

Indiana Marching Band Directors,

Many questions are currently being raised about high school marching band summer rehearsals and the fall competition season. Governor Holcomb has projected Indiana will move to Stage 5 of the Back on Track Indiana Plan on July 4th. While numerous restrictions will be lifted at that time, the guidelines for K-12 school operations is listed as “to be determined.” The Indiana State School Music Association and the Indiana Music Education Association are in support of a return to high school marching band as soon as local health and safety protocols can be implemented.

ISSMA has joined with other state associations, NFHS, and the College Band Directors Association in an International Coalition to commission a study on the effects of Covid-19 in music classrooms and performance venues. This study is examining aerosol rates when playing various instruments or singing to determine the level of risk in performing arts settings, including high school marching band. The scientific tests are scheduled to be completed by the middle of June with the results being distributed by the end of June.

Recently, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) published “A Guidance for a Return to High School Marching Band” to be used as a resource. This document was published to assist schools in those states where restrictions have already been lifted and marching bands are beginning to rehearse. It is the intent of NFHS to make additional recommendations once the results of the Covid-19 Aerosol study have been published. On June 5th, the Indiana Department of Education released the “Indiana’s Considerations for Learning and Safe Schools” (IN-CLASS) document that outlines additional considerations for Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Re-Entry.

Indiana marching bands will be encouraged to refer to the NFHS and IDOE guidelines as well as the recommendations from the International Coalition’s Covid-19 aerosol study as they begin to rehearse. It is important to note that the recommendations are intended as ideas for consideration and should not be considered as mandates. Marching band directors and school administrators are asked to meet with state and local health departments for additional guidance when developing local guidelines for the safe return to marching band.

At this time, all ISSMA marching band events scheduled for October and November will take place as scheduled. The Summer Showcase event scheduled for late August has been cancelled. ISSMA will closely monitor the potential of recurrent outbreaks of the virus this coming Fall, as well as any restrictions being placed on participating bands. The ISSMA Staff and Executive Committee will make necessary adjustments in event logistics to limit risk for all students, adults, spectators, workers and adjudicators. If the situation calls for the cancellation of an event, the decision will be made as early as possible and will be communicated directly to directors, distributed through press releases and posted on the ISSMA website.

For additional information click the following links:

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/unprecedented-international-coalition-led-by-performing-arts-organizations-to-commission-covid-19-study/>

<https://www.nfhs.org/media/3812337/2020-nfhs-guidance-for-returning-to-high-school-marching-band-activities.pdf>

https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/news/june-5-class-document.pdf?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=