



Arizona Department of Education

Dear Arts Educators:

I see your sadness as you learn about festival and competition cancellations. I hear your disappointment as you learn the trip you have worked on coordinating for the last two years will not occur. I feel your anger and confusion- we know what these experiences mean for our artists. We know how transformative these journeys are and how ensembles bloom because of shared travel and performance. I mourn that loss with you.

Parents and students will be looking to you as they come back to school next week, or when they next connect with you. They will look at how to respond and how to react. Many will be hurt, angry, confused, devastatingly sad, and scared.

I'm calling on you today to lead.

It is in times of crisis that the arts can flourish. We artists know how to navigate disappoint and traverse the unknowns. I call upon you to show your students and families how to use their imaginations and create something from this loss. Without conflict, there is no story, and without story, there is no art.

I see you, I hear you, I feel for you. I feel for your students. Tonight, we can sit in this moment together. Tomorrow, we must re-block, re-set, re-cast, re-stage. We owe this to our students.

Love and respect,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dustin Locher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Director of Arts Education & Title IV-A
Arizona Department of Education