



## POST-PANDEMIC PLANNING GUIDE FOR MUSIC EDUCATORS VOLUME 8

Welcome back to your Post-Pandemic **Positivity** Guide! Our previous “Planning” guides have been all about getting your program ready for life after COVID. In this volume, we take a different approach.

We know this year has been a challenge: We feel it too! For the final guide, each of the six contributing authors from the MusicEDNow! team will share how they are staying positive, managing fatigue, and preparing for life after COVID-19. In sharing their own techniques, we hope that perhaps you, and your students, may be able to utilize them, too.

### **Looking Forward to Fall: Time to *Thrive!***

As music educators we understood that advocating was an essential part of our job even before a world-wide pandemic where aerosol dispersion was unsafe. And because, as music educators, we are resilient in our pursuit to share music with children we have spent over a year finding flexible and ingenious ways to keep music education moving forward. Through these challenges we have all learned new ways to reach students outside of our classrooms and have continued to be strong advocates for music education in children’s lives.

As we plan for the fall there is no going back, only forward. We now have the opportunity to take our new skills and rebuild music programs that can inspire students as an ensemble and as an individual, with a trombone and a Chromebook, in a room and in a Zoom. Fall of 2021 is the beginning of a new chapter in music education and spoiler alert: It will thrive!

Take a moment to reflect on your accomplishments of the past year, not just the challenges. Think about the skills you have acquired, not just the ones you could not use. Now, add all those skills and accomplishments to all the great work you were doing pre-pandemic and reflect on how much stronger you now are as an educator and an advocate.

You are prepared to thrive, and your current and future students are so lucky to have you.

-John Mlynczak

John Mlynczak is Vice President of Music Education & Technology for Hal Leonard, a Graduate Instructor at VanderCook College, and passionate advocate for music education. Learn more at [www.johnmlynczak.com](http://www.johnmlynczak.com).



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### **Make the Most Important Thing the Most Important Thing.**

Last March, the world stopped. “Two weeks to flatten the curve” was all we talked about (and Carol Baskins...). “Two weeks” became “this fall”. Then fall came and went. Here we are, a year later, just beginning to see a light at the end of the tunnel.

But by being forced out of our rhythms, we were also forced to re-evaluate...well...everything! Our time and priorities shifted. A lot of the change forced upon us was challenging and uncomfortable, as we had to rethink even the most simple tasks. But some of it turned out pretty great, too. I can’t help but appreciate the additional time I had to spend with family and learn new things.

If nothing else, COVID has given us all a new perspective on what’s really most important. In life after COVID, will some of those peripheral things return to our calendars? Sure. But our perspective will be different. I will forever appreciate the simplicity of a hug, dinner with friends, and not having to dodge strangers on the grocery store aisle. (Ok. I may still do that.)

As we turn the page, I hope we all strive to make the most important things in our life, the most important thing. If COVID taught us anything, it’s this: focus on what’s important. The rest? Well...it wasn’t that important to begin with.

-Nick Averwater

Nick Averwater is the Vice President and 4th generation owner at Amro Music, a locally owned and family-operated music store in Memphis, Tennessee. You can follow Nick online as the host of the “[After Hours: Conversations for Music Educators](#)” podcast.

### **Going Back...to the Future**

When COVID-19 restrictions ease, students and educators must adapt and prepare for a return to schools. All school staff will need to support students in their transition back to the classroom, and at the same time, manage their own transition and anxiety. Below are several resources to help as educators prepare to support this transition, particularly for anxious students.

If still teaching virtually, this article from Edutopia will help [prioritize your self-care](#) while teaching from home and these [7 tips for returning to school](#) may help educators prepare for the transition back to in-person education.

In a blog article written for NAFME by Mara E. Culp and Rachel Roberts, the topic of



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[seeking profession satisfaction](#) during COVID-19 and beyond was addressed in detail. As articulated in the conclusion,

Teaching music can feel overwhelming and seeking professional satisfaction can help teachers find joy in challenging times. By identifying their particular needs and consulting trusted sources to help set reasonable expectations,...music teachers can find fulfillment and better assist their learners for years to come.

From a different perspective, noted sports psychologist, Dr. Josephine Perry, shares her [four secrets](#) from sports psychology that can be used by any educator as setting goals for returning to the classroom are being made:

1. Being nervous is good. Tell yourself, I am not nervous...I am excited. Reframe your anxiety.
2. Never do all the work yourself. Learn to let others support you along the way.
3. Mentally rehearse. Use visualization techniques which can increase motivation, build confidence and increase performance.
4. Talk to yourself. Self-talk can have a surprising impact on your performance. Think of Ali saying, "I am the greatest!" Tell yourself, "I can!"

Always remember "why" you are teaching music. This [highly-circulated quote](#), penned by an unknown author, is as important today as ever.

I teach music  
...not because I expect you to major in music,  
...not because I expect you to play or sing all your life,  
...not so you can relax,  
...not so you can have fun,

but so you will be human,  
so you will recognize beauty,  
so you will be closer to an infinite beyond this world,  
so you will have something to cling to,  
so you will have more love, more compassion,  
more gentleness, more good.  
In short, more **LIFE**.

-Marcia Neel

Marcia Neel is Senior Director of Education for Yamaha Corporation of America, a [Yamaha Master Educator](#), and president of [Music Education Consultants Inc.](#)



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### Looking for your Car Keys

It has been a gratifying pleasure to be a part of providing tools and compass direction as we all come out of the tunnel of COVID. Covid. I know that many of you can only see the dim light at the tunnel's end, but I assure you that it is near, we have survived and a new and brighter day is in our immediate future.

I am reminded of each time I lose the keys to my car. In my hectic, angry and frantic mode of searching under and through everything, it never fails that just before I do find the keys, I find something else I had lost and needed as well. That's truly a win/win for me and at that very moment, I am euphoric.

In searching for the answers and procedures of dealing with this Covid Challenge, many of us have found amazing treasures as well. It has been a time to re-evaluate the importance of each element of our "normal" and to focus on the greatest hits. For me it was to evaluate what my students ultimately needed from me for their musical journey, what was truly important in the pedagogical process and how music can soothe even the deepest of loss and sadness.

In the immediate tomorrows, we will embark on days of using our newly-found creativity to reach our students with more efficiency and with more impact. We've had to learn new approaches, forced to vacate "normal" and yet required to remain highly successful while doing so. YOU have SURVIVED, now it is time to THRIVE with your newly found KEYS to success. In nearly every case, students now better understand "who" we are and we certainly have a greater understanding of "them." Everyone appreciates music more deeply than ever before and without doubt our relationships built through music have never felt more vital.

Look at your glass as half-full. We have survived. The future is bright. You have found your beloved keys and the journey forward is going to be quite a site.

Best of luck !

-Barry Trobaugh

Barry Trobaugh is the Director of the Munford Band in Munford Tennessee and Musical Director of the Memphis Wind Symphony.

### It's a Small World

The world became smaller when COVID-19 closed our schools. Not because we were trapped in our homes but because teachers rallied online to share their best practices from across the globe. I received advice from Italy, Australia, and Alabama all in one thread. Video content,



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games, and songs have been made readily available for educators by the educators that created them.

Our ability to reach students over the internet and make music accessible even in the most dire of situations is a testament to our new standard of music education. With the assistance of apps and websites, music education doesn't have to end when students walk out of your room. Any place that has cell phone service is now an extension of our classroom. Though a difficult task, no student is unreachable now.

Music teachers are accustomed to getting the job done by themselves but there has never been a larger pool of online resources to assist your lesson plans, funding, and safety. When asked about advice I would give teachers 6 months ago, I said "Put your head down and power through." Lisa Steele-McDonald followed that up with recommending we lean on each other for assistance with daily tasks and mental health. I was taken back because the idea had never crossed my mind but it is now the advice that I give everyone. Thank you, Lisa.

-Tyler Swick

Tyler Swick is a 40 Under 40 Yamaha Music Educator and a Heart of Education Recipient in the Clark County School District where he teaches elementary music. Follow [Swick's Classroom](#) on YouTube for more content.

### **(RE)FILL YOUR BUCKET**

No matter which cliché you prefer, they all ring true: you can't pour from an empty pitcher and you do have to put your oxygen mask on before you can help others. After a long, hard adrenalized sprint to "make it happen", you have to give yourself some grace, so I just want to leave you with a few words on recharging your own batteries.

#### **Ask for help.**

I get it: you're the one your family, your kids, your colleagues depend on. But I promise you - there are things on your plate at this very minute that you could hand off to someone else. And there is someone in your network who would find joy in giving to you - so let them.

- Too many of us are on the verge of being overwhelmed at any moment. Try out one of these [6 Ways to Overcome Being Overwhelmed](#)

#### **Hit Pause More Often**

- In the moment, consider trying a [Self Care Reflection](#), and get a read on how well you might be tending to your own needs.



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- Can you use this summer to build up a [self-care routine to help you fight stress](#) going into the fall?

### **Bring the goal present.**

It's easy to lose ourselves in the minutiae of to-do lists and lesson plans and meeting agendas. Block out some time to pull back and look at the big picture.

- This is probably a great time to remind yourself about - or even further clarify - your WHY. Download the [Passion Roadmap](#) and take time to dream about the big things you want to accomplish next year, in 3 years and over the course of your life.
- Having clear goals is a tremendous help towards being able to self-regulate - it allows you to focus on positive behaviors that drive toward personal payoff. Here are 5 more [suggestions to help you self-regulate](#).

When you do a job that serves others, it is too easy to put yourself at the bottom of the list. You have been through a tremendously traumatic year, and accomplished AMAZING things in spite of factors beyond your control going wrong at every turn. Your efforts are seen, they are appreciated, and they will be something your students never forget. THANK YOU!

-Lisa MacDonald

Lisa MacDonald is Director of Vertical Marketing for Yamaha Corporation of America.

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From all of us on the MusicEDNow team, we wish you and your program nothing but success in the upcoming school year. We hope the Post-Pandemic Planning Guide provided you the spark or idea you needed to help you prepare for the fall ahead. If you missed a previous blast, you can find them here.

Know that the difference you make in your student's lives is immeasurable. As Mo Williams said, "Science will get us out of this. But the arts will get us through this."

Musically,

The MusicEdNow Team (Marcia, John, Lisa, Barry, Tyler, and Nick)

### **About The Authors**

The MusicEdNow team is a cross-industry committee joined by a common goal to help music teachers navigate the challenges facing music programs. It was formed in 2020 and includes an experienced team of educators, non-profit organizations, and industry leaders.