *Consider use of portable high-efficiency air cleaners.*
5. *Considering hiring an HVAC expert, such as an industrial hygienist, to assess and optimize airflow and air exchange.*

Recommendations for Reopening School Theatre Programs

Theatre Education in the Time of COVID-19





How you deliver theatre instruction may change under the new education normal, but learning outcomes should remain the same.

CONTENTS

Introduction to the Guide	1
Performance	2
Rehearsals	3
Live Performance	4
Virtual Performance	5
Curriculum, Instruction and Resources	5
Curriculum	5
Instruction	6
Resources	6
General Protocols for Reopening Schools	7
Acknowledgements	8
General Guides and Resources	8
Performance-Based Guides and Resources	9

We believe that theatre programs are more vital than ever, given their ability to support the social and emotional wellbeing of students in this time of great change and trauma.



INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDE

The mission of the Educational Theatre Association (EdTA) is to shape lives through theatre education. In the time of COVID-19 we will adhere to that mission. We believe that theatre programs are more vital than ever, given their ability to support the social and emotional wellbeing of students in this time of great change and trauma. We also believe that theatre performance opportunities—a central component to all theatre education programs—should continue to be available to all students, whether in-person or virtually. Therefore, EdTA endorses the safe resumption of school-based theatre activities in all schools.

EdTA has reviewed multiple guides, studies, and expert resources and synthesized them into a series of suggestions for the reopening of theatre classrooms and facilities. This document offers recommendations for how theatre educators can continue to provide meaningful theatre education experiences for their students in the COVID-19 era, as well as programmatic guidance for state, district, and school decision makers who are tasked with deciding how education will be delivered to students in the 2020-21 school year and beyond. It represents the best guidance available at the time of writing.

It's understood that what is applicable for reopening programs may vary from district to district and change over time. EdTA intends to regularly update the guide to acknowledge changing procedures. It's also understood that, as a trained professional educator, you want to offer the very best instruction to your students so they can learn and grow in their knowledge, understanding, and love of theatre. This guide affirms that you can still do that, but also acknowledges that *how* you deliver your teaching may be different than in the past. To that end, the two most important things to bear in mind are:

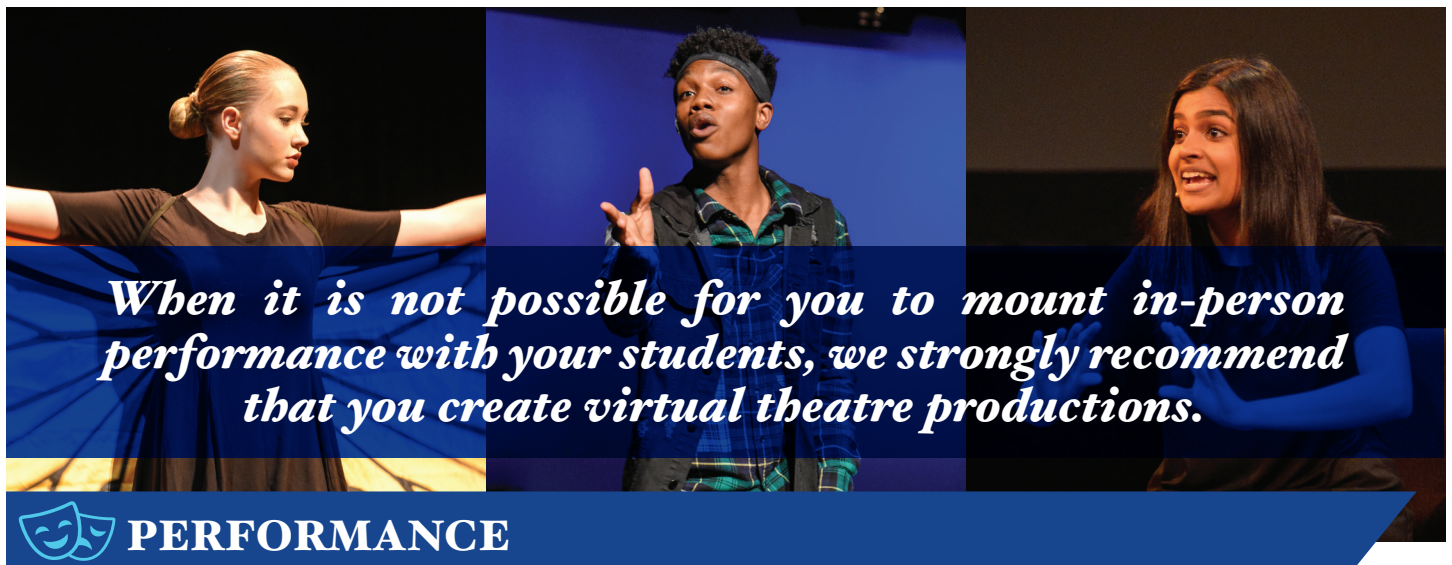
1. *The guide does not seek to replace or contradict the guidelines issued by your state or district public health agencies or the CDC regarding the timing or protocols for how schools should operate in the new normal of education.* You should *always* follow those guidelines, whatever they are. (See the guide's "General protocols for reopening schools" section for CDC guidance.)
2. *There is no expectation that all schools in all states and districts will or should follow every recommendation included here.* Every state is handling the pandemic differently and those differences may even vary district to district. Perhaps your school will return to classes and you will be able to restart your theatre program in a way that's very similar to the past. Conversely, you may initially be conducting your classes and performances entirely through a virtual platform.

Recommendations for Reopening School Theatre Programs offers health and safety guidance for theatre teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic by asking this question: *What does a theatre educator and their program need to minimize risks and ensure students' safety, while simultaneously providing them with quality theatre experiences?* And the guide is mindful of these three additional questions:

1. How can you deliver instruction while adhering to social distancing?
2. How can you adapt instruction for virtual teaching and learning?
3. How can the social and emotional support that live theatre experiences provide be transferred to online learning environments?

To answer these questions, the guide addresses these aspects of theatre education:

- Performance
- Curriculum, Instruction and Resources



If your district public health agency has prohibited the gathering of large crowds, or even limited groups, in confined spaces, you may not be able to produce in-person theatre events. When it is not possible for you to mount in-person performance with your students, we strongly recommend that you create virtual theatre productions. In the months following the outbreak of COVID-19, theatre educators and artists from around the country have proven that it is possible to create and share inventive and engaging work virtually, extending their artistry in new and inspiring ways. EdTA believes that you and your students can also tell theatre stories through this unexpected mode.

If not now, eventually you will be able to resume live, onstage productions. Much of what is offered in this guide regarding traditional, live theatre production addresses different steps that you can take to increase the safety of your students, self, and the audience in the COVID-19 era, along with the tools and resources necessary to do so. Again, these are *suggestions*. We know, for example, it will be a challenge for some schools to provide masks for every student or do the level of sanitizing suggested here. The question you and your administrator must answer is, "What is safely possible for our school and our students, under our state and local public health rules?"

Regarding staged productions in general: multiple research studies have detailed profound concerns over the transmission of the virus through respiratory droplets produced through speech, either spoken or sung, in close quarter environments.

The Educational Theatre Association encourages you to produce theatre that will minimize the risk of infection to students, your audience, and yourself until a cure, vaccine, or effective treatment is available.

The CDC guidelines of frequent hand washing, temperature checks, disinfection of all surfaces, equipment, and tools are all critical to safe, in-person school production. We understand that the sanitization recommendations cited here

are particularly challenging. EdTA strongly advises teachers to meet with their administrators to be certain that district procedures for sanitation includes support for theatre programs.

Rehearsals

Much of this rehearsal guidance is also applicable to performance.

Before you get to that big opening night you must, of course, lead your students through a series of rehearsals. Whenever possible, hold virtual rehearsals. This preparatory aspect of the craft should continue to be part of your theatre program. Bearing in mind your district's public health directives, in the new normal, here are some safety actions you might take to put your students and families at ease with this process:

- Adhere to social distancing (6 feet between actors, technicians, and teachers) by applying a room capacity formula (<https://www.banquettablespro.com/social-distancing-room-space-calculator>) that will calculate maximum capacity based on room size; if necessary, divide rehearsing students into small groups working in separate rooms.
- Everyone should wear masks throughout rehearsal.
- Conduct temperature checks of all students and school personnel entering the rehearsal space.
- Encourage students to bring their own marked water bottles.
- No sharing of food or beverages.
- Wipe down or spray all surfaces—chairs, set pieces, props, rails, technical hardware, etc.—before and after rehearsal, using CDC-approved disinfectants.
- Do not allow any sharing of makeup, costumes, or wigs.
- Launder all costumes and sanitize wigs after each rehearsal.
- Hold larger-cast rehearsals in gyms, cafetorium-type spaces or outside to more easily meet social distancing guidelines.
- Schedule staggered bathroom breaks to ensure social distancing guidelines, based on the application of the room capacity formula.
- Provide a hand-washing station and have hand sanitizer readily available in the dressing rooms, green rooms, backstage and all other production areas.
- Dressing rooms, green rooms, production areas should be sanitized—before and after rehearsals--using CDC-approved disinfectants.
- Students should not share any voice amplification equipment, if possible. Students should avoid touching any curtain.
- Sanitize all technical hardware--microphones/headsets, rigging, sound and light boards, lights and rigging before and after each rehearsal per manufacturer instruction. (For microphone care, see: <https://www.shure.eu/musiciansdiscover/educational/keeping-your-microphone-clean>)
- Minimize clustering of students not directly involved in rehearsal and only students who are required to be at rehearsals should be allowed to attend.
- Avoid unnecessary touching, movement or singing that might increase the transmission of aerosol droplets.
- Provide scripts for each student—ideally digitally—that honor copyright restrictions.
- Meet technical needs (set and costume construction, lights, sound, etc.) through the application of standard safe practice procedures and a staggered schedule that ensures social distancing in all workspaces.

- Conduct technical rehearsals with the minimal number of students possible and adhere to social distancing for both performers and technicians throughout.
- Err on the side of caution—if a student says they do not feel well, send them home and follow district procedures regarding contact tracing and follow up procedures.



Live Performance

Onstage, live theatrical performance can remain a central part of your school theatre program, as long as it can be produced safely with students working in all capacities—onstage, backstage, and front of house—and such that parents, other students and staff, and the community at large can enjoy these performances with minimum risk and concern.

For safety and opportunity, along with in-person performances before an audience, consider these three options regarding live student theatrical performance:

1. Virtual performance models that rely on video conferencing applications.
2. Outdoor performances, where social distancing would be easier.
3. In-person onstage performances simultaneously streamed live to an online audience.

Also consider scheduling additional performances over a longer period to allow for more community members to attend and to make up for lost revenues due to lower individual attendance, or develop a partner arrangement with another school or community-professional theatre with a larger seating capacity.

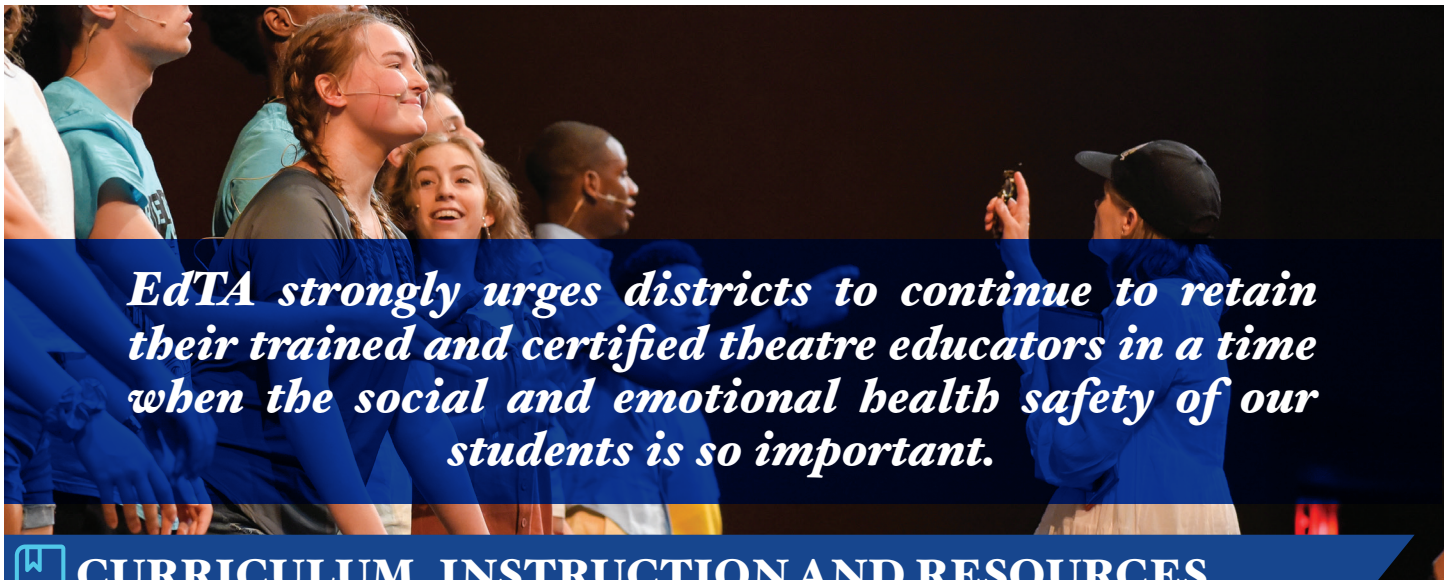
- Whenever possible, students, staff, and volunteers should wear masks when backstage, in the green room or other theatre related spaces, and adhere to the CDC guidelines for handling and sanitizing the masks.
- Calculate acceptable audience attendance based on house capacity that ensures 6-foot social distancing (<https://www.banquettablespro.com/social-distancing-room-space-calculator>).
- Follow district guidelines regarding seating.
- Educate audience members on health rules and expectations through:
 - school or program website;
 - social media channels;
 - online ticket purchasing;
 - emails and push notifications;
 - signage leading to and at the event site.
- Require volunteers—parents, ushers, box office staff, etc.—to follow the same safety guidelines as all other school personnel.
- Require all patrons to:
 - undergo temperature checks before entering the theatre;
 - wear masks throughout the performances;
 - follow a pre-marked pathway of entrance in and out of the theatre.
- Provide hand sanitizer in the lobby and restrooms.
- Sanitize all public areas prior to and after a performance—seats, rails, restrooms, back of house, and other high-touch surfaces, using CDC-approved disinfectants.
- Sanitize all set pieces and props before and after the performances.
- Advise audience members to limit clustering in groups before the production begins, during intermission, and afterwards.

- Limit bathroom occupancy to a designated number by applying the room capacity calculator (<https://www.banquettablespro.com/social-distancing-room-space-calculator>).
- Limit concession stand sales to pre-packaged beverages and food or eliminate concessions completely.
- Backstage:
 - masks should be worn at all times by all students, teachers, and volunteers in the backstage area;
 - sanitize all technical hardware--microphones/headsets, sound and light boards, lights, and rigging before and after the performance or rehearsals, per manufacturer instruction;
 - Sanitize all surfaces in the control booth, using CDC-approved disinfectants;
 - Limit the number of students in the control booth, based on social distancing rules.
- Be prepared to assist in contact tracing, per district health guidelines.



Virtual performance

Virtual theatre is something new and unexpected for everyone—including educational theatre. Given that newness, a lot of experimentation is going on to figure how to best create meaningful stories that work for actors, playwrights, audience members, and everyone else involved in making this magic happen. As a theatre educator that includes you as well. As noted earlier, the internet has exploded with live, recorded, and repurposed theatre in the months since the pandemic disrupted the theatre world and everyone’s daily lives. EdTA is tracking these new resources and is updating them on a regular basis. EdTA’s Theatre Educator Pro offers a curated list of resources and guidance to help you get started: <https://learn.schooltheatre.org/creating-virtual-performances>.



EdTA strongly urges districts to continue to retain their trained and certified theatre educators in a time when the social and emotional health safety of our students is so important.



CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND RESOURCES

At this writing, it is unclear what model of education delivery will be followed by individual states and districts. *How* you deliver theatre instruction may change under the new education normal, but learning outcomes should remain the same, based on a well-organized standards-based curriculum featuring curricular classes in general theatre and a range of specialized classes that address the four artistic processes of Creating, Performing, Responding, and Connecting.



Curriculum

As with performance, the internet has been flooded with innovative new approaches to theatre instruction that imagine teaching students in the multiple models suggested above. EdTA urges you to explore this content, particularly on websites that provide curated lists of lessons and resources. Start by reviewing [Theatre Educator Pro’s online learning center](#) and its [Resources for Creating Online Learning](#) and [Click to Teach: Lessons for Online Learning](#) pages.

The following is fundamental curriculum guidance relevant to the different models of teaching that you might work under in the 2020-21 school year and perhaps beyond:

1. When in-person theatre performance is either limited or unavailable, the curriculum should include curated teacher-guided virtual or recorded theatre performances that are or will be widely available so students can gain a better understanding of play structure, playwright intent, and production elements.
2. Curriculum and scheduling must be mindful of how instruction can support the social and emotional wellbeing of students, whether through playmaking, classroom instruction, or virtual environments in the COVID-19 era.
3. Virtual or hybrid curriculum should re-imagine in-class lessons, whenever possible, and create visible evidence of student learning that is measurable.
4. For students with special needs, adaptation tools must be provided to maximize their participation in classroom and production activities, either virtually or in-person.
5. The size of in-person theatre classes should meet CDC and state or district public health guidelines.
6. Coursework must continue to educate students on the elements and importance of intellectual property, copyright, and licensing fees, especially as there is an increased interest and demand for streaming of theatre performances. (For guidance on using licensed plays for virtual instruction or performances go to: <https://help.concordtheatricals.co,m/section/virtual-performances-and-digital-rights>)
7. Regular and meaningful opportunities for students to rehearse, produce, and perform theatre is of paramount importance, whether in person or remotely.



Instruction

EdTA strongly urges districts to continue to retain their trained and certified theatre educators in a time when the social and emotional health safety of our students is so important. Theatre educators can help, not only in how they teach, but in how they conduct themselves, with students, peers, and parents. Modeling the CDC and district guidelines regarding the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will send a strong message that they care about the wellbeing of the school community and the world. Working in this new educational environment you should:

1. be allowed to teach within your discipline as a theatre educator who possesses specialized training and pedagogy;
2. be provided specialized support for special-education students in theatre if they are provided for these students in other classes, whether in-person or virtually;
3. have opportunities to engage in professional development that is specifically designed to meet a redefined pedagogy of teaching in multiple environments;
4. have access to virtual or in-person theatre teacher work groups/ professional learning communities;
5. be evaluated in a way consistent with that of teachers in other subject areas, mindful of the new teaching norms educators were thrust into without notice or training.



Resources

Literary

1. Theatre is included in the district's schedule of textbook/resource adoption and updates for purchasing specialized resources, particularly those that meet virtual teaching needs.
2. Print textbooks should be made available to students without digital access.
3. If possible, textbooks should remain at home and not be transported to and from school.

Technology

1. Teachers and students should have reliable broadband content and daily access to a computer, tablet or smartphone, no matter the model by which you are delivering instruction.
2. Teachers and students should have access to the software and hardware needed to create virtual performances.

Production Elements

1. Set, lighting, sound, props, costume and makeup resources, theatre software, hardware, and tools are available to support theatre production, both in person and virtually.
2. All production equipment is regularly inspected, maintained, and regularly sanitized based on CDC and district health agency guidelines and manufacturers specifications.

Facilities

1. Theatre dedicated spaces (auditoriums, black boxes, dressing rooms, etc.) should remain reserved for theatre instruction and classes.
2. Access is available to a regularly sanitized classroom space dedicated to theatre instruction and adequate in size to accommodate students safely as prescribed by the CDC and state or district health agency guidelines for social distancing, whether for performance, rehearsals, or classroom instruction.
3. Theatre production and performance space is available to accommodate actors and technicians.
4. An HVAC system that has been inspected and certified as meeting CDC and guidelines by state or district licensed technician contracted by the school and district.
5. One trained person should be designated to monitor all shop tool/equipment use and its sanitization.



All schools must clarify how they will meet the most up-to-date CDC guidelines and guidance issued by the state and district public health agencies prior to reopening. This recommendation guide aligns with the agency's document [CDC Activities and Initiatives Supporting the COVID-19 Response and the President's Plan for Opening America Up Again](#), issued in May 2020.

The CDC states that schools should:

- follow applicable state and local orders for reopening;
- conduct temperature checks of all students and personnel entering the school;

- prepare to protect children and employees at higher risk for severe illness;
- screen students and employees upon arrival for symptoms and history of exposure;
- promote hand washing and the wearing of masks by all students and employees;
- create a plan to intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation throughout the school;
- encourage social distancing through increased spacing, small groups and limited mixing between groups;
- train all employees on health and safety protocols;
- engage in ongoing monitoring of students and staff;
- develop and implement procedures to check for signs and symptoms of students and employees daily upon arrival;
- encourage anyone who is sick to stay home;
- communicate and monitor developments with local authorities, employees, and families regarding cases, exposures, and updates to policies and procedures;
- monitor student and employee absences and have flexible leave policies and practices;
- consult with the local health authorities if there are cases in the facility or an increase in cases in the local area.

For additional schoolwide reopening guidance, see the General Guides and Resources list below.

This guide is by no means comprehensive or final; EdTA will update periodically, as needed. If you have suggestions or updates regarding how your theatre program is reopening, please email jpalmarini@schooltheatre.org.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Educational Theatre Association is grateful for the guidance that other organizations' reopening documents provided in the creation of this document:

- CDC Activities and Initiatives Supporting the COVID-19 Response
- Texas Thesians Recommendations for Reopening Theatre Classrooms & Theatre Facilities
- San Francisco Gay Men's Choral Singing in the Time of COVID-19
- Event Safety Guide for Event Professionals During the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Return to School Roadmap: Where Public Education and Public Health Meet
- National Federation of State High Schools Associations' Guidance for Opening High School Athletics and Activities

GENERAL GUIDES AND RESOURCES

- [CDC Activities and Initiatives Supporting the COVID-19 Response and the President's Plan for Opening Up America Again](#)
- [K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs: FAQs for Administrators, Teachers, and Parents](#)
- [Schools During the COVID-19 Pandemic School Decision Tree](#)
- [CDC Recommendation Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings, Especially in Areas of Significant Community Based Transmission](#)

- [Return to School Roadmap](#)
- [American Federation of Teachers Plan to Safely Reopen America’s Schools and Communities](https://www.aft.org/reopen-schools)
- [Council of Chief State School Officers: Phase 2 Restart and Recovery COVID-19 Response](#)
- [Educause May 15th blog: “COVID-19 Quick Poll Results: Fall Planning for Education and Student Support”, by Susan Grajek](#)



PERFORMANCE-BASED GUIDES AND RESOURCES

- [San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus: Choral Singing in the Time of COVID-19, by Dr. Timothy Selig](#)
- [Arts Together: Planning and Guidance in Maryland Public Schools](#)
- [Performing Arts Industry Relaunch Project](#)
- [Theatre Educator Pro](#)
- [The Event Safety Alliance Reopening Guide, edited by Steven A. Adelman](#)
- [Roadmap for Recovery and Resilience for Theater](#)
- [National Federation of State High School Associations Guide for Opening up High School Athletics and Activities](#)
- [“Arts Education Is Essential”: May 2020 statement of support by 69 national arts and arts education organizations](#)
- [Arts Education and Social-Emotional Learning Outcomes Among K-12 Students: Developing a Theory of Action](#)
- [2016 EdTA Opportunity-to-Learn Standards for Theatre Education](#)

Hello Senator Bell and Delegate Delaney! I hope you are both doing well.

I'm writing to ask for your support in an important school issue - inequity in the application of COVID gathering restrictions for our performing arts students. Theater, chorus and band are being categorized as "social gatherings" which they most certainly are not, any more than a basketball game is a social gathering. It is my understanding that this decision about performing arts being classified as a "social gathering" is the interpretation from the VA Board of Education.

Below is text from a Virginia Music Educators Association petition:

Governor Ralph S. Northam updated Executive Order 72 (EO 72), effective April 1, 2021, which includes statewide measures to contain the spread of COVID-19. Portions of EO 72 applies to public and private schools. The EO states that gathering limits do not apply to "educational instructional settings." This includes classrooms, buses, cafeterias and recess held on school grounds.

However, the Executive Order states, "a 'gathering' includes, but is not limited to, parties, celebrations, or other social events, whether they occur indoors or outdoors." This includes, but is not limited to, school activities such as: social picnics, dances, awards ceremonies in which degrees or diplomas are not conferred, fundraisers, and fine arts performances to which parents or the public are invited. These activities are subject to the gathering limits in place via Executive Order at the time they occur.

School-affiliated sports are not considered social gatherings but are included in the Recreational Sports section of EO 72. Outdoor recreational sports attendance has increased from 250 to 500 people, or 30% capacity, whichever is less.

The provisions of EO72 are inequitable towards school performing arts programs.

The Virginia Music Educators Association requests a review of Executive Order 72 to align school performing arts to the "Entertainment and Amusement Businesses" guidance which includes performing arts venues and concert venues, sports venues, as well as others. Such guidance includes, but is not limited to, the following requirements: (a) The total number of spectators indoors cannot exceed the lesser of 30 percent of the lowest occupancy load on the certificate of occupancy, if applicable, or 500 persons. The total number of spectators for outdoor venues cannot exceed 30 percent of the lowest occupancy load on the certificate of occupancy. If no occupancy load has been determined, a ratio of 40 square feet per person shall be used to determine occupancy limits – only square footage that is likely to be accessed may be included. For example, a 100,000 square foot outdoor venue would have an occupancy load of 2,500 – of which no more than 30% (750 persons) shall be permitted.

These revisions are necessary to ensure performing arts students can perform for an audience that is safe and appropriate for their particular performance venue. The implications that music and

theatre instruction, as well as their aligned performance opportunities (with an audience), are considered in the above-mentioned 'social gatherings' is hurtful to arts education and doesn't clearly articulate nor support the artistic work and dedication of our teachers and students.

I would like your support to ask the Governor's office to clarify this ruling to allow performing arts to fall under the same restrictions as sports. We are ALL concerned with safety, but at the same time we can't allow inequity in how our students extracurriculars are handled.

My daughter works tremendously hard with the Freedom Theater program, and their performances are most certainly not just social events. They have a play coming up in early May, and allowing for more socially-distanced audience members would not only bolster the ticket sales (which help fund theater programming), it will also allow these young people to perform in person in front of more of their family and peers.

Thanks for your time.

Lara Larson
25997 Talamore Drive
South Riding VA 20152
703-624-0946

Good Morning:

I wanted to ensure you are aware of the petition (<https://www.change.org/p/loudoun-county-public-schools-allow-marching-band-performances-at-loudoun-county-public-schools-virginia/c/816358813>) parents have circulating for support of LCPS marching bands to be able to compete in their sport just as the students on football, wrestling, lacrosse, baseball and other sports are being permitted to do. As of this morning, the petition has nearly 700 signatures of support. The decision to classify fine arts activities, which include marching band, as a “social event” means the students in the band are no longer able to compete unlike their peers in other sports, and have been restricted from performing at football games even though cheerleaders are allowed to do so. I believe marching bands are being treated unfairly considering they follow Covid protocols, are distanced at all times (and definitely more so than wrestlers or football players for sure), have special masks to use with their instruments, and masks for the instruments themselves and considering marching in and of itself is a sport. Your decision is diminishing these kids.

I’m writing you today to consider supporting local multi-school competitions or to get some type of showcase of bands on the books, even if it is a week or two or three from now. It would mean the world to the kids who have put so much effort into practicing and this provides the students the chance to shine, showcase the results of all their hard work, and feel included in their community.

Many thanks for your time, attention. I look forward to hearing from you.

Elaine Stone

Members of the Virginia Board of Education -

First let me say that I appreciate the challenging task of providing accommodations for our schools and our students in this challenging time. As President of the Virginia Band & Orchestra Directors' Association, I have great empathy for all those charged with making decisions for a large and diverse population---it has been a difficult year!

The reason for this email is this: the categorization of school Performing Arts performances stipulated in Executive Order 72 does not make sense.

I'm sure you are aware of the frustrations of students, parents, and educators over the perceived inequity in the allowance of spectators at some student events as opposed to others. For Performing Arts Educators, that frustration has turned to exasperation. The clarification we received from State Superintendent Lane that School Performing Arts events would fall under the umbrella of Social Gatherings as opposed to Entertainment Venues, which are allowed 30% capacity or a max of 500 attendees inside/1000 outside, is puzzling. I am curious as to how that determination was made. Under the Social Gathering restrictions, a concert or play with spectators at many schools would not be possible because there are more students enrolled in the Performing Arts classes than are permitted at a "Social Gathering" under EO 72! Placing a band, choir, or orchestra concert, which is a typical culminating activity of a unit of study for a class, in the same category as a school dance does not make sense---one is an academic exercise; the other is a true social gathering.

When we get down to brass tacks, I know that you already know that a gathering of people to watch a sporting event does not pose greater or lesser health risks than a similar number of people gathering in the same place under the same set of restrictions to watch a band concert or play. That just doesn't make sense. Nor does it make sense that the student participants for sporting events do not count against the spectator limit for sports but do for other types of student performance events. I've had it explained to me, and even though I can plainly see the rationale, it does not make sense.

Much has been made of the effort to provide competitive opportunities for our student athletes for their mental well-being. That is a valid concern. But what of students involved in other types of activities? Performing Arts require Performing. Performing without an audience is just rehearsing, and as such falls short of the Virginia Standards of Learning for those classes. This impacts students academically and emotionally. It is clear that the emotional and academic health of all students has not been considered in a balanced, equitable way. That does not make sense. Performing Arts are curricular electives--their performances are academic--part of the curriculum, and stipulated parts of the Virginia Standards of Learning for those subjects. Athletic events are extracurricular. The discrepancy in permitted attendance does not make sense.

To further underline the absurdity, consider this---it is specified that a Marching Band can perform at halftime of a football game for up to 500 spectators....because that falls under "Recreational Sports" in EO 72....but the same band can't perform outside for an audience of even 100 people if the football team is not involved....that does not make sense. The exasperation of the teachers I represent is well-founded, as is the frustration of students and parents. That's what happens when people have to live under restrictions that do not make sense.

I invite you to review the most recent release from the National Federation of State High School Association (NFHS) at this link:

[NFHS Study.](#)

The quote that jumps out at me is this:

"We have been monitoring potential spread of Coronavirus in college bands this fall, both concert groups and marching bands, and I am happy to report that even though there have been numerous examples of students in rehearsal (unknowingly at the time) with the virus, contact tracing has shown there have been zero transmissions during music activity," said study co-chair Dr. Mark Spede, CBDNA President and Clemson University director of bands. "This is certainly the result we were expecting and hoping for, and it provides solid anecdotal evidence that the mitigations recommended in our scientific study are working as intended."

Please use any influence you have as members of the Virginia Board of Education to persuade Governor Northam to amend Executive Order 72 to include school performing arts organizations in the stipulations in place under either Recreational Sports or Entertainment Venues. It is the only response that will make sense.

If we are permitted to hold live performances for audiences, we can and will do so with accommodations in place to safeguard everyone in attendance.

Thank you for your time, and best of luck in continuing to navigate these uncharted waters.

Respectfully -

David Webb
President
Virginia Band & Orchestra Directors' Association
2013 Commonwealth of Virginia Region 5 Teacher of the Year

You Have to Read This Letter

A New York father pulls his daughter out of Brearley with a message to the whole school. Is the dam starting to break?

I was planning to publish a roundup today of the many thoughtful responses to [Paul Rossi's essay](#). I'm going to save that post for Sunday, because I was just sent this letter that has my jaw on the floor. It was written by a Brearley parent named Andrew Gutmann.

If you don't know about Brearley, it's a private all-girls school on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. It costs \$54,000 a year and prospective families apparently have to take an "[anti-racism pledge](#)" to be considered for admission. (In the course of my reporting for [this piece](#), I spoke to a few Brearley parents.)

Gutmann chose to pull his daughter, who has been in the school since kindergarten, and sent this missive to all 600 or so families in the school earlier this week. Among the lines: If Brearley's administration was truly concerned about so-called "equity," it would be discussing the cessation of admissions preferences for legacies, siblings, and those families with especially deep pockets. If the administration was genuinely serious about "diversity," it would not insist on the indoctrination of its students, and their families, to a single mindset, most reminiscent of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. I'm pasting the whole thing below.

Meantime, I'm going to ask Andrew Gutmann to join Paul Rossi and me for our subscriber-only conversation this coming Tuesday night. I hope he'll join. Details about that event will be in Sunday's post.

I promise: this newsletter won't be exclusively about education. But my gosh is it a wild right story to follow right now. . .

See you Sunday.

April 13, 2021

Dear Fellow Brearley Parents,

Our family recently made the decision not to reenroll our daughter at Brearley for the 2021-22 school year. She has been at Brearley for seven years, beginning in kindergarten. In short, we no longer believe that Brearley's administration and Board of Trustees have any of our children's best interests at heart. Moreover, we no longer have confidence that our daughter will receive the

quality of education necessary to further her development into a critically thinking, responsible, enlightened, and civic minded adult. I write to you, as a fellow parent, to share our reasons for leaving the Brearley community but also to urge you to act before the damage to the school, to its community, and to your own child's education is irreparable.

It cannot be stated strongly enough that Brearley's obsession with race must stop. It should be abundantly clear to any thinking parent that Brearley has completely lost its way. The administration and the Board of Trustees have displayed a cowardly and appalling lack of leadership by appeasing an anti-intellectual, illiberal mob, and then allowing the school to be captured by that same mob. What follows are my own personal views on Brearley's antiracism initiatives, but these are just a handful of the criticisms that I know other parents have expressed. I object to the view that I should be judged by the color of my skin. I cannot tolerate a school that not only judges my daughter by the color of her skin, but encourages and instructs her to prejudice others by theirs. By viewing every element of education, every aspect of history, and every facet of society through the lens of skin color and race, we are desecrating the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and utterly violating the movement for which such civil rights leaders believed, fought, and died.

I object to the charge of systemic racism in this country, and at our school. Systemic racism, properly understood, is segregated schools and separate lunch counters. It is the interning of Japanese and the exterminating of Jews. Systemic racism is unequivocally not a small number of isolated incidences over a period of decades. Ask any girl, of any race, if they have ever experienced insults from friends, have ever felt slighted by teachers or have ever suffered the occasional injustice from a school at which they have spent up to 13 years of their life, and you are bound to hear grievances, some petty, some not. We have not had systemic racism against Blacks in this country since the civil rights reforms of the 1960s, a period of more than 50 years. To state otherwise is a flat-out misrepresentation of our country's history and adds no understanding to any of today's societal issues. If anything, longstanding and widespread policies such as affirmative action, point in precisely the opposite direction. I object to a definition of systemic racism, apparently supported by Brearley, that any educational, professional, or societal outcome where Blacks are underrepresented is prima facie evidence of the aforementioned systemic racism, or of white supremacy and oppression. Facile and unsupported beliefs such as these are the polar opposite to the intellectual and scientific truth for which Brearley claims to stand. Furthermore, I call bullshit on Brearley's oft-stated assertion that the school welcomes and encourages the truly difficult and uncomfortable conversations regarding race and the roots of

racial discrepancies. I object to the idea that Blacks are unable to succeed in this country without aid from government or from whites. Brearley, by adopting critical race theory, is advocating the abhorrent viewpoint that Blacks should forever be regarded as helpless victims, and are incapable of success regardless of their skills, talents, or hard work. What Brearley is teaching our children is precisely the true and correct definition of racism. I object to mandatory anti-racism training for parents, especially when presented by the rent-seeking charlatans of Pollyanna. These sessions, in both their content and delivery, are so sophomoric and simplistic, so unsophisticated and inane, that I would be embarrassed if they were taught to Brearley kindergarteners. They are an insult to parents and unbecoming of any educational institution, let alone one of Brearley's caliber. I object to Brearley's vacuous, inappropriate, and fanatical use of words such as "equity," "diversity" and "inclusiveness." If Brearley's administration was truly concerned about so-called "equity," it would be discussing the cessation of admissions preferences for legacies, siblings, and those families with especially deep pockets. If the administration was genuinely serious about "diversity," it would not insist on the indoctrination of its students, and their families, to a single mindset, most reminiscent of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Instead, the school would foster an environment of intellectual openness and freedom of thought. And if Brearley really cared about "inclusiveness," the school would return to the concepts encapsulated in the motto "One Brearley," instead of teaching the extraordinarily divisive idea that there are only, and always, two groups in this country: victims and oppressors. I object to Brearley's advocacy for groups and movements such as Black Lives Matter, a Marxist, anti family, heterophobic, anti-Asian and anti-Semitic organization that neither speaks for the majority of the Black community in this country, nor in any way, shape or form, represents their best interests. I object to, as we have been told time and time again over the past year, that the school's first priority is the safety of our children. For goodness sake, Brearley is a school, not a hospital! The number one priority of a school has always been, and always will be, education. Brearley's misguided priorities exemplify both the safety culture and "cover-your-ass" culture that together have proved so toxic to our society and have so damaged the mental health and resiliency of two generations of children, and counting. I object to the gutting of the history, civics, and classical literature curriculums. I object to the censorship of books that have been taught for generations because they contain dated language potentially offensive to the thin-skinned and hypersensitive (something that has already happened in my daughter's 4th grade class). I object to the lowering of standards for the admission of students and for the hiring of teachers. I object to the erosion of rigor in classwork and the escalation of grade inflation. Any

parent with eyes open can foresee these inevitabilities should antiracism initiatives be allowed to persist.

We have today in our country, from both political parties, and at all levels of government, the most unwise and unvirtuous leaders in our nation's history. Schools like Brearley are supposed to be the training grounds for those leaders. Our nation will not survive a generation of leadership even more poorly educated than we have now, nor will we survive a generation of students taught to hate its own country and despise its history.

Lastly, I object, with as strong a sentiment as possible, that Brearley has begun to teach what to think, instead of how to think. I object that the school is now fostering an environment where our daughters, and our daughters' teachers, are afraid to speak their minds in class for fear of "consequences." I object that Brearley is trying to usurp the role of parents in teaching morality, and bullying parents to adopt that false morality at home. I object that Brearley is fostering a divisive community where families of different races, which until recently were part of the same community, are now segregated into two. These are the reasons why we can no longer send our daughter to Brearley.

Over the past several months, I have personally spoken to many Brearley parents as well as parents of children at peer institutions. It is abundantly clear that the majority of parents believe that Brearley's antiracism policies are misguided, divisive, counterproductive and cancerous. Many believe, as I do, that these policies will ultimately destroy what was until recently, a wonderful educational institution. But as I am sure will come as no surprise to you, given the insidious cancel culture that has of late permeated our society, most parents are too fearful to speak up.

But speak up you must. There is strength in numbers and I assure you, the numbers are there. Contact the administration and the Board of Trustees and demand an end to the destructive and anti-intellectual claptrap known as antiracism. And if changes are not forthcoming then demand new leadership. For the sake of our community, our city, our country and most of all, our children, silence is no longer an option.

Respectfully,
Andrew Gutmann

For fear of retribution, we are withholding our full name, telephone number, and address, but we offer views based on published media stories, for your information

Now More than Ever, America's Richest School District Needs the Foreign Exchange Student

As if a pandemic is not challenging enough, America's richest school district, Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS), located in a suburb of Washington, DC, is unfortunately responding to issues involving discrimination, diversity, and inclusion in the school system. In the case of LCPS, it is the school board and administration themselves that are the focus of attention.

In early 2021, LCPS entered into a settlement agreement with the Virginia Attorney General based on a determination that LCPS had a discriminatory impact on Black/African American and Latin/Hispanic students that applied to the LCPS Academies of Loudoun in 2018. The settlement agreement followed a multi-year investigation by the Virginia Attorney General into allegations that LCPS denied students an equal opportunity to participate in their Academies of Loudoun and elementary gifted and talented programs based on their race.

More recently, allegations surfaced about efforts by participants in a closed Facebook group, including six School Board members and other local elected representatives and educators among its 624 members, to identify and take action against critics of the school closures and the division's equity initiatives. This prompted an investigation by the local Sheriff's Office. And one of the School Board members was censured and temporarily removed from committee assignments for failing to "welcome and encourage active cooperation of Loudoun County residents." And now a political action committee (PAC) has been created with the intent of unseating multiple school board members because of ongoing disagreements on some of the alleged equity teachings in the county system.

Our family supports the professional and committed LCPS teachers and staff, and we believe now more than ever LCPS needs to restart a very important and positive diversity and inclusive program at LCPS, the foreign exchange student program. Each year, except understandably this past year during the pandemic, a few families across Loudoun County and communities throughout the United States open their homes to host a foreign exchange high school student. In the past, LCPS generally allowed most high schools to enroll a couple of these English-speaking foreign exchange students that come to Loudoun County from all over the world, places like Serbia, Kenya, Turkey, Thailand, Germany, among many other countries.

<https://eca.state.gov/programs-initiatives/host-high-school-student>

Among the benefits of the foreign exchange program are:

- Tolerance, empathy, respect, and understanding of other cultures, nationalities, races, and religions.
- Promoting and valuing diversity, cultural and global awareness.
- Encouragement and acceptance of new ideas and perspectives.

The LCPS Interim Superintendent has committed to returning to a full-time in-person class schedule in the fall, with optional online learning. Unfortunately, LCPS has not decided whether to accept foreign exchange students for the fall.

The indecisive message currently being sent by the LCPS administration to the principals, counselors, teachers, parents, students, and community for failing to move forward with this important program is the wrong message at a time when the community at-large is questioning the LCPS' commitment to a diverse and inclusive school system.

Neighboring school districts in the Washington, DC area, such as Fairfax and Montgomery counties, have both publicly announced their schools will be accepting foreign exchange students for the 2021-2022 school year. It was Montgomery County in 2019 that initially limited the number of exchange students in certain schools, but after hearing from the community, reversed the decision and allowed most high schools in the county to take up to five foreign exchange students each. It is more important than ever that a positive program like the foreign exchange program that fosters and promotes diversity is embraced and promoted throughout the LCPS high schools. 'Two desks' in a high school with a population of 2,000 is inconsequential compared to the exponential benefits these foreign exchange students bring to the LCPS learning environment: new ideas, perspectives, nationalities, cultures, and religions.

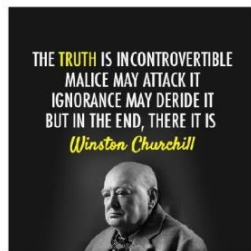
The LCPS administration should act now and demonstrate the school system's commitment to a diverse and inclusive school environment, free of discrimination, and a return-to-normal in the fall by promptly announcing the resumption and acceptance of exchange students at high schools throughout LCPS for the 2021-2022 school year.

Join our family and have your voices heard about the foreign exchange program, and diversity and inclusion at LCPS by contacting Loudoun County elected officials at <https://www.loudoun.gov/134/State-Federal-Legislators>, and Interim Superintendent Scott Ziegler, scott.Ziegler@lcps.org, and Asia R. Jones, LCPS Assistant Superintendent, Pupil Services, Asia.Jones@lcps.org.

A Real (Consumer) Revolution Is Starting to Take Over Education | NORFOLK/VIRGINIA BEACH/ VIRGINIA WHO WILL GO FIRST, THE WOKE [1] SUPERINTENDENTS, [2] SCHOOL BOARDS OR [3] THE VIRGINIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

NORFOLK/VIRGINIA BEACH/ VIRGINIA WHO WILL GO FIRST, THE WOKE [1] SUPERINTENDENTS, [2] SCHOOL BOARDS OR [3] THE VIRGINIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

PROJECT #FACTCHECKER PROGRAM* | MEMORANDUM | MEMORIALIZING
(Prepared by David M. Lindsey** | Relator | Commentator | Editor | Narrator)



MEMORANDUM ANALYZING

PROJECT #FactChecker
Program of The
Unalienable Rights
Foundation [UARF]*
A Virginia Non-Stock Corporation
EST. 2005
Virginia SCC ID# 0632406-5
P.O. Box 65002
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23467-5002
Telephone 757-818-8003
E-Mail
Project.FactChecker@uarf.us



Verification/investigation of
Arguments/Statements/Instructions/
Assertions Made in Public and Private
Spectrums
PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS
RESEARCH INSTITUTION
NTEE CODE U05

PROJECT #FACTCHECKER PROGRAM OF UARF*
MEMORANDUM ~ MEMORIALIZING ~ ANALYZING

☒ P. O. Box 65002 / Virginia Beach / Virginia / 23467-5002 / ☎ 757 - 818 - 8003

**Disclaimers/Notices/Imputed Knowledge [1]:Relator: noun, a person who relates or tells; narrator. Law, a private person on whose suggestion or complaint certain writs, are issued and whose position is analogous to that of a plaintiff; female relatrix. The relator appears as one beneficially interested, but the action is maintained on his behalf. : a party other than the plaintiff upon whose information, knowledge, or relation of facts an action is brought when the right to bring the action is vested in another: as / a : the private person who brings a qui tam action / b : a party who has standing and on whose behalf a writ is petitioned for by the state as plaintiff; [2]Regarding Electronic Signature: If this communication concerns the negotiation of a contract or agreement, electronic signature rules do not apply to this communication; [3] contract formation in this matter shall occur only with manually-affixed original signatures on original documents. [4] No negotiations respecting any item (including repairs), such as talking about that/any item (s)or securing estimates for same shall not in any way obligate The Unalienable Rights Foundation [UARF] to that item or repair(s) discussed, nor shall UARF or its Client be held liable for any damage(s)for failure not to include/honor the same unless obligated to do so by the terms set forth in a contract negotiated by the parties with the aforesaid manually affixed signatures. The foregoing comments are copyright © MMXX UARF and may not be copied, redistributed, extracted from, or recirculated outside of this mailing without written consent by UARF.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/mkt_morningbrief/a-real-consumer-revolution-is-starting-to-take-over-education_3782490.html?utm_source=morningbriefnoe&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=mb-2021-04-20&mktids=264a2775d74370d0e4428c91d45154f2&est=MBEW915h1mFDAEds5IIG1DcJonj%2FXyBll1yxdgs7j0xohtIASLoY2TYGsU4k2A%3D%3D



April 20, 2021

Esteemed Members of the Board of Education:

We are writing as concerned alumni of Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology and Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for Government and International Studies to advocate for reform at our alma maters and educational equity in Virginia. As alumni that entered TJ/MW and gifted education programs from diverse cultural backgrounds, experiences with gifted education, English language learner status, socioeconomic backgrounds, and current careers, we firmly believe that **a diverse and equitable learning environment is absolutely necessary for all students**. We applaud your determination to issue best practices for greater equity in Virginia's gifted education programs and academic year Governor's schools. Specifically, we urge you to:

- **Repeal 8VAC20-40-40(D) #4 & 5** to remove the standardized testing requirement for entry into gifted programs.
- Encourage the exploration and trial of **inclusive paradigms such as the Schoolwide Enrichment Model and open/embedded honors courses; where tracking continues, we recommend open enrollment** with domain-specific on-ramps at the beginning of each semester rather than a once-and-for-all gifted designation.
- **Broaden the sentence recently added to 8VAC20-40-60 #2 concerning equity in AYGSs to all advanced academic offerings** for high schoolers, including Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate.
- Review and clarify the purpose of academic year governor's schools (AYGS) vis-a-vis other advanced studies offerings; name and challenge the narrative that **AYGS is the apex of gifted education. AYGSs should be distinguished by passion for the subject matter and non-traditional instruction; the AYGS experience should be an opportunity, not a reward.**

Thank you in advance for all your efforts to make Virginia a more inclusive and equitable learning environment for all our young people.

Gratefully,

TJ Alumni Action Group (TJAAG)
Anti-Racist Alum (ARA) of Maggie L. Walker Governor's School