



# PMEA ADJUDICATION

**Tom Snyder, Coordinator**

**tsnyder@westasd.org**  
**Arts Coordinator, West Allegheny SD**  
**(724) 816-0420 C**

## **NEW FOR 2016!**

### **NEW 'FESTIVAL' PERFORMANCE CONTEXT AVAILABLE!**

Band, orchestra and choral directors at all levels will have a new performance context available in 2016 for participation 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 the '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 options for each ensemble:

1. To perform pieces of any grade level. The pieces would not be required to be on the PMEA Selective Music List. The grade levels of the pieces would not be required to be declared or provided to the adjudicators.
2. For instrumental, 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 would be most appropriate for his/her ensemble. If Sight-Reading is not selected, the director would have the option of a clinic with the adjudicator assigned to sight-reading.
3. For choral, we plan to develop a new Sight-Reading component that would be optional at this time for all choral ensembles in either 'Traditional' or 'Festival' performance context.
4. To receive Scores and Ratings through the PMEA Assessment Form.
5. To receive Adjudicator Comments through digital audio commentary in real time and/or as 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, and choice of terminology to be included on the certificate (Superior, Excellent..... or Outstanding, Advanced....etc.).

The Registration Fee for ensembles participating in the Festival performance context would be reduced approximately by the difference in the cost of the plaque and its mailing.

The existing, 'Traditional' Music Performance Assessment context that remains standard throughout the country would continue intact within PMEA Adjudication.

We hope that directors at the middle and high school levels who are new to PMEA Adjudication would be more comfortable and interest in participating with an array of options available. 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.

A side-by side comparison of both performance contexts follows:

<b>MPA PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>TRADITIONAL</b>	<b>FESTIVAL</b>
<b>Choice of Repertoire</b>	Selected from PMEA Selective Music List (SML) or as approved	Any pieces of any combination of grade levels that the ensemble is preparing for a concert
<b>Grade Level</b>	Declared by director from the graded repertoire included in the PMEA SML	Grade levels do not need to be declared. The director retains the option to do so to inform the adjudicators.
<b>Sight-reading (Instrumental)</b>	Required at 1 ½ to 2 grade levels lower than that of the prepared pieces	Optional. Directors that choose to participate in Sight-reading may also choose any grade level preferred for the music used. Directors who do not wish to participate in Sight-reading may choose to have a clinic will that judge.
<b>Sight-reading (Choral)</b>	Optional once this new component is available, most likely in 2017.	Optional once this new component is available, most likely in 2017
<b>Scoring and resulting Rating using PMEA Assessment Form</b>	Included. All scores and ratings will continue to be kept confidential.	Optional. All scores and ratings received will continue to be kept confidential.
<b>Adjudicator Comments through digital audio commentary in real time</b>	Included	Included
<b>Adjudicator Comments as written on the PMEA Assessment Form</b>	Included	Optional
<b>Recording</b>	Included	Included
<b>Registration Fee</b>	\$185	\$150
<b>Award Recognition</b>	PMEA Award Plaque	PMEA Award Certificate
<b>Rating Terminology</b>	Choice between 'Superior/Excellent', etc. and Outstanding/Proficient', etc.	If receiving a Rating, choice between Superior/Excellent' and Outstanding/Proficient, etc.
<b>Individual Student Medals</b>	Optional – available for purchase separately	Not available

Updated materials for directors and hosts, including the *Guide to Participating* and *Guide to Hosting*, will be released and posted within the Adjudication area of the PMEA website as soon as available.

## OTHER HIGHLIGHTS FROM NEW ADDITIONS IN RECENT YEARS

The infrastructure of *PMEA Adjudication* continues to evolve. Those most involved---directors and adjudicators---continue to offer terrific suggestions for both minor tweaks and major improvements that combine to enable 'the system' work better for all. Strengths of PMEA Adjudication include sensitivity to its participants and a willingness to change. Each email is read and answered. Each conversation is welcomed. Keep the lines of communication open!

- All *Guides* and *Checklists* will be updated soon for 2016 and posted within the PMEA website's Adjudication area to provide essential information for directors considering or planning participation for the first time along with a reference for those experienced in MPA participation. Each form is continuously reviewed and updated as needed. All forms are posted on the website both as 'Type In' Word .doc form documents to type in and print or email, and, as 'Write On' .pdf documents to print and write on.
- The *revised PMEA All-State Audition Forms* are aligned in philosophy, structure and process to the PMEA Adjudication Assessment Forms. As directors become more familiar with the performance assessment of individual students at All-festival audition forms, we hope that they become more comfortable with how the band, orchestra and chorus forms are evaluated in the ensemble adjudication context. That familiarity should enable directors to better understand and benefit from the ratings received as well as encourage more directors to become large ensemble adjudicators themselves in the future.
- *Returning to past practice, all registration checks for all MPA's are to be mailed directly to the Host.* Fortunately, we are nimble enough to recognize that when a new procedure doesn't work, go back to the old way! We tried having the checks mailed directly to me as Adjudication Coordinator for year-to-year consistency, but that led to confusion for directors and hosts along with organizational/management issues with late and misplaced payments. I received numerous requests to go back to past practice and will gladly comply!
- Directors may choose which *rating terminology* to be engraved on the award plaque or award certificate, either the traditional PMEA terms (Superior, Excellent, Good, Fair) or the terms adapted from the PSSA's (Outstanding, Advanced, Proficient, Basic).
- The *Assessment Forms*, newly adopted back in 2009, include a three-point range within the scoring for each Evaluation Area to provide more flexibility in conveying assessment within a given rating. This was the area of most intense concern from directors in the late 2000's---the perception that numbers were possibly suppressed by adjudicators not willing to award the 'perfect 10'. Most agree that a 1-5 range is far too narrow, but the two-point range is perceived as too limiting. The three-point range, however, permits an additional number within each rating and considerably more overall flexibility for assigning an appropriate score. Within the 'Superior' level, adjudicators now may choose a '13' or a '14' in addition to the 'perfect 15' as the performance warrants. Also, adjudicators who are also experienced in marching band, drum corps and/or indoor guard/percussion assessment contexts are used to 'dividing the boxes into thirds' and would therefore be more comfortable with a three-point range. We continue to receive extremely positive feedback about this core component of the MPA forms from both directors and adjudicators.

- Adding the 'Letter Grade' and 'Approx. PSSA Equivalent' to the traditional Roman number I-V and Superior-Fair summary rating descriptors has greatly assisted adjudicators in determining ratings as well as directors and their students in interpreting the nature of the scores assigned in each of the evaluation areas and summary rating. The adjudicators now assess the performance and assign a Score from 1-15 for each of five Evaluation Areas: Tone, Intonation, Accuracy, Technique and Interpretation, according to the following descriptors:

PMEA SCORE	RATING	DESCRIPTOR	LETTER GRADE	APPROX. PSSA EQUIVALENT
13-15	I	Superior	A+	Outstanding
10-12	II	Excellent	A	Advanced
7-9	III	Good	B	Proficient
4-6	IV	Fair	C	Basic
1-3	V	Unprepared	U	Below Basic

- Hosts of Jazz Ensemble MPA's now may choose between two different *Jazz Ensemble Assessment Forms* to best meet the backgrounds and needs of the participating jazz ensembles. One includes improvisation-related factors within the 'Technique' and 'Interpretation' Evaluation Areas. The other includes 'Improvisation' as its own Evaluation Area. How best to incorporate improvisation, a critical component of jazz and jazz education, within PMEA Adjudication continues to be discussed.