

Good afternoon!

The UHSAA Music Committee acknowledges the power and value of continuing the tradition of holding region and state solo and ensemble festivals for music students to participate, despite the unpredictable nature of the current worldwide pandemic. As a committee, we felt it best to recommend a virtual festival format for region and state festivals. This virtual recommendation was approved and adopted on Wednesday, January 13, by the UHSAA Executive Committee. There will be no in-person Region or State Solo and Ensemble Festivals in 2021.

There are several reasons for this decision:

- Given the state's 1% school closure policy (if 1% of the school community tests positive, the school may be shut down for up to 2 weeks), any school could close at any time. This could include a potential host school for a region or state festival.
- We would have very little control over parents/family/friends who may wish to attend. Even if we put out policies, we don't want to put teachers or students in a position of having to control crowd sizes in festival rooms, and we certainly don't want to put any teachers or students at risk.
- We aren't willing to ask our already busy colleagues to be responsible for cleaning and sanitizing music stands, chairs, pianos, etc, in between each performance.
- The adjudicators we typically hire are, are generally part of the most vulnerable population for complications of Covid-19.
- We are generally optimistic about our state's future recovery, especially with vaccines already being distributed. However, we feel like it would be irresponsible for us to try and predict what the conditions of the pandemic in our state will be in the next 3-4 months.
- We are trying to give rural schools, and schools that would have to travel significant distances more flexibility. Rather than simply not participating at all, we're hoping to give everyone a chance to participate, regardless of the travel limitations.
- In past years, during the state festival, we haven't had to disperse crowds of students or parents waiting to perform or to watch performances. Due to physical distancing limitations, we feel it best not to put host schools/districts at risk of liability.

Virtual Region Festival

To save teachers and festival organizers valuable time and resources, we will be using new web-based software, AuditionWare, for all Region and State Solo and Ensemble Festivals. This software will enable all teachers, region chairs, and adjudicators to connect and be consistent with one another throughout the state.

- Due to the complexity of the software and submission process, Region Music Chairs will need to replace Festival Hosts as the main administrators of the Region Solo and Ensemble Festivals (Training will be provided for Region Music Chairs).
- Teachers will help students record high-quality videos of their performances. Specifics will not be given for minimum or maximum production value, but it is recommended that teachers use the resources available to them at their school (AV Department, production classes, etc), to help students be successful.

- Only video recordings may be submitted, ***no audio recordings.***
- Students in the videos should be dressed appropriately as if they were attending and performing in a live festival.
- Teachers will help students to upload these videos to YouTube or any other video hosting website that allows sharing without restrictions.
- Teachers will register students for their own region's festival using AuditionWare's platform. The registration process will include submitting the link for their video.
- UHSAA has set region and state deadlines for the submission of these videos and entries for adjudication.
- Region Music Chairs will hire adjudicators from the approved list for these festivals as they would any normal year. But, the adjudication will be done virtually. UHSAA has set region and state adjudication windows during which all adjudication will take place and be returned.
- Adjudicators will need to create their own AuditionWare accounts. Once created in the system, Region Music Chairs will assign them to the correct region festival and assign entries to them for adjudication.
- Adjudicators will be paid based on a per-entry scale developed by the UMEA Adjudication Committee. This payment will be paid by individual regions, but must be tallied and calculated by the region music chairs based on the number of entries adjudicated.
- Once adjudication is finished and the region chairs have verified all entries, adjudication forms will be sent electronically to teachers from their Region Music Chair, who will then distribute them to students.

Virtual State Festival

- Students who earn a superior rating (I, or I,I,I/I- for Chamber Choirs), may submit for adjudication to the State Festival.
- Teachers will need to once again help them to create a new video for state submission. It is expected that state qualifiers will use the feedback received at the region festival to improve upon their performance for state. ***This is why a new video must be submitted, and not the same video used for region.***
- Teachers will go through the same process for state as they did for region. The state festival entries will need to be submitted following the schedule below. They will also be verified by the Region Music Chairs to ensure they earned a qualifying rating at region.
- The State Festival Chair and UMEA Adjudication Committee will hire adjudicators. All adjudication will be completed virtually. Adjudicators will be paid based on a per-entry scale developed by the UMEA Adjudication Committee. This payment will be made by the UHSAA, and will be calculated based on the number of entries adjudicated.
- Adjudicators will need to create their own AuditionWare accounts--if they didn't already create one for a region festival. Once created in the system, the state festival chair and UMEA Adjudication Committee will assign them to the state festival and assign entries to them for adjudication.
- Once adjudication is finished and the State Festival Chair has verified all entries, adjudication forms will be sent electronically to teachers, who will then distribute them

to students. Certificates for superior ratings will also be emailed to teachers to print and distribute.

- Medals for superior entries will be sent to individual schools by the UHSAA office.

Schedule

REGION

All regions will follow the same basic schedule for submissions and adjudication for region entries.

February 22-March 22 Region Submission Window

- *Individual regions may choose their own submission schedule within the submission window, but absolutely no later than Monday, March 22nd.*

February 22-April 2 Adjudication Window

- *Individual regions may choose their own adjudication schedule within the adjudication window, but absolutely no later than Friday, April 2nd.*

Monday, April 5 All Region Adjudication Must be Completed, Electronic Results Sent to Schools

- *Individual regions may choose their own schedule for verifying adjudication and returning results to schools, but absolutely no later than Monday, April 5th.*

STATE

*Only state qualifying entries may be submitted for State adjudication. **Must be a new video submission.***

Monday, April 12 - State Submissions Open (7am)

Friday, April 23 - State Submissions Closed (5pm)

April 24-April 30 State Adjudication Window

Monday, May 3 State Adjudication Completed, Electronic Results/Electronic Certificates Sent to Schools (7am)

May 4-May 24 UHSAA sends superior medals to schools

Recommendations

- One of the highlights of participation in a live festival is being able to see and hear performances from students at other schools. Teachers should coordinate with other teachers in their region or from elsewhere in the state, to receive links to videos they may show in class of their students' performances. This is particularly essential for chamber choirs.
- We recommend teachers use whatever resources are available to them at their schools or through connections with parents or community partners in producing high-quality videos for submission. While we don't anticipate teachers needing to spend money on these videos, we do encourage them to do whatever they can to produce videos that have high sound fidelity and high-quality video.
- While YouTube is the preferred website for sharing these videos, we realize some district web-filters block YouTube. Other sources may be used (i.e. GoogleDrive, Dropbox, Vimeo, etc), but permissions on the videos must be enabled so that anyone with the link may watch it. Videos that are locked or where permissions haven't been enabled, may be disqualified.

Training

All teachers, Region Music Chairs, and adjudicators will have access to training on AuditionWare. The creator of AuditionWare will host specific online trainings over Zoom for teachers, Region Music Chairs, and adjudicators. He will also be available for technical support for anybody using the program.

Much more information will be coming in the next few weeks. We are excited for the opportunity this virtual festival format offers us, to hopefully have even more participants than in years' past. We encourage you to help your students embrace this format this year, given the circumstances. We are confident this festival can still be a meaningful and rewarding experience for your students and for you as their teacher.

Thank you!

Brenan Jackson
UHSAA Director of Music

Justin Bills
State Solo & Ensemble Festival Chair

John Bowman
UMEA Adjudication Committee Chair