



September 25, 2020

The Honorable Gretchen Whitmer
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Governor Whitmer,

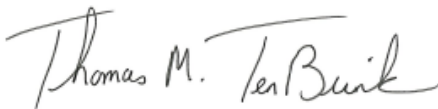
On behalf of the students, staff, families, and communities we serve, we respectfully request consideration for performing arts students to have the opportunity to perform with conditions similar to organized sports while Michigan is in Phase 4 of the MI Safe Start Plan. The MI Safe Schools Return to School Roadmap and Executive Order 2020-142 called for local control by requiring local school boards approve COVID-19 Preparedness and Response plans. Through shared responsibility for safety and public health, local districts have ownership and accountability over implementation. This implementation now includes athletics and learning at the local level. However, up to this point no accommodations, consideration or flexibility has been provided for our performing arts students.

A comprehensive education is a critical component of the public school experience for our students. Students in performing arts programs often have their most meaningful school experience while performing with a school ensemble. The rationale for allowing performing arts is one rooted in equity, access, and educating the whole child. We know given the serious nature of the pandemic there needs to be additional precautions taken for performing arts to protect students, staff and our communities. That is why we are recommending the following as a framework for performing arts to continue:

- Performances will only be for the school community in which the ensemble is a part of (including co-op ensembles), therefore not allowing competitions.
- Performances should take place outside strictly adhering to a minimum social distance of 6 feet, requiring face coverings for participants that cannot maintain 6 feet social distance, and for participants who wearing a face covering does not interfere with their performance (e.g. percussion, color guard, drum major)
- Indoor performances are permissible in accordance with provisions for organized sports in Executive Order 2020-176.
- All staff are required to wear face coverings at all times.
- Guests are permitted in accordance with provisions for organized sports in Executive Order 2020-176.

Time is of the essence with this request as the fall season is quickly passing and will soon be over. The weather is quickly changing; however, there is still time to allow students to have a meaningful performing experience for this school year. Allowing schools to make this decision at the local level will be in accordance with the spirit of the Roadmap and subsequent Return to Learn legislation that has empowered local school districts and public health officials to operate within a framework to make the best decisions respective of the unique conditions in each local community.

Sincerely,



Tom TenBrink
Superintendent
Jenison Public Schools



Ron Caniff
Superintendent
Kent Intermediate School District



Dr. Kevin Macina
Superintendent
Byron Center Public Schools



David Washburn
Superintendent
Comstock Park Public Schools



Dr. Heidi Kattula
Superintendent
East Grand Rapids Public Schools



Daniel Behm
Superintendent
Forest Hills Public Schools



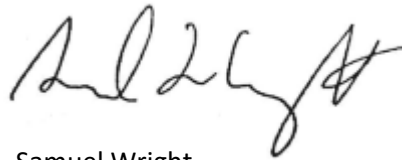
Kevin Polston
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Bill Fetterhoff
Superintendent
Godwin Heights Public Schools



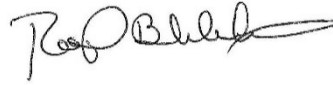
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Grand Rapids Public Schools



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Roger Bearup
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Grandville Public Schools



Rob Blitchok
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Gerald Hopkins
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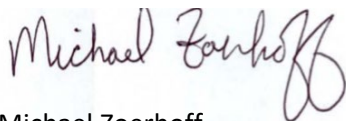
Craig Hoekstra
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Rockford Public Schools



Dr. Curt Babcock
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North Muskegon Public Schools



Nate Fowler
Superintendent
Lowell Area Public Schools



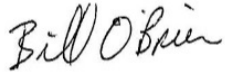
Dr. Adam Bayne
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Dr. Dedrick Martin
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Bill O'Brien
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Mona Shores Public Schools



Peter Haines
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Jeff Johnson
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Montague Area Public Schools



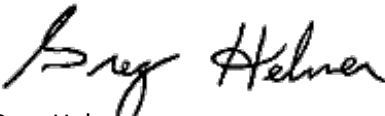
Dr. Garth Cooper
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