



**Associated Friends of Roosevelt Drama
RHS Rider Band Boosters
Roosevelt Jazz Boosters
Roosevelt Orchestra Boosters
Rider Choirs Boosters**

October 18, 2021

To Deputy Superintendent Gannon, Chief Operations Officer Podesta, Associate Superintendent Pedroza, Associate Superintendent Campbell, Associate Superintendent Pritchett, Office of Strategy Deployment and Responsiveness and Health Information Department:

As Seattle Public Schools strives for High Quality Learning environments, based on the 180 Days of Excellence platform, we strongly recommend you allow in person performances as you revisit your policies. We are concerned that current SPS regulations do not allow curricular performing arts classes to conduct any live in-person performances after school hours. Live performances in front of an audience are an essential part of the performing arts curriculum. We are confused because we cannot find any current health guidelines that would prohibit these performances. We are aware that you will be making a decision on this matter by the end of October and ask you to consider the following information.

Performing arts classes are academic, curricular classes, just like math, science, and language arts. These are not extracurricular classes, and in many cases are used to meet state and local graduation pathway requirements. [Nearly 1/3 of the learning standards for performing arts classes require students to perform.](#) Technical theatre classes meet standards by building scenery and costumes for productions. Music I classes like Jazz, Orchestra, Choir, and Band and theatre production classes meet standards by rehearsing real shows meant to be performed on stage. It is unreasonable to expect performing arts classes to pivot to remote performances in order to meet standards while also being expected to meet in-person for class. It places undue burdens on students and teachers as it requires twice the time, significant expense, and the virtual/in-person formats are not compatible. The current plan is inequitable as not all Seattle Public School theatre and music programs can afford the additional costs or possess the technology to film, edit, and livestream performances. Please revise the plan to align with SPS policy no, 2200 to provide equitable access to programs and service for all students.

We do not understand why SPS has chosen to restrict live in-person performances. Seattle King County Public Health has no specific guidance for public schools, and on its website defers to [Washington State Department of Health K-12 Guidelines](#), which state the following for School-Sponsored Performing Arts Performances and Activities:

- For performances, audience members should be seated in “family units” and those small groups should be spaced at least 6 feet apart. All audience members must wear a mask, regardless of vaccination status.
- Masking is required outdoors for all spectators if there are 500 or more people present at the event.
- Universal masking is required during performances for participants, including appropriate face coverings and bell covers on woodwind and brass instruments.

Given the current Department of Health guidelines, we see no reason why SPS cannot create and implement plans by October 29 to allow all performing arts students back to the stages in their schools including:

- Revise the Operations Handbook to allow performing arts to hold outdoor performances, at the minimum. This aligns with the current allowance for spectators at outdoor athletic competitions. Performing arts audiences are easily able to be masked and socially distanced per current Washington Department of Health guidelines due to arranged and ticketed seating.
- Create and implement plans to allow for performing arts indoor performances, beginning in early

November. Just as regional theatre and musical organizations and other school districts around the Puget Sound are welcoming full capacity audiences back with masks and proof of vaccination/negative COVID



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test within 72 hours, SPS schools can enact similar rules. School staff or family volunteers can enforce these and any additional spacing rules at performances. Additionally, SPS must build protocols to allow students to equitably meet their learning standards for performances when it becomes prohibitive to perform outdoors this winter.

Please provide us the support required so that student learning is not further interrupted and our students can meet all of their learning standards while meeting the mission of the SPS Visual and Performing Arts to “ensure equitable access to a comprehensive, sequential, and predictable arts education for each and every student at SPS.”

Respectfully,

Associated Friends of Roosevelt Drama Board & Parents

Roosevelt Orchestra Booster Board & Parents

Roosevelt Jazz Booster Board & Parents

Rider Choirs Booster Board & Parents

RHS Rider Band Booster Board & Parents

RHS Rider Band Booster Board & Parents

West Seattle High School Band

West Seattle High School Orchestra and Choir - Taylor Fritts

West Seattle High School Drama Department - Andrew Finley & Dan Weiner

Denny Sealth Performing Arts Booster

Ingraham Performing Arts Boosters

Garfield High School Theatre Parents Association

Zachariah MacIntyre, Lincoln High School Band Director

Victoria Greenbaum, Lincoln High School Orchestra Director

CC:

Mr. HkwauaQuejol Hollins, Principal, RHS

Mr. Roy Merca, Assistant Principal, RHS
Dr. Jean-Marie Kent, Director of Rider Choirs and Performing Arts Dept. Head, RHS
Mr. Scott Brown, Director of Band and Jazz, RHS
Mrs. Christine Gero, Director of Orchestra, RHS
Mr. Ben Stuart, Co-Director of Theatre, RHS
Ms. Katie Greves, Co-Director of Theater, RHS
Seattle School Board of Directors,
Liza Rankin, District 1
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Brandon K. Hersey. District 7