

MMEA

choral  
directors  
handbook

a guide for  
new teachers

2016  
AND  
2017

Mississippi

Music Educators Association



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## I. Welcome

Welcome to choral music in the State of Mississippi! Whether you are a first year teacher or a seasoned veteran from another state, this handbook is designed to help you through your first year of teaching in the State of Mississippi. The Mississippi Music Educators Association (MMEA) is the local affiliate of NAFME: The National Association for Music Education. This is a professional music organization advancing the teaching of music education nationwide. It is our belief: "For today's students to succeed tomorrow, they need a comprehensive education that includes music taught by exemplary music educators." The MS Chapter of ACDA is the state chapter for the American Choral Directors Association. Membership with NAFME and/or ACDA is required for students to participate in many of the activities listed in this document.

This handbook is meant to serve as a general guide; please keep in mind that procedures can vary between districts. In addition to your division presidents and your state president, your administrators, district chair, and colleagues in your area can also be of great help in answering any questions you may have. The current officer list for the MS Music Educators Association may be found at [www.msmea.org](http://www.msmea.org). The current list for the MS Chapter of ACDA may be found at [www.msacda.org](http://www.msacda.org).

The MHSAA (Mississippi High School Activities Association) is the organization responsible for governing high school choral activities in the State of Mississippi. As a new director in the state, it is highly beneficial to attend their choral business meetings which are led by MMEA division presidents. These meetings are held at the beginning of August and January each year at the MHSAA building in Clinton. You can find exact dates for these meetings by visiting [www.msmea.org](http://www.msmea.org) or by clicking on <http://www.misshsaa.com/choral/>. In addition to these meetings, there is also a voting meeting held during the Annual In-Service Conference for members. *Please note, these are MMEA divisional meetings, and they are not sponsored by the Mississippi High School Activities Association.*

## II. Beginning of the Year

### Membership

Join your professional music organizations so your students will be eligible to participate in all of the choral music opportunities offered state-wide. Membership forms may be downloaded from the MMEA website, [www.msmea.org](http://www.msmea.org) and the MS ACDA web-site, [www.msacda.org](http://www.msacda.org)

### Registration with MHSAA

In order for your students to be eligible to participate in choral music activities in the state, you must register both yourself and your students with the MHSAA. All forms are located in the choral director's handbook on the MMEA web-site. [Junior High District Handbook](#) or [High School](#)

**Form 1** registers you as a choral director, and the **Eligibility Form** will register your students. The forms are due no later than September 15<sup>th</sup> and should be sent to Diane Bruser at MHSAA. If these forms are not received, your students will be unable to participate in district and state choral festivals.

Contact Diane Bruser: [dbruser@misshsaa.com](mailto:dbruser@misshsaa.com)

### **Eligibility**

Students are academically eligible to participate in state-wide choral activities if they maintain a GPA of 2.0 or a C average. Eligibility rules are explained in depth in the MHSAA manual. If a student does not meet eligibility requirements they **may** participate in your school concerts, but they **may not** participate in any choral events that includes singers from another school (ie, district and state performance assessment). Submit your eligibility form through C2C. *Check with your athletic director or principal for directions.*

### **Repertoire to Start the Year**

Repertoire selection is one of the most important keys to success during your first year. It is helpful to obtain old concert programs and recordings so you can ascertain the skill level of your singers, as well as an understanding of the kinds of repertoire they have been exposed to. In many situations, it is best to wait to pick the majority of your repertoire until you have had a chance to hear and work with the singers. Spend time before school starts narrowing down a large list of possibilities, then you will have many pieces ready to choose from once you have had an opportunity to hear your singers. Be sure to choose several pieces for the beginning of the year that will provide your singers with success early on, and that they are sure to enjoy. There will certainly be many opportunities to challenge your singers throughout the year, and you will increase your chances of them rising to challenges if you give them a feeling of success during the first weeks of school.

### **Scheduling and Maintaining a Calendar**

Before the school year starts, it is imperative that you meet with your administration/counselors to discuss scheduling for the choral music program. You will want to determine how many classes you are teaching and obtain rosters for each of these classes. Be sure you are familiar with the procedures for dropping and adding courses. Your counselors are vital to the success of your program, and it is important to develop friendly communication early on.

As soon as you are able, you will want to provide your administrators with a choral calendar for their approval. This same calendar should also be distributed to students no later than the first few weeks of school. It is helpful if you can obtain a calendar from the previous year so you will know what kinds of performances the students are accustomed to. As you are scheduling concerts, be sure you are aware of other school events (especially if you have many singers involved in band or another sport), ACT testing dates, SATP testing dates and MMEA/ACDA sponsored events.

## **III. Choral Music Activities in Mississippi**

### *Opportunities Sponsored by MMEA, MS ACDA, and MHSAA*

#### **District and State Performance Assessments**

After you register yourself and your students with the MHSAA, you are eligible to participate in your district's choral festival. District festivals are in February; your district chair will contact you with the specific date. If you are unsure of your district or district chairperson, contact Robert Sims via email: [rsims1358@yahoo.com](mailto:rsims1358@yahoo.com) or by phone @ 601.209.0588.

**Junior High:** Eligible groups for District and State Performance Assessments: **Choirs** - Mixed, Girls, Boys and **Ensembles:** Mixed, Girls, Boys

**High School:** Eligible groups for District and State Performance Assessments: **Choirs:** SATB Mixed, SAB Mixed, SSA women, TTB/TTBB Men

**Ensembles:** SATB Madrigals (8-20 members), SSA Madrigals (8-20 Members), Mixed Ensemble 4-18 members), Sextet (no more than 6), and Quartet (4 members)

- All choirs must sight-read at district festival. [Junior High](#) or [High School](#)
- To advance to the State Performance Assessment, you must receive superior ratings from at least two out of the three judges.

On the **junior high level**, all groups are required to sight-read at the State Performance Assessment regardless of their score/rating at the district level.

### ***Choosing Music for Festivals***

New directors may often run into situations where they are faced with a smaller number of men in their choir than desired. Please note that special approval is required for **high schools** to perform SAB literature at festival. [SAB Request Form](#) You may also find the SAB request form in your MHSAA manual. It is due in January – deadline varies due to actual date of festival.

Contact Amy Lee: [amy.lee@rcsd.ms](mailto:amy.lee@rcsd.ms)

Each performing group sings two selections at district festival. **For high schools**, one of these selections must come from the Mississippi, Texas, or Florida Prescribed Music lists. [Prescribed Music List](#)

The second selection may be the choice of the director. Bear in mind that certain musical styles may not be appropriate for festival performance; if you have questions regarding the suitability of a piece of music for festival, it is always recommended that you contact a mentor or trusted colleague.

### ***Festival Preparations***

Your district chair will contact you with registration information; forms and fees are due mid-to late January depending on the date of the actual festival.

**You are responsible for preparing packets for the adjudicators with the following:**

- three original\*, clean copies of each piece of music with measures numbered for the judges.
- three copies of the adjudication forms [Electronic Forms](#)
- one copy of the sight reading adjudication form [Electronic Forms](#)
- accompanist for both performance and sight-reading.

\*Clearly identify music used from the Choral Public Domain Library (CPDL). **Photocopied music will result in disqualification.** [www.cpdll.org](http://www.cpdll.org)

Be sure to carefully familiarize yourself with the procedures for sight-reading in the manual. Procedures and rules differ on the junior high and high school level. [Junior High](#) or [High School](#)

Teaching sight-reading every day is the best way to ensure success. It is recommended that you practice the specific festival procedures with your students in the weeks leading up to festival. Masterworks Press sells past sight-reading examples from the state of Mississippi.

There are three performance judges and one sight-reading judge. Groups are scored from I-IV, with I being a rating of superior. Groups earning superior ratings will advance to state festival.

Be sure and fill out your bus request forms as soon as you receive your performance times for district and state events. Plan to arrive at least thirty minutes ahead of your warm-up/performance time.

### ***Choral Art Festival***

The Choral Art Festival, sponsored by MMEA, is a one-day event where choirs can receive comments by a qualified choral expert, but do not receive ratings. This non-adjudicated choral experience is especially helpful for new choirs and/or new directors who do not wish to participate in District Festival. The festival is typically held in late March. Since 6th graders are not allowed to participate in district festival for junior high this creates a perfect non-threatening environment to receive comments from judges.

#### [Choral Art Festival](#)

Contact Andy Smigielski: [asmigielski@forrestcountyahs.com](mailto:asmigielski@forrestcountyahs.com)

### ***Solo and Ensemble Festival***

This event is sponsored by both MMEA (Jr. High) and MS ACDA (Sr. High), and directors must be a member of MMEA/ACDA in order for their students to be eligible to participate. The event is organized by region so dates vary widely; more information is provided at the fall choral directors meeting and on [www.msmea.org](http://www.msmea.org) and [www.msacda.org](http://www.msacda.org)

### ***All-State Honor Choirs***

The following All-State Honor Choir opportunities, sponsored by MMEA and MS ACDA, are available to students: Elementary, Junior High SSA, Junior High SATB, High School Women, High School Mixed, and High School Show Choir. These honor choirs rehearse and perform during the MMEA/ACDA state convention held annually in the spring. You must be a member of the sponsoring organization to audition your students and you must be registered for the MMEA/ACDA Annual Conference. Registration/auditions vary depending on the sponsoring organization.

#### **MMEA Sponsored Honor Choirs**

[Elementary Honor Choir](#) (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>) – Jennifer Milner, [mezzodivajm@hotmail.com](mailto:mezzodivajm@hotmail.com)

[Junior High SATB Honor Choir](#) (7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>) – Emily Massey, [emassey@newton.k12.ms.us](mailto:emassey@newton.k12.ms.us)

[Junior High Women’s Honor Choir](#) (7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>) – Andy Beasley, [andrew.beasley5@gmail.com](mailto:andrew.beasley5@gmail.com)

#### **MS ACDA Sponsored Honor Choirs**

High School Mixed Honor Choir (10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>) – Claire Leeke, [Claire.leeke@dcsms.org](mailto:Claire.leeke@dcsms.org)

High School Women’s Honor Choir (10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>) – Rachel Upton, [raption@madison-schools.com](mailto:raption@madison-schools.com)

High School Show Honor Choir (10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>) – Debbie Wolfe, [debbiewolfe@gmail.com](mailto:debbiewolfe@gmail.com)



### ***Male Vocal Symposium***

This event, sponsored by MS ACDA, offers males the opportunity to participate in a large choir and work with a recognized conductor. Directors are responsible for selecting students for this one day event in the fall. ACDA Membership is required. Visit [www.msacda.org](http://www.msacda.org) for more information.

Contact: Adam Potter – [apotter@deltastate.edu](mailto:apotter@deltastate.edu)

### ***Lakeshore Choral Camp***

This is a five-day summer camp opportunity, sponsored by MMEA and MHSAA, for both teachers and students, held in June. Students have the opportunity to rehearse and perform with a nationally recognized clinician, and teachers have the opportunity to participate in teacher sessions and earn 2.0 CEU credits. Visit [www.msmea.org](http://www.msmea.org) for more information.

Camp Co-chairs: Amy Lee – [amy.lee@rcsd.ms](mailto:amy.lee@rcsd.ms) or Suzanne Cain - [scain@newton.k12.ms.us](mailto:scain@newton.k12.ms.us)

### ***Additional Opportunities***

Many honor choir opportunities and festivals exist throughout the state with programs offered through local colleges or tuition-based community choirs. Check with your local children's choirs, community choirs and colleges/universities for additional information.

There are numerous honor choir/mass choir events sponsored through Delta State University, Mississippi State University, University of Mississippi, and the University of Southern Mississippi.

## **IV. Professional Development and Additional Resources**

### ***Professional Organizations***

Membership in professional organizations is highly recommended and brings many benefits to the choral educator. The two most common organizations are NAFME (National Association for Music Education) and ACDA (American Choral Directors Association). By joining these national organizations, you also gain membership in the corresponding state organizations (MMEA and MS ACDA).

### ***Annual State Conference***

MMEA and MS ACDA co-sponsor an Annual In-Service Conference in the spring. In addition to the six honor choirs, this event also features numerous interest sessions, vendor displays, and performances by selected Mississippi choirs. CEUs are available. Visit [www.msmea.org](http://www.msmea.org) for convention registration and hotel information. Registration deadlines are at the end of February or early March depending on the actual conference dates.

### ***Fall Workshops – Sponsored by MMEA***

MMEA sponsors fall workshops for junior high and senior high choral music teachers. These workshops are held in three locations throughout the state on various dates in the fall. CEU's are available. Members of MMEA receive discounted registration fees. Registration forms are available on the website: [Registration for Fall Workshop](#)

<u>Northern</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>Southern</u>
November 7, 2016	October 14, 2016	October 21, 2016
Starkville High School Starkville, MS	First Baptist Church Clinton, MS	First Baptist Church Wiggins, MS

### **Summer Conference – Sponsored by MS ACDA**

The MS-ACDA summer conference offers attendees the opportunity to network with colleagues from Mississippi and surrounding states in a relaxed and laid back setting. The conference features interest sessions and nightly social events. There is also the opportunity to participate in the director's chorus with Dr. Blackstone conducting. [www.msacda.org/events/summer-conference/](http://www.msacda.org/events/summer-conference/)

- Dates: July 17-19, 2017 with guest clinician Dr. Jerry Blackstone
- Location: Natchez, MS

Contact: Catherine Feazell - [catherinefeazell@gmail.com](mailto:catherinefeazell@gmail.com)

### **National and Regional Conferences**

NAfME offers annual in-service conferences. Stronger Together: 2016 National In-Service Music Education Conference will take place on November 10-13, 2016 in Grapevine, Texas. <http://nationalconference.nafme.org/>

ACDA sponsored regional conventions are held in even-numbered years and national conventions in odd-numbered years. "A Life of Song" will be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota on March 8-11, 2017. <http://acda.org/page.asp?page=national>

Registration and travel can be costly, and it is worthwhile to check with your administration and/or booster club to see if funds can be made available to support your attendance.

As with any time you will be away from school, be sure to communicate early with your administration to request time off and arrange for a substitute.

## **V. Mentor Program**

You are fortunate to be in a state that sponsors a mentor program free of charge to new choral directors. The application form can be found in your MHSAA manual or on the MMEA web-site. Our mentor program is designed to pair you with a veteran teacher to help you "stay in the loop" or "be in the know" regarding festivals, deadlines, workshops and conventions. In addition to your mentor, don't forget to take the time to connect with the other directors in your district. They will often be in the best position to provide you with both advice and encouragement as you begin your first year.

### **Request a Mentor**

Contact: Robert Sims – [rsims1358@yahoo.com](mailto:rsims1358@yahoo.com)



## VI. Additional First-Year Considerations

### *Budgeting and Fundraising*

Meet with your principal early and determine if there are funds available for your program. Schools will have several different operating accounts, and sometimes the kinds of items that can be purchased from each account may be restricted. Be certain to fill out the proper paperwork and obtain approval before ordering any materials.

Virtually all choral programs will need to participate in some kind of fundraising. Each school has a different policy regarding the number of fundraisers a choir program can participate in as well as the kinds of items that can be sold.

### *Network of Support*

Work to build a network of support from your fellow teachers, the school secretaries, counselors, cafeteria managers, and janitors. The support staff at your school will be an invaluable resource for you in helping you identify students with a love for music, scheduling, or helping you to organize/store fund raising items. Don't overlook subject area teachers as they may have a musical background and may be a hidden ally.

### *Transportation*

Each school district has a different procedure for requesting and obtaining transportation. Most will require at least several weeks' notice to secure you both a vehicle and a driver.

### *Recruitment*

The beginning of the year is the perfect time to start recruiting for your choir. Maintain a good relationship with your counselors so they can help you identify students who may want to join. Establish a relationship right away with the music teachers at your feeder schools and visit often, both with and without your students. Your biggest recruitment tool is your own students, so work from day one to ensure that singers in your program feel a sense of pride and accomplishment through their membership in the organization.

### *Social Media: Ethical Considerations*

The rise of social media has created both new opportunities and new concerns for choral directors. Facebook, blogs, and Twitter can be a useful way to communicate choir information to students who live in a media-saturated world. However, each school has a different policy regarding the use of technology, including Facebook and text messaging. Be sure you are familiar with this policy before the year starts. If your school does allow these communications between teachers and students, be sure that all conversation contributes to a positive and professional student/teacher relationship. Many teachers have fallen into the trap of using more casual forms of communication to become overly friendly with their students. Ultimately, these actions can lower student respect, thus reducing your effectiveness as a choral director. Depending on your use of Facebook or other social media platforms, it may be wise to use privacy settings so your students are not allowed a glimpse into your full personal life.

Follow us on Social Media:

- Join our Facebook page - [MS Music Educators Association](#)
- Join the conversation on [Twitter](#) @MSmusicEdu
- Follow us on [Instagram](#) @MSmusicEdu

Facebook and twitter followers may find the latest feed on the MMEA home page – [www.msmea.org](http://www.msmea.org)

Social Media Advisor: Jennifer Davis – [jdavis@mpsck12.net](mailto:jdavis@mpsck12.net)

## VII. Additional Resources

As stated in the introduction, this handbook is intended as a guide, a “quick-start” to your knowledge of choral music in Mississippi. There is no substitute for reading your MHSAA manual cover to cover so you are familiar with all of the rules and regulations in the state.

The following is a list of websites that may be of help to the choral director:

<a href="http://www.msmea.org">www.msmea.org</a>	Mississippi Affiliate of NAfME
<a href="http://www.nafme.org">www.nafme.org</a>	NAfME: The National Association for Music Education
<a href="http://www.adca.org">www.adca.org</a>	National American Choral Directors Association
<a href="http://www.msacda.org">www.msacda.org</a>	Mississippi Chapter of ACDA
<a href="http://www.choralnet.org">www.choralnet.org</a>	Numerous resources on all choral topics
<a href="http://www.cpd1.org">www.cpd1.org</a>	Free online sheet music
<a href="http://www.musicanet.org">www.musicanet.org</a>	Online database of choral music

## VIII. Calendar of Activities and Deadlines

Visit [www.msmea.org](http://www.msmea.org) and view our events/calendar, on the home page, for the most up to date information regarding events and deadlines. This calendar is designed to provide dates for the MMEA/MS ACDA/MHSAA sponsored choral events in the state. It is also important to stay in close contact with your district chair so you can obtain specific dates and further information.