

ARTS ED NJ

DATE: August 10, 2021

TO: All New Jersey Arts Educators, Administrators, Principals, Superintendents, Executive County Superintendents, School Board Members, Health Officers

FROM: Robert B. Morrison, Arts Ed NJ

SUBJECT: September Forward 2021 Guidance for Arts Education

CC: Governor Phil Murphy, Commissioner of Health Judith M. Persichilli, Acting Commissioner of Education Angelica Allen-McMillan, New Jersey State Board of Education President Kathy Goldenberg, LEE Group, NJDOE Road Forward Team.

Arts Ed NJ has just released September Forward Fall 2021 Guidance for Arts Education (<https://www.artsednj.org/september-forward/>). This guidance comes in the wake of New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy's August 6th Executive Order mandating that all students, educators, staff, and visitors will be required to wear face masks indoors for the start of the 2021-2022 school year.

The recommendations outlined in September Forward 2021 build on work that began in 2020 with a taskforce of more than 100 of the state's leading arts educators and stakeholders, who met regularly throughout the school year and beyond to understand the challenges for students and teachers during the COVID era and is informed by the groundbreaking research of International Coalition of Performing Arts Aerosol Study led by Dr. Shelly Miller, University of Colorado Boulder and Dr. Jelena Srebric, University of Maryland.

The following highlights apply to indoor visual performing arts classrooms and activities (Dance, Media Arts, Music, Theatre, Visual Art):

Masks: Masks (made of appropriate material*) should be utilized by all performers except wind players where the instrument itself should be masked. Wind Players may have a normal mask around the neck when playing the instrument which should be used to cover the mouth when not playing. Specially designed player masks are not necessary. NOTE: Flutes and Recorders do not need any covering as they do not generate aerosols

Timing: In spaces with good ventilation, indoor rehearsal time should be limited to 50 minutes** followed by one air exchange before resuming (A minimum of 3 air changes per hour should be used or 1 air change every 20 minutes). If there are spaces with higher air change rates, you may consider longer rehearsal times.

Social Distancing: Distancing of three feet (measured center of seat to center of seat) is suggested when feasible but should not preclude an activity from taking place.

Proper hygiene and ventilation strategies should be a priority at all times.

*Material should consist of MERV13 material or ASTM F2100 (or similar) standard.

** For classes over 50 minutes start and end the class with a non-performance activity

For Outdoor Activities: There are no mask, distancing, or time limitations for any outdoor visual and performing arts activity. Outdoors remain the safest space. No mitigations are needed (subject to level of local transmission rates). Proper hygiene strategies should remain in place.

Screening Testing

The CDC suggests screening testing as a potential strategy for groups mixing vaccinated and unvaccinated students:

To facilitate safe participation in sports, extracurricular activities, and other activities with elevated risk (such as activities that involve singing, shouting, band, and exercise that could lead to increased exhalation), schools may consider implementing screening testing for participants who are not fully vaccinated. Schools can routinely test student athletes, participants, coaches, and trainers, and other people (such as adult volunteers) who are not fully vaccinated and could come into close contact with others during these activities. Schools can implement screening testing of participants who are not fully vaccinated up to 24 hours before sporting, competition, or extracurricular events.

Individual Arts Discipline Guidance

Guidance for individual arts disciplines of dance, music, theatre and visual art visit:

<https://www.artsednj.org/september-forward/>

Recommendations are based on:

- [International Coalition of Performing Arts Aerosol Study \(July 9, 2021 Update\)](#): Dr. Shelly Miller, University of Colorado Boulder and Dr. Jelena Srebric, University of Maryland, Lead Researchers
- [Current CDC Guidance](#)
- [United States Department of Education Return to School Roadmap](#)
- [New Jersey Department of Health](#): The Road Forward Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year
- [New Jersey Department of Education](#): The Road Forward, Engage, Recover, and Reimagine Education in New Jersey

For more detailed information on this and other visual and performing arts guidance, please visit <https://www.artsednj.org/september-forward/>

Arts Ed NJ is the performing arts affiliate for the National Association of State High School Associations for New Jersey.

NOTE: Mitigation strategies for timing and social distancing should be implemented “when feasible” and should not be used as an excuse to preclude any activity from taking place.

Note on Face Shields and Partitions: Plastic face shields do not stop aerosol, masks do; room dividers inhibit the function of the HVAC system and are not recommended.