Guidance for General Music Teaching during COVID-19

Introduction

Music education has been identified in the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) as part of a well-rounded education. The 2014 National Music Standards provide a framework for general music instruction for students in grades PreK−8. It may be difficult to select specific standards as "essential" because current Arts standards were developed under the umbrella of the Artistic Processes of Creating, Performing, Responding, and Connecting. Each standard under an Artistic Process is an individual component or step in that process.

It is possible to teach music and provide standards-based instruction to students using various instructional delivery options (in-person, hybrid, virtual). As schools decide how best to move forward, please make sure the arts (and in particular music education) are part of your district's education plan. This document provides examples of general music teaching using the Anchor Standards as the essential standards for instruction.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Music Education

As students return to school this fall, we must think about the individual and collective social and emotional needs of students. Music education is particularly suited to help students with social emotional learning. There are several resources available to help music educators implement elements of SEL.

- The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) https://casel.org/.
- Harvard Center on the Developing Child: Toxic Stress https://developingchild.harvard.edu/guide/a-guide-to-toxic-stress/.
- Dr. Scott Edgar's book Music Education and Social Emotional Learning (2017), GIA Publications.
- The National Association for Music Education (www.nafme.org) offers SEL webinars (https://nafme.org/advocacy/quarterly-advocacy-webinars/social-emotional-learning) and a pamphlet (https://nafme.org/wp-content/files/2020/05/NAfME-SEL-Brochure-May-2020.pdf).
- New Jersey's Arts Education Social & Emotional Learning Framework (https://selarts.org/) provides specific examples of SEL tied to Arts standards in different grade level bands.
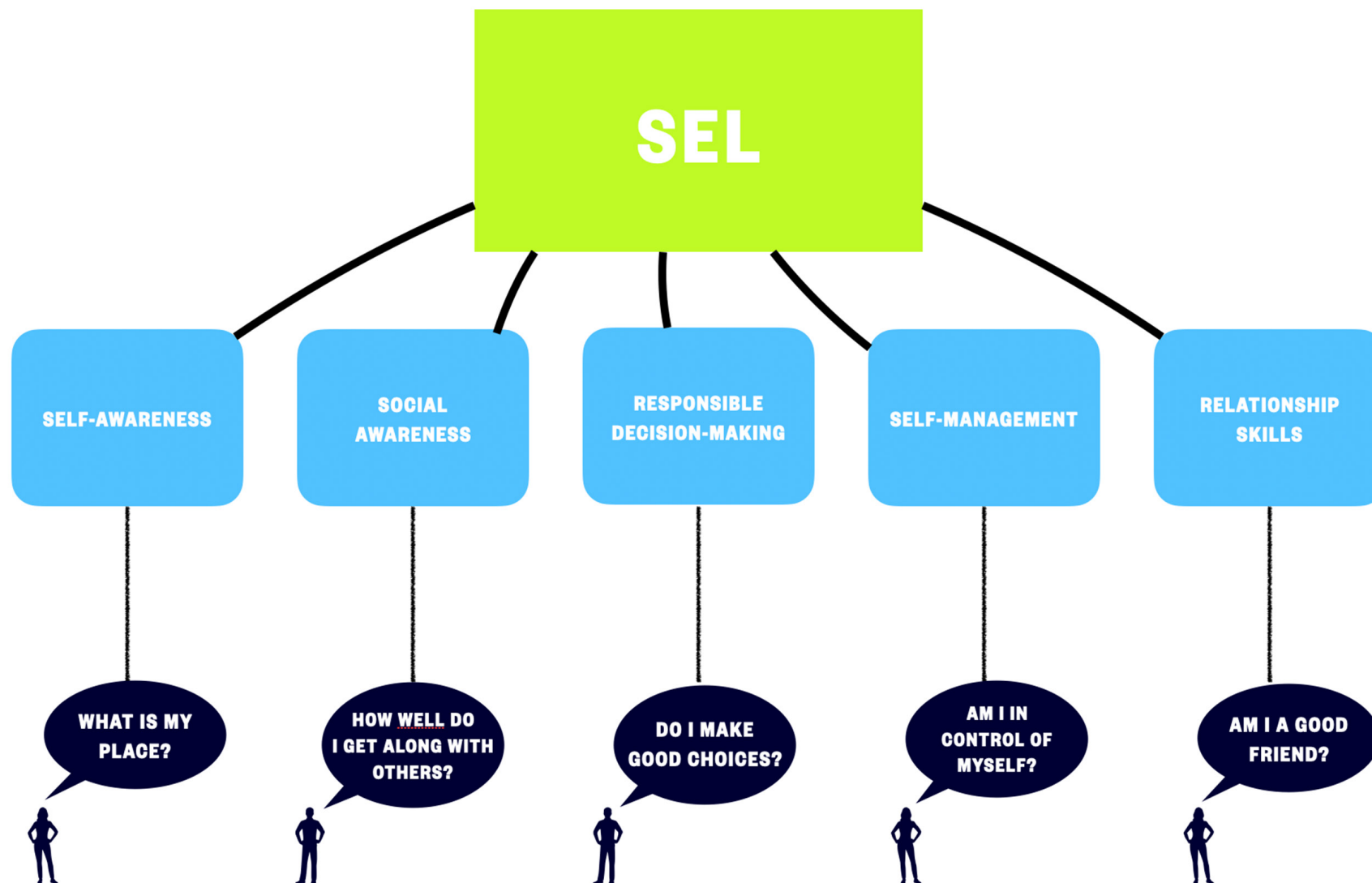
Students need opportunities to perform, create, respond, and connect through music, using whatever means possible during this time.

Rethinking the Focus of Instruction during COVID-19

More important than selecting essential standards is ensuring that students have access to high-quality general music experiences during in-person, virtual, or hybrid instruction. This document will provide scenarios for how general music instruction can and should continue. Whether your school system is engaging in virtual, in-person, or a hybrid approach to instruction, your students can participate in standards-based instruction. Consult with your local music educators to determine how best to meet standards for your specific school and/or district.

Anchor Standards for General Music
(PreK-8)

Creating	Performance	Responding	Connecting
Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.	**Anchor Standard 4:** Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.	**Anchor Standard 7:** Perceive and analyze artistic work.	**Anchor Standard 10:** Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make music.
Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.	**Anchor Standard 5:** Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.	**Anchor Standard 8:** Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.	**Anchor Standard 11:** Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.
Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work.	**Anchor Standard 6:** Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.	**Anchor Standard 9:** Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.	

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.		
In-Person	**Hybrid**	**Virtual**
• Students can improvise answers to musical questions (tonal) using pitched percussion instruments or personal devices. • Individual students can improvise rhythmic patterns in response to rhythmic musical questions using spoken syllables (with mask), nonpitched instruments or body percussion. • Students can discuss and brainstorm ideas (creative intent, connection, and purpose) to create a two-chord song using previously learned chords.	• Students can collaborate through technological means to develop musical questions and answers. - Students can collaborate in real time or use video editing software to combine questions and answers. • Students can discuss and brainstorm (creative intent, connection, and purpose) two-chord songs in class and review chords already learned. While working at home, students can research two-chord songs and create a collaborative list of two-chord songs using Google sheets.	• Teachers will provide musical questions through video. Students will record themselves improvising an answer. • Students develop a thinking map using a presentation app or software to brainstorm creative intent, connection, and purpose for creating a two-chord song.

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.		
In-Person	**Hybrid**	**Virtual**
• Using a personal modified staff, students can create and notate tritonic melodies (*La, Sol, Mi*). • Using an instrument (ukulele, guitar, xylophone, piano, etc.) or personal device students can create a two-chord song using previously learned chords.	• Students can use materials around their home (building blocks, toys, etc.) to create and notate tritonic melodies. Students can perform and share, using video or teleconferencing software, their melodies and explain their creative intent. • Students can meet using teleconferencing software to perform early drafts of two-chord songs for each other. The students	• Students can use materials around their home (building blocks, toys, etc.) to create and notate tritonic melodies. The student can take pictures and use the screen record feature on their device to perform, share, and explain their intent. • Students can upload early drafts of two-chord songs to the learning management platform. The songs can be played on an instrument or using a device. The students can comment and explain creative intent, purpose, and connection to other two-chord songs.

CREATING

		can offer suggestions and explain their creative intent and purpose.	
	Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work.		
	In-Person	**Hybrid**	**Virtual**
	• Students can create a rubric, with teacher guidance, to evaluate and refine creative products. • Students can perform two-chord songs in class. Other students, with teacher guidance, can provide suggestions for refinement of individual two-chord songs.	• In class, students can compare and contrast musical attributes of successful compositions. Students can, virtually, create a rubric to evaluate and refine works. When in class again, students can discuss the ratings and develop plans to refine their works. • In class, students can listen to two-chord songs created by fellow students. At home, students can evaluate each other's two-chord songs and provide feedback using a collaborative rubric, learning management software, or app.	• Use an app or program to record musical ideas and share their recording with the class and teacher. • Students can upload their two-chord songs to the learning management platform. Other students and/or the teacher can leave comments for refining individual songs.
SEL Bridge	Engaging in a creative process requires students to have **self-awareness** as they determine their strengths, needs, and self-efficacy. In group creative processes students must have **social awareness** and **relationship skills** as they communicate, show respect, work cooperatively and collaboratively, and negotiate conflict. Students must also show **responsible decision making** and **self-management** as they set goals, solve problems, and apply concepts and knowledge to complete creative tasks.		

PERFORMING	**Anchor Standard 4**: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.		
	In-Person	**Hybrid**	**Virtual**
	• Focus on activating skills with percussive, rhythmic, or pitched instruments that do not require breath to create sound.	• Focus on percussive, rhythmic, or pitched instruments that do not require breath to create sound. • Found sounds or student-made instruments that allow students to practice and perform at home following a live lesson.	• Teacher-provided instructional videos of teaching concepts, literature, or any material that allows students to practice singing or playing along at home.
	Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.		
	In-Person	**Hybrid**	**Virtual**
	• Focus on activating skills with percussive, rhythmic, or pitched instruments that do not require breath to create sound.	• Focus on percussive, rhythmic, or pitched instruments that do not require breath to create sound. • Found sounds or student-made instruments that allow students to practice and perform at home following a live lesson.	• Teacher-provided instructional videos of teaching concepts, literature, or any material that allows students to practice singing or playing along at home.
	Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.		
	In-Person	**Hybrid**	**Virtual**
	• Focus on activating skills with percussive, rhythmic, or pitched instruments that do not require breath to create sound.	• Focus on percussive, rhythmic, or pitched instruments that do not require breath to create sound. • Found sounds or student-made instruments that allow students to practice and perform at home following a live lesson.	• Teacher-provided instructional videos of teaching concepts, literature, or any material that allows students to practice singing or playing along at home.
SEL Bridge	**Self-Awareness**: Recognize and name emotions associated with a variety of composers, genres, and styles of music; **Social Awareness**: Artists consider a variety of viewpoints including the cultural, historic, and social perspectives of their intended audience in preparing for a music performance. **Relationship Skills**: How can an artist's relationship with others impact the performance of artistic works?		

RESPONDING	**Anchor Standard 7:** Perceive and analyze artistic work.		
	In-Person	**Hybrid**	**Virtual**
	• Choose appropriate music for specific events based on the text, timbre, tonality, etc. • After hearing, singing, or playing a song, the teacher gives students additional information about the song. Upon hearing, singing, or playing the song again, students analyze the difference the new information makes on the performance.	• Categorize music based on text, timbre, tonality, etc.., for different occasions using Google Docs, Microsoft Word, or any available technology. • After singing or playing a song, the teacher gives students additional information about the song. Upon singing or playing the song again, students analyze the difference the new information makes on the performance.	• Categorize music based on text, timbre, tonality, etc.., for different occasions using Google Docs, Microsoft Word, or any available technology. • After singing or playing a song, the teacher gives students additional information about the song. Upon singing or playing the song again, students analyze the difference the new information makes on the performance.
	Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.		
	In-Person	**Hybrid**	**Virtual**

• Apply varying dynamics, tempos, colors based on what the student wants to convey keeping in mind the composer's original intent. • Listen to different versions of the same song (media streaming services, etc.), discussing what changed between the versions and why.	• Apply varying dynamics, tempos, colors based on what the student wants to convey keeping in mind the composer's original intent. • Listen to different versions of the same song (media streaming services, etc.), discussing what changed between the versions and why. Students create a collaborative spreadsheet to record their findings.	• Apply varying dynamics, tempos, colors based on what the student wants to convey keeping in mind the composer's original intent. • Listen to different versions of the same song using media streaming services, etc., discussing what changed between the versions and why. Students create a spreadsheet to record their findings.

Anchor Standard 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

In-Person	Hybrid	Virtual
• Using a personally created work, evaluate, refine, and document revisions to the music, using established criteria and feedback to show improvement over time. •	• Using a personally created work (GarageBand, Chrome Music Lab, Noteflight, etc..), evaluate, refine, and document revisions to the music, using established criteria and feedback to show improvement over time.	• Using a personally created work (GarageBand, Chrome Music Lab, Noteflight, etc..), evaluate, refine, and document revisions to the music, using established criteria and feedback to show improvement over time.

SEL Bridge	Recognize one's feelings and thoughts. Recognize the skills needed to establish and achieve personal and educational goals. Identify and apply ways to persevere or overcome barriers through alternative methods to achieve one's goals.

	Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make music.		
	In-Person	Hybrid	Virtual
CONNECTING	With guidance as appropriate: • In groups of 2 or 3, students work together to create speech rhythms related to a given topic or song. These become rhythmic ostinati to be performed using body percussion and transferred to instruments. Social distancing and frequent cleaning of instruments will be employed.	With guidance, as appropriate: • Using materials suggested or provided by teacher (e.g., a personal music kit containing craft sticks, small shakers, laminated staff paper, etc..), students will participate in activities such as rhythmic/melodic dictation, composition, performance. • Students predict events in an instrumental programmatic piece such as "In the Hall of the Mountain King" or a movie score, based on expressive elements.	With guidance, as appropriate: • The individual student will use materials found in the home to create/recreate/perform simple rhythmic and melodic patterns. • The student will perform a new or familiar song that is introduced or reviewed by the music teacher. • The student will perform rhythmic or solfège echo-patterns using Curwen hand signs and found objects.
	SEL Bridge: Students collaborate on composition project. Classmates and teacher give feedback.	**SEL Bridge:** Individual student creates/recreates/performs simple rhythmic and melodic patterns. Teacher feedback, student reflection.	**SEL Bridge:** Student explores materials in the home through the lens of musical relevance. Teacher feedback, student reflection.
	Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.		
	In-Person	Hybrid	Virtual
	• Apply varying dynamics, tempos, colors based on what the student wants to convey keeping in mind the composer's original intent. • Listen to different versions of the same song (media streaming services, etc.), discussing what changed between the versions and why.	• Apply varying dynamics, tempos, colors based on what the student wants to convey keeping in mind the composer's original intent. • Listen to different versions of the same song (media streaming services, etc.), discussing what changed between the versions and why. Students create a collaborative spreadsheet to record their findings.	• Apply varying dynamics, tempos, colors based on what the student wants to convey keeping in mind the composer's original intent. • Listen to different versions of the same song using media streaming services, etc., discussing what changed between the versions and why. Students create a spreadsheet to record their findings.
	Anchor Standard 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.		
	In-Person	Hybrid	Virtual
	• Students analyze verses of American music such as "America the Beautiful" or songs about your state. • In groups of 2 or 3, students create a school song based on the examination of national and state patriotism.	• Students explore and discuss the relationship between songs and historical events (such as the Civil Rights Movement). Using available interactive or digital platforms, students will present their findings.	• Students share their personal musical heritage based on conversations with family members and descriptions of personal musical preference. Using available interactive or digital platforms, students will present their findings.
SEL Bridge	Students relate love of country/state to specific lyrical descriptions of country/state. This leads to the creation of a school song. Groups of 2 or 3 classmates and the teacher give feedback.	Students explore music related to historical events.	Students present (performance, presentation, etc.) the musical experiences of family members.

Frequently Asked Questions

1) Can we sing?

Based on preliminary research findings conducted at the University of Colorado, Boulder:
- Well-fitting masks should be worn by all students and staff in the music classroom. Singers should wear masks at all times.
- A 6x6-foot distance between students should be maintained in all music classrooms.
- Rehearsals should be limited to 30 minutes of sound production (playing or singing) both indoors and outdoors.
- At least 3 Air Change rates per Hour (ACH) should be set as the minimum; more is better.
  a. Use of HEPA Filters is recommended to increase ACH.
- Good hygiene norms should be followed, and school-approved disinfection strategies should be used.

We are still awaiting further research to be completed on the safety of singing and will update this document as more information is made available. If you cannot meet the minimum guidelines listed above, we recommend no whole-group singing until you can meet the guidelines.

One suggestion would be to teach children songs through movement or listening lessons and provide opportunities for children to sing at home. Several organizations and schools have inquired about virtual choirs. While this is a valid way to supplement performance during this time, you must weigh the cost of software (recording, editing, presentation), time (typically 40 - 50 hours per song), and copyright compliance (you must obtain permission from publishers). NAfME has developed resources to help music educators understand copyright guidelines: https://nafme.org/my-classroom/copyright/. In addition, NAfME and the NFHS developed a document on copyright guidelines for distance learning: https://nafme.org/wp-content/files/2020/09/TEACH-Act-Summary-and-FAQ-September-2020.pdf.

2) Can we play instruments?

Students should have opportunities to play instruments! However, you need to consult your local policies and the guidelines from your state and local Department of Public Health as to how best to clean and sanitize instruments between student uses. In addition, NAfME, NFHS, and NAMM Foundation have developed instrument cleaning guidelines: https://nafme.org/covid-19-instrument-cleaning-guidelines/. At this time, it is suggested that instruments and mallets should not be shared and should be disinfected between each student's use. Also, check with instrument manufacturers about the proper way to clean and sanitize instruments (ukuleles, guitars, wooden xylophones, and drums with natural/skin drumheads) without causing damage to the instrument.
Several questions have been asked about recorder playing. We recommend continuing recorder playing from a "flipped" classroom approach. Students are taught knowledge and skills at school that are then applied by playing recorder at home. Teachers can also create and provide instruction videos for student learning at home.

3) How do music specialists teach on a cart or "traveling" to classrooms?

Music educators may need to be prepared, especially in elementary school settings, to teach "music on a cart", bringing music education into classrooms to limit student movement throughout the building. Administrators will need to provide music teachers with proper equipment (working cart, access to technology, portable sound system, amplification for speaking, and small classroom instruments) and sufficient time to travel between classrooms. Cleaning of materials (rhythm sticks, mallets, etc..) may need to be factored into travel time. Also, the physical layout (stairs, multiple buildings, etc..) of the school may impact travel time. NAfME produced a webinar, "Social Distancing, Sanitation, and Carts, Oh My! Suggestions and Strategies for Teaching General Music on a Cart". You can view the webinar by visiting this link: https://vimeo.com/447200884.

4) How do music specialists teach in a mask?

As teachers and students possibly return to school wearing masks, it is important that teachers protect themselves from vocal damage and fatigue. Having to project the voice through a mask and over the sounds of the classroom could be damaging to the voice. School systems need to investigate providing wireless amplification for their teachers. In addition, it is suggested that teachers not ask students to speak louder through their mask to protect student vocal health.

5) What technology resources are needed to perform hybrid and/or virtual instruction?

It is difficult to recommend a system and/or programs for every situation. The needs of the learning task should dictate technology selection and usage. However, there are multiple presentation platforms, data collection platforms, personal student technology (apps, screen record), and learning management systems. Please utilize the best technology resource for your system and student use. Every effort should be made to ensure student access and equity of resources during hybrid and virtual instruction.

6) Should music teacher(s) be teaching virtual and in-person students?

Systems will be offering multiple options of instruction (virtual, hybrid, blended, and in-person) in order to deliver high-quality teaching and learning experiences. If a music teacher is assigned more than one mode of instruction (virtual and in-person, hybrid and in-person, etc..), it is recommended they be provided with adequate time to plan and deliver instruction. Every effort should be made to schedule virtual teaching planning/delivery blocks into the master schedule.

7) Can we share materials and/or resources?

For the safety of students, it is recommended that teachers find ways to not share physical resources (music stands, books, manipulatives, etc.). Consider providing each student with a personal music kit that includes common classroom instruments (rhythm sticks, mallets, etc.) and manipulatives (beat chart, paper xylophone, musical staff, rhythm and pitch cards, etc..). If personal music kits are not feasible, we recommend having several class sets of materials to use throughout the day. Please consult the CDC, State and Local Department of Public Health, and local guidelines for sanitation guidance.

8) What if a music teacher travels between several individual school buildings?

For the safety of all involved, it is recommended that travel between buildings be limited. We suggest music teachers complete one full day at each building. If possible, consider having the music teacher teach at one school for an extended period (several days, weeks, or a grading period) of time to limit exposure. Please consult local and state health guidelines and recommendations from the CDC.

If traveling between buildings is necessary, the school and teacher must keep accurate records of time in each building and interactions with students and staff. We recommend not taking instruments or other materials used by students between buildings.

9) Should music teacher(s) attend professional development?

Yes! There are many organizations offering free professional development webinars and virtual conferences. In addition, professional music education groups will offer professional development opportunities throughout the year. When online professional development or conferences are offered during the school day, we strongly suggest you make arrangements for your music teacher(s) to attend and participate in real time.

10) What resources are available to teach from different modalities?

There are resources being created to help music teachers during this time. A few notable resources are:
- (a) The National Association for Music Education has created a comprehensive virtual teaching and learning page with suggestions, webinars, and links: https://nafme.org/my-classroom/virtual-learning-resources-for-music-educators/
- (b) New Jersey's Arts Education Social & Emotional Learning Framework (https://selarts.org/) provides specific examples of SEL tied to Arts standards in different grade level bands.

NAfME Council for General Music Education
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