

Music Department FAQ:

- 1) If the choir is singing in masks do the students still need to be 12 ft apart? Is this school guideline or the CDC recommendation? Do you know where a parent can find that information?**

In Governor Cuomo's reopening plans, it was dictated that all vocal music and woodwind and brasswind instruments, as well as, all physical education classes be 12ft apart. There was not a directive for wearing masks while singing, however, if rehearsing in the auditorium, all of the cloth seats would have to be covered and cleaned if they were unmasked due to expectorations related to singing. They will be wearing masks while singing in any space, specifically the auditorium.

- 2) a) HS Marching Band: How many students fit on the football field? Are there more fields that can be used? Can the band be separated into groups and rotate in and out to maximize playing time and collaboration?**

In the 100 yard x 50 yard football field, we can safely fit 32 students, at 12ft apart, on the football field. Groups can be separated into several different groups and rehearsed in different areas, and we have a TENTATIVE plan for that, but with no after school activities occurring right now and no fall sports planned, we will explore different options and timeframes for the Marching Band. If the students are going to be at rehearsal, they will be making music, and not sitting. The tentative plan includes 5 groups rehearsing in different areas outside and in school. That is detailed on the document!

- b) Will the marching band be allowed to meet additional hours outside during the nicer weather time of year to accommodate and maximize their time making music?**

Right now, there are no activities after school past 1:30 pm, due to transportation. Typically, Marching Band has rehearsed on Saturdays. Pending approval, we have a plan to execute the Marching Band, and if we have to postpone to align with the football season. However, that does not change the restrictions allowed on the football field and practice field. We have plans if we can have it and if we have to postpone it.

- c) The more proficient musicians can lead sections in wind ensemble, drum majors can be utilized too, so there can be rehearsals in different rooms or outside. Marching Band should be able to happen in small groups if needed whether there is football or not. As it is, marching bands' time together is so limited even without the present circumstances. Now band overall is not possible and this is an option for them given they have the largest challenge due to size.**

I would not utilize seniors to instruct younger students. There are several reasons for that. Just because someone is a senior doesn't mean they have the highest level of proficiency. Drum Majors can certainly be utilized, for sure, but as they have in the past. But this does not replace supervision for students, as a teacher would still have to be present, regardless of who is leading what. Students cannot grade other students either.

D) Why do they need to be confined to 32 to a field? There is so much more space available if they use the grassy area and track plus the area next to the football field where the students often practice.

Marching Band drills and formations are dictated by the dimensions of the classic football field. We would need enough space to space almost 150 students, which would be roughly 4.6 football fields, or 460 yards at 12ft apart. We do plan to utilize several spaces, but unfortunately, we do not have that type of space and the supervision for enforcement of social distancing which would be incredibly difficult and a high demand for the teachers. Musically, this would also create echoes and lags from one end to the other.

3) Will the school district allow ensembles to meet outside the scheduled time of the class period given how many students are taking it? Maybe there can be sign up timesheets for students to attend at other hours.

This cannot be allowed at this time, since no activities can occur past 1:30 p.m. at JFKHS, and it would not change the amount of socially distanced requirements for music activities. Also, vocal music and wooden instruments (orchestra instruments) don't do well in outdoor environments. We must abide by these transportation requirements. All 4th - 8th grade ensemble work will be done virtually under further notice. 4th grade ensembles won't begin until January.

4) a) How are pull out lessons taking place? If a student does not want to be pulled out of other classes due to only being in school 2x per week what other arrangements can be made? Will any lessons be allowed to be scheduled on Fridays in person? What are the virtual lesson options?

We still intend to have pull-out lessons for the students. We anticipate that a live, in person lesson, may not be able to occur weekly, and that there will be a virtual component. This is due to spacing, the number of students, and social distancing requirements. We cannot allow for in person lessons on Fridays as the buildings will be closed. If a student cannot attend an in-person lesson, at the discretion of the teacher, it may be made up virtually. We will work our hardest to pull the students from the least restrictive times of the day for them, and try to be as accommodating as possible. In-person lessons are so vital to the musicality and growth of a student's technique and proficiency on their instruments

b) Can pull out lessons should be scheduled on remote learning days so A-K on T/TH or vice versa for L-Z. o Additional: Why are our kids only able to work with one teacher for lessons?

We only have one band at the high school, one for orchestra, and one for chorus, and they cannot teach in each other's area, as it is not their speciality. The other music teachers throughout the district are all subscribed to a full teaching schedule as well. The remote learning days for some are live learning days for others, so to schedule lessons only remotely would be quite difficult. That would mean you would have 150 band kids all trying to be fit in for lessons in one day, and with 4 different grade levels and musical proficiencies for students..

5) The spring was not successful for my child and there were no lessons done virtually. Just doing assignments is not motivating for students who want to play music, learn their instrument and be together. What will be done differently this school year to make this a better experience for the kids in these ensembles?

It is regretful to hear that your experience with a virtual lesson was unfulfilling. However, all buildings did have lesson work being done. Depending on the level would change the answer to this, due to how school was operating. Several schools and teachers put up a lesson that was expected for groups of students to complete within a week. Fortunately, we will be able to move on from that this year, and work to make the in-person and virtual lessons more aligned. It will more adequately meet the needs of kids, their proficiency, and schedule.

6) a) The students at the HS meet for 5 days. If they are only in school for 2 days for shorter periods how can they possibly get anything done when some of the period is getting their instruments out and put away?

In my observations of teachers, they have always allowed a few minutes, and in some cases even put a stopwatch on their smartboards, on their screens to delineate a time for students to get their instruments out and set up, and are always allowed a few minutes to pack their instruments away as well. This won't change, and although time will be adjusted, this practice will remain intact. We will utilize as much time as we can playing.

b) To Add onto this: the music classrooms are quite far from some other areas of the building. Often students are rushing to get to their next class- if they are being let go keeping social distancing protocol will there be something concrete in place that allows these students additional hall passing time?

We haven't planned anything yet, but we can always let the teachers know the students who are in music classes, so they are reminded and aware of the distance in the building that will have to be traveled. We cannot let students go before a bell rings, but we can have them ready to go so when it does, and again, we can let the staff know these students are headed to them. In the past, we haven't run into conflicts with other staff regarding that and they were always

understanding and cordial. Please reach out to your child's teacher with specific concerns about this.

- 7) My student made their schedule knowing they buy and eat lunch at the beginning of rehearsal. Now the periods are shorter, but we cannot change the schedule to include a designated lunch time. Will they still be able to have lunch during that period?**

This year, students will not be allowed to eat lunch in the classrooms of the high school. We understand that this is a challenge. There is a possibility that we can allow for a few minutes for students to eat quickly and then come to rehearsal, but that would have to be at the discretion of the building administration. We are sorry for this inconvenience.

- 8) So many students take part in acapella and put in a tremendous amount of work during their own time with each of their groups. Since it does not work well virtually what ideas can you offer for acapella to continue? Additionally, masks have been ordered at some colleges that are specific for singing. Has the district looked into buying these? If not would fundraising dollars be able to be used from the acapella fund for students who wish to have them.**

As far as a cappella goes; that is considered a club activity, and there will not be any afterschool activities. So we will have to find to have it function virtually during these times. We have added an additional advisor for the club this year, in addition to Mr. Paltrowitz. This will help flexibility in the scheduling, and different aspects of things we can focus on as well. We are excited for the growth of it. When after school activities begin again, we can have rehearsals in different spaces, with the social distancing requirements for singing in place, with the advisor and asst. advisor.

There are several reports in regards to masks and singing that are conflicting, but the specific masks for singing, as opposed to normal masks, with or without filters, don't offer much of a difference in terms of safety, and the masks specifically designed for singers would be if there was no social distancing. I cannot speak to colleges, but as far as I know, some neighboring school districts have not purchased specific masks for vocalists. We are confident with the 12ft spacing and using their own, personal masks, that we will be in good shape.

- 9) Can you please explain how many students can be in choir rehearsing together at one time? The music document listed possible options as the gym or auditorium. Can the auditorium be used due to cloth seating?**

Depending on the room, it depends on how many students can be accommodated in different areas. In the auditorium, we know we can fit approximately 40-45 students, and as long as the students are 12ft apart, with masks on, cloth seats won't be an issue or need to be covered. If they are in the chorus room, then at 12ft apart, unmasked, we can have 8 students. At 6ft apart

with masks, and not singing, we can have 23 students. We are intending to primarily have chorus classes in the auditorium, and if we have to change locations, we have plans for content and activities as well.

10) How can students who are playing violin or viola learn with a mask on? In 4th grade I feel like this would be very hard to do.

This won't be as strenuous as any other activity. Since the orchestral instruments don't involve blowing any wind into them or have rates of exhalation.

11) What will the difference be for 5th and 6th grade ensembles vs 7th and 8th ? Are they all going to be done by grade only? Will there be lessons available for remote students who are on live on google meet?

All ensembles between 5th - 8th grade will have weekly assignments in Google Classrooms for band, orchestra, and chorus, but will not be meeting virtually. There will still be pull-out lessons that will be done in accordance with the social distancing requirements. Yes, we will have lessons available for the students who are remote learning, as well as, having them included in the ensembles. We will make sure they have a great experience.

12) With respect to the small group lessons and being pulled out of core classes with only two live teaching sessions for certain subjects it would be preferred to do them during the remote learning day. Will this be possible? Can additional teachers be used?

We plan to try our best to accommodate students during the least restrictive times during the day. There are too many students in the program to do all the lessons virtually only, and the days alternate for different groups of students being live or remote. Peer tutoring is always great, however, that would require extra time to have them pulled out. If that wants to happen outside of school hours, it would be at the discretion of the parents and guardians of all parties. I would be happy to help champion a program like that, but we cannot have students grading other students either. Additional teachers won't be needed, as we will have the ability to cover all of the student's lessons. It may be possible to have a live lesson one week, a virtual lesson the following week, and we always try to not to pull students out of consecutive lessons week by week.

13) a) Using the ensemble period for a lesson period is ok but not for the students that will have to go elsewhere and just kill time in the cafeteria or library. What other spaces will be considered? Can any music be done in those rooms with additional teachers?

Our goal is to have as many students rehearse in our largest spaces whenever possible, and hardly ever having to displace students. Our goal is to not have kids go to other spaces, at all,

unless absolutely necessary. Even in that case, each student will be given subscriptions to different musical programs for implementation, as well as, creative projects. We are hoping to have small numbers, if any, of students that need to be displaced. And even so, this will not be the case for daily work.

b) Sitting in a cafeteria doing nothing is not acceptable even if they are practicing scales 12 ft apart they need to be doing music.

There will always be projects and things to do related to music. But again, we are not anticipating this being the normal situation for students, and we intend to utilize our spaces for as many students as possible, with supervision. But with using the auditorium, gymnasium, and orchestra room, this shouldn't be a problem.

c) Will the school district consider music technology in these overflow rooms as another possibility? Can you provide some ideas? Will there be consideration to hire for a role like this? Can the guitar teacher or other music specialists "push in" to these overflow areas. Why not embrace the time to learn something new? Would the school district approve the purchase or rentals of other instruments? As well will some remote learning days- possibly Fridays when all are home- offer "guest speakers" from colleges, or possibly performers for a lecture and Q & A.

We have several music technology subscriptions setup for the students, but we won't have any overflow spaces where this will be necessary when it can be avoided. As I mentioned in previous answers, we will rehearse in the largest spaces primarily first. The Guitar teacher has a full schedule already. We already have several additional instruments ready to go. And we always are welcoming to guest speakers, too. We hope to continue that.

14) It does not seem right that accommodations have not been made for orchestra, and bands like it's been for other academic classes just because our kids are so many to a room. Learning instruments is a hands-on practice and it has not been discussed in our school.

I don't think it was intended to be left off discussions, as the district plan for these classes has been on the music area of the website for some time now. Our plan is set and ready to go. And we are confident in it's execution.

15) Can you explain what a typical lesson or class time would be like for students who have chosen remote learning? Will they have the teacher in school? Can you please explain in detail remote learning days for hybrid learners.

Like all subjects, students who will be remote learning will have sections they are enrolled in through Google Classrooms. We are still working out those sections with the curriculum office and building principals. They will have the teacher from their home school. Their lessons will be

scheduled, and done through Google Meet or Zoom. Hybrid model students will have assignments for their classes (such as ensemble classes at the Hs level) each day. They will have one lesson a week, whether virtual or in-person, and they will be rotated in the schedule. It may have to be that they have one in-person lesson every two weeks depending on the factors of social distancing, time available, and amount of students enrolled in the class or ensemble.

16) Tri-M status cannot be based on NYSSMA anymore since it is cancelled. I feel seniors with high abilities need to be inducted in. Younger students need to be evaluated in other ways: grades, a test, audition, teacher recommendation, etc. Has this been discussed?

Last year we eliminated the NYSSMA score as a requirement for Tri-M students due to NYSSMA being cancelled. This year, NYSSMA is anticipating having festivals. In conjunction with the Tri-M advisor, we will certainly make concessions for students, as the NYSSMA scores were only one piece of the criteria that was evaluated when applications for admission. How we move forward will be similar, but we may expect some changes, and we will come to a decision that will be inclusive and fair. Last year, we used the criteria that students have to be registered for a NYSSMA level 5, 6, or All-State solo, not necessarily perform them. This year, it may be different, but we will discuss the best way to include the kids deserving of acceptance.

17) Although NYSSMA did not take place, nothing was done last year to allow for the kids to play the music they worked so hard on. It is also not taking place this year. Why is this not being done virtually.

Last year, some teachers actually did do virtual NYSSMA recitals, but that was not required. It was done by a very small number of kids. It wasn't done by every school, and was done, graciously, by teachers at different times and levels. NYSSMA is planning on taking place this year, so the students will have an opportunity to perform their solos. NYSSMA actually is exploring different options for festivals as well. We can investigate opportunities for students to be showcased this year in the event it was cancelled, and it would be optional for students to participate in.

18) Will concerts be streamed this year? How will students achieve this with limited to no time together? Will concerts happen in all ensembles?

This is a great question. We have been recording all of our HS concerts and posting them on the District YouTube channels for some years. We can also explore streaming a live concert. Many districts do this with success and we were always planning to head in that direction. It will depend on social distancing guidelines at the time (if we can have full rehearsals with ALL kids being the biggest factor). I don't anticipate we will have concerts in December, but for the spring, I do have hope it will be able to happen. We anticipate doing some virtual performances intermittently throughout the year, and some teachers have already started planning to do that, too.