



ONTARIO MUSIC EDUCATORS' ASSOCIATION

May 21, 2021

Dear OMEA Members,

Along with our colleagues at Choral Canada, the Canadian Music Educators' Association, the Coalition for Music Education, and the Kodály Society of Canada, we are writing to advise that preliminary results from the *Singing in Canadian Schools: COVID-19 Impact Survey (2021)* are now available. These results contain information relevant to decision-making about K-12 music programs as we look ahead to 2021-2022.

As you plan for the coming school year, you will be faced with many difficult decisions alongside leaders, administrators, teachers, and students. There are preliminary findings from the *Singing in Canadian Schools: COVID-19 Impact Survey* that may be very helpful for those involved in decision-making processes.

All Canadians, including music educators and students, have come through such a challenging and unique pandemic year, and the effects on arts and education have been many. One of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic has been reduced singing in classrooms and choral ensembles, singing alone and singing together.

Within the constraints of COVID-19 health and safety restrictions, school closures, and alternate forms of education delivery, fewer students are singing in Canadian schools. Singing is embedded in Canadian music curricula for its value not only as a tool for learning and instruction, but because it is an essential means of self-expression. Currently, **71% of survey music teacher respondents' students are unable to engage in music learning through singing at school**¹. Considering both the constraints and possibilities that may exist moving forward, we want to look towards solutions that engage students in safe, singing practices in Canadian schools, helping them to receive the myriad of benefits we know accompany group singing.

Looking back on this past year, music education leaders have learned a great deal. When it comes to singing in schools, we have learned that:

- **91% of music teacher respondents' students are no longer able to sing in extra and co-curricular programs such as choirs and singing ensembles**²
- **Fewer than 30% of music teacher respondents are teaching music from their music classrooms, spaces designed for music teaching and learning**³

This evidence-based study paints an authentic picture of our experiences as Canadian music educators. The survey sample pool was highly representative, with almost 1000 respondents from across the country. Survey data are very comprehensive and include both quantitative and qualitative data. These data hold much potential to guide policy and practice related to singing in schools in the upcoming year, while always keeping students safe and engaged in a comprehensive music education: one that includes singing.

More results are being analyzed and will be published shortly. Please find 5 one-page supporting documents attached for you to share and to assist in guiding conversations. Now, more than ever, we know how crucial music-making is for our students.

^{1, 2, 3}Morin, F., & Mahmud, M. N. (2021). Singing in Canadian schools: COVID 19 impact survey. Unpublished preliminary findings. Choral Canada.

On behalf of the Ontario Music Educators' Association, we welcome the opportunity to provide support, answer questions, and work together to support music education for our students throughout Ontario.

Sincerely,



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President
Ontario Music Educators' Association
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Attached:

In Person Group Singing...An Irreplaceable Experience!

Let's all sing...and sing safely!

Let's Return Music Learning to Designated Music Spaces!

Music and Singing in our Schools...Music and Singing in Our Lives!

Music and Singing_A Pandemic Lifeline