

# GETTING STARTED WITH PMEA ADJUDICATION!

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Thinking about participating in *PMEA Adjudication*? Not sure where to begin? Do you need to know where to look for the answers to your questions? If you answered, “Yes, yes and yes”, what follows will help you in ‘Getting Started’!

PMEA Adjudication events are formally called ‘Music Performance Assessments’, or ‘MPA’s’, which replaced the term ‘festivals’. In addition, what were generally known as ‘score sheets’ are called ‘Assessment Forms’. The main reason for the change to the term ‘Music Performance Assessments’ was to strongly and accurately place PMEA Adjudication events in an educationally valid context more easily understood and, hopefully, more supported by administrators, school boards, other teachers, directors, parents and the students themselves. The ‘Assessment Forms’, updated in 2009, better reflect current academic assessment processes as applied to our academic content area, music.

A goal of PMEA Adjudication remains to provide quality opportunities for soloists and small, medium and large ensembles to receive a rating reflecting performance levels---a snapshot evaluation of how effectively the music curriculum has been implemented---along with meaningful feedback from the adjudicator commentary recordings and written forms to maximize learning for both directors and students. In today’s educational environment, this is indeed ‘assessment’ in our academic content area. Directors can benefit from the evaluation process as applied to music performance and ‘speak the language’ of testing, curricular accountability and program validity when sharing the results and strategies for growth with stakeholders and decision-makers in their buildings and districts as a whole.

PMEA Adjudication, by focusing on educational input through assessment with both ratings and written and aural feedback, is striving for awareness, relevance, acceptance and participation by directors across the entire state of Pennsylvania. The goal remains to establish PMEA Adjudication as a priority and an annual performance option for directors within the hectic schedule demands of each school year.

To ‘get started’, access the PMEA home page, click on *Conferences and Events* on the main menu bar, and then click on *Adjudication* within the sub-menu to access the Adjudication area.

First, go to download the current *Adjudication Calendar* for the most current list of scheduled MPA’s to identify the contexts, dates and sites of the events that may work best for your program. Click on the *Adjudication Calendar* for the most current listing of scheduled Music Performance Assessments to identify a date and site that works best for YOUR program.

Once you choose a date and site, contact that MPA host to convey interest, and confirm available openings. After that is confirmed, continue the communication to finalize arrangements, including warm-up and performance times.

Download and complete the Registration Form, choosing ‘Traditional’ or ‘Festival’ and providing all of the information requested. Process payment of the Registration Fee through your District or Boosters. Then, mail the form and check to the Host, which ‘officially’ confirms participation and locks in any performance times discussed.

We recommend that you download the *Guide to Participating* in whichever context interests you – Band and Orchestra, Chorus, Jazz Ensemble, Percussion Ensemble or Solo and Small Ensemble. *Checklists* for all MPA contexts are also posted as a ready reference and a snapshot outline of what is involved. These Guides and Checklists should answer the most common questions for directors new to PMEA Adjudication and serve as a review or just a reference for those who have participated in the past.

Note that adjudication IS currently offered for standard medium-sized choral ensembles, such as madrigals, concert chorales, women’s choirs and men’s choirs within the existing Choral MPA event context. However, MPA’s are not yet available for jazz choirs or show choirs.

Solo and Small Ensemble MPA’s provide assessments for your winds, percussion, strings and vocal soloists and duets, trios, quartets and larger small ensembles. While there are no MPA’s in this context scheduled at this time, we are hoping to expand into this area of performance assessment in the future.

*Guides to Hosting* all current PMEA Adjudication MPA contexts are also posted. New hosts are needed throughout the state in every context; please contact me if interested! We recommend that director participates in at least one PMEA MPA before hosting their own event.

How will your students’ performances be assessed? Download the *Assessment Forms* for each MPA context to check out the first updates to adjudication assessment since Adjudication began in PA in 1986 with forms issued by MENC in 1958. These updated forms better reflect current assessment processes while improving ease of use by adjudicators as well as enhancing their educational value for directors and students alike.

All registration forms and forms needed to participate or host are posted. A complete list of forms needed to participate in or host a particular MPA context can be found on the *Introduction* page of the given Participation or Hosting Guide.

**NEW FOR 2016! PMEA LAUNCHES NEW ‘FESTIVAL CONTEXT’** – excerpted from the Fall Issue of the *PMEA News*  
*More information is available in the article included in the Fall Issue of the PMEA News and is posted as a resource article within the Adjudication area of the PMEA website.*

Band, orchestra and choral directors at all levels now have a new performance context available in 2016 to participate in a Music Performance Assessment (MPA) through PMEA Adjudication. In addition to the existing ‘Traditional’ format, directors will now be able to choose to participate in a ‘Festival’ performance context. A ‘menu’ of options will be available for each director to customize an adjudication experience that best meets the needs of his or her program at that time.

The Festival performance context will include the following ‘menu’ options for each ensemble:

1. To perform pieces at any combination of grade levels. Directors would be able to choose among any pieces they are already preparing in class for their next concert. Directors would not be required to choose music from the PMEA Selective Music List or provide the grade levels of the pieces being performed. Grade levels would not be a factor in participation in any way.
2. For bands and orchestras, participating in the Sight-Reading component would be optional. If Sight-Reading is selected, the director would choose the grade level of the music involved that he/she feels would be the most appropriate for that ensemble. If Sight-Reading is not selected, the director could choose a clinic with the adjudicator assigned to sight-reading or choose not to select any option in this area.

3. For choral ensembles, we plan to develop a new Sight-Reading component that would be optional in either 'Traditional' or 'Festival' performance contexts, most likely first available in 2017.
4. To receive Scores and Ratings by the three adjudicators using the PMEA Assessment Form. Scores and ratings are already kept confidential, only provided to each individual director. The "Comments Only" option remains available as well.
5. To receive Adjudicator Comments through digital audio commentary in real time along with those written on the Assessment Form.

Ensembles choosing the 'Festival' performance context would receive an official PMEA Certificate recognizing participation. The certificate would include the rating, if requested, reflected by the director's choice of terminology, either the longstanding 'Superior, Excellent..... etc.', or 'Outstanding, Advanced, Proficient....etc.', similar to that of the PSSA's. The Registration Fee for ensembles participating in the new 'Festival' performance context would be lower than those participating in 'Traditional' by an amount reflecting the difference in the cost of the plaque as received by those ensembles.

We hope that directors at any level who have not yet participated in PMEA Adjudication would be more comfortable and interested in participating within the array of options available within the 'Festival' context. Some directors may now choose to participate in the 'Traditional' context with their high school or top ensemble and then also bring their second or middle/junior high school ensembles to participate in the 'Festival' context.

Not sure what repertoire to perform? Directors participating in the new 'Festival' context can simply choose 2 pieces from what they already plan to perform at their concert. Those participating in the 'Traditional' context can start by consulting the PMA *Selective Music List* for their ensemble as posted on the website. Note that all of the existing lists are being updated, with the new, official PMEA Band SML and Chorus SML slated to be ready for the 2016 Adjudication 'season'! Much flexibility exists concerning what repertoire can be approved for participation, as our PMEA lists have not been updated for almost 25 years. If you wish to participate in 'Traditional' and perform a piece or pieces not on 'the list'----as it is likely that any recently-published piece is *not* included----simply download and submit the *Request for Addition to Selective Music List Form* no later than 60 days prior to the event. PMEA Adjudication strives to be as 'inclusive' as possible.

Once you choose the site and date that best works for your program, contact the host via email or phone to reserve performance slot(s). Some sites fill quickly; be sure to confirm that openings exist before processing the application and check for registration.

I hope this helps you in 'Getting Started' in PMEA Adjudication! Please contact me at [tsnyder@westasd.org](mailto:tsnyder@westasd.org) or (724) 816-0420 with any questions. We continue to welcome feedback from all involved that supports our ongoing goal to best serve directors, their ensembles and, above all, their students through quality performance assessment opportunities within PMEA Adjudication.