



Arkansas Choral Directors Association

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To Governor Asa Hutchinson, Secretary Johnny Key, Dr. José Romero, and The High School Sports Advisory Group:

We, the Arkansas Choral Directors Association, are writing to you today to discuss the unnecessarily restrictive guidelines that you have imposed for fine arts programs amid the ongoing COVID-19 epidemic.

The current Arkansas guidelines for choir are unmanageable, overly cumbersome, and unwieldy, making it blatantly impossible to successfully teach the subject at all. We desperately need to reevaluate this list of directives.

Today, the National Federation of High School Activity Associations (NFHS) released their research findings and subsequent recommendations (<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/second-round-of-performing-arts-aerosol-study-produces-encouraging-preliminary-results/>), which are both *reasonable* and manageable in addition to allowing for a *safe* return to school activities. To highlight their conclusions:

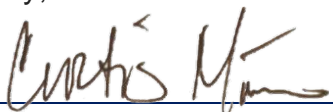
- Indoor rehearsal requirements
 - 6 feet spacing minimum
 - Masks are required
 - Singers should all face the same direction and not be in a curved/arched formation
 - 30 minute rehearsal then a 20 minute "clear the room" break
 - Minimum of 1 "air change" (ACH rate) to take place after a rehearsal before the next rehearsal begins, 3 air exchanges preferable
 - HEPA filtration system to improve the quality of air
- Outside rehearsal requirements
 - 30 minute rehearsal then a 5 minute break
 - 6 feet spacing minimum
 - Masks are required

To put it plainly, the Arkansas directives *only* allow for safe and healthy students, whereas the NFHS guidelines allow for *both*- safe and healthy students *plus* a workable environment for the successful instruction of choral music education.

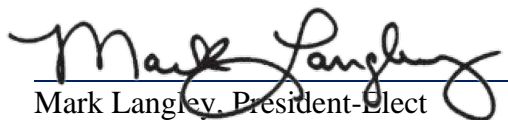
Given the current climate and the extensive research available on the subject, we are all already familiar with the benefits of fine arts programs, though it may be worth repeating here. Participation in music, theater, and speech results in higher grades in core classes such as math, science, and English. Involvement in the arts also raises standardized test scores as students learn how to perform. And activities like choir improve student retention rates such as the percentage who successfully graduate, primarily because of the social and emotional boon of belonging to a peer group. In truth, the lion's share of students do not attend school for the inherent fun in diagramming sentences or dissecting complicated math equations. They attend school, they *succeed* in school because they have found a band of like-minded people with whom they can share an activity they love, something that might lead to a college scholarship or even a future career.

In light of the importance of student participation in the arts, The Arkansas Choral Directors Association is asking that you review the NFHS's research in its entirety and revise the Arkansas guidelines according to this latest research. Please reach out to us with any questions or concerns and open a dialog wherein we can work *together* to achieve safety and success for students this school year.

Sincerely,



Curtis Minor, President



Mark Langley, President-Elect



Mat Whitworth, Past President



Terri Whitworth, Executive Director