

MMEA

choral
directors
handbook

a guide for
new teachers



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 immense 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. The current list for the MS Chapter of ACDA may be found at 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 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 the choral music opportunities offered state-wide. Membership forms may be downloaded from the MMEA website, www.msmea.org and the MS ACDA web-site, 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 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 15th 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

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 most 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 for junior high only; 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 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 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 only)
- To advance to the State Performance Assessment, you must receive superior ratings from at least two out of the three judges. (Junior High Only)

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.

State Performance Assessment (High School Requirements)

New for 2017-2018:

1. DISTRICT FESTIVALS HAVE BEEN DISSOLVED. MHSAA/MMEA has adopted the State Performance Assessment (SPA) and only requires each school to attend ONE adjudication. There will be a site in the Northern, Central, and Southern regions of the state. MMEA is responsible for Choral Art Festival and will continue offering the Choral Art Festival as an alternative to the SPA for the choice of ratings or comments only.
2. There is NO PREREQUISITE for participation in the SPA.
3. A director does not have to be a member of MMEA to participate in SPA or Choral Art Festival. His school, however, must be a member of MHSAA and the director must be registered with MHSAA (see Form 1).
4. Since participation in SPA is for RATINGS ONLY, the only option for a performance group wishing for “Comments Only” is to participate in the Choral Art Festival.
5. Sight reading adjudication is required of all students from each participating school in the SPA. It is, however, optional for Choral Art Festival.
6. Ensembles may not be conducted in any way.
7. All groups perform from memory.
8. Plaques and trophies are awarded to superior-rated choirs and ensembles. Please note that MHSAA/MMEA has adopted a new policy for plaques for SPA that will only allow two per school (one for choirs and one for ensembles). The new plaques, available in future years, will be fitted with a larger engraving plate that will allow each Superior rated choir and ensemble to be listed and include any sight-reading achievement.
9. Boys with unchanged voices may sing in SSA choirs.
10. Girls may never sing tenor or bass in any group.
11. Time allotted for performance includes entrance and exit on the stage.
12. Choirs have a designated warm-up room. There is no warm-up room for ensembles.
13. If a school has a need to attend a different region’s SPA than the one it is assigned; this choice MUST be indicated on Form 1 when registering with MHSAA in the fall. Failure to do so will result in that school having no alternative location.

Groups You May Enter

All members of any choral group of MHSAA schools are eligible to enter the SPA upon meeting MHSAA eligibility requirements. Only students from choral classes recognized by the school authorities will be allowed to participate in choral festivals. Members of small ensembles

must be members of the school choirs.

1. All choirs must sing 2 selections.
 - a. SATB choirs are mixed with no girls singing the “T” or “B” part. SATB choirs may sing from the SATB lists.
 - b. SAB choirs are mixed with no girls singing the “B” part. An SAB permission form is not required.
 - c. SSA choirs are all female with the exception of unchanged male voices. SSA choirs may sing from the SSA or Sextet lists.
 - d. TTBB choirs are all male and may sing from the TTBB or Quartet lists.
2. All ensembles must sing 2 selections.
 - a. Quartet is a 4-male ensemble singing TTBB music (not TTB or TBB music even though some arrangements may be found on the MS Prescribed Music List’s T(TB)B list). They may sing from the Quartet or TTBB lists.
 - b. Mixed Ensemble is an ensemble of 4-18 voices. They may sing SATB music from the Madrigal List. No girl may sing the “T” or “B” part.
 - c. Madrigals are an ensemble of 8-20 voices. They may sing SATB, SAB or SSA voicing with no duplication personnel. They must sing from the Madrigal List. No girl may sing the “T” or “B” part in any mixed voicing. Both performance selections for Madrigal Ensemble must be of the Renaissance STYLE, not necessarily only from the Renaissance period.
 - d. Female ensemble (usually a sextet) is an ensemble of 3-6 voices. This ensemble may sing music from the Sextet and SSA Lists. SA music is not to be used for this ensemble.
3. More information:
 - a. A school may enter more than one TTBB, SSA and/or SATB choir at SPA with no duplication of personnel (i.e., Freshmen Chorus, Intermediate Chorus, etc.).
 - b. A school may enter more than one ensemble in each category at SPA.
 - c. If, for some reason, scheduling time restraints will not allow for multiple ensembles of the same voicing, you will be contacted as soon as possible by the High School Division Officer in charge of your SPA to discuss a solution.

Choosing Music for Festivals

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
- one copy of the sight-reading adjudication form
- You will also need an 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.cpd.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

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 and www.msacda.org

ACDA: Joanna Hunt, Chair - jhuntchoirs@hotmail.com

MMEA: Kristy Brumfield - kristy.brumfield@yahoo.com

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](#) (5th and 6th) – Celia House, chouse@nasd.ms

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

[Junior High Women’s Honor Choir](#) (7th – 9th) – Scott Sexton, sextons@gosaints.org

MS ACDA Sponsored Honor Choirs

High School Mixed Honor Choir (10th – 12th) – Carrie Owens, cowens@madison-schools.com

High School Women’s Honor Choir (10th – 12th) – Rachel Upton, rupton@madison-schools.com

High School Show Honor Choir (10th – 12th) – Debbie Wolfe, 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 for more information.

Contact: Terry Walker: terry.walker@lbsdk12.com

Mississippi 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 for more information.

Camp Co-chairs: Amy Lee – amy.lee@rcsd.ms or Suzanne Cain - 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 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> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| October 12th | October 13th | November 3rd |
| Starkville High School Starkville, MS | First Baptist Church Clinton, MS | Forrest County Agricultural High School, Brooklyn, 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. 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/

- Dates: July 16-18, 2018 with guest clinician Dr. Rollo Dilworth
- Location: Natchez, MS

Contact: Catherine Feazell - catherinefeazell@gmail.com

National and Regional Conferences

NAfME offers annual in-service conferences. The 2017 National In-Service Music Education Conference will take place on November 12-15, 2017 in Dallas, Texas. <http://nationalconference.nafme.org/>

ACDA sponsored regional conventions are held in even-numbered years and national conventions in odd-numbered years. <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

MMEA sponsors a mentor program free of charge to new choral directors. The application form may 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 in regard to festivals, deadlines, workshops and conventions. In

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

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 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

Social Media Advisor: Jennifer Davis – 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 the rules and regulations in the state.

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

| | |
|--|---|
| www.msmea.org | Mississippi Affiliate of NAFME |
| www.nafme.org | NAFME: The National Association for Music Education |
| www.adca.org | National American Choral Directors Association |
| www.msacda.org | Mississippi Chapter of ACDA |
| www.choralnet.org | Numerous resources on all choral topics |
| www.cpd1.org | Free online sheet music |
| www.musicanet.org | Online database of choral music |

VIII. Calendar of Activities and Deadlines

Visit 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.