

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Arts Education School Operating Considerations

April 9, 2021

The Department of Public Instruction's (DPI) guidance documents are based upon the recommendations of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS). The DPI does not have statutory authority to mandate local school district decisions or policies. Therefore, decisions regarding infection control measures and exclusion and quarantine are the responsibility of each local school district/school board. The DPI recommends local school districts work closely with local public health departments (LPHD) in making infection control and exclusion/quarantine decisions.

Districts and school should work with their local and tribal health department to best implement this guidance in order that the measures implemented meet your district's unique circumstances. Further, it is understood that no guidance or mitigation measures will completely remove the risk of exposure to COVID-19 while the SARS-CoV2 virus is still in wide circulation. It is recommended you work with your local health authority, insurance carrier, and legal counsel in determining to what degree your districts is able to implement mitigation measures. For specific programming guidance, always refer to [Wisconsin Department of Health Services, the Interim COVID-19 Infection Control and Mitigation Measures for Schools, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), the school district, and local health orders. In addition to these resources, arts education recommendations are outlined on the following pages.

We acknowledge the arts play a pivotal role during these challenging times and will continue to do so for all students, regardless of the education learning environment (in person, physically distanced, or virtual). The value of the arts is noted in [legislative language](#) and in the [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) of 2015](#). Additionally, 50+ national arts organizations created a unified statement, [Arts Education Is Essential](#), which provides the essential grounding needed through the arts as intersected with social emotional learning and as part of a well-rounded education.

School districts should take the points within this document into consideration when developing programming in the content areas of art, dance, music, and theatre. These points offer an initial start to our deep conversations about what is needed for our young musicians, dancers, actors, artists, and artistic technicians. This document is designed to help administrators, educators, parents, and students create a balanced Arts Education program that embeds safe and healthy practices in the creating, presenting/performing, responding, and connecting within the arts classroom and spaces. The guidance focuses on five areas: General Considerations, Arts Learning Space Considerations, Social Emotional Learning Implementation, Learning Strategies, and Resource Use.

General Considerations

See the updated Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction [Interim COVID-19 Infection Control and Mitigation Measures for Schools](#) (April 9, 2021).

Arts Learning Space Considerations for Art, Dance, Music, and Theatre

- Require physical distancing for arts learning spaces such as studios, rehearsal rooms, and performance staging. Spacing should be consistent with requirements identified through CDC (participants should be at least six feet apart).
- Consider placing markings on the floor into personal squares measuring six by six feet at minimum, to comply with current CDC physical distancing guidelines. Nine by six feet is recommended for trombone players.
- Mark off assigned students physical spaces for classroom use.
- Set up classroom or rehearsal configuration to limit aerosol particle movement, such as by using straight lines of student spaces facing the same way with proper physical distancing.
- For physically active classes such as dance and theatre, maintain six feet physical distancing for activities that are more sedentary and 10 feet physical distancing for more physical activities that increase heart rate (and hence, deeper, more frequent respiratory breathing.)
- Limit instructional time indoors (e.g., 30-minute intervals). For indoor spaces, at least one HVAC air exchange should occur before using the same room again (three air changes is the goal); for outdoor rehearsals, provide breaks to allow aerosols to disperse (e.g., five-minute breaks every 30 minutes).
- Provide regular class breaks to allow for cleaning and disinfection, and to lessen the amount of overlap of departing/arriving students.
- Reorganize programming to provide smaller classes, permitting physical distancing and other precautions.
- Consider the use of portable HEPA air filtration systems to enhance air cleaning.
- Maximize air circulation for indoor arts learning spaces by opening windows and doors.
- When possible, hold classes in outdoor spaces while continuing to keep physical distancing parameters in place.
- For large groups, consider auditorium, gymnasium, cafeteria, and outdoor spaces that allow for movement activities to suit the environmental needs and ensure safety of all students.
- Consider rotating students into various grouping stations such as performing, reading, writing/composing/drawing, and observing so that not all students are in motion during the same class.
- Allocate time for cleaning and disinfection between classes to support infection control.
- For designated arts learning spaces, identify a station for disinfecting media, tools, and equipment.
- For traveling arts staff, create a disinfecting system for materials and supplies used in multiple classrooms.
- Provide arts staff with the necessary specialized software and applications to implement engaging remote arts instruction.

Social Emotional Learning Implementation

- Support the emotional development of students by utilizing the arts to help understand and manage one's emotions through verbal and nonverbal means.
- Foster an environment, whether virtual or in person, that supports students in developing a positive self-identify and ways to recognize themselves as a lifelong learner through artistic activities.
- Establish and maintain positive relationships through the modeling and embedding of activities to help students build respect for others, practice social skills, and make responsible choices as a member of a larger community, whether virtual or on site.

Learning Strategies

- Provide traveling educators additional time to set up and break down any class space they use.
- Classroom activities should avoid actions such as touching others, movement within or between physical distancing parameters, or expelling of particle concentrations, which increases the transmission of droplets and infection.
- Utilize technology to broadcast instruction to physically distanced students (large screens for projection of instructional materials/music, speakers to project accompaniment, microphones/megaphones for announcements/instructions, etc.).
- Ensure that students that participate in physically distanced learning have access to the technology and other things needed to participate fully.
- Each of the arts content areas explore their respective area through multiple standards which include the opportunities to create, perform/present, respond, and connect. Review the performance indicators within the Wisconsin Standards for each arts area to identify how these may offer engaging, safe learning activities. [Art and Design](#), [Dance](#), [Music](#), [Theatre](#)
- Integrate activities that fully explore the standards of create, perform/present, respond, and connect through multiple demonstration techniques - technology, small group and physically distanced sharing.
- Utilize technology platforms to introduce standards concepts and skills demonstrations with physical distancing parameters in place.
- Record rehearsals and learning space activities for those students who cannot participate during scheduled time.
- Incorporate the practice of students creating personal activities that include reporting of learning processes, achievement of standards, and progress towards benchmarks.
- Provide arts teachers with the technology and tools needed to provide arts instruction to students in a remote learning environment and provide students with the technology and tools needed to fully participate in learning.
- Provide teachers with a portable amplifier to support a low conversational volume.

Resource Use

- Use student supplies (e.g., art material packets, musical instruments, dance equipment, and theatre props) that are personalized for each student to use. No sharing.
- Students should only use assigned costumes and choir robes for a final performance. No sharing.
- Disinfect instruments, props, equipment, stands, and other frequently used items and surfaces between uses when possible.
- All students shall bring and use their own water bottles. No sharing. Schools should be prepared to have water bottles to provide to students in case a student forgets or loses theirs.
- Music/scripts/choreography notes should be provided for each student to use for instruction. No sharing and as copyright licenses permit.
- If shared teaching material is necessary, focus on class hand washing hygiene before and after each educational session. Stagger hand washing for students in order to maintain proper physical distancing.
- Provide arts teachers with professional development opportunities and extended time to refine their virtual learning skills and modify their instructional plans to support the needs of multiple learning environments.
- Keep each student's belongings in a separate, safe and clean space. (e.g., cubbies or lockers)

This document has used the following documents for reference purposes:

- [Arts Education Is Essential](#)
- [Education Forward: Reopening Wisconsin Schools](#)
- [New Hampshire Arts Education Return to School, Arts Together: Planning Guidance for Arts Educators in Maryland Public Schools](#)
- [Pandemic Recovery Considerations: Re-Entry and Reopening of Schools created by Missouri School Boards' Association's Center for Education Safety](#)
- [Performing Arts Aerosol Study Round 1](#)
- [Performing Arts Aerosol Study Round 2](#)
- [Performing Arts Aerosol Study Round 3](#)
- [Performing Arts Aerosol Study Final Report \(2021\)](#)
- [Recommendations for Arts Education as North Carolina Reopens Schools](#)
- [September Ready Fall 2020 Guidance for Arts Education SEPTEMBER READY Fall 2020 Guidance for Arts Education](#)
- [Social and Emotional Learning Competencies - WI DPI](#)

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