



GEORGIA MUSIC EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

24 February 2021

Greetings, Band & Orchestra Directors of Georgia:

Hopefully this letter finds you well, as we all continue to make the most of this strange year and look forward to a brighter tomorrow. As you are likely aware, your GMEA Executive Committee and the Band & Orchestra Division Chairs have been working for many months to make All-State Band & Orchestra happen in person. We have met exhaustively and with increased frequency these last several weeks to determine what we will or will not be able to do this spring.

As has been the case since last summer, our efforts have focused on doing what is best for the students and included ensuring the process of auditioning for All-State would happen. Our intent has been to hold an in-person All-State event, if such an event was deemed possible. Throughout the school year, we have made calendar adjustments and continued to watch the circumstances across the state, as well as limitations that are put in place at the Classic Center in Athens due to the pandemic. We are just over six weeks out from the scheduled All-State event, and with so many aspects of the post-audition organization of the actual event facing us, a final decision on whether or not to gather the students in Athens had to be made.

An in-person All-State event this spring could only take place with far fewer students than we typically bring together for the twelve bands and orchestras. Socially distancing in the rehearsal rooms would necessitate smaller and fewer groups and would prohibit the use of the stage for performances, and while there are aspects of the rehearsals and performances we can control, there is much more outside of GMEA's purview.

Thus, in light of current conditions, we met again Monday evening, and the decision has been made not to hold the in-person All-State event. This decision was reached after much consideration and after reviewing a significant amount of input, including the feedback from the recent surveys, which was quite informative. The well-being of students and directors has been a primary consideration all along, and allowing us to recognize the normal number of All-State musicians was also a significant factor. With all of those factors in mind, this is the call that had to be made.

The GMEA All-State ensembles have long been among the best in the nation, and we are planning a virtual All-State experience to honor these outstanding students. Please look for information about that special celebration in the coming weeks, as we could not begin that planning until we made the decision about the in-person event. Rest assured rosters and chair-placements will be released as they normally would and certificates and medals will be awarded to the students who earned the honor of being in the All-State Bands & Orchestras.

Countless volunteers work each year to provide our students with the opportunity to make All-State, and in that sense this year is no different. From the organizers to the adjudicators, to the hosts and data entry teams, and so many more hard-working members, we would not be able to do what we do without you. Thank you all for being part of GMEA and for what you mean to the music students of our great state. It is an honor to serve you and our organization, and we appreciate what you all mean to us.

Most sincerely,

The GMEA Executive Committee

Alan Fowler, Vice President for All-State
Jeff Funderburk, Vice President for LGPE
Matt Koperniak, President-elect

Carl Rieke, President
Frank Folds, Past-Presidents Council Representative
Cecil Wilder, Executive Secretary