



July 30, 2020

Hello!

As you are aware, after sending my update at the end of last week (which contained Summer Rehearsal Plan C), all in-person activities in Waller ISD were suspended per current Harris County Health Authority orders. This means that we will not have any in-person rehearsals until further notice. While this is certainly disappointing, we are committed to making the safety of our students and community our number one priority. Should conditions improve, and suspensions of in-person activities be lifted by the appropriate health authorities, we will assess our ability to reschedule any summer activities at that time. While things may continue to change, below is some important information I can share based on what we currently know. As always, there's a lot here, but it's all extremely important, so please make sure you read all the way through.

We are planning to have summer rehearsals to the extent possible in a virtual setting. We will work on details for this and get information out as we have it. You will continue to receive updates from me, but you should also be on the lookout for information from the other directors who will be scheduling and leading many of your rehearsals. Due to the limitations of Zoom, this will mostly occur in the form of sectionals. I am currently working to get material posted for you to practice on your own in the meantime, which will also be some of what is covered in your sectionals. By the end of this week, I will be posting the TMEA All-Region/All-State audition materials along with links to access videos explaining and demonstrating them for those who would like to get a head start. I'll also be getting music for warm-ups and performances posted as it becomes available. Soon, you'll also have access to an online series of instructional videos that will help you begin to learn and practice some of our visual techniques and exercises. So, while we can't meet in person, we are not canceling band and will continue to work and improve in whatever ways we can.

Regarding the season, as you are aware, undertaking a competitive marching season involves significant amounts of time, planning, energy, and funding from various sources including the district, boosters, and individual parent and student contributions. We take these investments very seriously and feel that we should always use them in a manner that provides the best, and safest, experience for all our students. With this in mind, along with the delayed start, reduced rehearsal time, and uncertainty of what the season will bring, we have decided that the best course of action is to delay using our planned competition show until next year in order to ensure that we are able to get the full benefit of the investment put into creating a custom production. That said, while it may need to be shorter in length and difficulty, we are committed to creating an alternate production that will reflect the quality our students and



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community are accustomed to and that will allow for success at UIL events, while also providing for maximum flexibility and safety considerations and allowing all students to participate in the manner in which they are most comfortable.

At this time, all Bands of America events (including regionals, super regionals, and Grand Nationals) for this season have been cancelled, as have other invitational competitions that we would normally attend. At this time, UIL events are still scheduled with tentative dates of November 17th for the Region 27 Evaluation and December 12th for the Area E Marching Contest. While many schools across the state have announced that they will not be competing this season, it is our intention to participate in these UIL events if they are held and we can safely do so. Additionally, if opportunities arise, and conditions at the time allow, we will continue to seek additional performance opportunities. We are waiting for further guidance regarding our participation at football games, but our plan is certainly to participate in whatever capacity is allowed and appropriate from week to week. At this time, we have not made any changes to our planned weekly rehearsal schedule that will begin once in-person classes resume, however it is highly possible that we will need to make adjustments due to changing bell schedules, transportation schedules, facility use, and other restrictions that may arise depending on the number of students who select Waller ISD Online or Waller ISD In-Person. When we know what, if any, adjustments are needed, we will update the calendar accordingly.

Regarding fees and payments, taking a scaled-back approach to the marching season will also allow us to lower the financial burden on our students and families. We are currently working on ways to reduce this year's fees as much as possible and I will send additional information once this has been finalized. You do not need to make any payments (unless you have past due amounts from last year that you would like to take care of) until I send further information. Of course, as always, I will also be able to work with you individually, if needed, when the time comes. Money is NEVER a reason not to participate in band in Waller ISD.

All forms in RankOne should still be completed as soon as possible. Remember that the Medical History form (which used to be part of the physical form) is now also digital and to be completed in RankOne. You MUST complete this form online even if you need a physical, which means that you will also fill it out for the doctor as part of the paper physical form. If you completed your online forms in May or early June, please go back to RankOne to make sure you've completed this form. It was probably added after you did your forms (also, thank you for doing what you were supposed to in May). Also, remember that you only need a physical if you did not have one for a Waller ISD activity last school year, or you've had a change in your medical history since last year's physical. For those who do need a physical, you may either upload it to the physical assignment in the 2020-2021 WHS Band Google Classroom (preferred) or email it to me once completed by your doctor.



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Finally, if you need a school instrument, and do not currently have one, please fill out the instrument request form found here: <https://forms.gle/XBGBVLeWejFetKQb9>. Once I receive the form, I will contact you about picking up an instrument as soon as we have one ready for you.

I understand that many of you are very disappointed about the cancellation of summer band and the thought of a year that may not be exactly what you envisioned. I'm disappointed too and sincerely miss all of you and can't wait until we can get back to making music and working together to become the best version of ourselves possible. Remember, we are all in this together. Even though this year may look and feel different, we will still make it a great year. DIFFERENT DOES NOT HAVE TO MEAN WORSE! I'm looking forward to a year full of firsts and great accomplishments. I hope you are too!

Grant McWilliams
Director of Bands