

Students Show Flexibility and Diligence

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Our school district has been in-person since August, and the number of student quarantines has been a source of stress for both students and teachers as students have been expected to stay current with their in-person peers while in quarantine. We have been following an alternating A/B schedule, and the choirs I direct are on the B days. This originally meant I only saw them 3 days a week in the first week and 2 days a week in the second week. A remote Wednesday was added in November to help keep quarantined students afloat, and that meant that rehearsals were trimmed to two days a week for a total of around 3.5 hours a week.

Despite the many challenges, in the fall our students were able to complete an audio-only recording session in our auditorium, while appropriately distanced. It was a success! In December, we were also able to record and stream a holiday performance in the atrium of our city's municipal center without an audience. Our students have rehearsed at 9-foot distancing in the acoustically dead house of our auditorium, and they haven't complained once. We have reflected on how much we mourned the end of last school year without a final performance, and have agreed to make the best of this one despite the restrictions. While most of our choirs aren't performing the level of literature we'd like, they are still building skill, and we've found ways to have virtual sectionals on Flipgrid.

It has been a blessing to see how positive the students are and how diligently they are turning in their practice assignments so that we can rehearse more effectively when we see one another in person. I am grateful that they continue to persevere and grow as musicians in a less than ideal environment.