**Letters from Parents, band supporters, band alumni and musicians**

**For use where a Band program has been cancelled entirely**

*This is a sample letter that can be sent to School Divisions, Trustees and Principals which emphasizes that research shows band programs can be offered safely, highlights the importance of band to our youth, and calls for action to ensure band recruitment and delivery receive dedicated support for the school year.*

Re: Give Band Programs Time to Recover – Cancelling Now is Premature and Unfair

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

COVID-19 should not be allowed to rob our children of rich and vibrant futures! Music is a fundamental element in the education of students worldwide. The unique value of ensemble music making found in all band programs is well documented and beneficial to our students and our community.

For many students their ability to participate in band is a unique and essential component of their school experience; it is simply irreplaceable. Administrative decisions, often based on funding, are difficult but must take into consideration the unfair, inequitable impact COVID-19 had on band programs before any band programs are cancelled. From putting entire programs on hold to extreme distancing requirements and cohorting that resulted postponing the full band experiences that motivate students – band programs need time and support to fully recover.

**That is why NO band programs should be cancelled for the 2022-23 school year!** Applying system-wide minimum registration or participation criteria to determine program cancellations is unfair to band programs where participation was already unduly impacted by extreme pandemic restrictions.

Funding for education must be increased. School Divisions are faced with challenging decisions as a result of budget shortfalls and that is unacceptable. However, band programs cannot be treated the same as other classes and, once cancelled, are often not able to restart. For example, many elementary Jazz programs **still** have not returned following the initial lockdowns. Cancelling secondary school Jazz programs based on registration numbers does not factor in the impact of this extended program pause and the fails to recognize that Jazz ensembles are, by design, smaller in number. Once removed, the natural program promotion resulting from concerts is lost; resulting in short-term decisions having long-term impact.

{INSERT PERSONAL ANECDOTE REGARDING THE IMPACT OF BAND ON YOUR CHILD/ YOURSELF HERE. HOW HAS YOUR CHILD – OR HOW WERE YOU - GROWN/CHANGED/BEEN SUPPORTED BY PARTICIPATION IN BAND?}

The benefits of band are too important for our students, our communities and our province! Research has proven that band, and other music programs, provides students with many health, social, and educational benefits. All students at {YOUR SCHOOL/DIVISION} deserve to have access to all of the benefits band provides, cancelling any band programs now will have long-lasting impact.

Regards,