



## NEW TEACHER MANUAL

*Survival Kit for New Mississippi Choral Directors*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the world of choral music in the State of Mississippi. This document is designed to help you through your first year as a new Mississippi Choral Director. Membership with NAFME and ACDA: The National Association for Music Education and The American Choral Directors Association is required for your students to participate in extra state-wide musical activities. This will be explained later in this document.

This handout 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, administrators, district chairpersons, and colleagues in your area of the state can be of great assistance. The current officer list for the Mississippi Music Educators (NAfME) can be found on the [www.msmea.org](http://www.msmea.org) website. The current list for the Mississippi American Choral Directors can be found on the [www.msacda.org](http://www.msacda.org).

The MHSAA (Mississippi High School Activities Association) is the organization responsible for governing activities in the state of Mississippi for grades 7-12. As a new director in the state, it is highly beneficial to attend the fall and winter business meetings, which are led by MMEA division presidents. These meetings are held at the beginning of August and January of each school year at the Mississippi High School Activities Association building in Clinton, Mississippi. Three meetings a year are voting meetings: August, January, and the State Convention. These are MMEA sponsored meetings so to be able to vote you must be a member of NAFME.

## I. BEGINNING THE YEAR

### Professional Organizations

Membership in your professional organizations is very important to grow as a music educator. The two music organizations that are responsible for the activities in the state are ACDA (American Choral Directors Association), and NAFME (National Association for Music Education.)

Join your professional organizations so that your students will be able to participate in all of the choral music opportunities.

To join NAFME and ACDA, visit [nafme.org](http://nafme.org) and [acda.org](http://acda.org). During the registration process, you will select which state you are to be a member of as well.

## Budgets and Funding

You should ask your principal early on to determine if there are funds available to you for your program. If so, make sure you understand how these funds may be spent. Also, make sure you fill out all paper work and obtain approval before you order anything. The more responsible you are with the funds the more respected you will be with the school officials.

## Social Media

Social media can be a good and bad thing when it comes to education. Make sure you understand your school's policy on using it to promote your program. Always remember to keep all conversations positive and professional between you and your students. 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 to view your personal information.

There are two things that can cost you your job – FINANCE and ROMANCE.

## Scheduling A School Calendar

Look at a choral music calendar from the previous years to see what the program has been doing. Decide what you want to accomplish your first year and pick your dates. Before you tell the students, talk to the principal and see if your dates will work with the school calendar. Once they are on the school calendar, give them to your students and tell them these dates are required events.

## Friends To Make At Your School

**Your principal:** When you meet with him/her, make sure you are organized and get in and out very quickly. They are busy and don't want to hear you babble on and on.

**School Secretaries:** They are the nuts and bolts of the school and they can be of great assistance on so many levels. A box of donuts for the secretaries in the office will go a long way.

**School Counselors:** They know the students and can help you target possible choral music kids. Consider volunteering to help with Verification of Residency or other counselor events.

**Cafeteria Manager:** They can help if you need to store things in the freezers from a fund-raiser.

**Janitor:** They may be able and willing to help you set up for your concerts at the school. If you have a great working relationship with the janitor, they will usually take extra good care of your classroom.

## **REPERTOIRE TO START THE YEAR**

Repertoire selection is one of the most important keys to success during your first year. It is suggested that you have a number of basic pieces, (unison), to see where your students are at the beginning of the year. Then, have a few more advanced pieces that you can move toward. You can look at old programs to get an idea of the choir's musical ability, but note that you may not be able to start at that point. You want the students to have some success very quickly. This will build their confidence in you as a director. You have got to win the students' trust, but don't get discouraged if it is a challenge at the beginning. Keep working and let them see that you are knowledgeable and willing to work with them to achieve success. They will not necessarily work for you just because you are the teacher.

## **II. 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 Mississippi High School Activities Association. **Form 1** in your choral manual, (on the MMEA website under High School Division or Junior High Division), which will register you as the director. Form 1s are due to **LeAnna Dawson** (ldawson@misshsaa.com) **at MHSAA** no later than September 15<sup>th</sup> each year. If these forms are not received, your students may not be allowed to participate in district and state choral activities.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

Students are academically eligible to participate in statewide choral activities if they maintain at least a GPA of 2.0 or your schools lowest C average. Eligibility rules are explained in depth in the MMEA High School & Junior High manuals. Ineligible students may be in your program and may participate in activities at your school, but may not participate in anything where students from others schools are present. If you don't follow this rule your program may be put on probation and your director may be fined.

Each student, with the help of their parents, must complete the entire process of registration through the DragonFly system. Instructions on how to use the DragonFly system are included in this document. You will want your Athletic Director (or whoever runs the DragonFly system for the school) to set you up as an administrator in the

system for your school. This will allow you to see who has or hasn't registered and where they are in the process.

### III. CHORAL ACTIVITIES

#### State Performance Assessments

State Performance Assessments usually happen during the month of March. Your district chairperson will send out information that you need to know. If you are not sure which district you are in, contact Robert Sims, Mississippi Mentor Supervisor, at [rsims1358@yahoo.com](mailto:rsims1358@yahoo.com) or 601-209-0588. Mr. Sims will help you get in contact with your district chairperson.

At the Junior High/Middle School level, you do not have to choose music from a Prescribed List for State Performance Assessment. Groups at the junior high/middle school level are: **Choirs: Mixed, Treble, and Bass. Ensembles: Mixed, Treble, and Bass.**

At the Junior High/Middle School level, all schools must sight-read at State Performance Assessment. To be eligible for SWEEPSTAKES, your group(s) must sight-read at the same voicing as your stage repertoire or one voicing down. For example, if you sing SATB on stage, to be eligible for sweepstakes, you must read SATB or SAB (SSA on stage – SSA or SA sight-reading).

At the High School Level, you have stricter guidelines. Each of your groups must perform two pieces, one of which **must** come from the Mississippi, Florida, or Texas prescribed lists. If you search your titles through the **J.W. Pepper** website, you can see if it is on one of the prescribed lists. Pick that piece first and your job will be much easier.

Groups that are allowed at the high school level are:

Choirs: SATB, SAB, SSA/SSAA, TTB/TTBB

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

At the High School level, all choirs must sight read at State Performance Assessment. To be eligible for SWEEPSTAKES at the high school level, each choir must sight-read the same voicing as they performed on stage. For example, an SATB choir must read SATB to earn a SWEEPSTAKES award.

For each group, you need to have three original copies of music with all of the measures numbered. Make sure you check, double check, and triple check your folders for completion. If you use music from the Choral Public Domain Library ([cpdl.org](http://cpdl.org)) make

sure you mark it on the music. If you use photocopied music your group will be disqualified. You must also include three adjudication sheets filled out and included in this folder. On the outside of the folder of music, list the name of your school, the type of group, the time you perform, and the selections you are doing. This will help the person in charge of the festival.

To receive Superior Ratings, your group must earn a score of 90 or higher from 2 of the 3 judges. To receive SWEEPSTAKES, your group must earn a superior rating from all three stage judges AND a 90 or higher from the sight-reading judge.

### **Festival Preparations**

Fill out registration forms and send your fees as soon as you can. Deadlines for these forms and fees will be announced to you by your district chair and the division presidents. You will need to be registered before you can be scheduled to perform.

Prepare your folders as stated above.

Make sure you understand the sight-reading rules. The rules are different for Junior High/Middle School and High School. Read the rules so that you can feel confident about the process. This will help the students feel more at ease.

The minute you receive your performance date and times, fill out your bus request forms. You are more likely to get what you need if you do it in advance. You need to plan to arrive at the performance venue at least thirty minutes in advance of your performance time.

### **Choral Art Festival**

The Choral Art Festival is a one-day event sponsored by the Mississippi Music Educators Association and MHSAA. It is a non-adjudicated choral experience for choirs that may not be ready for State Performance Assessment. Your choir will receive written comments and a judge will come up after your performance and give your students a short clinic. This even is designed for new choral programs or programs with high teacher turn over.

This is also good for sixth grade choirs because they are no longer allowed to participate in MHSAA events. This will give them the experience of singing for judges in a very relaxed atmosphere.

If you are interested in more information about the Choral Art Festival, visit the MMEA webpage, [msmea.org](http://msmea.org). You can find the information under the High School OR Junior High Division tabs.

### Solo And Ensemble Festival

Mississippi ACDA and MMEA sponsor this event, and directors must be a member of ACDA/MMEA for their students to be able to participate. Look at ACDA/MMEA website, [msacda.org](http://msacda.org) or [msmea.org](http://msmea.org), for more information.

### All-State Honor Choirs

Each year, MSACDA and MMEA host a convention, usually in late March or early April. This conference is an event where you can network with other directors, earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs), and have students participate in All-State Honor Choirs. Each level of honor choir (Elementary, Junior High/Middle School, High School) has its own set of rules and procedures, so be sure to check the MSACDA and MMEA websites for registration processes, audition processes, etc.

You must be a member of ACDA and MMEA for your students to participate in All-State Honor Choir.

This year's conference is **March 23-25, 2022** at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. The deadline to register will be late February or early March. You will be able to find the registration information at [msmea.org](http://msmea.org).

CEUs are available at convention.

<b>NAFME/MMEA HONOR CHOIRS</b>		
<b>Honor Choir</b>	<b>Chairperson(s)</b>	<b>Email Address</b>
Elementary Honor Choir Grades 5-6	Joey Coleman Celia Criddle	Jcolemanedu516@gmail.com ccriddle@nasd.ms
Junior High Mixed Honor Choir Grades 7-9	Ginger Partain	gpartain@nettleton.k12.ms.us
Junior High Treble Honor Choir Grades 7-9	Jamie Lee Moore	jamielleemoore88@gmail.com
<b>MSACDA HONOR CHOIRS</b>		
<b>Honor Choir</b>	<b>Chairperson(s)</b>	<b>Email Address</b>
High School Mixed Honor Choir Grades 9-12	Terrell Hall	terrell.hall@dcsms.org
High School Treble Honor Choir Grades 9-12	Dale Beech	dale.beech@dcsms.org
High School Bass Honor Choir Grades 9-12		
High School Honor Show Choir Grades 9-12	Toney Keeler	ant501@rcsd.ms
Middle School Honor Show Choir Grades 7-8	Sam Lovorn	shlovorn@gmail.com

#### **IV. MMEA FALL WORKSHOPS**

There are three workshops held in the fall each year for teachers to earn CEUs. The workshops for this year are as follows:

- North Site – September 30 – Starkville High School
- Central Site – September 26 – Pearl High School
- South Site – September 23 – Gulfport High School

Visit the MMEA website or contact Robert Sims for more information.  
rsims1358@yahoo.com.

There are also fall workshops for elementary teachers. These are usually held in late September. Check the msmea.org website for more information.

## V. MENTOR PROGRAM

There is a mentor program for first year teachers and new teachers to the state of Mississippi. To apply for a mentor, go to [www.msmea.org](http://www.msmea.org), click one of the division tabs, and choose the Request a Mentor option. There, you will find a link to a Google Form to request a mentor.

As the mentor supervisor I leave these thoughts with you. "You are never too experienced to need help." "There are no stupid questions except the ones you don't ask."

## VI. HELPFUL WEBSITES FOR CHORAL DIRECTORS

- www.msmea.org (Mississippi Chapter of NAFME)
- www.nafme.org (National Association for Music Education)
- www.acda.org (American Choral Directors Association)
- www.msacda.org (Mississippi American Choral Directors Association)
- www.choralnet.org (Choral Music Resource Site)
- www.cpd.org (Free online sheet music)
- www.fva.net/ctr/ (Curriculum, worksheets and other teaching materials)
- www.musicianet.org (Online database of choral music)
- www.jwpepper.com (Music ordering website)

## VII. ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

There are other choral opportunities throughout the state. Below is a list of opportunities.

- Delta State Honor Choir- Auditions in October, event in February
  - Contact Dr. Julia Thorn – [jthorn@deltastate.edu](mailto:jthorn@deltastate.edu)
- Mississippi Girl Choir – Treble Song
  - Contact Hollyn Steiner - [msgirlchoir@gmail.com](mailto:msgirlchoir@gmail.com)
- University of Southern Mississippi – SICC Conference- Usually in September
  - Contact Dr. Jonathan Kilgore - [jonathan.kilgore@usm.edu](mailto:jonathan.kilgore@usm.edu)
- Mississippi State University – MSU Choral Colloquium
  - Contact Dr. Gary Packwood - [gary.packwood@msstate.edu](mailto:gary.packwood@msstate.edu)
- University of Mississippi – Ole Miss Choral Festival
  - Contact Dr. Don Trott - [dtrott@olemiss.edu](mailto:dtrott@olemiss.edu)
- Riverland Choral Festival – Usually the 1<sup>st</sup> weekend in November
  - Contact Andy Beasley – [abeasley@pearlk12.com](mailto:abeasley@pearlk12.com)
- A Capella 101
  - Contact Jeffrey Coulter - [jeffery.coulter@lamarcoutyschools.org](mailto:jeffery.coulter@lamarcoutyschools.org)

This handout is designed to give you a quick way to find basic information you will need to make it through your first year as a choral director in the State of Mississippi. Make sure you constantly check the [msmea.org](http://msmea.org) and [msacda.org](http://msacda.org) websites for all the information and forms you will need.

**Go Forth and Educate!!**