



## An open letter to Principals, Superintendents, and Board Members • July 2020

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My name is Anne Lyman, and I am the President of the Washington State chapter of the American Choral Directors Association. Our members represent over 400 choir conductors, singers, composers, and music educators from across the state.

As an organization and as individuals ACDA and its members are deeply committed to promoting and fostering the artistic, cultural, social and emotional learning and growth that can only come from participation in choir. During this extraordinary time when districts are planning for the new academic year, adjusting budgets and considering distance learning options, I ask you to continue to invest in choir in your districts.

Singing is an essential component in building and maintaining human connection through communities. From the very beginning of the global health crisis, the choral community has proven itself to be an effective, creative, and progressive force for continued connection through singing in a virtual world. ACDA has recently released the [American Choral Directors Association COVID-19 Response Committee Report](#) (June 15, 2020). This 108-page document includes pedagogical models, educational and artistic advocacy, and an 8-page resource appendix, which includes government health organizations, virtual platforms for ensemble singing, and interactive choral pedagogical tools. Choral musicians are also awaiting the results of the [Performing Arts COVID-19 Aerosol Study](#), led by the University of Colorado, will be available on July 25. I urge you to postpone making any permanent decisions about the singing component of choral music in your district until those results are published and made available to the public.

Current OSPI guidelines state that choir is considered “high risk,” but it does not acknowledge that **there is more to choir than singing**. Creating, Performing, Responding and Connecting are all Washington state standards that encompass a wide range of activities beyond singing. *All of these important facets of choir are still achievable amid even the strictest health mandates:*

- Building foundational music reading skills, including syntax, rhythm, melody and harmony
- Encouraging musical exploration and creativity through improvisation and composition
- Empowering students to appreciate and understand the historical, cultural and societal impact of vocal and choral music upon diverse communities of people
- Understanding the relationship of choir within the wider realm of music education, and as an essential arm of interdisciplinary fine arts
- Incorporating culturally-responsive platforms for teaching and learning

Choral music is unique among other subject areas in that it provides aesthetic and artistic contributions that are much-needed in these times of social and physical isolation. It is a form of community outreach that everyone can participate in, regardless of experience or economy. Choral music is a major vehicle in amplifying voices from underrepresented communities. An education rich in choral music can reach beyond our present limitations to explore and create, and to express what cannot be expressed in words alone.

Thank you for your continued support of and investment in choir in our schools. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anne Lyman". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name.

Dr. Anne Lyman  
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## Choral Music Fall 2020 Covid-19 Strategies for Opening

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### Introduction

Choral music professionals are mindful of the health and well-being of our students during this time of health crisis and social justice. We are committed to using a variety of methods to deliver instruction with these concerns in mind. Washington State Music Educators Association and Washington State American Choral Directors Association are proud to be working together to ensure we are granting students genuine experiences that will grow their skills in the practiced art of choral music, performance through singing, music appreciation and music analysis through literacy, theory and technology. Our state music leaders worked together to compile this list of strategies to assist our colleagues as they prepare for the reopening of schools this fall.

We recommend utilizing the [ACDA Covid-19 Response Document](#) for design and implementation ideas for both an online or hybrid online scenario. We recommend all administrators and choral teachers wait, when possible, to make final pedagogical decisions until results are published from the [Performing Arts COVID-19 Aerosol Study](#) by the University of Colorado. Publication is expected by **July 25, 2020 for choral ensembles.**

The strategies listed below have been prepared using the guiding themes outlined in OSPI’s [Reopening Washington Schools 2020 Planning Guide](#). The suggested choral applications are meant to help guide administrators and teachers as they plan for the coming school year.

Theme	Choral Applications
<p><i>Professional Development and Learning</i></p>	<p><a href="#">Washington ACDA Seattle Institute</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• July 22–24, 2020</li> <li>• Online Choral Conference. Free to attend.</li> <li>• Building Choral Community in a Virtual World.</li> <li>• Programming in the Digital World</li> <li>• Sessions on Global Music, Racial Equity &amp; Choral Music.</li> <li>• WA ACDA Choral Commission.</li> <li>• Reading Sessions, and Roundtable Discussions.</li> <li>• Clock hours through WMEA</li> <li>• Free registration</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Oregon ACDA Summer Workshop</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• August 4, 2020</li> <li>• Free Registration for ACDA Members</li> <li>• Virtual Conference: <a href="http://www.oracda.org">www.oracda.org</a></li> <li>• Featured speakers: Rollo Dillworth &amp; Tesfa Wondemagegnehu</li> </ul>

Theme	Choral Applications
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Professional Development and Learning</i></p>	<p><a href="#">NAfME Online Academy</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• WMEA members who plan to claim clock hours should contact Bruce Gutgesell prior to beginning a webinar or course.</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Music Ed Conference sponsored by Music First and Nafme</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• July 30, 2020</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Keep our Choirs Singing: Workshop from CLaS</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• July 10-12 Building our Voices: Building our Ensembles</li> <li>• July 29-31 Creative and Engaging Techniques for online or F2F rehearsals</li> <li>• August 13-14 Kickstart! Tools To Start The Year With Immediate Success</li> <li>• Sessions can be taken a la carte</li> </ul> <p><i>All district offerings will apply here as well.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Safety Training and Orientation</i></p>	<p><b>Adhere to all local and state guidelines regarding school distancing, cleanliness and best practice for the health and safety of all participants. Singing in groups is not yet allowed per those guidelines.</b></p> <p><b>Suggested Guidelines</b></p> <p><b>Classroom</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom instruction will be discussion, lecture, observation and practice without audiation of sound. Rhythmic speaking should be done at low volume levels to reduce aerosol particle distribution. Rhythmic practice could be achieved through clapping, tapping or other means.</li> <li>• Maintain all distancing guidelines set forth by health authorities and school districts.</li> <li>• Seat/Stand in one row (or multiple rows with distancing) and facing one direction.</li> <li>• Regular choral riser set up will not maintain distancing guidelines.</li> <li>• Use of larger classroom areas with spacing marked for students.</li> </ul> <p><b>Stage and Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not yet allowed in Stage 1/Stage 2 scenarios. This will be updated as conditions change.</li> <li>• Performances once allowed must maintain all guidelines set forth by health authorities and school districts.</li> </ul> <p><b>Instrument/supplies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There shall be no sharing of music, or instruments.</li> <li>• Each student will need their own octavo for rehearsal and should keep their personal copy in their possession until rehearsal of that selection is completed for the term.</li> <li>• When returning music, leave untouched for a minimum of 14 days before cataloging/reshelving music or paper products.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Social Emotional Learning or SEL</i></p>	<p>Music Teachers and Music ensembles are uniquely positioned to implement whole student social emotional learning or SEL. With purposeful integration of SEL into our classrooms we can enrich the student’s personal connection to the music. The relationships built over multiple years of instruction brings the opportunity to build school connectedness and foster empathy. The collaborative nature of choral music rehearsal welcomes discussion and self-awareness in a community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Nafme Social Emotional Learning Brochure</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Book: Music Education and Social Emotional Learning by Scott N. Edgar</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Social Emotional Learning and the Arts</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Advocating for Music Education through Social Emotional Learning.</a></li> </ul>

Theme	Choral Applications
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Essential Standards</i></p>	<p><b>National Standards for Choral Performance:</b> <a href="#">Choral Literacies and Skills</a>  <b>State Standards for Music Learning:</b> <a href="#">OSPI Music Standards PDF</a>  <b>National Core Arts Standards:</b> <a href="#">NCAS website</a></p> <p>Knowing we have limited time resources during an online or hybrid classroom situation, and that our return to classrooms will need flexibility to close at any time due to an outbreak, teachers must review these standards. We advise active assessment of student learning outcomes to manage achievement of these standards while maintaining the integrity of distancing guidelines. That might mean the creation of Power Standards.</p> <p>Power standards can be defined as a subset of learning standards that educators have determined to be their priority for student learning. These may be developed or selected at the school or team level by teachers in collaboration with their administration. Power standards should be reflective of gaps in a program beyond a Covid-19 affected year to be most effective.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Feedback in a Virtual Setting</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video feedback via LMS systems like Canvas, Google Classroom, or Flipgrid</li> <li>• Succinct rubrics that address vocal technique and performance criteria</li> <li>• Student self assessment and goal setting. Involve student voice in designing instruction.</li> <li>• The use of subscription sites such as <a href="#">Choral Coach</a> or <a href="#">Music First</a> for their practice and feedback applications could be advantageous for teachers of large ensembles that cannot meet at the same time due to distancing guidelines.</li> </ul>

## Links for reference

### *Covid-19*

- [ACDA Covid-19 Response Document](#)
- [Performing Arts COVID-19 Aerosol Study](#)
- [NAfME Covid-19 Resources](#)
- [National Federation for High Schools- Marching Band Activities Guide](#)

### *Advocacy*

- Arts Education Advocacy: [STATS & RESOURCES](#)
- [Essential Data from Americans for the Arts](#)
- [Chorus America impact study](#): In 2009, Chorus America conducted a follow-up study that included a component exploring the value of singing for children. The results show that children who sing have academic success and valuable life skills. Children who sing in choruses display many of the enhanced social skills found in adult singers, substantiating earlier conclusions that singing in childhood is likely to have an enormous influence on the choices individuals make later in life.

### *Programming*

- JW Pepper Reading Session [Repertoire Lists](#)  
(Look for Date/ACDA Seattle Institute under Washington State or NW ACDA under Oregon State in dropdown menu.)

### *Music Online Resources*

- A Successful Mindset for Solitary Singing: [Blog Post](#)
- Finding Music Resources from Gettysburg College: [Resource List](#)
- Teaching Online: [Blog Post](#)

*Zoom and Teaching Music*

- [Downloadable Music Staff](#) for using Zoom interactive dry erase board.
- [Filpgrid](#) Video capture for conversation and vocal assessment
- [Zoom](#) for flipped classroom video tutorials

*Recording tutorials for students*

- Recording online resources: [Ryan Jones playlist](#)
- Recording yourself for a virtual choir using your home technology guide: [Link to Form](#)

*More resources are available upon request by email to [monika\\_tabor@lkstevens.wednet.edu](mailto:monika_tabor@lkstevens.wednet.edu)*