



**MISSISSIPPI THEATRE ASSOCIATION
HANDBOOK
2026**

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ABOUT THE MISSISSIPPI THEATRE ASSOCIATION

The Mississippi Theatre Association has been in business under its present structure since the early 1970's, but dates back to the mid 1950's as the Mississippi Little Theatre Association. The organization serves primarily as a sanctioning organization for the Festival and Convention and the College Theatre Festival under the wider aegis of the Southeastern Theatre Conference, the American Association of Community Theatres and the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. (SETC, AACT and MTA/KC/ACTF as they are more widely known). Each year, community theatres and selected secondary schools meet for a festival of short plays in a juried format, evaluated by judges from out of state, who select one high school and one community theatre presentation to attend the SETC convention. A concurrent children's festival showcases children's productions to elementary schoolchildren in the host community.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Mississippi Theatre Association is to foster appreciation of and participation in children's, college, community, high school, professional, and university theatre in Mississippi by:

- Sponsoring festivals, workshops, and retreats
- Communicating with members and the public
- Acting as an advocate to government agencies, business, and the public
- Recognizing excellence in performance and production
- Sanctioning representatives to regional festivals

MEMBERSHIP

Three classes of membership are available in the Mississippi Theatre Association:

- Student Membership: \$40.00 (available to students regularly enrolled in educational institutions such as high schools, colleges and universities, and professional theatre schools)
- Individual Membership: \$55.00
- Organizational Membership: \$95.00 (available to active theatre groups, including but not limited to those in high schools, professional theatres, and community theatres)
- College & University Organizational Membership: \$70.00

When you pay your annual dues and become a member of MTA, you will become part of a dynamic statewide organization dedicated to promoting excellence in theatre at all levels.

ADVANTAGES TO MEMBERSHIP IN MTA

- Participation (with payment of registration fees) in the annual MTA convention, a four-day festival of theatrical productions, workshops, and social events
- Free advertising of your theatre's season on this website, including a link to your home page
- Discounts on workshops

PAST PRESIDENTS

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| • 1956 S.E.Wallace, presided at organization | • 1962 Bernard Freutel, Vicksburg |
| • 1956 Julia Arnold, Vicksburg | • 1963 James Canizaro, Vicksburg |
| • 1957 Helen Forte, Greenville | • 1964 Leon Kamien, Cleveland |
| • 1958 W. M. Whittington, Jr., Greenwood | • 1965 – 1966 Robert Cannon, Sardis |
| • 1959 Stuart McClosky, Vicksburg | • 1967 Jimmy Pigford, Meridian |
| • 1960 Dorothy Brunson, Jackson | • 1968 Cowboy Maloney, Jackson |
| • 1961 Elliot Trimble, Natchez | • 1969 Teresa McGehee, Natchez |

- 1970 Ray Graves, Greenville
- 1971 James Beebe, Meridian
- 1972 Jimmy Sistrunk, Brookhaven
- 1973 Kathryn Lewis, Perkinston
- 1974 Tom Sawyer, Meridian
- 1975 Peter Jones, Jackson
- 1976 Roberta Dilatush, Greenwood
- 1977 – 1978 Richard Strahan, Cleveland
- 1979 Ronnie Miller, Meridian
- 1980 Fred Kinder, Columbus
- 1982 – 1983 Blaine Quarnstrom, Hattiesburg
- 1984 – 1985 Dominic Cunetto, Starkville
- 1986 – 1987 Denise Halbach, Raymond
- 1988 – 1989 Chester Delacruz, Biloxi
- 1990 – 1991 Richard Strahan, Cleveland
- 1992 – 1993 Tim Bixler, Greenville
- 1994 – 1995 Larry Mullican, Hattiesburg
- 1996 – 1997 Janie Walters, Gulfport
- 1998 – 1999 Tamsie West, Water Valley
- 2000 – 2001 Joe Van Dyke, Sardis
- 2001 – 2002 Stephen Cunetto, Starkville
- 2003 – 2004 Tonya Hays, Gulfport
- 2005 – 2006 MJ Etua, Starkville
- 2007 – 2008 Tom Booth, Tupelo
- 2009 – 2010 Stacy Howell, Ridgeland
- 2011 – 2012 Suzanne Allmon, Oak Grove
- 2013 – 2014 Tom Hardy, Hattiesburg
- 2015 – 2016 Lee Crouse, Columbus
- 2017 – 2019 Tim Matheny, Starkville
- 2020 – 2024 Juniper Wallace, Flowood

THE COWBOY MALONEY AWARD RECIPIENTS / STEPHEN CUNETTO AWARD RECIPIENTS

The Cowboy Maloney Award is awarded by the Board of Directors to an individual who has added significantly to the successful operation of MTA through actions that are noteworthy for their positive image, regional recognition, long tenure, program establishment, and/or administrative service, rather than for their personal gain.

- 1980 Warren McDaniel
- 1981 The Sheffields
- 1983 Dick Strahan
- 1984 Margaret and Tom Sawyer, Meridian
- 1985 Ruth Liveakos, Tupelo High School
- 1986 Charles Lembright
- 1987 Denise Halbach
- 1988 Kathryn Lewis
- 1989 Dominic J. Cunetto, Mississippi State University
- 1994 Blaine Quarnstrom, University of Southern MS
- 1997 R.B. Hill, University of Southern MS
- 1998 Hoagan Bramlett, Oak Grove High School
- 2000 Tim and Sonya Bixler, Greenville
- 2001 Larry Mullican, University of Southern MS
- 2002 Jerry Bangham
- 2003 Ronnie Miller, Meridian Community College
- 2006 Shannon Robert, William Carey College
- 2012 Tonya Hays, Lynn Meadows-WINGS
- 2012 Wayne and Jo Durst, Starkville/MS
- 2015 William “Peppy” Biddy, MS University for Women

In January 2016, the MTA Board of Directors re-named the Cowboy Maloney Award the Stephen Cunetto Award in recognition of Cunetto serving MTA for over 12 years including as President and the organization's first Executive Director from 2002 – 2016.

- 2016 Tom Booth, Tupelo Community Theatre
- 2018 Tom Hardy, Just Over the Rainbow Theatre
- 2020 Dex Edwards, University of Mississippi
- 2021 Pattye Archer, Starkville Community Theatre
- 2022
- 2023 Deborah Hardy
- 2024 Suzanne Allmon, Oak Grove High School
- 2025 Tim Matheny, William Carey University

THE BYLAWS OF THE MISSISSIPPI THEATRE ASSOCIATION

ARTICLE I

This Corporation shall function as the Mississippi affiliate of the Southeastern Theatre Conference, Inc.

ARTICLE II – DUES AND FEES

The Board of Directors shall set and publish the dues and convention fees for various classes of membership in accordance with the financial status of the Corporation, and shall review the established dues upon the advice of the Treasurer. All Board members must be members of the Mississippi Theatre Association and must pay their membership dues annually.

ARTICLE III – AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS AND CHARTER OF INCORPORATION

- Section 1. The Bylaws may be amended, altered, or rescinded by the Board of Directors, provided that such amendments not be effective until approved by a majority vote at the next annual meeting or convention, or at a special meeting called for that purpose.
- Section 2. Proposed amendments to the Charter of Incorporation may be considered at any annual meeting of members or any special meeting called for that purpose. To become effective, such amendments require approval by a two- thirds vote.
- Section 3. Proposed changes in these Bylaws and in the Charter of Incorporation; however originated, shall be studied by the Board of Directors. Proposed amendments approved by the Board of Directors shall be circulated to the active membership at least two (2) weeks prior to the meetings of the membership at which they are to be submitted for approval.

ARTICLE IV – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Section 1. The affairs of the Corporation shall be managed by a Board of Directors composed of the following:
1. The four elected officers of the Corporation:
 - a. A president to serve for a term of two (2) years;
 - b. A vice president to serve for a term of two (2) years;
 - c. A secretary to serve for a term of one (1) year;
 - d. A treasurer to serve for a term of one (1) year.
 2. A representative of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) committee to be appointed annually by the Executive Director and confirmed by a vote of the EDI committee to advise the Executive Committee of elected officers.
 3. The immediate past president to serve a term of two (2) years and to serve as the State Representative to the Southeastern Theatre Conference;
 4. A Divisional Chair, to serve for a term of two (2) years, from each of the interest divisions of the Corporation, provided such divisions are currently active, to be appointed by the President with the approval of the Board of Directors.
 - a. The Division Chair will be active in the division represented.
 - b. The interest divisions of the Corporations are:
 - Secondary Theatre Division,
 - College and University Theatre Division,
 - Community Theatre Division,
 - Theatre for Youth,
 - 10-Minute Festival,

- Secondary Individual Events,
- Adult Individual Events,
- Professional Theatre Division,
- Studio Theatre Division

5. The Division Vice Chair shall serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Board.

Section 2. The Board of Directors shall be the administrative, policy making and planning body of the Corporation. It shall be the ultimate authority when the Corporation is not meeting.

ARTICLE V – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee shall consist of the four elected officers of the Corporation and the immediate past president. The Executive Committee shall act for, and have the power of, the Board of Directors in the interim between Board of Directors meetings, but any action taken under this authority must be reported to the full Board of Directors at its next meeting. This committee shall meet at the call of the President.

ARTICLE VI – DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. The President shall:

1. Preside at all meetings of the membership;
2. Call and preside at meetings of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee;
3. Appoint a chairperson for each standing committee and appoint special committees as he/she deems necessary;
4. Be a member ex officio of all committees except the Nominating Committee;
5. Develop and maintain close contact with other organizations and foundations that might give support to, or require assistance from this Corporation;
6. Travel, when necessary, representing the Corporation;
7. Perform such other duties as normally pertain to the President of an organization

Section 2. The Vice President shall:

1. Perform the duties of the President when designated to do so by the President or when the President is unable to fulfill such duties;

Section 3. The Secretary shall:

1. Keep a full and accurate record of the proceedings before the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, the annual meeting and special membership meetings;
2. Maintain a current file of operations manuals for all ongoing Corporation functions;
3. Perform such other duties as normally pertain to the Secretary of an organization;
4. Maintain the Association's Handbook;
5. Maintain and safeguard official documents of the corporation.

Section 4. The Treasurer shall:

1. State, review, and approve organizational accounts and statements.
2. Maintain a suitable program of investment of Corporation funds not needed for current operation and report on same at the annual meeting perform such other duties as normally pertain to the Treasurer of an organization.

Section 5. The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Representative shall:

1. Oversee Executive Committee activities and analyze MTA organizational activity through an EDI lens.
2. Provide appropriate training to other members of the Executive Committee and the MTA Board of Directors concerning issues of equity, diversity, and/or inclusion.
3. Develop and recommend strategies to the Executive Committee for increasing EDI awareness throughout the MTA membership.
4. Provide support for MTA Board and general members with questions or concerns about handling issues of equity, diversity, and/or inclusion, and alert the MTA Board to potential or active EDI-related concerns.

ARTICLE VII – DUTIES OF THE SETC REPRESENTATIVE

The State Representative to the Southeastern Theatre Conference shall:

1. Provide liaison between the board of Directors of this Corporation and that of the Southeastern Theatre Conference;
2. Promote Mississippi theatre activities on the regional level through publicity and attendance at regional meetings;
3. Report annually to the Corporation through the newsletter the activities of his office during the past year.

ARTICLE VIII – DUTIES OF DIVISIONAL CHAIRPERSONS

The Divisional Chairpersons shall:

1. Furnish leadership for the division they represent;
2. Coordinate such festivals as their division may sponsor;
3. Stimulate and develop interest in their respective areas;
4. File reports of the work of their respective divisions on the dates requested by the Vice President, and to the Executive Director.
5. Report on activities of their respective division at the general membership meeting.

ARTICLE IX – ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- Section 1. The Nominating Committee shall present a slate of officers for election at the general membership meeting of each annual convention. Additional nominations may be accepted from the floor at this time. Officers shall be elected by a majority vote.
- Section 2. The Board of Directors shall have the authority to fill any vacancy created by death, resignation or disability of any elected officer of the Corporation. The replacement officer by the Board of Directors shall be supervised by the highest-ranking remaining officer.

ARTICLE X – MEETINGS

- Section 1. There shall be an annual convention of members at a time and place fixed by the Board of Directors or by a majority vote at any annual convention. At this convention, an opportunity shall be provided for having a business session for consideration of business by the Corporation, for action on the Board of Directors programs, and for hearing and considering reports of committees. Members present shall constitute a quorum at a business meeting.
- Section 2. The Board of Directors shall meet at a minimum of two times per year. The President may call other meetings of the Board of Directors whenever he/she deems necessary; the President must call a meeting of the Board of Directors whenever requested to do so by any three (3) members of the Board of Directors. A majority of the membership of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE XI – STANDING COMMITTEES

- Section 1. The Bylaws Committee shall consist of a chairman appointed by the President and members selected by the chairman on the approval of the President. It shall review all proposals for change in the Charter of Incorporation or Bylaws and make recommendations to the Board of Directors.
- Section 2. The Nominating Committee shall consist of a chairman, appointed by the President and members selected by the committee chair on the approval of the President. The duties of the Nominating Committee shall be:
1. Nomination of a candidate for each office for election at the annual convention;

2. Supervision of any honors bestowed in the name of the Corporation.

ARTICLE XII – CENTRAL OFFICE

The Board of Directors may appoint an administrative director and/or an executive director and other assistance for operation of a central office with powers and duties established by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE XIII – FISCAL MANAGEMENT

Section 1. The Executive Director shall pay accounts with the oversight of the Treasurer. No other committee, or individual is authorized to pay accounts, promise to pay accounts, or incur liability on behalf of the Corporation without approval of the Board of Directors.

Section 2. The fiscal year shall begin on July 1 of each year and end on June 30 of the next year.

Approved by the General Membership on January 19, 2003.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The duties of the Executive Director of the Mississippi Theatre Association shall include:

1. The Executive Director will report directly to the MTA Board of Directors and shall serve a one-year term from July 1 to July 1.
 - a. The MTA Board of Directors shall determine the salary for the position.
 - b. In addition, MTA shall cover travel expenses for the Executive Director for all travel required by the Board.
2. The Executive Director is responsible for
 - a. Handling correspondence and business associated with the Mississippi Theatre Association; answering all inquiries for information about the association
 - b. Promoting the Mississippi Theatre Association by overseeing the publication and distribution of the MTA Newsletter
 - c. Organizing and maintaining all business files of the association, including officer and festival chair manuals of operations as well as copies of financial reports
 - d. Maintaining mailing lists and membership data of MTA members and association contacts
 - e. Seeking funding to support the activities and operation of MTA
 - f. Organizing all special events and meetings of the Association
 - g. Assisting the MTA Convention Host in the coordination and running of the annual MTA Convention, including:
 - i. Organizing, printing and mailing all convention documents, including the convention program
 - ii. Receiving and organizing convention registration materials
 - iii. Purchasing all needed trophies and awards
 - iv. Serving as the convention contact person for the convention hotel
 - v. Assisting the convention host and local arrangements persons with the overall administration of the annual convention
 - vi. Making hotel room reservations and travel arrangements for festival adjudicators and special guests of the convention
 - vii. Working with local businesses and vendors to support the convention
 - h. Maintaining and updating the MTA website

Approved by the General Membership on January 19, 2003.

DUTIES OF THE PRESIDENT

1. The President of the organization is responsible for calling and presiding over all MTA Board meetings beginning with the board meeting which follows the annual convention.
 - a. Typically, the Board has two meetings annually.
 - b. The first meeting is held in May to discuss general MTA business.
 - c. The president should call a second board meeting in July that is typically located in the same city as the upcoming festival.
 - i. This provides the board and division chairs an opportunity to review and tour the facilities.
 - ii. The festival coordinator should be invited to this meeting as well.
2. The President should become familiar with the MTA Manual of Operations and see that all of the officers do likewise. All officers should become familiar with the MTA bylaws.
3. Following their own appointment, the President appoints committee chairs, including all division chairs.
4. The President and the Executive Director work together on the application for grant funding from the Mississippi Arts Commission (MAC) and other granting sources. Generally, the deadline for the MAC application is March 1.

5. Communication among board members is essential to the survival of the organization; it is the responsibility of the President to keep all board members informed of issues concerning MTA.
6. While the compilation of the newsletter is the responsibility of the Executive Director, the President should ensure that it is distributed at least twice a year.
7. The President should monitor the progress and work of the other board members and the Executive Director.
8. Each year the President needs to determine which board members are willing to continue to serve on the Board.
 - a. If positions become vacant, the President must appoint a Nominating Committee.
 - b. Refer to bylaws for exact charge and method of creating the committee.

Other important events that the President should be aware of:

1. High school regional festivals are held at Mississippi State University and the University of Southern Mississippi in late fall.
2. The Southeastern Theatre Conference (SETC) Convention is held every year in late February or early March.
 - a. State SETC Screening Auditions are held virtually.
 - b. There is an All-States Meeting and an Executive Director, President, State Representatives meeting that all three positions should attend.
 - c. There are Community and Secondary festivals that take place during SETC to which the President should lend support both before and during the convention.

Generating new ideas and services is something every President may wish to implement. If the President has an idea to implement, it is important to present it to the Board early in the year so that action can be taken in a timely fashion.

DUTIES OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

1. Coordinate adjudicators for:
 - a. Community Festival – three out-of-state adjudicators
 - b. Secondary Festival – three out-of-state adjudicators
 - c. 10-minute Festival – two in-state or local adjudicators; prefer local talent as available
 - d. Theatre for Youth Festival – two in-state or out-of-state adjudicators
2. Assist the Individual Events chairpersons with coordinating professional adjudicators as necessary.
3. Collect adjudicators' headshots, bios, contracts, and contact information.
4. Collect division chairs' contact information and arrange for them to meet with their adjudicators at the festival.
5. Work with the Executive Director to arrange travel and hotels for all adjudicators.
6. Assist with / arrange adjudicator travel to and from the airport, to the theatre, to socials, to meals, etc.
7. Work with the Executive Director to arrange workshops; collect workshop titles and descriptions.
8. Create gift baskets for each adjudicator. Secondary and Community Festival adjudicators receive larger baskets.
9. Collect clipboards, pens, pencils, book lights, notepads, etc. for each adjudicator.
10. Build a packet / notebook / binder with the appropriate MTA rules, scoring sheets, list of awards, etc. for each adjudicator.
11. Lead the Secondary and Community theatre adjudicator meetings, define the order that the adjudicators will speak, and tally Secondary and Community scores at the end of the festival on the computer spreadsheet
12. Write up lists of awards and their recipients. Verify that the Executive Director has received a copy of the awards list at the end of the festival.
13. Arrange meals for adjudicators and VIPs:
 - a. Create a list of possible local dining options, hot spots, etc... have directions available
 - b. Arrange Thursday night dinner for all adjudicators including Community, Secondary, Playwriting, 10-Minute, Theatre for Youth, and special guests as applicable.

- c. Breakfast should be at the hotel. Advise adjudicators to turn in their receipts to you. Remit all receipts to the Executive Director at the end of the festival.
 - d. Arrange lunches at the theatre / festival venue. Try to support local delis, sandwich shops, or catering companies.
 - e. Make reservations for Friday and Saturday night dinners at local restaurants; arrange transportation, etc.
14. Encourage the adjudicators to attend the socials
15. In the case of a conflict of interest with the Vice President and a specific division, an unaffiliated member of the executive committee will handle coordinating the adjudicators for the division in conflict.
- a. There will also be an unaffiliated Executive Committee designee at the state festival to lead the adjudicator meetings for the division in conflict.
 - b. "Coordinating the adjudicators" includes all of duties related to adjudicators spelled out in this section.
 - c. Example: If the Vice President is connected to a theatre organization that has a production entering the Community Festival, the Executive Committee will designate a different person on the Executive Committee to manage coordinating the three out-of-state adjudicators for the Community Division.

SINGLE FESTIVAL ENTRY GUIDELINES, CENSORSHIP, AND SECONDARY FESTIVAL ENTRY RESTRICTIONS

Festival Entry Guidelines

1. Participating organizations may enter into each of the divisions offered at the MTA State Festival with a selection that meets the material selection guidelines of the division.
2. Each selection that an organization enters is only eligible for a single division's festival.
 - a. The same organization may not enter the same title in multiple divisions' festivals during the same season.
 - b. E.g. South Central High School's production of *The Convert* that did not advance from DramaFest to the MTA Secondary Festival may not submit *The Convert* for the same year's Theatre for Youth festival.
 - c. E.g. The director-slash-playwright of *People Holding Signs* may not produce it for Dramafest/Secondary and also submit it as their entry to the adult playwriting festival.
 - d. E.g. A student may not enter a Secondary Individual Event with a selection cut from their organization's entry into the Dramafest/Secondary festival cycle.
3. Individuals with questions about whether their production is acceptable for entry should reach out to the chairs of the divisions they intend to enter.

Censorship

1. MTA supports a policy permitting the widest possible range of dramatic material.
2. Adjudicators may in NO CASE may prohibit a submission from advancing exclusively on the basis of the presence of mature language, themes, or content.
3. MTA reserves the right to include appropriate disclaimers to notify audiences of mature language, themes, and content.
 - a. Disclaimers may be published in the festival program and/or announced prior to the beginning of a production containing mature content.
 - b. Disclaimers may be made for, but are not limited to the following content:
 - i. Mature content
 - ii. Adult language/profanity
 - iii. Firearms or weapons
 - iv. Gunshots and/or loud noises
 - v. Performers moving among audience members/Performers in the house
 - vi. Fog or haze effects
 - vii. Strobe or other lighting effects
 - viii. Overt sexual content
 - ix. Nudity
 - x. Blood and/or gore
 - xi. Historical discrimination, racism, and/or bigotry
 - xii. Drugs/alcohol/substance abuse
 - xiii. Sexual, physical, and/or emotional violence
 - xiv. Suicide, suicidal ideation, or self-harm
 - xv. Child abuse
 - c. Producing organizations are expected to disclose accurate information about content that may warrant a disclaimer.

Production Entry Restriction in the Secondary Festival

1. To ensure equitable opportunities for all participating schools, MTA restricts the repeated entry of productions in the Secondary Festival circuit across a three-year period.
 - a. No organization may enter a production into the Secondary Festival circuit (DramaFest → MTA Secondary Festival) that has been presented in its own regional festival (North or South DramaFest) within the past three years.

- b. No organization may enter a production into the Secondary Festival circuit (DramaFest → MTA Secondary Festival) that has been presented in the MTA Secondary Festival within the past three years.
2. This policy does not restrict two or more organizations from entering the same production during the same festival year; repeated entries are prohibited following a festival cycle, concurrent productions are allowed.
3. This policy only applies to repeated productions of the same script by the same playwright. Different adaptations, versions, or scripts with similar themes are considered distinct works and remain eligible for entry.
4. Current Restrictions List
 - a. MTA publishes a list of productions that are ineligible for production during the current festival cycle.
 - b. This list includes:
 - i. All titles and playwrights presented at each regional festival in the past three years.
 - ii. An asterisk (*) marking those productions that advanced to the State Festival.
 - c. This list applies statewide; any production appearing in an organization's region and all productions marked with an asterisk are unavailable for entry into the Secondary Festival circuit.
5. Scenarios and examples:
 - a. If Neel High School entered its production of *Elenka* by Poppy-Rose Whitfield into North DramaFest in 2023 (for the 2023-2024 festival cycle) and DID advance to the state festival, no school entering either regional DramaFest in 2025, 2026, or 2027 is eligible to enter a production of *Elenka* by Poppy-Rose Whitfield.
 - b. If South Central High School entered its production of *People Holding Signs* by Jayde Gibson into South DramaFest in 2024 (for the 2024-2025 festival cycle) and did NOT advance to the state festival, ...
 - i. Any school entering North DramaFest in 2025 (for the 2025-2026 festival cycle) is eligible to enter a production of *People Holding Signs* by Jayde Gibson.
 - ii. No school entering the South DramaFest in 2025, 2026, or 2027 is eligible to enter a production of *People Holding Signs* by Jayde Gibson.
 - c. If Morisot High School entered its production of *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller into North DramaFest in 2022 (for the 2022-2023 festival cycle) and DID advance to the state festival, ...
 - i. No school entering either regional DramaFest in 2023, 2024, or 2025 is eligible to enter a production of *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller.
 - ii. Any school entering either regional DramaFest during this time period may enter *Abigail/1702: A Twice-Told Tale* by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, *Afflicted: Daughters of Salem* by Laurie Brooks, or *The Burn* by Phillip Dawkins, despite that these plays have characters, plot points, and themes that are present in *The Crucible*.
 - d. If O'Keefe High School entered its production of *Cyrano de Bergerac* by Edmund Rostand into South DramaFest in 2024 (for the 2024-2025 festival cycle) and DID NOT advance to the state festival, ...
 - i. Any school entering North DramaFest in 2025 may enter *Cyrano de Bergerac* by Edmund Rostand.
 - ii. No school entering South DramaFest in 2025, 2026, or 2027 may enter *Cyrano de Bergerac* by Edmond Rostand.
 - iii. In 2025, any organization may enter *Cyrano de Bergerac* by Tonya Hays (adapted from the play by Edmond Rostand) or *Cyrano and Roxanne: A Retelling of Edmond Rostand's Play, "Cyrano de Bergerac"* by Janice Rider or *CYRI* by JD Atkins, as these are considered distinct adaptations.
 - iv. Any school entering either regional DramaFest in 2025 may enter an original devised version of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, based on or adapted from the play by Edmond Rostand.

GUIDELINES FOR ADJUDICATOR SELECTION

Purpose

1. Mississippi Theatre Association is committed to providing diverse panels of professional, educated, and experienced respondents with skills appropriate to each division and festival.
2. This document shall provide a framework to the members of the executive committee who assume responsibility for coordinating adjudicators for the MTA state festival.
3. MTA strongly recommends that adjudicators who are selected by other individuals or committees (such as the respondents for each regional Secondary Dramafest, the Individual Events Festival, and the Playwriting Contest) meet the standard expectations herein.

Commitments

1. MTA is committed to securing adjudicators who, at large, reflect Mississippi demographics in terms of race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, and (dis)ability.
 - a. Due to the small nature of adjudicator panels at the MTA state festival, it is probable that there may be individual panels (consisting of 2 - 3 respondents) that do not reflect the breadth of diversity in the MTA membership or across Mississippi.
 - b. MTA will strive to develop intentionally diverse individual panels but will prioritize diversifying the overall slate of adjudicators and assigning respondents to panels as they best fit.
2. MTA is committed to securing adjudicators who have worked in professional and/or educational theatre and whose body of work reflects experience, expertise, training, and commitment to creative learning.
3. MTA is committed to securing adjudicators with a breadth of theatrical knowledge, including professional theatre artists and educators whose focus extends beyond the scope of performance.
4. MTA is committed to securing adjudicators who can reflect and generously respond to participants' interests and lived experiences.
5. MTA is committed to evaluating the impressions its members have of both individuals and panels of adjudicators.

OPERATIONS MANUAL: ADVOCACY
(See the Long-Range Plan for Strategies and Goals)

PURPOSE

The Mississippi Theatre Association holds Advocacy as one of its key values. Through this MTA will inform legislators, theatre professionals, and the general public on the power of the arts; provide numerous opportunities for networking of theatre professionals; and continue the education of all ages and all professional levels of arts and theatre.

DUTIES OF MTA IN REGARDS TO ARTS ADVOCACY

1. Work with the Arts Action Fund, Theatre Communications Group, and other key theatre advocacy groups to maintain an understanding of important issues requiring advocacy and to advocate on behalf of theatre communities.
2. Notify statewide theatres of advocacy efforts and encourage them to individually take action.
3. Offer workshops and training to statewide theatres on how to advocate for themselves and the arts in general.
4. Network and correspond with key local, state, and national legislators throughout the year in an effort to share with them what the statewide theatre community achieves, and to encourage them to support key theatre advocacy efforts.
5. Work with statewide organizations such as The Mississippi Department of Education, the Mississippi Alliance for Arts in Education, and the Mississippi Presenters Network, in an effort of collaboration and to support theatre and art advocacy efforts.
6. Serve as a resource for statewide theatres to learn about grants from the Mississippi Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts.

OPERATIONS MANUAL: COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES DIVISION

DUTIES OF THE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES DIVISION CHAIR

1. Maintain the list of colleges and universities and relevant contacts on the MTA website and listerv.
2. Create and maintain a list of state college and university personnel and their specialties.
3. Attend and encourage other college and university personnel to attend the Mississippi SETC screening auditions, the MTA College and University Auditions, and the MTA state festival,
4. Encourage current college and university theatre students to apply for the Dream Team.
5. Work with the Executive Director to define needs for the MTA College and University Auditions.
 - a. Needs include but are not limited to:
 - i. Purchasing supplies (with reimbursement).
 - ii. Creating audition numbers for auditionees.
 - iii. Communicating with and answering questions from college reps.
 - iv. Creating instructional “how to” videos to help support the audition process.
 - v. Assist with securing an accompanist.
 - b. Chair will create and maintain a College and Universities Auditions binder to support continuity from year to year, help identify ongoing needs, and provide data to assess future changes.
6. Run the MTA College and University Auditions.
 - a. Including but not limited to:
 - i. Set up and strike of audition space(s).
 - ii. Working with Dream Team members.
 - iii. Fielding questions from auditionees and teachers.
 - b. Hold a meeting with the College/University Reps following auditions to get feedback about the audition process as well as general feedback to get to the auditionees/teachers.
7. Prepare and submit a division report to the board following the state festival.
8. Attend all board meetings and develop ideas make the division stronger; propose these ideas to the board.
9. Review the division guidelines in the MTA handbook and edit so that they remain up-to-date. Submit handbook changes to the MTA secretary two weeks prior to a board meeting.
10. Attend meetings (such as the Secondary Workshop, Town Hall Meetings, Arts on the Capitol Day, etc.) as available and as requested by the President and the Executive Director.
11. Attend the annual MTA Festival, and assist as needed.
12. Stay mindful that this position means that sometimes the College and University Division Chair will have to miss performances, be back stage, or do work at the festival that separates them from the main festival events. Bear in mind that these positions are to better the organization and not the individual interest of the Coordinator.

OPERATIONS MANUAL: PROFESSIONAL DIVISION

PURPOSE

The Professional Division of the Mississippi Theatre Association is the division that represents theatre professionals. It connects theatre professionals with one another, and it connects theatre professionals with the Mississippi Theatre Association and its many activities throughout the year.

DUTIES OF THE PROFESSIONAL DIVISION CHAIR

1. Review the definition and divisions of professional theatre every five years, beginning in 2020.
2. Create and update a list of professional theatres and theatre professionals across the state. This list should be created and maintained on the MTA website.
3. Create an annual opportunity for theatre professionals and professional theatres to share with one another and to network.
4. Encourage professionals to participate / lead MTA workshops throughout the year and the annual festival.
5. Work with the Executive Director in creating opportunities for professional artists to share their theatrical experiences with MTA and the general public. This may be through in person as well as social media means.
6. Connect with colleges / universities to encourage them with first-hand information of what is expected in professional theatres, so that graduates will be better prepared.
7. Create instructional videos for use of colleges / universities and high schools
8. Work with colleges / universities and high school theatres to create internships
9. Assist MTA with the selection of adjudicators for Dramafest / MTA
10. Assist MTA with knowing about theatre advocacy needs and leading the advocacy efforts, as deemed necessary by the Executive Director and the Executive Committee.

OPERATIONS MANUAL: MISSISSIPPI STATE REPRESENTATIVE TO SETC

DUTIES OF THE MISSISSIPPI STATE REPRESENTATIVE TO SETC

The State Representative (appointed by MTA president) shall:

1. Provide liaison between the SETC Board of Directors, Executive Committee, Mississippi Theatre Association, and theatre organizations (educational, community, and professional) within the state, and encourage development of common aims and purposes.
2. Provide leadership through encouraging membership in the state organization and assisting in the formation and strengthening of state theatre groups and organizations.
3. Provide leadership in publicizing state activities by submission of information to Southern Theatre, the Mississippi Theatre Association Newsletter, and other publications.
4. File written reports (may be filed electronically) within the state and to the SETC Central Office as requested by the state and SETC leadership.
5. Attend the meetings of the Board within the state organization (as they are scheduled), and attend the fall and spring Board meetings of SETC to represent the state of Mississippi and to ensure that the state's interests are represented and voiced.
6. Serve as the appointed Mississippi Representative to the SETC Board for a three-year term (*SETC Operations Manual, 3/11/98*).
7. Send a list of new state officers, divisional officers, committee chairs, award recipients, and contest / festival winners at the conclusion of each annual state convention to the SETC Central Office.
8. Ensure that the state's annual organizational dues have been paid to SETC in order to protect the state's voting prerogatives and representative with SETC.
9. Assist the state president in planning the state meeting held during the SETC convention.
10. Meet with the body of State Representatives before the fall and spring Board meetings to discuss common goals, interests, and problems.
11. Orient the next Mississippi State Representative to the operations and procedures of SETC and supply that person with an updated manual of operations.
12. Be a member of SETC and MTA.
13. Serve as the liaison and official host for the representative from the SETC Executive Committee when that person visits Mississippi's state convention.
14. Assist the president in arranging transportation and lodging for the Executive Committee member for the state visit.
15. Prepare and submit a division report to the board following the state festival.
16. Vote in elections of the SETC and MTA Boards.
17. Serve on committees as appointed by SETC and state leadership.
18. Assist on grant applications as requested by state leadership.
19. Refer to the manual for this position at: <https://www.setc.org/about/leadership/committees/state-representatives-manual/>

Prepared by Shannon Robert (source: *SETC Manual of Operations*), Former Mississippi State Representative

OPERATIONS MANUAL: COMMUNITY THEATRE DIVISION

COMMUNITY THEATRE DIVISION GOALS

1. To provide learning experiences in artistic, technical, and management areas through performances, adjudication, workshops, and festival participation; thereby affirming, supporting, and nurturing community theatre companies.
2. To stimulate and inspire community theatre companies to strive toward excellence in theatrical production and to recognize them for their achievement through an appropriate adjudication process.
3. To develop enlightened and discerning audiences for community theatre.

COMMUNITY THEATRE GENERAL RULES

The Mississippi Theatre Association produces a community theatre festival annually. If four or more theatres participate in the festival, the state may advance two productions to the regional SETC festival. In odd-numbered years, two winners at the SETC level may advance to national AACTFest, sponsored by American Association of Community Theatre.

In order to follow best practice and avoid confusion, MTA elects to follow AACT rules for all community theatre festivals. Those rules are outlined below.

1. All theatre companies must meet the same eligibility standards and requirements.
2. It is the responsibility of each entering company to read the entire AACTFest Handbook and comply with all the rules.
3. The festival must be held in a functioning theatre facility, unless granted an exception by the AACT Vice President for Festivals.
4. Productions advancing to the regional or national level must be the same performance.
 - a. The script, actors, design elements, and blocking must be consistent with the original entry unless an adjudicator suggests a change.
 - b. If there is a change necessitated by facility limitations, this requires a waiver from the Vice President for Festivals.
5. Maximum time limits are 10 minutes for set-up, 60 minutes for performance, and 10 minutes for strike. A closed 80-minute tech rehearsal, supervised by the Commissioner, will be scheduled in the theatre facility for each competing company.
 - a. **Please note:** This rehearsal will not necessarily be scheduled the same day as the performance.
 - b. The house must be closed at the start of and during each performance.
 - c. The house must remain open for set-up and strike.

Festival Commissioners

In odd-numbered “national” years, Festival Commissioners are assigned by the AACT Festivals Coordinator under authority of the Vice President for Festivals to provide assistance to state and regional festivals. In matters of dispute during the festival, the Commissioner makes the final ruling. Any questions regarding disqualification must first be addressed to the Commissioner. The Commissioner verifies each production’s time with the official festival timekeepers and, if a violation occurs, the Commissioner will notify the company in violation following the completion of the festival.

Focus

The primary festival focus is on the productions. AACTFest rules, guidelines, and decisions are made for the benefit of the entering companies by creating an even playing field for all participants.

Censorship

AACT policy permits the widest possible range of dramatic material to be performed in any festival of the American Association of Community Theatre and, therefore, does not permit censorship of any company’s production.

Production

1. Companies will set up with the main curtain open.

- a. Set-up may occur behind a closed curtain if a public set-up would have a negative impact on a production.
- b. It is assumed this will be an uncommon occurrence and must be cleared with the Festival Commissioner in advance.
2. Once in progress, a production may only be stopped or interrupted for reasons of public safety or due to problems with the theatre facility.
3. The house must be closed at the start of and then during each performance. It must remain open for set-up and strike.

Waivers

Any request for a waiver of specific rules (except waivers pertaining to facility, which may only be granted by the AACT Vice President for Festivals) must be submitted in writing (email) to the VP for Festivals and copied to Festival Commission Chair and AACT Festival Coordinator. The solution must maintain equality for all companies.

Disqualification

Failure to comply with festival rules and requirements will be grounds for disqualification. The decision of the Festival Commissioner is final. When a disqualification takes place, the company will be notified on site, but no public announcement shall be made. The Festival Commissioner will also notify the contact person for the disqualified company by mail or electronically and will send copies to the Festival Commission Chair and the AACT office within one week of the close of the festival. The notification should include a reference to the Handbook section dealing with the violation.

Entrants

1. Theatre Companies
 - a. Any amateur theatre that has been organized for at least one year prior to the state festival and has produced at least two shows prior to the state festival is eligible to enter the festival process. (This applies to new theatres entering the AACT process.)
 - b. At the state level, a host may decide to limit the number of entrants if there are resource constraints; however, the limitations must be immediately announced, and companies accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.
 - c. Each theatre may enter only one production in only one state in any given festival cycle.
 - d. Theatres may showcase other productions with the permission of the Festival Chair. However, festivals with only showcase productions will not be considered part of the AACTFest cycle, and no Commissioner will be assigned.
 - e. Any production participating in a state or regional festival in a given festival cycle may not be reentered in the next festival cycle. In addition, a production must be originally mounted by the presenting organization and may not appear as an "imported" production, mounted independently of the presenting theatre.
 - f. State festivals with four or more AACT eligible entered companies may send two adjudicated productions to the appropriate regional festival.
 - g. In festivals where one production advances, balloting must rank productions first through third place.
 - i. If the selected company is unable to advance, the second and third-ranked shows are considered official alternates, respectively.
 - ii. In festivals where two productions advance, balloting must rank productions first through sixth place.
 - » If there are fewer than six productions, ranking is just through the entire slate.
 - » If the selected company is unable to advance, the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth-ranked shows are considered official alternates, respectively.
 - h. If a company decides not to advance to the next level, the alternate assumes the same rehearsal and performance slot originally scheduled for the advancing production.
 - i. Appointments: The AACT Vice President for Festivals has authority to appoint one production to represent a state or region when no official festival has been conducted - or only one theatre wants to participate.
 - j. All productions appointed to the National Festival from a region not holding a Regional Festival must have been adjudicated, at the theatre's expense, by an adjudicator approved by the Vice President for Festivals or his/her designee. If more than one production is interested in advancing from the State level to Regional, one of two selection methods must be used:

- i. A festival must be held to select an advancing company.
 - ii. All productions must be adjudicated by the same adjudicator at the theatres' expense.
 - » Use of this method and the adjudicator must be approved by the Vice President for Festivals or his/her designee.
 - » The productions selected to proceed from the regional festivals (one each for all regions) are entered into the national festival.
 - k. A twelfth company is selected from the region with the highest number of eligible productions in its AACTFest state festivals during the cycle.
 - i. Note: This does not include showcased productions.
 - ii. If a region does not advance a show and a second slot in the national festival opens, the same criteria will apply to the region with the second-highest number of eligible productions in its state festivals during the cycle.
 - l. If only one state in the region hosts a festival and there are no productions appointed from the other states in the region, the winning production may advance directly to the national festival.
2. Company Members
- a. Persons who are active members of Actors' Equity or Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) may not under any circumstances be involved as an actor in an entering production at any level of AACTFest.
 - b. All entering company actors are required to sign the Affidavit of AACTFest Actor Eligibility (Form T3).
3. Productions
- a. A production entered in the festival process may be a cutting of a full-length play or musical, a one-act play, or any other performance of a theatrical nature, including children's theatre productions intended for youth audiences and/or performed by children.
 - b. The total length of the performance may not exceed sixty minutes (including introductions, scene changes, and curtain calls).
 - i. Any element that brings the audience into the world of the play (music, sound, movement, lights, etc.), will begin the sixty-minute performance time.
 - ii. The complete cessation of such will complete the timing period.
 - iii. If a set-up or strike is intended to set mood, establish character, or otherwise begin the experience of the play, it will be considered part of the sixty-minute performance time.
 - c. Following each performance, the adjudicator(s) will comment on the performances. Emphasis will be on acting and direction, but final consideration will be the overall realization of the production.
 - d. Each company is responsible for furnishing any sets, props, or furniture needed for the production. The host theatre may provide standard articles of furniture, if requested to do so in advance.
 - e. Productions selected to proceed must be performed in the same form at all levels, except that adjustments in staging may be made in response to adjudication at the prior level within the cycle or to allow for differences in stage facilities.
 - i. Lines or business may not be removed except to allow for easier compliance with timing issues.
 - ii. Actor substitutions may not be made without written consent from the Festival Commission Chair; substitution requests must be for legitimate hardships.
 - f. Substitution of musicians, production staff, and technicians does not require consent; however, addition of crew or musicians does require consent.

Production Process

- 1. The company will be permitted to pre-assemble any portion of the set on site during load-in, or other pre-agreed times available to all companies, provided that the assembled scenery does not exceed the allotted storage space, and the process does not interfere with any other entrant or the reasonable rules of the host. Any assembly that cannot be accomplished during load-in or the pre-agreed times will need to be accomplished during the company's 80-minute rehearsal time.

2. All sets, props, costume changes, special effects, etc. (everything utilized to present the production) must fit into a storage area and on-deck area (see definitions below).
 - a. Exceptions are costumes and musical instruments, which need not fit in the storage or on-deck areas if they are not part of the set or used as properties in the production.
 - b. If space allows, primary costumes and make-up may be stored in the dressing room, and changed into prior to the performance.
3. Each company will have a storage area of similar size and should be aware different theatre spaces will have different height clearances.
 - a. The on-deck and storage areas may be open on all four sides; items need to be self-supporting. Perishable or valuable objects and weapons should be brought to the storage area immediately prior to rehearsal and performance and removed thereafter.
 - b. Items used during the production (props, costumes, etc.) may be struck to the on-deck area as soon as their use is complete.
4. On-Deck Area:
 - a. The on-deck area is immediately adjacent to the performance area.
 - b. It is the location from which the setup starts and the strike ends.
 - c. The on-deck area must be 100 square feet (no more, no less).
 - d. While it can be of any shape, it is strongly suggested that the dimensions be 10' x 10' if at all possible.
 - e. The national festival will have an on-deck area of 10'x10'.
5. Storage Area:
 - a. If there is not sufficient space to have an on-deck area for each company, it will be necessary for the host to provide storage areas.
 - b. The storage area will be the repository for all materials that will be placed in the on-deck area prior to set up/ performance.
 - c. The storage area may be any size or shape, but it must hold everything that will ultimately go in the on-deck area.
6. Companies must follow the festival venue's rules governing the use of weapons, pyrotechnics, and special effects.
 - a. While the host facility should publish the necessary rules, it is ultimately the responsibility of the performing company to confirm whether or not a specific item is permissible.
 - b. Backstage, onstage, house safety procedures, and other established safety policies of the host theatre must be followed at all times.
7. Each production is allowed a maximum ten-minute set-up time and ten-minute strike time.
 - a. When ready, the company spokesperson will signal the festival stage manager (or the designee) who will announce "go" loudly enough for ALL timing personnel to hear.
 - b. The timing will begin at that point, and the company will proceed with the set-up.
 - c. The company is allowed to ask timers how much time remains in the setup or strike period.
 - d. When finished, the company may assemble as determined by the company and the company spokesperson will again signal the festival stage manager who will announce, "stop."
 - e. At this point, no other action may take place on stage until the start of the performance; everything must be ready and in place, on stage and backstage for the show to start.
 - f. Cast and crew can still move to "places."
 - g. After the performance, the strike will proceed in the same manner.
8. Technical and performance personnel need not gather in or near the on-deck area before and after set-up or before and after strike. While it may be useful for the company to set a beginning and end position for the sake of keeping track of company members, their location will be at the discretion of the performing company and is not governed by festival rules.
9. Light and sound operators may begin the setup period in their respective operations areas and remain there at the end of setup.
 - a. They do not need to join the rest of the company during or after strike.

- b. If these operators assist in the on-stage setup, they must be in their show positions before “stop” is called.
 - c. Lighting and sound checks must be conducted within the 10-minute set-up time.
10. It is the responsibility of the company to ensure the stage floor is left in the same or better condition than it was when the setup began, including wet mopping, if necessary.
- a. Nothing may be placed on the stage floor that cannot be adequately removed within the allotted strike time.
 - b. Care should be taken not to disturb any shows’ spike tape.
 - c. Spike tape will not be removed by the company during strike.
11. The production process (set-up, performance, strike) should continue without significant delay until complete.
- a. Should a production exceed any time limits, the performance will not be stopped, nor will an announcement be made.
 - b. Adjudicators will comment as scheduled.
 - c. Timekeepers will notify the Festival Commissioner who will disqualify the company from selection to proceed.
12. Immediately after the strike, company members are usually seated in the front rows in the auditorium for the adjudication.

Entry Requirements:

1. The Festival Chair should provide companies a deadline for the required material.
2. Each company must provide the following to the Festival Chair before the festival begins:
 - a. Festival Entry/Information Sheet (Form T1 found in the AACT Handbook).
 - b. Warranty of permission to perform the property from the leasing agent and/or author, and warranty of permission to perform the property as cut or altered; warranty that the theatre has obtained all other necessary rights.
 - i. Form T2 found in the AACT Handbook.
 - ii. It is wise to obtain performance permission for all three levels prior to the state festival.
 - c. Four scripts marked as intended to be performed.
 - i. Do not photocopy any scripts without proper permission from the playwright or publisher.
 - ii. Additional scripts may be required for interpreters or other personnel with sufficient notice to the company.
 - iii. Because of the addition of an alternate adjudicator, five scripts will be required for the National festival.
 - d. Entry and registration fees as required by specific festivals.
 - e. Affidavit of AACTFest Eligibility for each actor (Form T3).
 - f. Technical Information Forms
 - i. Forms T4 a, b.
 - ii. Companies advancing to regional and the national festival must re-submit Forms T4 a & b, reflecting any corrections and/or changes, to the AACT office for the next festival chair, or for the National Festival Technical Director to the national festival liaison.
 - g. Program information as requested by the festival.
 - h. Proof of membership in state/regional associations and any other local applicable fees as required by the particular festival.
 - i. AACT Non-Member theatres are required to pay a \$100 authorization fee.
 - i. This fee qualifies the theatre to participate and advance in the AACT National Festival Cycle.
 - ii. Fee includes a one-year AACT introductory membership.
 - iii. Fee does not include state, regional, or national registration costs; those fees are determined by the host association and facility.
 - j. Failure to comply with the AACTFest rules are grounds for disqualification. If there are questions, they may be addressed to the Festival Commissioner or the Festival Commission Chair at any time.
 - k. During the festival, the rulings of the Festival Commissioner are final.

Technical Specifications:

1. Lights

- a. The use of a basic festival lighting plot will be provided for all entering companies.
 - i. The plot may not be altered.
 - ii. The host must provide all performing companies with drawings, magic sheets, etc. clearly illustrating the instrumentation, gel colors, circuiting, and wash areas on a timely basis.
- b. It is the responsibility of the performing company to coordinate any additions to the Festival Lighting Plot with the House Technical Director prior to arriving at the Festival Theatre.
- c. When part of the inventory, the Host theatre may offer the use of a follow spot.
 - i. If the follow spot needs to be rented, the cost will be shared by all companies requesting its use.
 - ii. A company may supply their own follow spot, providing the Host Technical Director approves of this use.
- d. Special lighting is permitted; any special lighting must be set up during the 80-minute rehearsal period.
 - i. The host may, at its discretion, set up specials prior to the company's rehearsal.
 - ii. The same level of accommodation by the host must be provided to all groups.
 - iii. Lighting specials are limited to the use of six (6) circuits.
 - iv. Additional specials may be included if used in sets, such as strip lights or practicals, or carried by actors, if such specials are not incorporated into the house lighting system.
- e. A performing company may provide moving lighting instruments and/or LED fixtures to be used as specials, providing the Host Theatre Facility can accommodate their use.
 - i. Each moving lighting instrument will count as one special no matter how many times it is used.
 - ii. The programming and focusing of these specials must be accomplished during a performing company's 80-minute tech rehearsal.
- f. The Host Technical Director must approve all instrumentation for lighting specials.
 - i. This approval must be requested prior to the Festival.
 - ii. If it is necessary to replug, re-aim and/or re-gel instruments between performances, the operation will be completed by the host staff and will be done prior to the production company's set-up.
- g. It is the producing company's responsibility to ensure any instrumentation not provided by the host has electrical connections compatible with the host facility's equipment.
- h. Lighting specials may be connected and left in place between a company's rehearsal and performance unless the Host Technical Director determines the placement may obstruct other companies. In this case, the specials must either be relocated or set-up and struck as necessary by the host technical staff prior to the 10-minute set-up.
- i. If a company elects to supplement the host facility's lighting equipment with portable control consoles, etc., the equipment, including any necessary power or control cables, must be set up during the company's rehearsal period.
 - i. The Host Technical Director will determine whether the placement of any or all of the equipment is detrimental to other companies.
 - ii. If so, the designated equipment must be set-up and struck during the standard setup and strike time.
- j. During their technical rehearsal time a company will program the lighting looks/cues needed for their performance.
 - i. These cues will be stored on the Lighting console if it has memory capability.
 - ii. The host theatre may elect to program cues for the entering companies prior to the scheduled rehearsal times if the opportunity is offered to all performing companies.
 - iii. The host may set reasonable conditions for the service, such as a specific deadline for submission of cue parameters prior to the festival.

2. Sound

- a. The Host theatre must have a functioning sound system with a minimum of a CD player, a hook up for a laptop computer, house speakers, and a mixing board capable of accommodating the available sound sources.

- i. There should be at least one to three house microphones for use by both the companies as a special sound source and by the adjudicators.
 - ii. There needs to be a means of communication between all operator positions including backstage, sound & light control and spotlights if used.
 - iii. When possible, the Host Facility should have onstage speakers available as playback monitors for actors to hear music or important sound F/X.
 - b. The Host Facility is NOT expected to provide body mics for actor sound reinforcement. If a performing company brings their own body mics and mixing board, they must coordinate with the Host Technical Director prior to the Festival to ascertain body mic feasibility at the Host Facility.
 - c. If a company elects to supplement existing equipment, the company's equipment may be set up during the company's rehearsal period.
 - i. Sound equipment may be connected and left in place between a company's rehearsal and performance unless the Host Technical Director determines the placement may be detrimental to other companies.
 - ii. If this is the case, the equipment must either be relocated or set-up and struck as necessary by the host technical staff prior to the 10-minute set-up.
 - d. There is no limit to the number of sound cues or effects used during the performance.
 - i. Sound cues may be loaded onto the Host theatre's equipment during the technical rehearsal.
 - ii. Any sound effect device, such as a door unit that is used for a "slamming" sound during the performance, must be set up and struck during the set-up and strike times and be stored with scenery in the on-deck area.
 - e. For panel adjudication, each adjudicator must be issued a separate microphone.
3. Scenic Devices
- a. No scenic devices may be hung, placed, or positioned in the playing area prior to the scheduled Tech Rehearsal.
 - i. Scenic devices used for creating special effects have no limit but must be provided by the company.
 - ii. The Host Facility must approve scenic devices required to be set up in the "house" of the theatre or onstage.
 - iii. The Host Technical Director may override placement of any devices if deemed a hazard.
 - iv. The devices should be set up during the company's technical rehearsal.
 - v. The Host Technical Director may determine a scenic element should stay in place to prevent potential injury and may allow a scenic element to stay hung if it is not detrimental to other companies.
 - vi. If the Host Technical Director has concerns about the safety of a scenic device, they must consult with the AACT Commissioner and company representative to solve the issue.
 - b. If a company has equipment requiring significant warm-up time (fog machines, for example) the equipment should be stored at the edge of the company's storage area and arrangements made with the Host Technical Director to initiate the warmup process prior to the set up.

Emergencies

- 1. Only the Festival Commissioner or the Host Facility Coordinator (this may be the Festival Chair) may determine and declare a public safety problem.
- 2. The designated representative of the company in performance may declare a problem with the theatre facility.
 - a. In such cases, the Festival Commissioner will immediately investigate the seriousness of the problem and the likely impact on the production.
 - b. If the company stops its performance and the declaration is denied, the production will be disqualified.
 - c. The disqualification will not be made public, and the company will be notified of the disqualification following AACT policy.
 - d. In any case, the performance may begin from the beginning or from the point of interruption, at the company's option, subject to local scheduling needs.
 - e. Problems with the theatre facility should be invoked in only the most extreme of circumstances.
 - f. Any declaration must be made while the performance is in progress; no claim will be entertained after the fact.

ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY THEATRE DIVISION POLICIES

The following policies have been established to assist in the accomplishment of the above goals.

1. The house rules of the Host Theatre will apply as pertains to smoking areas, food and beverages, admission of children, etc.
2. No cameras will be allowed in the auditorium except those officially designated by the host group.
 - a. The official photographer may not use any kind of flash or distracting light and will be asked to be as unobtrusive as possible.
 - b. If the performing group feels that the photography will be detrimental to the performance, the group may request an alternate solution from the Festival Chair.
3. AACT and SETC rules prohibit censorship of any kind.
 - a. This may necessitate publishing disclaimers about performances.
 - b. Host theatres may notify their season patrons in advance if they have reason to believe a festival performance may be locally unacceptable, or publish a disclaimer, but in NO CASE may they refuse to allow the company to perform.
 - i. Disclaimers may be published in the festival handbook or announced by the Community Theatre Division Chair prior to the beginning of the production containing mature content.
 - ii. Disclaimers may be made for, but are not limited to the following content:
 - » Mature content
 - » Adult language/profanity
 - » Firearms or weapons
 - » Gunshots and/or loud noises
 - » Performers moving among audience members/Performers in the house
 - » Fog or haze effects
 - » Strobe or other lighting effects
 - » Overt sexual content
 - » Nudity
 - » Blood and/or gore
 - » Historical discrimination, racism, and/or bigotry
 - » Drugs/alcohol/substance abuse
 - » Sexual, physical, and/or emotional violence
 - » Suicide, suicidal ideation, or self-harm
 - » Child abuse
 - c. Prior to attending the MTA festival, a "viewer discretion" statement must be made available to the Community Theatre Division Chair if the content is not acceptable for all age groups.

DUTIES OF THE COMMUNITY THEATRE DIVISION CHAIR

1. The Executive Director will communicate with community theatres encouraging them to participate in the MTA Festival by entering a production or observing.
 - a. Communicate with theatres that do not normally participate in the MTA Festival and encourage them to attend the festival.
 - b. Collect all individual, organizational and other required forms.
 - i. Ensure that all of the required information has been received.
 - ii. This includes all fees, forms and scripts.
 - c. Send copies of individual and organizational forms to person handling registration.

2. The Executive Director will send all technical questionnaires to the Host Site Technical coordinator, and the Community Division chairperson will serve as a liaison between host site personnel and theatres participating in the festival.
 - a. Work with host site Technical Director to field questions posed by the participating theatres.
 - b. Collect and then mail scripts to the adjudicators prior to the festival.
3. During an AACTFest year, the Executive Director will learn the name of the AACTFest Representative who will attend the State Festival.
 - a. Supply hotel accommodation information and provide any necessary assistance with travel arrangements.
 - b. AACT pays for the travel of the AACT representative attending the festival. MTA only pays for their MTA registration.
4. The Vice President will be responsible for holding an Adjudicators meeting prior to the first production.
 - a. Attend the Adjudicators meeting.
 - b. Prepare and hold the Directors meeting.
 - c. Sample agendas for both meetings can be found below.
5. Prepare and hold a Community Theatre Division meeting during the festival at the time set by the festival coordinator.
6. Distribute division awards during the Awards Ceremony.
7. Coordinate a workshop for community theatres in the fall.
8. Work with the Adult Individual Events Chair to generate interest in adult individual events.
9. Respond to e-mails from the President and the Executive Director in a timely manner.
10. Review festival materials as requested by the President and the Executive Director.
11. Prepare and submit a division report to the board following the state festival.
12. Provide content for newsletters, blog posts, and social media as requested by the President and the Executive Director.
13. Attend all board meetings and develop ideas to make the division stronger; propose these ideas to the board.
14. Review the division guidelines in the MTA handbook and edit so that they remain up-to-date. Submit handbook changes to the MTA secretary two weeks prior to a board meeting.
15. Attend meetings (such as the Secondary Workshop, Town Hall Meetings, Arts on the Capitol Day, etc.) when requested by the President and the Executive Director.
16. Stay mindful that this position means that sometimes the Community Theatre Chair and Vice Chair will have to miss performances, be back stage, or do work at the festival that separates them from the main festival events. Bear in mind that these positions are to better the organization and not the individual interest of the Chair or Vice Chair.

COMMUNITY THEATRE FESTIVAL ADJUDICATORS MEETING AGENDA

1. Provide and review a copy of the festival program.
2. Introduce the person who will be the adjudicators' escort. The escort will stay with them all day and make sure they are where they are supposed to be.
3. Introduce the Festival Coordinators and other MTA Board Members.
4. Communicate that we will try to go to lunches/dinners as a group IF they are interested. This is not mandatory, but MTA would like to entertain them for meals when possible.
5. Show them the adjudicator room, restrooms, etc.
6. Allow them to determine where they want to sit in the auditorium, and mark off the adjacent seats as necessary.
7. Ask about any special requests or needs.
8. Provide:
 - a. A copy of the Guidelines for Adjudication.
 - b. A list of the festival awards.
 - c. A clipboard, notepad, pen, and light.

- d. A copy of the Adjudicator Festival Evaluation form.
- e. The Adjudicator's Ballot sheets.
- 9. Review the verbal response procedure following a production.
 - a. Each adjudicator is allowed 5 minutes to respond to the production; the adjudicators will rotate the order in which they speak.
 - b. The Chair will time the responses or designate an official timekeeper for the duration of the festival.
- 10. Explain procedure for remitting receipts:
 - a. The Executive Director must receive all receipts before they leave on Sunday.
 - b. MTA will pay for the hotel room upon checkout. They do not need to pay.
 - c. Ask the adjudicators to provide all receipts including travel and food receipts as soon as the festival is over.
 - d. MTA can calculate mileage based on the State of Mississippi handbook.
 - e. If the adjudicators have any other festival-related expenses, they should turn those receipts in as well.
- 11. Invite the adjudicators to join us for the party! There will be informal socials Friday and Saturday night after the last production.
- 12. Ask for questions.

COMMUNITY THEATRE FESTIVAL GUIDELINES FOR ADJUDICATION

Three out-of-state adjudicators will respond to Community Theatre Festival entries. Guidelines for adjudicators has been taken from the American Association of Community Theatres' Handbook.

Adjudicators will adhere to the following criteria:

- 1. Plays are to be judged on the overall production, the major elements of which are PERFORMANCE, DIRECTION, and DESIGN.
- 2. The choice of material is to be as unlimited as possible.
- 3. To overcome the seeming difficulty of comparing musicals, revues, avant garde, "controversial," and dramatic material, entries should be judged on how fully ALL production values and criteria below are realized.
- 4. Because of the difficulties of touring, such as an unfamiliar stage, the host technical crew, minimal rehearsal time and potentially long distance travel, participating groups should consider the technical aspects of performing "on the road" when choosing a selection.
- 5. It should be noted that a blank stage or a complex set can be equally effective, if appropriate to the material attempted.
- 6. Technical competence is to be given consideration as to its effectiveness as an integral part of the total production experience.
- 7. Adjudicator response forms and score sheets will be returned to each organization at the end of the festival.
- 8. Adjudicators should provide constructive, written feedback on the evaluation forms and score elements consistently and fairly across all productions.

COMMUNITY THEATRE FESTIVAL AWARDS

- 1. The adjudicators will deliberate and agree on the awards given. They may award discretionary special recognition to recognize companies and/or individuals as warranted.
- 2. The following awards are required.
 - a. Warren McDaniel Award for Best Production (x2 if there are 4 or more entries in the festival)
 - b. Runner-Up Best Production (when only one Warren McDaniel Award is given)
 - c. Outstanding Achievement in Acting (x2 – not gender specific)
- 3. Special Recognition Awards are not required, may include, and are not limited to the following:
 - a. Outstanding Scenic Design
 - b. Outstanding Costume Design

- c. Outstanding Technical Achievement
- d. Outstanding Ensemble
- e. Outstanding Performance in a Supporting Role (x2)
- f. Outstanding Direction
- g. Excellence in Make-up, Props, Sound Design, Original Playwriting, Choreography etc.

COMMUNITY THEATRE DIRECTORS MEETING INFORMATION

Attendees for the Director's Meeting:

- 1. Division Chair and Co-Chair
- 2. AACT Commissioner (in national years)
- 3. The Director or one person designated by the Director from each theatre in the performance block
- 4. Host Technical Advisor
- 5. Local Technical Personnel
- 6. Time Keepers

Suggested Agenda for the Meeting:

- 1. Introduce the participants.
- 2. Introduce the technical personnel.
 - a. Explain each person's duties
 - b. Explain the facility's technical capabilities
- 3. Collect three copies of each program for the adjudicators. Provide a copy of each program to each adjudicator prior to the production block.
- 4. Confirm method of timekeeping.
- 5. Explain and tour the physical production space.
 - a. Review 10' x 10' blocks.
 - b. Review load-in areas
 - c. Tour dressing rooms and restrooms
- 6. Confirm that all the required materials have been received prior to production beginning.
- 7. Explain about the awards ceremony and encourage participation in workshops and division meetings.
- 8. Ask and answer any questions.

COMMUNITY THEATRE DIVISION CODE OF CONDUCT

Knowing that any organization is judged largely by the behavior of its individual members, we who attend the Mississippi Theatre Association Convention agree that registering at the State Convention constitutes our subscribing to the following rules, which comprise the Code of Conduct.

- 1. Although the majority of participants in the Community Theatre Division Festival are adults, the Production Director will be held responsible for each and every minor in the Company. The Production Director will also be the initial point of contact for any situation that may arise with a member of the Company.
- 2. Members registered at the convention should be present and on time for all scheduled productions, workshops, etc. in which they are participating. MTA activities will not hold for members who are absent or tardy.
- 3. Use of alcohol and tobacco shall be governed by the laws of the municipality or the policies of the university or college where the Festival is being conducted. All members must follow the laws of the State of Mississippi regarding the presence and/or use of drugs.
- 4. Registered members are expected to wear official badges at all times to allow appropriate entry into events and to easily facilitate identification of registered participants.

5. Each member will respect the property of the host theatre.
 - a. Registered members shall be responsible for providing all equipment necessary for their production, and no items belonging to the host theatre shall be removed or relocated from their current location without the permission of the Technical Director of the host theater.
 - b. The Production Director will ensure that all personal items for each member shall be removed from the dressing room as soon as possible following the conclusion of the Company's competition time.
 - c. Each Company and its members shall assume responsibility for the removal of any and all trash created during the Company's use of the dressing room and all such trash shall be removed as quickly as possible following competition.
6. MTA representatives shall defer to the Technical Director of the host theatre regarding questions about specific technical needs – lighting, sound, etc. Each Production Director should discuss any special needs with the Technical Director of the host theatre at least two weeks prior to Festival.
7. Registered members shall conduct themselves professionally during the adjudicators' critique following performance. Additional understanding of the adjudicators' critiques can be found on the comment form which will be provided to each Company after the completion of the Awards Program.
8. Open verbal abuse (either spoken, written, or shared through social media) directed toward the Mississippi Theatre Association or any member of the host facility staff will not be tolerated and may cause the Company and/or individual members to be placed on probation for a period of at last one year. MTA reserves the right to extend the period of probation based on the severity of such action.
9. Each member is expected to adhere to all Mississippi Theatre Association Community Theatre Festival Rules/Guidelines.
10. Any issue not addressed in this Code of Conduct shall defer to the Mississippi Theatre Association Community Theatre Festival Rules/Guidelines. Should an answer not be provided therein, assessment of the issue shall be reviewed by the Mississippi Theatre Association Board of Directors who will have final judgment as to the consequence of the action.

SAMPLE COMMUNITY DIVISION ADJUDICATOR RESPONSE FORM



MISSISSIPPI THEATRE ASSOCIATION ADJUDICATOR RESPONSE FORM



COMMUNITY DIVISION THEATRE FESTIVAL

COMMUNITY THEATRE: _____ YEAR: _____

PRODUCTION: _____

ADJUDICATOR NAME: _____

PERFORMANCE	CHARACTERIZATION (Believability, Technical Skill, Interpretation, etc.)
	ENSEMBLE (Timing, Consistency, Commitment, etc.)
	VOICE (Projection, Articulation, Accent Work, etc.)
	MOVEMENT (Physicality, Combat, Dance, etc.)
	INTENT (Appropriateness, Consistency, etc.)
DIRECTION	MATERIAL (Selection, Appropriateness to the Company, etc.)
	CONCEPT (Directorial Choices, Appropriateness to the Material, Execution, etc.)
	STAGING (Blocking, Stage Pictures, Choreography, Use of Space, etc.)
	PACE / TIMING (Appropriateness to the Material, Control of the Structure, etc.)
	PREPAREDNESS (Is the production well-rehearsed?)
DESIGN Scenic / Costume / Sound / Lighting / Props / etc.	APPROPRIATENESS TO MATERIAL (Do the technical elements support the overall production?)
	NECESSITY TO THE PRODUCTION
	EXECUTION QUALITY OF DESIGN ELEMENTS
	OPERATION QUALITY OF DESIGN ELEMENTS
	ACTOR INTERACTION WITH DESIGN ELEMENTS

SAMPLE COMMUNITY DIVISION ADJUDICATOR SCORE SHEET



MISSISSIPPI THEATRE ASSOCIATION ADJUDICATOR SCORE SHEET



COMMUNITY DIVISION THEATRE FESTIVAL

COMMUNITY THEATRE: _____ YEAR: _____

PRODUCTION: _____

ADJUDICATOR NAME: _____

Adjudicators should put the number corresponding with the rating for each criterion in the appropriate box (i.e. Superior = 4; Excellent = 3; Good = 2; Fair = 1). The scores for the category will be added together to make up the Category Score (Acting, Directing, Design). The three category scores will then be added together to determine the final Production Score.

(Note to tabulator: If you are using the scoring spreadsheet, input a 1 in the appropriate cell instead of the corresponding rating of 1, 2, 3, or 4. The spreadsheet will then calculate the accurate subtotals and totals.)

		FAIR (1)	GOOD (2)	EXCELLENT (3)	SUPERIOR (4)
PERFORMANCE	CHARACTERIZATION (Believability, Technical Skill, Interpretation, etc.)				
	ENSEMBLE (Timing, Consistency, Commitment, etc.)				
	VOICE (Projection, Articulation, Accent Work, etc.)				
	MOVEMENT (Physicality, Combat, Dance, etc.)				
	INTENT (Appropriateness, Consistency, etc.)				
	PERFORMANCE SUBTOTAL				
	PERFORMANCE TOTAL				
DIRECTION	MATERIAL (Selection, Appropriateness to the Company, etc.)				
	CONCEPT (Directorial Choices, Appropriateness to the Material, Execution, etc.)				
	STAGING (Blocking, Stage Pictures, Choreography, Use of Space, etc.)				
	PACE / TIMING (Appropriateness to the Material, Control of the Structure, etc.)				
	PREPAREDNESS (Is the production well-rehearsed?)				
	DIRECTION SUBTOTAL				
	DIRECTION TOTAL				
DESIGN Scenic / Costume / Sound / Lighting / Props / etc.	APPROPRIATENESS TO MATERIAL (Do the technical elements support the overall production?)				
	NECESSITY TO THE PRODUCTION				
	EXECUTION QUALITY OF DESIGN ELEMENTS				
	OPERATION QUALITY OF DESIGN ELEMENTS				
	ACTOR INTERACTION WITH DESIGN ELEMENTS				
	DESIGN SUBTOTAL				
	DESIGN TOTAL				

TOTAL PRODUCTION SCORE	
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OPERATIONS MANUAL: SECONDARY DIVISION

DUTIES OF THE SECONDARY DIVISION CHAIR

The Executive Director will communicate with high school theatres and encourage them to participate in the MTA Festival by entering a production or observing.

The Executive Director will send all technical questionnaires to the Host Site Technical coordinator.

As changes are made to the Secondary Division Chair's responsibilities as DramaFest Liaison, they will be added to the list of responsibilities in this section.

The Secondary Chair will:

1. Communicate with high school theatres that do not normally participate in the MTA Festival and encourage them to attend the festival.
2. Coordinate a workshop for high school teachers in the fall.
 - a. Create the line-up and book the sessions for the Annual Secondary Teachers meeting in September or October
 - b. This workshop lasts a day and a half.
 - c. The Executive Director typically handles securing the location, which is typically on-site at the host facility for the upcoming State Festival.
3. Serve as a liaison between host site personnel and theatres participating in the regional and state festivals.
4. Work with host site Technical Directors to field questions posed by participating theatres.

For the MTA State Festival, the Secondary Chair will:

5. Build and maintain an archival festival notebook (or shared digital folder) that contains copies of critical festival paperwork and other information that an incoming Secondary Chair would find useful for subsequent years' festivals.
6. Collect copies of competing schools' rights, permission to cut, and music royalties.
 - a. Provide a copy of each to the Executive Director.
 - b. File a copy into the festival notebook.
7. Develop the performance schedule for the Secondary Festival at MTA.
 - a. File a copy of the finalized schedule into the festival notebook.
 - b. Some things to consider in the development of the schedule:
 - i. The line-up consists of ten (10) schools, and the list of participating schools changes every year.
 - ii. Each school must have a 35-minute combined load-in and private, protected rehearsal time.
 - iii. Announce the performance order as soon as possible following the close of the regional DramaFests.
 - iv. Communicate with the Theatre for Youth Chair to resolve potential conflicts for organizations with entries in both festivals.
8. Run load-in, rehearsals, the festival itself, and load-out.
9. Collect four (4) programs from each school
 - a. File one copy into the festival notebook.
 - b. Provide one copy to each adjudicator.
10. Collect one staged production photo from each school with actors in costume and labeled.
 - a. Allow the adjudicators to use this during their deliberation to accurately identify actors.
 - b. After adjudication is complete, file each photo in the festival notebook with the school's program.
11. Introduce each production; include the name of the school, the title of the show, and the name of the director.
12. Call on each production to begin:
 - a. State the name of the school and ask "are you ready?"
 - b. After the school responds, verbalize the name of the school and "go!"

13. Designate and manage timekeepers.
 - a. There should be three official timekeepers, and the Chair and Vice Chair may be two of them.
 - b. Timekeepers should record the start time, end time, and total time on the Secondary Timekeeping Form for each production.
 - c. File the three timekeeping forms into the festival notebook.
14. Oversee load-out.
 - a. Each school will be given a designated time to load out of the performance space.
 - b. Check the space to make sure everything is clear and ready for the next block to load in (or for the festival to end.)
15. Distribute Secondary festival awards during the Awards Ceremony
16. Distribute score sheets and adjudicator feedback to each participating school after the awards ceremony.
17. Run the Secondary Division meeting at the state festival.
18. Prepare and submit a division report to the board following the state festival.

The Secondary Chair will regularly:

19. Provide content for newsletters, blog posts, and social media as requested by the President and the Executive Director.
20. Respond to e-mails from the President and the Executive Director in a timely manner.
21. Review festival materials as requested by the President and the Executive Director.
22. Attend all board meetings and develop ideas make the division stronger; propose these ideas to the board.
23. Review the division guidelines in the MTA handbook and edit so that they remain up-to-date. Submit handbook changes to the MTA secretary two weeks prior to a board meeting.
24. Stay mindful that this position means that sometimes the Chair and Vice Chair will have to miss performances, be back stage, or do work at the festival that separates them from the main festival events. Bear in mind that these positions are to better the organization and not the individual interest of the Chair or Vice Chair.

SECONDARY FESTIVAL RULES AND GUIDELINES

1. Schools will be assigned specific load-in times and held responsible for adhering to the festival schedule.
 - a. Each school will have a 35-minute combined load-in and private, protected rehearsal time.
 - b. Schools exceeding their allotted load-in time will have two (2) points automatically deducted from their final production score.
2. MTA and regional festival hosts will return both the written evaluation forms and the score sheets from the adjudicators to each participating school.
 - a. Participating schools will receive these documents following the close of the Awards Ceremony.
 - b. If participating schools are obligated to leave prior to the Awards Ceremony, the forms will be emailed to the primary contact's email address provided at the time of registration.
3. Prior to performance the school may move their items up to the Go Line.
 - a. The Go Line will be indicated by taped lines on the floor in the back and wings.
 - b. Schools will preset their items during the adjudication time of the previous performance.
 - c. The presetting of all items to the Go Line must be done in absolute silence and must not be seen by the audience. We insist on not disturbing the adjudication time. Out of fairness, we require the same procedure for the first show of the block even though there is not an adjudication in progress.
4. Official time begins when the festival director says "go" after the school's response.
 - a. The school is allotted 45 minutes to setup from the Go Line, perform, and strike the set to behind the Go Line.

- b. A designated representative from each school will be instructed to call “clear” once everything has passed the Go Line.
 - c. Official time will then be stopped and recorded.
5. A second time will begin from the “clear” call.
 - a. The school will have 5 minutes to reset their production items back into the 10x10 block and to make their way to the front row of the auditorium for adjudication.
 - b. Adjudication time will begin after the allotted 5-minute strike time has ended.
6. The reset back to the 10x10 box runs just like it did before. Everything must fit in the 10x10 at the reset.
7. It is important in order for the festival to remain on schedule.
 - a. Producing organizations should rehearse the reset to the box so as not to exceed the allotted time.
 - b. Producing organizations should also practice the preset to the Go Line in order to be as efficient and unobtrusive to the adjudication as possible.
8. The dividing line between the North and South will be I-20. Any school North of I-20 will go to the festival at Mississippi State University and any school South of I-20 will go to the University of Southern Mississippi Festival.
9. Both regional festivals will cap the number of productions at 17. This does not include observing schools.
10. Each regional festival will advance five (5) productions to the State Festival.
11. A drop fee will be added to each regional festival to deter schools from dropping out at the last minute.
12. The MTA Awards Ceremony will announce the third-place production and note that this school will represent Mississippi at SETC in the case that one of the advancing schools is unable to attend.
 - a. This award will be announced before the announcement of the runner-up and winning production.
 - b. The third-place production will receive a physical award.

SECONDARY ELIGIBILITY

1. A Traditional High School will be defined as a single school recognized within a school district and consisting of secondary students.
2. Secondary students will be defined as those students attending a Traditional High School and enrolled in grades 9-12.
3. Traditional High Schools will be eligible for all awards, as well as the right to advance.
4. Non-school groups will include all community based programs with students in grades 9-12 or the equivalent.
 - a. Non-school groups may include homeschool students as well as students enrolled in a traditional high school, charter, or magnet school.
 - b. Any non-school group or combined school group will be placed on a waiting list and granted entry into a regional festival based on registration numbers.
 - i. Non-school groups will be notified of their admission into the festival following the close of the festival's registration window.
 - ii. Non-school groups will be eligible to compete in the regional festivals and may earn all awards EXCEPT the Distinguished Play Award.
 - iii. Non-school groups are not eligible to advance to the MTA State Festival.
 - iv. A non-school group may not take a slot in a regional festival from a school group that is eligible to advance to the MTA State Festival.
 - c. A student may only compete in one show at a regional festival. (I.e. The same high school student may not participate in a show with their school and a show with a non-school group.)
 - d. The regional festival adjudicators will treat a non-school group the same as all other entrants in the regional festival by providing educational, critical feedback in the 15-minute response block and by providing the group's director with written feedback at the close of the festival.
5. Homeschool student groups are those community based programs that ONLY include homeschool students in grades 9-12.

- a. No students enrolled in a traditional high school may participate in this group or it will be classified as a non-school student group.
- b. Homeschool groups will be eligible to advance to MTA State Festival (as long as they qualify as a homeschool group).
- c. Homeschool groups will be eligible for ALL awards.
6. Non-Traditional schools will be eligible to participate in Regional and State MTA Festivals
 - a. E.g. Adept School, Bailey Magnet, Wells APAC
 - b. Non-Traditional schools will be eligible for all awards and benefits of a traditional high school
7. Festival capacity is 17 participating schools.
 - a. The first 17 entries the festival coordinator receives following the opening of festival registration will be accepted.
 - b. Schools who meet the registration deadline but exceed the festival capacity will be placed on a waiting list and notified in the event a school withdraws.
8. The order of performance will be randomly generated immediately following deadline date.
 - a. Regional festival coordinators will communicate performance order to the participating schools as soon as possible.
 - b. Performance order will not be based on the order the packets are received by the Host site.
 - c. Schools with extenuating circumstances (such as administrative mandates due to state testing, etc.) must communicate their special needs with the respective regional festival coordinator.
9. The **one show per festival rule** means that a theatre group cannot enter a secondary show in a regional DramaFest and also enter that production in the Community Theatre Festival, Theatre for Youth Festival, or Secondary Individual Events, or any other MTA festival.
10. The participating school must contract with the copyright / royalty holders to obtain written permission to perform the play, and a copy of the appropriate permissions will be required prior to performing.
11. If a production must be edited to conform to festival production length requirements, the participating school must obtain written permission from the publisher/royalty agent to perform in the festival. A copy of permission will also be required prior to performing.
12. If a production uses copyrighted music as part of the production, the participating school must obtain written permission from the copyright holder in order to use their music. A copy of permission will also be required prior to performing.

SECONDARY PERFORMANCE / TECHNICAL RULES AND PROCEDURES

1. **Time:** Shows may not run longer than forty-five minutes. Timing begins when called by host site (and the Go Line is crossed). Timing ends when the set is completely struck: the stage must be completely cleared (and behind the Go-Line).
 - a. The forty-five minute period includes the time for setting up the stage (including any offstage sound or lighting equipment brought to the site by the participating school), lighting and sound checks at Regional Festival, performing the play, and clearing the stage.
 - b. Each participating school will have a private rehearsal period during the festival.
 - i. The site coordinator and/or stage manager will schedule technical briefings at regular intervals during each regional festival.
 - ii. Only the participating school and official festival representatives may be present during the rehearsal period; no adjudicators, participants from other schools, or spectators may be in the auditorium or on the stage during this time.
 - iii. AT THE REGIONAL FESTIVAL, there will be a combined load-in/rehearsal period of thirty (30) minutes.
 - iv. AT THE STATE FESTIVAL (MTA), there will be a combined load-in/rehearsal period of thirty (35) minutes.
 - v. All actors and set pieces must remain in the area behind the Go Line designated by the host site until the rehearsal time begins and must return to that area before timing stops.
 - vi. Participants may use rehearsal time to examine the stage and the technical booth prior to their performance.

- c. Set-up and strike are the sole responsibility of each participating school.
 - d. If any production exceeds the forty-five minute time limit, it cannot receive a Superior Rating or Best Production, advance to the State Festival from a Regional Festival, or advance to SETC from the MTA State Festival. Productions exceeding the time limit are still eligible for all other awards.
 - e. The time clock may be stopped at the discretion of the site coordinator if unforeseen and extenuating circumstances arise during the forty-five minute time allotment.
2. **Running the show:** Only students from the performing school and members of the host site crew are allowed in the sound/light booth or backstage during the run of the show.
- a. No non-students, directors or teachers may enter the booth, backstage area or communicate with their students in the booth by headset or otherwise during the run of the show except in case of a safety emergency.
 - b. Teachers and technical directors may assist with load-in, technical rehearsal time, and load-out only.
 - c. Note: Not all productions last a full 45 minutes.
3. By entering the festival, each participant assumes responsibility for making arrangements with the author and/or publisher for the right to use the play they are performing and to pay any required royalties.
- a. No MTA-affiliated organization - including the South Regional Festival, the North Regional Festival, The State Festival (MTA), nor the host site - shall be held responsible for any unpaid royalties.
 - b. Payment of royalties must be shown prior to performance.
4. **Technical requirements and limitations.** Each participating organization must provide all technical materials, such as set, hand and furniture properties, makeup, costumes, recorded music and special sound effects.
5. **The organizing committee for the MTA High School Play Festival has determined that some standardization in technical guidelines is desirable.** Therefore, each Regional Festival site, and the State Festival sites will provide the following:
- a. Multiple isolated lighting areas.
 - b. One 20-amp outlet for use by participants to power their own equipment.
 - i. Said equipment must be approved prior to the date of the Festival by the host site coordinator and must meet all applicable safety codes and regulations.
 - ii. The host site coordinator reserves the right to refuse to allow the use of a particular piece of equipment.
 - iii. Schools should bring their own extension cords.
 - c. An auxiliary cable for running sound through the facility's sound system from a participant's computer or sound device.
 - i. Festival participants must provide their own computer or sound devices.
 - ii. Schools with questions about site-specific sound capabilities should direct them to the appropriate festival coordinator.
 - d. **Light effects and follow spots:**
 - i. Simple area lighting is provided. A light plot will be provided with each festivals' technical packet.
 - ii. Lighting needs other than those listed here must be approved by the site coordinator in advance (with a minimum of two weeks' notice), and any such equipment must be supplied by the participant.
 - iii. The placement and removal of additional lighting equipment must be included in the allotted time.
 - iv. One follow-spot may be provided at the local host site coordinator's option.
 - v. The participating school must provide the operator.
 - » Some technical assistance may be provided by the host site to show how things work, but the host facility will not be provide anyone to run the follow spot for a show.
 - » The host site coordinator will notify performing groups of whether this option is available.
 - e. There will be a designated holding space where each participating school will load in and strike to as part of your time. Your local host site coordinator will provide detailed technical specifications for their facility well in advance of the Festival.

6. **Safety.** Participants must adhere to all state, federal, county, and/or city fire codes. Absolutely no fire, pyrotechnics, combustibles or other unreasonably dangerous matter may be brought into the host facility or used in the production. Violation of this rule is grounds for disqualification and immediate removal from the festival site.
7. **Running Crew.** Each participant must provide adequate running crew to ensure swift set changes and proper cues for lights, etc. A student familiar with the production (i.e. stage manager) should be in the control room (or on headset) to call cues.
8. Dressing rooms may be occupied no more than one show prior to your production.
9. No recording devices of any kind (audio or video) are allowed during performances.
10. Each participating school shall provide a one-sheet informational program to the festival coordinator.
 - a. This program should indicate the title of the production, the author(s), publisher (if applicable), school, director, cast and production crew lists, time/place of play, and any special advisory notes (i.e. the use of strobe lights or loud noises).
 - b. Characters may be listed with a sufficient description of their appearance to help adjudicators accurately identify actors.
 - i. Example 1: "BJORIA: dark red pants, combat boots, green army-style jacket, dreadlocks - Zoë Panlener"
 - ii. Example 2: "ENSEMBLE: blonde wig, purple pants - Chance DeLacey"
 - c. This will be the program that regional festival adjudicators receive for each production.
 - d. Any pre-production services by paid professionals or professional volunteers (people who would usually get paid for their work) must be listed in the one-sheet program.
 - e. Any contractual requirements for licensing must be listed in the one-sheet program.
 - f. See the [sample one-sheet program](#) below.
11. Schools shall also provide one clearly-printed, staged production photo with all actors in costume and labeled with the name of each character and each actor.
 - a. The purpose of this photograph is to assist the adjudicators in accurately identifying actors.
 - b. The size of this photo should not exceed 8"x10".
 - c. See the sample labeled production photo below.
12. Schools are encouraged to bring their own programs to distribute to the audience for their production.
13. Should the production contain any themes, language, activity, or subject matter that are not appropriate for all ages, a notice to that effect must appear in the program.
 - a. Disclaimers may also be announced by the Secondary Theatre Division Chair prior to the beginning of the production containing mature content.
 - b. Disclaimers may be made for but are not limited to the following content:
 - i. Mature content
 - ii. Adult language / profanity
 - iii. Firearms or weapons
 - iv. Gunshots and/or loud noises
 - v. Performers moving among audience members / Performers in the house
 - vi. Fog or haze effects
 - vii. Strobe or other lighting effects
 - viii. Overt sexual content
 - ix. Nudity
 - x. Blood and/or gore
 - xi. Historical discrimination, racism, and/or bigotry
 - xii. Drugs / alcohol / substance abuse
 - xiii. Sexual, physical, and/or emotional violence
 - xiv. Suicide, suicidal ideation, or self-harm

xv. Child abuse

14. The set should fit into a 10' x 10' space.
 - a. Your set should be contained inside the imaginary walls of the 10x10 space.
 - b. You may stack your set as high as safety allows, but elements may not protrude from the box.
 - c. This is a Regional Festival, State Festival (MTA), and Southeastern Theatre Conference (SETC) rule.
 - d. Props that are not costumes or costume props (props worn by actors) must remain behind the "Go line" until they are told GO by the host.
 - i. Student performers may keep musical instruments such as guitars, horns, etc. with them in the dressing room for tuning and warm-ups.
 - ii. Students may not play instruments in the dressing rooms if their instrument can be heard on the stage.
 - iii. The Chair, the regional festival host, or the facilities host will notify students with musical instruments whether warming up or tuning in the dressing room is permissible.
 - e. Costumes worn by actors at the top of the show do not have to fit in the 10x10' and will be taken to the dressing room during load-in. All other costumes must fit in the school's 10x10'.
15. No non-student may perform in the production.
 - a. Any portion of dialogue in the script (whether live or recorded) must be performed by a student. Historical recordings such as newscasts are allowed.
 - b. Only students are allowed to play live accompaniment in a production. Non-student accompaniment must be pre-recorded.
 - c. Non-students may not conduct musical numbers.
 - d. Non-students may assist in any technical aspect during the running of the show or strike.
16. The designated leader of the production may only be a theatre arts educator from the represented school.
 - a. Anyone else involved in the production is not the "designated leader."
 - b. Nothing in this section should be construed to mean that guest artists cannot be involved with the production process.
17. Schools are prohibited from performing a play that was performed at their regional festival or at the MTA State Secondary Festival within the last three years. (The list of productions will be posted on the MTA website.)

Additional Points for Hosts: *(added August 2009)*

1. Participating schools will receive their adjudication forms at the awards ceremony along with their participation certificates.
2. The house and backstage will remain closed until all schools have had thirty-five (35) minutes in the space and on the lighting board.
 - a. This will be recorded by an unbiased timekeeper.
 - b. The timekeeper will announce 2 minutes, 1 minute, and 30 seconds remaining.
 - c. Schools will clear stage immediately at the conclusion of their allotted time.
 - d. Parents and other non-directorial adults may only assist with the load-in portion of this rehearsal time.
3. Host sites will post directional signs backstage to assist in locating dressing rooms, rest rooms, etc.
4. Host sites will provide backstage workers to assist in directing students and answering questions.
5. Host sites are encouraged to provide a snack bar for participants. The host site can retain all proceeds from this service.

Adjudicator Information

1. Adjudicators will not be affiliated with the host institution or another school/university in the region.
2. Graduate students cannot be used as adjudicators.
3. Adjudicators will be selected from schools outside of the host's region.
 - a. I.E. North festival has to select adjudicators from the South region or out of state, and vice versa.

- b. This is to ensure that participating schools have an objective and impartial adjudication.
- c. It is important to bring in adjudicators that cannot be viewed as being partial to one group or another.
- 4. Adjudicators will not be used at the same regional festival in consecutive years.
- 5. Instruct adjudicators to make full use of their time during the comments following a production.
 - a. Ask them to keep all comments relevant to the production and not bring personal stories into the allotted time.
 - b. Each adjudicator should attempt to speak to how well the production adhered to the qualities described in the adjudication rubric.

Breaking any of the rules above will result in disqualification for advancing at the regional level and disqualification for the Dominic Cunetto Best Play Award at MTA.

ETIQUETTE GUIDELINES FOR PERFORMERS, CREW, AND AUDIENCE MEMBERS

Students attending the regional festivals and the state festival must complete a **Code of Conduct** form. Teachers must review the Code of Conduct form with the students and discuss theatre etiquette with their students.

1. **Violation of these rules may result in:**
 - a. Students will not be allowed to continue at festival and/or will not be allowed to participate the following year.
 - b. Schools will not be allowed to continue at the festival and/or not be allowed to participate the following year.
2. Students attending the Festivals must be accompanied by an adult from the school or organization they are representing.
 - a. In the event of an emergency, special permission can be requested to use substitute supervision; however, all supervisors must be 21 or older.
 - b. The site coordinator must be notified in advance of such situations.
3. Once the house lights go out and a play begins, there should be no entering or leaving the theatre until after the play ends unless an emergency.
4. No flash photography, video, or sound recording is permitted during the performance of any play. Violation of this rule will result in the removal of the individual from the Festival.
5. There should be no talking backstage or in the audience during the performances or the adjudicators' critiques.
6. Rudeness in any form will not be tolerated.
 - a. Student behavior onstage, backstage, and in the audience must be courteous at all times.
 - b. There will be no use of foul language at any festival site.
7. As we are training future audiences as well as performers, directors, designers and technicians, sponsors / directors are expected to prepare students by informing their participants of these standards:
 - a. No food or drink in the theatre.
 - b. No feet on the seats.
 - c. No hats.
 - d. No distractions from the performance.
8. There will be no smoking, use of other tobacco products, alcohol or drugs by students on the grounds of preliminary or state festival sites or at any times during the festival.
9. Students are expected to participate in all festival activities.
 - a. Be courteous and attentive to all performers and workshop artists.
 - b. Disruptive students may be asked to leave a theatre workshop.
10. Any disruptive or inappropriate behavior may result in disqualification and/or dismissal from the grounds.

Each school should receive a copy of their adjudication scoring ballot and comments before they leave the Regional and State Festival. These should be given out after the awards ceremony.

REGIONAL DRAMA FESTIVAL AWARDS

The following awards are presented to the participants.

- Play Rating Certificates
 - a. These printed certificates are given to each participant to quantify the quality of their presented work.
 - b. The rating should be aligned with the adjudicators' averaged production score.
 - i. 1 - 15 = Fair
 - ii. 16 - 30 = Good
 - iii. 31 - 45 = Excellent
 - iv. 46 - 60 = Superior
- Distinguished Play Awards: These plays advance to the State Secondary Festival.
- Outstanding Direction
- Outstanding Performance in a Lead Role (2)
- Outstanding Performance in a Supporting Role (2)
- Outstanding Ensemble
- Outstanding Costume Design
- Outstanding Scenic Design
- Outstanding Technical Achievement
- All Star Cast
 - a. Each school should receive at least one All Star cast member.
 - b. All Star cast members should not receive another acting award, such as Outstanding Performance in a Lead or Supporting Role; they should only receive one.
- Overall Theatrical Experience Award
 - a. This award is presented to the school contributing the most to the festival, showing general excellence in all areas of theatre production as well as displaying an attitude of cooperation throughout the festival.
 - b. This award can be given to anyone participating in the festival, and does not necessarily need to be one of the advancing schools.
 - c. This award does not have to go to the school with the highest score, but it may.
 - d. This award is not a 4th place award.
 - e. In the South, this is the *Glen Menna Award*.
- Peer Choice Award – each school is given a ballot and ranks the shows in order of which one they enjoyed the most.
- Theatre Arts Awards
 - a. A maximum of ten certificates may be awarded.
 - b. Adjudicators may use these awards to recognize theatrical excellence in areas not otherwise acknowledged.
 - c. Examples: Excellence in Make-up, Properties, Sound, Student Playwriting, Choreography, etc.

STATE SECONDARY FESTIVAL AWARDS

- Play Rating Certificates
 - a. These printed certificates are given to each participant to quantify the quality of their presented work.
 - b. The rating should be aligned with the adjudicators' averaged production score.
 - i. 1 - 15 = Fair
 - ii. 16 - 30 = Good
 - iii. 31 - 45 = Excellent
 - iv. 46 - 60 = Superior

- Dominic Cunetto Award for Best Production
- Runner-Up Best Production
- 2nd Runner-Up Best Production
- Outstanding Performance in a Lead Role (x2)
- Outstanding Performance in a Supporting Role (x2)
- Outstanding Direction
- Outstanding Ensemble
- Outstanding Costume Design
- Outstanding Scenic Design
- Outstanding Technical Achievement
- All Star Cast
 - a. Each school should receive at least one All Star cast member.
 - b. All Star cast members should not receive another acting award, such as Best Actor/Actress; they should only receive one.
- Theatre Arts Awards
 - a. A maximum of ten certificates may be awarded.
 - b. Adjudicators may use these awards to recognize theatrical excellence in areas not otherwise acknowledged.
 - c. Examples: Excellence in Make-up, Properties, Sound, Student Playwriting, Choreography etc.

SECONDARY GUIDELINES FOR ADJUDICATION

1. Three out of state adjudicators will judge secondary theatre entries.
 - a. The MTA Vice President is responsible for securing these adjudicators.
 - b. The panel of adjudicators should meet MTA's guidelines for adjudicator selection (see p. 15).
2. The central role of the adjudicator is to provide useful critical feedback, in a thoughtful, caring way. Adjudicators should provide feedback that helps participants grow as artists and people, through enriched understanding of their own collaborative work.
3. All adjudicators will be asked to participate in a festival adjudicators meeting where the Secondary Chair and MTA President will answer questions and clarify expectations.
4. Public adjudication happens at the conclusion of each production in the festival.
 - a. Adjudication will not exceed 15 total minutes, with each adjudicator being afforded 5 minutes of verbal feedback.
 - b. Responses should consist of a positive general assessment of each production and should include the adjudicator's strongest impression of specific elements of the production.
 - c. Constructive criticism should be coupled with positive reinforcement.
5. Adjudicators will be provided with a rubric outlining the expectations of how their feedback should align with the numerical scores they assign to each category. A copy of this rubric is provided at the end of this operations manual.
6. Best practices for all adjudication include:
 - a. Positive reinforcement to each performing school group about the strengths of their work alongside constructive, critical feedback to help the artists grow.
 - b. Clear suggestions and observations about how the work could be stronger.
 - i. Provide questions for the artists to consider and answer for themselves.
 - ii. Provide concrete proposals or creative alternatives.
 - c. Specific, detailed commentary about all theatrical elements.
 - i. Where possible, provide specific examples and observation about as many participant roles as are applicable
 - ii. Participant roles may include but are not limited to design, direction, performance, writing, music, choreography

- iii. As possible, address how the multiple elements work together in each production.
 - d. Sensitivity to the participants and acknowledgment of challenges and limitations faced by the performing group.
 - e. Admission of subjectivity.
 - i. Remind artists that adjudicators are selected for their expertise and have credible insight to offer.
 - ii. Remind artists that each adjudicator also has their own tastes, preferences, and perspectives.
 - iii. The job of the artist is to listen, consider the feedback, and determine for themselves what is most valuable; remind artists that they are not obligated to agree with or execute all of your ideas and comments.
 - f. Awareness of diversity.
 - i. Be mindful of your own assumptions about the students you meet and work against those assumptions during the adjudication process.
 - ii. Be cognizant of the words you choose to talk about the members of a company.
 - iii. Consider what pronouns you use to describe particular roles in the theatre. (E.g. Directors are not always “he;” costume designers are not always “she,” etc.)
 - iv. Remember that student participants have a range of abilities and that not all artists will receive adjudication the same way.
 - g. Should you find yourself needing to address themes or experiences with which you do not have personal experience, feel free to ask questions.
 - i. “What were you hoping to do with [this specific moment]?” or “What was your intention with [a specific choice]?”
 - ii. Do not hesitate to amend previous statements or recommendations in light of new information or understanding. This models learning and adapting to new knowledge for our young artists.
7. Elements to Consider as Adjudicating:
- a. MTA has divided the adjudicator response sheets into three overarching categories: Performance, Direction, and Design.
 - i. The sub-categories in the response sheets should guide respondents’ feedback but should in no way be considered a finite list of areas available for response.
 - ii. The questions provided under each category below are suggestions to consider as respondents formulate responses and may also serve as questions to ask performing groups about their work.
 - iii. No production should be penalized for less or more of a particular element. A bare stage may support a concept as effectively as a large-scale, realized scenic design. Adjudicators should evaluate the effectiveness of the choices to the concept of the production.
 - b. Overall Production
 - i. How effectively has the production team worked with limited resources?
 - ii. Are the resources available to the production effectively employed to serve the story?
 - iii. Does there appear to have been a coherent vision for the production that all collaborators appear to understand/
 - iv. Are there any especially significant production elements? (E.g. original music composition, projection design, use of mask, choreography, etc.)
 - v. What was your overall experience of the piece as a whole? What emotional impact did it have? How did it provoke thoughts or feelings?
 - c. Performance
 - i. Voice
 - » Do actors have clear, articulated speech and adequate projection?
 - » Were the actors’ vocal / speech choices appropriate to the characters’ time and place / to the world of the piece?
 - » If there is live singing, are the voices strong and clear? Are the songs well-interpreted? Are any harmonies accurate and well-executed? Is there a balance between the voices and any other live or recorded sound or music sources?

- » If there are accents or dialects employed: Does the voice work support the overall vision of the selection? Are the accents accurate to their point of reference / origin? Is accented voice work comprehensible and effective?
- ii. Movement
 - » How successfully have the actors physicalized and internalized the characters they are portraying or the roles they are performing?
 - » What do you notice about actors' physicality?
 - » If there is choreography: How well is it executed by the performers? How the performers move together / how does a dancer move in relationship to other actors?
- iii. Characterization
 - » What clear choices have been made about the development of the characters?
 - » Do actors appear to thoroughly comprehend their character's role?
 - » Are there elements of originality to an actor's interpretation?
 - » Is there a magnetism or specific quality apparent in the performance.
 - » Is the character convincing and compelling?
- iv. Ensemble
 - » Do actors remain focused when they are not at the center of the action?
 - » How does the ensemble work together?
 - » How do the members of the ensemble support each other inside the performance?
 - » What is the relationship between the whole production and the elements that make up its parts?
- v. Intent
 - » How does the performance advance the storytelling / support or define the world of the piece?
 - » Do actors appear to understand and be contributing to a shared vision for the piece?
- d. Direction
 - i. Material Selection
 - » What audience is this play for?
 - » Has this story been told before? Does it need to be told again?
 - » Who is represented in this play? Who is not?
 - » How does the representation in the play align with social identities (race, class, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, (dis)ability, citizenship, etc.) of the students in the cast? In the audience? In the state?
 - » Who is the writer / creator of the play?
 - » What kinds of challenges does the script / content offer the participants in the production process?
 - » How did the company serve the material they selected?
 - » What is the potential social or artistic impact of the material?
 - ii. Concept
 - » How well has the director understood the play / material / subjects of exploration?
 - » How well has the director guided the audience to enter the world of the play and understand the rules within it or suspend their disbelief?
 - » How has the director collaborated with designers to guide how the elements work in relationship to each other?
 - » Has the director guided or provided a unique or unusual interpretation of the piece?
 - iii. Staging
 - » Do the actors move in space with purpose and in relationship to each other?
 - » Have the director's choices communicated time and place?
 - » Is the blocking reasonable and well-motivated? Has the director considered sight-lines and stage pictures?

- » If there is choreography: How does the expression in the dance advance the storytelling or define the world of the piece?
- iv. Pace / Timing
 - » Are the transitions tight or flowing and as well-considered as the other action of the piece?
 - » Are the pacing and timing appropriate to the execution of the vision of the piece?
- v. Preparedness
 - » Is the production well-rehearsed?
 - » Do the actors seem to understand their roles as well as a collective purpose?
- e. Design - Scenic, Costume / Makeup, Sound, Lighting, Props, etc.
 - i. Appropriateness to the Material
 - » How do the design elements serve the piece and the interpretation of the piece?
 - » Are there missing elements that could serve the production and that are realistic to produce?
 - » Is intention or concept communicated through the design?
 - » How do character-specific design elements (costumes, hair, makeup, props, etc.) contribute to our understanding of the characters or performers?
 - » How do the design elements inform our understanding of time and place?
 - ii. Necessity to the Production
 - » How do the design elements help the performers do what they need to do?
 - » Do the design elements enhance the storytelling / communicate a world to the audience?
 - » Do the elements feel like they belong in the created world?
 - » Are there existing elements that feel superfluous or that detract from the piece?
 - » Are there missing elements or alternative choices worth exploring?
 - iii. Execution Quality of Design Elements
 - » Are all design elements safe for performers?
 - » Are the design elements adaptable to a variety of venues?
 - » How much care and detail has been worked into the design elements?
 - » Is the construction of the design elements remarkable in any way?
 - iv. Operation Quality of Design Elements
 - » Are elements used effectively?
 - » Are cues well-timed and well-executed?
 - v. Actor Interaction with Design Elements
 - » If there are major scenic changes, do they occur smoothly and intentionally within the performance?
 - » Do performers utilize their personal design elements (costumes, hair, makeup, props, etc.) effectively and with apparent expertise?

SECONDARY FESTIVAL ADJUDICATORS MEETING

1. Provide and review a copy of the festival program.
2. Introduce the person who will be the adjudicators' escort. The escort will stay with them all day and make sure they are where they are supposed to be.
3. Introduce the Festival Coordinators and other MTA Board Members.
4. Communicate that we will try to go to lunches/dinners as a group IF they are interested. This is not mandatory, but MTA would like to entertain them for meals when possible.
5. Show them the adjudicators room, restrooms, etc.
6. Allow them to determine where they want to sit in the auditorium, and mark off the adjacent seats as necessary.

7. Ask about any special requests or needs.
8. Provide:
 - a. A copy of the Guidelines for Adjudication.
 - b. A copy of each participating school's declaration and statement of circumstance, one-sheet descriptive cast list, and labeled cast photograph.
 - c. A list of the festival awards.
 - d. A clipboard, notepad, pen, and light.
 - e. A copy of the Adjudicator Festival Evaluation form.
 - f. The Adjudicator's Ballot sheets.
9. Review the verbal response procedure following a production.
 - a. All three adjudicators share a 15-minute response.
 - b. The adjudicators will rotate the order in which they speak.
10. Explain about remitting receipts:
 - a. The Executive Director must receive all receipts before they leave on Sunday.
 - b. MTA will pay for the hotel room upon checkout. They do not need to pay.
 - c. Ask the adjudicators to provide all receipts including travel and food receipts as soon as the festival is over.
 - d. MTA can calculate mileage based on the State of Mississippi handbook.
 - e. If the adjudicators have any other festival-related expenses, they should turn those receipts in as well.
11. Invite the adjudicators to join us for the party. There will be informal socials Friday and Saturday night after the last production.
12. Reinforce that adjudicators should not discuss any production before the awards ceremony.
13. Ask for questions.

SECONDARY DIRECTORS MEETING INFORMATION

The following people should attend the Director's Meeting:

- Division Chair and Co-Chair
- The Director/Sponsor or one person designated by the Director/Sponsor from each school or theatre in the performance block
- Host Technical Advisor
- Local Technical Personnel
- Time Keepers

Items to be Covered During Meeting

1. Introduction of Participants
2. Introduction of Technical Personnel
 - a. Explanation of duties
 - b. Explanation of technical capabilities
3. Collect three copies of each production's program for adjudicators. (Provide program copies to each adjudicator copy prior to the production.)
4. Confirm familiarity with guidelines
5. Confirm method of timekeeping
6. Explain and tour the physical production space
 - a. Review 10x10 blocks
 - b. Review load-in areas

- c. Tour dressing rooms and restrooms
- 7. Confirm that all of the required materials have been received prior to production beginning.
- 8. Explain to the director/sponsor/representative about the awards ceremony and encourage participation in the Workshops AND Divisional Meetings.
- 9. Encourage directors to complete the post-festival survey. Explain that this will assist us with planning future festivals.

SECONDARY CODE OF CONDUCT

(Revised September 2016)

Knowing that any organization is judged largely by the behavior of its individual members, we who attend the Mississippi Theatre Association Convention agree that registering at the State Convention constitutes our subscribing to the following rules, which comprise the Code of Conduct.

- 1. Each Sponsor is responsible for each and every one of his/her students. Therefore, students must keep their sponsor informed of their whereabouts at all times.
- 2. Members registered at the convention should be present for all scheduled meetings and on time.
- 3. Curfew is promptly at midnight unless the Convention Chair announces otherwise. This means in your own room and respectfully quiet.
- 4. Members may visit other members' rooms only with the Sponsor's knowledge and approval.
- 5. No Alcohol and/or other drug, in any form, shall be possessed by a minor at this state convention.
- 6. All registered members are expected to wear official name badges at all times.
- 7. Each registered member is expected to display and exert leadership qualities in a responsible manner, which will lead to the organized success of this Convention. Members should conduct themselves in such a manner that their actions will reflect favorably on their school and community and all of those responsible for providing the student with this educational opportunity.
- 8. Each student will conduct themselves in an orderly fashion and will not in any way destroy, mutilate or alter ANY of the facilities while at the State convention.
- 9. Each student will act as an adult and as professionals during all productions, critiques, workshops and social events associated with the Convention.
- 10. Student will NOT use electronic devices including cell phones, iPods, etc. while in the theatre or auditorium. All devices will be kept OFF. Students also should NOT send or receive TEXT MESSAGES during productions or critiques. This will result in the Festival Chairman taking up cell phones, iPods, etc.
- 11. Students will be respectful, courtesy and congenial to others performing. This includes not talking during critiques, announcements and performances.

MTA ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG POLICY FOR MINORS

No student attending any Mississippi Theatre Association activity shall be permitted to carry on his/her person or in any other manner have in his/her possession, in any way, or be under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs. The provisions of this policy shall not apply to any student who is under the care of a licensed physician and who is taking medication which is under the supervision and direction of such physician.

This policy is for the sole and exclusive protection of the students of this association and their general welfare, and nothing herein shall be construed to avoid any prosecution under applicable criminal statute. MTA may report any violation of this policy to the student's school sponsor, parents, school principal, district superintendent and also to the proper law enforcement officials.

SAMPLE ONE-SHEET PROGRAM FOR SECONDARY FESTIVALS

PEOPLE HOLDING SIGNS

By: Jayde Gibson

South Central High School – Festival Production

SETTING

Washington D.C. – 1913, 1963, 2014

New York City – 1969, 1982, 2020

CAST

EILEEN (long, salmon-colored dress with poofy sleeves ♦ - sign: "Votes for Women") Joyce Gibbons

BRAXTON (male, African American, khakis, button up - sign: "We Demand Jobs Now!") Mo Perry

ALEXA (cloth mask, fitted green cardigan, jeans - sign: "#BLM") Meera Branch

SUKHMANI (black slacks, floral shirt ♦, hijab - sign: "Water's rising, should we?") Sumiya Els

MILLIE (long brown hair in braids, flower power dress ♦ - sign: "Make anything but War!") Kaitlyn Smith

TAYLA (black turtleneck, tweed vest ♦, chinos, black afro - sign: "Power to the People") Nikki Martin

ENSEMBLE: Hannah Evans (short hair, solid grey shirt, blue jeans, combat boots)

Marcus Ordnithan (crew-cut brown hair, bomber jacket, aviator sunglasses)

Kurt Kirkland (shaggy light brown hair, very tall and thin, basketball shorts and jersey)

Emily Sanders (blonde hair in French braid, pencil skirt ♦, white blouse, blazer ♦, pumps)

Lizzy Franklin (tall and thin, braided hair with beads, baggy black sweatpants and graphic tee)

PRODUCTION TEAM & CREW

DIRECTOR Dillon Zavala

STUDENT ASSISTANT DIRECTOR Alisha Berger

LIGHT OPERATOR Yasmin Ashley

SOUND OPERATOR JoAnna Roth

STUDENT PRODUCTION DESIGNER (SCENIC, COSTUME, & MAKEUP) Alisha Berger

PUBLICITY DESIGNER (POSTER, TICKETS, SOCIAL MEDIA) Frank Hellman

SET CONSTRUCTION SCHS Theatre Production Class

COSTUME CONSTRUCTION & ACQUISITION Scott Hannetty* & SCHS Theatre Production Class

CREDITS

PEOPLE HOLDING SIGNS is produced through special arrangement with the playwright, Jayde Gibson.

isolate by Scomber (c) copyright 2020 Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Noncommercial (3.0)

license. <http://dig.ccmixer.org/files/scomber/61322> Ft: Bluemillennium

Erase Racism by J.Lang (c) copyright 2020 Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution (3.0) license.

<http://dig.ccmixer.org/files/djlang59/61875> Ft: Donnie Ozone

*Scott Hannetty is a local professional costumer who volunteered to build certain costume pieces for SCHS's festival production. Scott's professionally-constructed costumes are marked in the cast list with [♦].

SAMPLE LABELED PRODUCTION PHOTO



SAMPLE SECONDARY ADJUDICATOR RESPONSE FORM



MISSISSIPPI THEATRE ASSOCIATION ADJUDICATOR RESPONSE FORM



SECONDARY DIVISION THEATRE FESTIVAL

SCHOOL: _____ YEAR: _____

PRODUCTION: _____

ADJUDICATOR NAME: _____

PERFORMANCE	VOICE (Projection, Articulation, Accent Work, etc.)	
	MOVEMENT (Physicality, Combat, Dance, etc.)	
	CHARACTERIZATION (Believability, Consistency, etc.)	
	ENSEMBLE (Consistency, Commitment, etc.)	
	INTENT (Appropriateness, Consistency, etc.)	
DIRECTION	MATERIAL (Selection, Appropriateness, etc.)	
	CONCEPT (Directorial Choices, Interpretation, etc.)	
	STAGING (Blocking, Choreography, Use of Space, etc.)	
	PACE / TIMING (Appropriateness to the Material, etc.)	
	PREPAREDNESS (Is the production well-rehearsed?)	
DESIGN Scenic / Costume / Sound / Lighting / Props / etc.	APPROPRIATENESS TO MATERIAL	
	NECESSITY TO THE PRODUCTION	
	EXECUTION QUALITY OF DESIGN ELEMENTS	
	OPERATION QUALITY OF DESIGN ELEMENTS	
	ACTOR INTERACTION WITH DESIGN ELEMENTS	

SAMPLE SECONDARY ADJUDICATOR SCORE SHEET



MISSISSIPPI THEATRE ASSOCIATION ADJUDICATOR SCORE SHEET SECONDARY DIVISION THEATRE FESTIVAL



SCHOOL: _____ **YEAR:** _____

PRODUCTION: _____

ADJUDICATOR NAME: _____

Adjudicators should put the number corresponding with the rating for each criterion in the appropriate box (i.e. Superior = 4; Excellent = 3; Good = 2; Fair = 1). The scores for the category will be added together to make up the Category Score (Acting, Directing, Design). The three category scores will then be added together to determine the final Production Score.

(Note to tabulator: If you are using the scoring spreadsheet, input a 1 in the appropriate cell instead of the corresponding rating of 1, 2, 3, or 4. The spreadsheet will then calculate the accurate subtotals and totals.)

		FAIR (1)	GOOD (2)	EXCELLENT (3)	SUPERIOR (4)
PERFORMANCE	VOICE (Projection, Articulation, Accent Work, etc.)				
	MOVEMENT (Physicality, Combat, Dance, etc.)				
	CHARACTERIZATION (Believability, Consistency, etc.)				
	ENSEMBLE (Consistency, Commitment, etc.)				
	INTENT (Appropriateness, Consistency, etc.)				
	PERFORMANCE SUBTOTAL				
	PERFORMANCE TOTAL				
DIRECTION	MATERIAL (Selection, Appropriateness, etc.)				
	CONCEPT (Directorial Choices, Interpretation, etc.)				
	STAGING (Blocking, Choreography, Use of Space, etc.)				
	PACE / TIMING (Appropriateness to the Material, etc.)				
	PREPAREDNESS (Is the production well-rehearsed?)				
	DIRECTION SUBTOTAL				
	DIRECTION TOTAL				
DESIGN Scenic / Costume / Sound / Lighting / Props / etc.	APPROPRIATENESS TO MATERIAL				
	NECESSITY TO THE PRODUCTION				
	EXECUTION QUALITY OF DESIGN ELEMENTS				
	OPERATION QUALITY OF DESIGN ELEMENTS				
	ACTOR INTERACTION WITH DESIGN ELEMENTS				
	DESIGN SUBTOTAL				
	DESIGN TOTAL				

TOTAL PRODUCTION SCORE	
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SAMPLE SECONDARY COMPOSITE SCORE REPORT

In 2022-2023, MTA piloted a reporting system that would return a composite score report to schools participating in the Secondary Festival. MTA will continue to provide these reports to directors of participating schools during the 2026-2027 festival cycle.

DramaFest 2021			
Composite Score Report			
School	O'Keefe HS		
Production	Black Iris: A Pirate Play		
Director	Oliver Jordan		
OVERALL SCORES			
Judge 1 <i>(out of 15-60)</i>	Judge 2 <i>(out of 15-60)</i>	Judge 3 <i>(out of 15-60)</i>	Totals <i>(out of 45-180)</i>
School Score	School Score	School Score	Total School Score
54	46	47	147
Festival Average	Festival Average	Festival Average	Total Festival Average
42.9	44.0	41.4	128.3
JUDGING CRITERIA SCORES			
Criteria Averages	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3
Acting	13.2	13.6	12.0
Directing	12.5	13.6	12.9
Technical	12.7	13.1	12.9
How to Read this Report			
Overall Scores: The School Score shows your school's score from each judge. Festival Average shows the average score given from that judge. Point Spread shows how many points exist between the top and bottom scores.			
Judging Criteria Scores: Each criteria is listed by judge for the overall average of all scores given by each judge in that category.			

SAMPLE SECONDARY ADJUDICATION RUBRIC

Following discussion regarding a need for adjudication consistency and alignment between verbal comments, written comments, and scores, the MTA Secondary Division developed the following adjudication rubric to offer to adjudicators to help clarify the connections between comments and scores.

 MISSISSIPPI THEATRE ASSOCIATION ADJUDICATION RUBRIC SECONDARY DIVISION THEATRE FESTIVAL 					
		FAIR [1]	GOOD [2]	EXCELLENT [3]	SUPERIOR [4]
PERFORMANCE	VOICE (Projection, Articulation, Accent Work, etc.)	Speech lacks clarity and consistent projection; vocal choices do not support the character or world of the piece.	Speech is generally clear and adequately projected; some appropriate vocal choices are evident.	Speech is consistently clear and well-projected; vocal choices support the character and world effectively.	Speech is exceptionally clear, nuanced, and well-projected; vocal delivery enhances characterization and storytelling.
	MOVEMENT (Physicality, Combat, Dance, etc.)	Physical choices are limited or unfocused; movement does not effectively support the storytelling.	Movement demonstrates intent and developing physical expression of character.	Movement consistently supports character and narrative; actors exhibit clear physical awareness.	Physicality is well-integrated with character and ensemble; movement enhances the overall storytelling.
	CHARACTERIZATION (Believability, Consistency, etc.)	Character development is unclear or lacks depth; actors demonstrate limited understanding.	Character is identifiable with some consistent traits; actors show developing interpretation.	Character is well-defined and believable; actors demonstrate insight and originality.	Character is fully realized with depth and complexity; performance is compelling and memorable.
	ENSEMBLE (Consistency, Commitment, etc.)	Limited ensemble cohesion; actors show inconsistent focus and support for one another.	Actors generally work together with some effective moments of ensemble connection.	Ensemble is cohesive and collaborative; mutual support enhances performance.	Ensemble functions as a unified whole; interactions are seamless and elevate the production.
	INTENT (Appropriateness, Consistency, etc.)	Actors show limited connection to the production's vision or storytelling intent.	Actors demonstrate a developing understanding of their role in supporting the narrative.	Actors clearly contribute to a unified vision and effectively support the storytelling.	Actors exhibit a deep understanding of the production's vision; performances significantly enhance the narrative.
DIRECTION	MATERIAL (Selection, Appropriateness, etc.)	Selected material lacks relevance or appropriateness for the ensemble and context.	Material is somewhat appropriate and offers moderate artistic or educational value.	Material is well-suited to the ensemble and offers meaningful challenges and opportunities.	Material is highly relevant, impactful, and purposefully chosen to align with student strengths.
	CONCEPT (Directorial Choices, Interpretation, etc.)	Directorial vision is unclear or inconsistently realized across the production elements.	Concept is emerging but unclear or not fully integrated throughout the production elements.	Concept is clear and well-communicated through the storytelling; it is effectively integrated across the production.	Concept is innovative, cohesive, and fully realized. Collaboration is clear across present artistic disciplines.
	STAGING (Blocking, Choreography, Use of Space, etc.)	Blocking lacks clarity and purpose; spatial use is inconsistent or ineffective.	Staging is functional with some evidence of thoughtful use of spatial relationships.	Staging effectively supports storytelling and utilizes space with purpose and clarity.	Staging is visually compelling, purposeful, and enhances the dramatic impact of the piece.
	PACE / TIMING (Appropriateness to the Material, etc.)	Transitions are disjointed; pacing detracts from the overall coherence of the selection.	Pacing and transitions are mostly effective with minor inconsistencies or distractions.	Pacing supports narrative flow; transitions are smooth and well-executed.	Pacing is expertly calibrated; transitions and tempo encourage engagement and enhance the rhythm of the story.
	PREPAREDNESS (Is the production well-rehearsed?)	Production lacks polish; frequent lapses in execution indicate insufficient rehearsal.	Production is mostly prepared with occasional inconsistencies in performance and technical execution.	Production is well-rehearsed with confident performances and technical execution.	Production demonstrates exceptional preparation; performances and technical elements are precise and deliberate.

		FAIR [1]	GOOD [2]	EXCELLENT [3]	SUPERIOR [4]
DESIGN <i>Scenic / Costume / Sound / Lighting / Props / etc.</i>	APPROPRIATENESS TO MATERIAL	Design choices appear disconnected from the material and/or do not support the production's intent.	Design elements basically support the world of the play.	Design choices clearly reflect and reinforce the setting, characters, and themes.	Design is conceptually aligned, thoughtfully executed, and able to enrich the audience's understanding of the piece.
	NECESSITY TO THE PRODUCTION	Design elements are excessive, lacking cohesion, or hinder storytelling.	Designs generally support the performance; some elements may be extraneous.	Design elements enhance narrative clarity and support actor performance.	Design elements are purposeful, integrated, and vital to the storytelling.
	EXECUTION QUALITY OF DESIGN ELEMENTS	Design elements feel inconsistent or sloppy in their construction, seem to lack detail, and/or present safety concerns for the performers and/or audience.	Design elements are adequately constructed and serve their functional purpose. Design elements do not present safety concerns.	Designs are thoughtfully and artistically constructed, demonstrating clear craftsmanship, creativity, and attention to safety.	Designs elements exhibit care and exceptional attention to detail, enhancing the overall conceptual vision of the production without sacrificing safety, creativity, or craftsmanship.
	OPERATION QUALITY OF DESIGN ELEMENTS	Technical cues are frequently mistimed or executed poorly in a way that disrupts or distracts from the overall production.	Technical cues are generally well-executed but may have occasional disruptions or distractions.	Technical cues run smoothly and reinforce storytelling. Operators demonstrate a strong sense of cohesion with the overall production.	Technical cues are precise and consistently executed in a way that seamlessly supports the overall production.
	ACTOR INTERACTION WITH DESIGN ELEMENTS	Actors struggle to interact with design elements effectively; awkward handling distracts and disrupts in a way that impacts the clarity of the storytelling.	Actors interact with most design elements competently, with some inconsistencies and/or distractions.	Actors engage naturally with design elements; these interactions enhance and do not distract from the storytelling.	Actors demonstrate complete familiarity with design elements; interactions are purposeful, supportive of, and integrated into the overall performance.

OPERATIONS MANUAL: 10-MINUTE DIVISION

DUTIES OF THE 10-MINUTE DIVISION CHAIR

- Collect all required forms; use the checklist to ensure that all required information has been received.
- Compile packets to distribute to competing groups at registration.
- Respond to emails from the President and the Executive Director in a timely manner; review materials as requested by the President and the Executive Director.
- Announce and present awards at the 10-Minute festival award ceremony.
- Contact the 10-Minute festival adjudicators prior to the festival and coordinate / conduct the adjudicators meeting.
- Get a token of appreciation for the 10-Minute adjudicators.
- Prepare and submit a division report to the board following the state festival.
- Provide content for newsletters, blog posts, and social media as requested by the President and the Executive Director.
- Attend all board meetings and develop ideas to make the division stronger; propose these ideas to the board.
- Review the division guidelines in the MTA handbook and edit so that they remain up-to-date. Submit handbook changes to the MTA secretary two weeks prior to a board meeting.
- Attend meetings (such as the Secondary Workshop, Town Hall Meetings, Arts on the Capitol Day, etc.) when requested by the President and the Executive Director.
- Stay mindful that this position means that sometimes the 10-Minute Chair and Vice Chair will have to miss performances, be back stage, or do work at the festival that separates them from the main festival events. Bear in mind that these positions are to better the organization and not the individual interest of the Chair or Vice Chair.

10-MINUTE FESTIVAL SPONSORSHIP AND PURPOSE

The 10-Minute Play Festival is designed to provide a low stress atmosphere where students can experience the production process and cultivate their collaborative and creative skills. The target participants are students who are not participating in individual events but still desire the opportunity to compete and express themselves.

10-MINUTE FESTIVAL GUIDELINES

1. The 10-Minute Festival is open to any organization that is eligible for secondary school theatre participation in the state of Mississippi. This includes
 - a. Public and Private High Schools.
 - b. Performing Arts Schools.
 - c. Non-School Groups.
 - d. Dual Enrollment Institutions.
 - e. Charter Schools.
 - f. Homeschool Groups.
2. A sponsor / chaperone / volunteer must accompany each group.
3. Each group and each participant must be a member of MTA.
 - a. Each group registering students for 10-Minute Festival must be an organizational member of MTA and must be registered for the entire MTA festival.
 - b. Each participant must be individually registered for the entire MTA festival through their organization.
4. The 10-Minute Festival adheres to all rules and regulations set forth by MTA.

10 MINUTE / DEvised THEATRE FESTIVALS

1. The 10-Minute / Devised Theatre Festival provides an opportunity for students to expand their horizons and hone their skills.
2. Devised theatre allows students to create a short production using a collaborative process, a provided prompt, and the resources available.
3. The festival will take place during the annual MTA state festival.
4. Each participating school will be allowed three (3) teams of six (6) individuals.
 - a. Teams will compete in groups of five (5) to six (6).
 - b. Participating schools must pay \$100 for the team they are sending.
 - i. This festival fee applies regardless of whether the team is full or not.
 - ii. If the school has students exceeding a full team, those additional students will be put on a waiting list and allowed to participate based on the number of available spots.
 - c. At the festival, students will be scrambled with students from other schools and sorted into new groups of five (5) to six (6).
 - d. Participants will devise and rehearse their production, which will be performed the same evening.

Participation Guidelines

1. Participants will be provided with a prompt prior to the festival.
 - a. The prompt can mean many things, but students participating in this project should all come into it with an idea to serve as source material
 - b. Source material does not have to be heavy.
2. Ensemble members will be assigned from various schools.
 - a. Students will be divided into random groups. Within their groups, they will collaborate using the source material they have brought to develop a performance related to the festival theme.
 - b. One student may serve as the scribe, but the play belongs to all involved.
 - c. Students will explore and create using Moment Work Technique as developed by Tectonic Theatre Project (See: *Moment Work: Tectonic Theatre Project's Process of Devising*. ISBN: 978-110-197-1772.)
3. Each student must bring one prop and one costume to be incorporated into the play.
4. The groups will work together and rehearse throughout the day.
5. In the evening, they will come together and festival attendees will be invited to watch the plays within the limitations of the venue.
6. Adjudicators will give live responses.
 - a. Three Respondents, selected by the Regional Chair and knowledgeable in the field of dramatic production, shall share a 30-minute oral critique following all of the performances. Critiques shall be open to the audience.
 - b. Criteria to be considered:
 - i. Writing
 - » Are the characters well developed?
 - » Does the dialogue reflect thoughtfulness?
 - » Is the material appropriate for the group?
 - » Is the material worthy of the time and effort?
 - ii. Directing
 - » Is the concept appropriate for the material?
 - » How well has the structure of the play been controlled?
 - » How effective are movement and stage pictures?
 - » Was attention given to pacing, tempo, variety, and subtle nuances?

- iii. Acting
 - » Is the acting believable?
 - » Is the acting technically skillful?
 - » Are the characters well interpreted?
 - iv. Technical
 - » Do the technical elements support the production?
 - » Set Props
 - » Sound (if applicable)
 - » Lighting (if applicable)
 - » Costuming
 - » Make-up.
 - v. Overall Production
 - » Does the company display ensemble work?
 - » How well is the concept realized by the group?
 - » How effective was the total impact?
7. Time limit is ten (10) minutes.
 8. The 10-Minute / Devised Play Festival is open to any school or organization in the State of Mississippi.
 - a. This includes public and private high schools, performing arts schools, dual enrollment institutions, charter schools, and home school groups.
 - b. Participants must be enrolled in a school program and must be accompanied by a sponsor.
 - c. Electronic devices (e.g. laptops, tablets, etc.) are acceptable and recommended for the writing portion of this event.
 9. Each individual team must pay a registration fee of \$100.00.
 - a. Schools are also encouraged to be, or to become, organizational members of MTA.
 - b. Registration payment must be received prior to, or at, the festival check-in.
 10. Each group will have one adult volunteer assigned to work a shift during the festival who will help supervise students and fulfill other duties as assigned by the division chair for a portion of the festival.
 11. Participating schools must provide a sponsor/chaperone/volunteer to help supervise and fulfill other duties as assigned by the division chair.
 12. A floor plan of the performance area will be distributed to the directors and assistant directors when scripts are distributed.
 13. General furnishing, lighting, and a sound system will be supplied by the festival.
 - a. These aspects may be limited.
 - b. Any other aspects (music, costumes, make-up, props...etc.) will be the responsibility of the director, assistant director, and actors.

10-MINUTE FESTIVAL AWARDS

The following awards will be given by MTA at the 10-Minute Festival awards ceremony:

- One to two (1-2) All-Star Cast awards per group
- Outstanding Acting Performance (x2)
- Outstanding Ensemble
- Outstanding Directing
- Outstanding Technical Excellence
- First Place Production (certificates or medals awarded to all group members)

- Second Place Production (certificates or medals awarded to all group members)
- Third Place Production (certificates or medals awarded to all group members)
- Other awards may be given at the discretion of the adjudicators.

OPERATIONS MANUAL: THEATRE FOR YOUTH DIVISION

PURPOSE OF THE THEATRE FOR YOUTH FESTIVAL

The purpose of the Theatre for Youth Festival at MTA is to promote love and appreciation of theatre for young performers and audience members in Mississippi. The festival achieves this purpose by creating an entry point for festival group participants, especially secondary and community groups introducing theatre to young audiences in Mississippi, as well as engaging in outreach to community and school groups.

DUTIES OF THE THEATRE FOR YOUTH DIVISION CHAIR

1. Maintain the handbook page for Theatre for Youth Responsibilities
2. Maintain appropriate records of participant contact and production information and other relevant festival-related data.
3. The Executive Director will send out registration forms to schools and theatres asking for their participation.
 - a. Communicate with theatres that do not normally participate in the MTA Festival
 - b. Encourage them to attend the festival.
4. Coordinate the Theatre for Youth Festival schedule.
 - a. The Chair will communicate with participating schools and organizations and ensure that the schedule does not conflict with other festival activities in which the same group is participating.
 - b. The Chair bears the responsibility to maintain the schedule, to keep the festival running at the published times, and to help schools and organizations resolve conflicts with other festival obligations.
5. Work with the host facility for the Theatre for Youth Festival
6. The Vice President will get a token of appreciation for the TFY adjudicators.
7. The Vice President will contact the TFY adjudicators before the festival and will coordinate and lead the adjudicator meeting
8. Respond to e-mails from the President and the Executive Director in a timely manner.
9. Review festival materials as requested by the President and the Executive Director.
10. Prepare and submit a division report to the board following the state festival.
11. Provide content for newsletters, blog posts, and social media as requested by the President and the Executive Director.
12. Attend all board meetings and develop ideas make the division stronger; propose these ideas to the board.
13. Review the division guidelines in the MTA handbook and edit so that they remain up-to-date. Submit handbook changes to the MTA secretary two weeks prior to a board meeting.
14. Attend meetings (such as the Secondary Workshop, Town Hall Meetings, Arts on the Capitol Day, etc.) when requested by the President and the Executive Director.
15. Stay mindful that this position means that sometimes the Theatre for Youth Chair and Vice Chair will have to miss performances, be back stage, or do work at the festival that separates them from the main festival events. Bear in mind that these positions are to better the organization and not the individual interest of the Chair or Vice Chair.
16. Update and maintain any websites or public forum created for Theatre for Youth
17. Create digital educational package of public-domain and original works performance recordings and supporting educational materials for schools, daycares, and community youth centers across the state of Mississippi.
18. Create and maintain records of PreK-12 schools, daycares, and community centers that would like to receive information concerning TFY performances, recordings, and educational support materials.

THEATRE FOR YOUTH ELIGIBILITY

Any amateur group that performs plays with content intended for young audiences is eligible to participate.

THEATRE FOR YOUTH FESTIVAL FEES

1. Any theatre performing in the Theatre for Youth Festival will be responsible for paying the theatre festival fee of \$50 per theatre/production.
2. Anyone planning to stay for the entire festival or remaining portion of the festival will need to either pay the applicable weekend pass or the festival fee + MTA membership fee.

THEATRE FOR YOUTH SELECTION GUIDELINES

1. Productions entered in festival may be of any type provided the material presented is appropriate for children.
 - a. Each participating group must inform the Chair of the Theatre for Youth Division if their show contains material that makes it unsuitable for younger audiences.
 - i. As the division is for young audiences, material should be suitable for all ages.
 - ii. The Chair retains the discretion to refuse to allow unsuitable content to be performed in the festival.
 - b. To be included in year-round resources provided to schools, daycares, and organizations for youth across Mississippi, selections must be original or public domain.
 - i. Participants who are interested in inclusion in this project must sign a media release form.
 - ii. This is not mandatory for participation in the TFY festival.
 - c. Care will be taken to match each show with an appropriate audience.
2. The total length allotted for each individual performance will be 30 minutes.

THEATRE FOR YOUTH PRODUCTION RULES

1. Each group needs to arrive prepared to set-up and strike their own set. Performance groups will be allotted a total of five (5) minutes for both setup and strike.
2. The house will remain open during set-up. However, the doors will close and remain closed during the production.
3. Lighting will be limited to lights up and down with basic wash covering the performance area. House lights will remain at least 25 percent intensity throughout performances.
4. All special requests (use of special effects, technical requirements, time slots, etc.) must be approved by the Theatre for Youth Division Chair.
5. Participating groups who do not adhere to the guidelines, rules, and time limits will be ineligible to receive the "Best Play" award but may receive other awards at the discretion of the adjudicators.

THEATRE FOR YOUTH FESTIVAL PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

1. Before the Theatre for Youth Festival at MTA, each group is required to submit the following information to the Chair of the Theatre for Youth Division:
 - a. Proof of Permission to Perform / Proof of Payment of Royalty (if applicable)
 - b. Proof of Theatre for Youth Festival Entry Fee (payable online or with organizational registration)
 - c. Entry / Information Sheet
 - d. Signed media release forms for each performer (if applicable, see selection guidelines 1.b.)
2. Each school must provide 3 copies of the following information to the Chair prior to the performance (The Chair will file one copy and distribute a copy to each of the Theatre for Youth respondents):
 - a. School / Organization Name
 - b. Title of the Play
 - c. Author of the Play

- d. Cast of Characters in Speaking Order:
 - i. Character Name and Actor Name
 - » If the character does not have a name that is called in the play, include a description of some type that clearly allows the adjudicators to distinguish among actors
 - » Example 1: "CINDERELLA - Harriett Thompson"
 - » Example 2: "DWARF: red hat, green boots, big glasses - Marcellus Nguyen"
- e. Director, Crew, and Additional Support

THEATRE FOR YOUTH HOST THEATRE FACILITIES

1. The host community will provide a facility in which to perform.
2. The host facility will provide basic lighting and sound as needed.
3. Each participating group is responsible for furnishing sets, props, and furniture needed for its production.
4. Off stage storage will be provided for sets, etc.

PERFORMANCE ORDER

1. The order of performance of the Theatre for Youth Festival is at the discretion of the Theatre for Youth Division Chair. Requests concerning performance order due to conflicts or other specific needs will be taken into consideration and accommodated if possible.
2. The Festival Program will include:
 - a. Introduction and Welcome from the Chair
 - b. School or Organization Name, Show Title, and Performance Times
 - c. Intermission
 - d. Lunch Time
 - e. Adjudicator Feedback
 - f. Awards
3. Care is taken to match show appropriateness to age of audience. (E.g. Shows intended for very young children will be placed at the time in which audiences of that age are available.)

SERVICE TO COMMUNITY

1. The MTA Theatre for Youth Festival strongly supports the idea of providing theatre experiences to Mississippi's children at no cost.
2. To this end, the host city of the Theatre for Youth Festival is strongly encouraged to bus children to the festival to see the shows for free admission or, depending on scheduling, to publicize the festival performances within the community.
3. Additionally, a digital education package will be created including performance recordings of any public domain or original works with permission and supplemental materials to be distributed to interested groups across the state of Mississippi.

THEATRE FOR YOUTH AWARDS / RESPONDENTS

1. Written feedback will be provided after the conclusion of the festival.
2. Two in-state / local respondents will evaluate all entries in the Theatre for Youth festival.
 - a. The respondents will be provided with the informational one-sheet about the provided by the participating organization.
 - b. The respondents will give general educational, constructive feedback following each block of performances or at the end of the Theatre for Youth Festival, depending on capabilities of the host facility and festival schedule.
 - c. Respondents will discuss and compile a list of award winners and will provide the completed list to the Chair.

- i. Two (2) awards will be given for The Spirit of Theatre for Youth.
 - ii. Two (2) Outstanding Performer awards will be given.
 - iii. Each participating production will receive at least one (1) All-Star Cast member award.
 - iv. Additional special recognition to highlight notable technical or performance achievement may be given at the adjudicator's discretion.
- d. The Chair or their designated representative will announce the winners during the Theatre for Youth Festival Awards Ceremony.

OPERATIONS MANUAL: PLAYWRITING DIVISION

HISTORY AND PURPOSE

At the 2007 Festival, MTA announced the first MTA Playwriting Competition for Adults, and in 2008 MTA announced the first MTA Playwriting Competition for Youth. Both competitions are designed to recognize and promote the works of Mississippi playwrights and is open to all Mississippi-based writers.

DUTIES OF THE PLAYWRITING DIVISION CHAIR (SECONDARY AND ADULT)

1. Review the division guidelines in the MTA handbook and edit so that they remain up-to-date. Submit handbook changes to the MTA secretary two weeks prior to a board meeting.
2. Work with the Secondary and Community Theatre divisions to increase awareness and interest in the playwriting contests.
3. Determine and communicate reasonable deadlines, etc.
4. Handle all adjudicator recruitment for the playwriting contests.
5. Coordinate the staged reading of the winning scripts at the annual festival in January.
 - a. Communicate with the executive director, president, and festival site host to ensure sufficient seating, music stands, copies of scripts, etc. for the actors.
 - b. Select a cast of actors appropriate to the script from individuals and organizations participating in the annual convention.
 - c. Host a rehearsal session during a workshop block to give the staged reading actors the opportunity to meet with the playwright, as possible, and to familiarize themselves with the script.
 - d. Introduce the playwright, the actors, and the script to the audience of the staged reading.
6. Announce and present the Playwriting awards at the appropriate Awards Ceremony.
7. Respond to e-mails from the President and the Executive Director in a timely manner.
8. Review festival materials as requested by the President and the Executive Director.
9. Prepare and submit a division report to the board following the state festival.
10. Provide content for newsletters, blog posts, and social media as requested by the President and the Executive Director.
11. Attend all board meetings and develop ideas to make the division stronger; propose these ideas to the board.
12. Attend meetings (such as the Secondary Workshop, Town Hall Meetings, Arts on the Capitol Day, etc.) when requested by the President and the Executive Director.
13. Stay mindful that this position means that sometimes the Playwriting Chairs may have to miss performances, be back stage, or do work at the festival that separates them from the main festival events. Bear in mind that these positions are to better the organization and not the individual interests of the Chair.

PLAYWRITING CONTEST ELIGIBILITY

- The Playwriting Contest eligibility will mirror the Individual Events eligibility requirements. In brief:
 - a. An individual is eligible to submit to the Secondary Playwriting Festival if they are
 - i. A high school student, including students enrolled in homeschool programs, in grades 9 – 12,
 - ii. Currently residing in the state of Mississippi, and
 - iii. A registered member of MTA, either through a participating school that is an organizational member of MTA or as an individual (as is often the case for homeschool students).
 - b. An individual is eligible to submit to the Adult Playwriting Festival if they are
 - i. Eighteen (18) years of age AND not enrolled in a high school or homeschool program,
 - ii. Currently residing in the state of Mississippi, and

- iii. A registered member of MTA, either through a participating group that is an organizational member of MTA or as an individual.

PLAYWRITING CONTEST TIMELINE

- Call for Submissions: April 1 – October 1.
 - a. This change to the submission window (from August 1 – October 1) will go into effect in 2022.
 - b. Entries are accepted from April 1 until October 1. Entries submitted after this date will not be considered.
- The winning selection will be announced on or before December 10.
- There will be a staged reading of each division's winning submission at the annual festival in January.

PLAYWRITING CONTEST ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- Each submission should be a one-act play that has not been published and has not been professionally produced.
- Each playwright may only submit one play per year. This submission limit includes plays written collaboratively.
- Plays may be written collaboratively, but a winning playwriting team will share awards.
 - a. MTA provides one free festival registration and hotel accommodation for one room for one night, regardless of the number of writers on the winning script.
 - b. Any other necessary arrangements must be made by the playwriting team.
- MTA is currently unable to accept musicals, full-length plays, adaptations, or screenplays.
- Submission Format:
 - a. All scripts must follow the style sheet found in this operations manual.
 - b. Plays must not exceed 45 pages.
 - c. There is no minimum page limit, but MTA encourages writers to keep in mind that the staged reading block is designed for a script that runs approximately an hour.
 - d. Electronic submissions are required. Scripts must be saved as PDFs and submitted through the MTA website.
 - e. Playwrights' names must not appear on the pages of the script text.
 - i. All submissions will be evaluated anonymously.
 - ii. Playwright biographical and contact information will be collected through the online submission form as well as a one-page cover attached to the submitted script. See the style sheet (below).
- Mississippi Theatre Association reserves the right not to produce a winner in any given year.
- Aside from the necessary permissions to stage the reading of the winning entry, all rights are retained by the playwright.

Style Sheet

1. All of the text in the script submission should be
 - a. Times New Roman
 - b. 12-point font

1

1.5"

CAPITALIZE THE TITLE OF YOUR PLAY
AT THE CENTER OF THE UPPER HALF OF
THE PAGE. IT IS OKAY IF IT'S NOT EXACT.

By: Full Name

Full Name

Mailing Address (Street)

Mailing Address (City, State ZIP)

Phone Number

Email Address

1"

BIO: In 200 words or less, write your brief biography to be included in information shared publicly by the Mississippi Theatre Association, should you win this contest. MTA reserves the right to cut or edit bio information as necessary.

- c. Double spaced.
2. Set up your document so that your page has these margins:
 - a. Top: 1"
 - b. Bottom: 1"
 - c. Left: 1.5"
 - d. Right: 1"
 - e. Note: the left margin is slightly larger so that a printed manuscript can be bound without risk.
3. Include the page number in the top, right-hand corner of every page.
4. Cover Page with Playwright Contact and Biographical Information
 - a. Capitalize the title of your play at the center of the upper half of the page. (It is okay if it's not exact.)
 - b. Below the title, write "By:" and your full name. (This will typically be the name you use when you write your signature.)
 - c. Below the halfway line on the page, include your contact information:
 - i. Full Name
 - ii. Street Address
 - iii. City, State, and Zip
 - iv. Phone Number
 - v. Email Address
 - d. Below your contact information, include your bio.
 - i. Bios should be written in the third person.
 - ii. Bios should not exceed 100 words and should not break to the next page.
 - iii. By including information in your bio, you grant MTA the right to publish it in any form of distributable materials (e.g. programs, social media, etc.); MTA reserves the right to edit or cut bios.
5. Characters, Settings, and Notes
 - a. **DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ON THIS PAGE.**
 - b. Capitalize and center your title.
 - c. Include a subheading for your characters; be clear about how you lay them out. (Order of Appearance is common, but it is not the only option.)
 - d. Include a subheading for the setting.
 - e. Include any relevant notes about casting requirements, typesetting, etc.

1

BED OF ROSES

By: Franklin Findilay Cowhort

Franklin Findilay Cowhort

809 Exists St.

Jackson, MS 39202

601.123.4567

FindiCowhort@gmail.com

BIO: Franklin "Findi" Cowhort is an up-and-coming playwright in central Mississippi. Previous short drama was realized in MTA's 10 Minute play festival, and his school theatre department is excited to produce his new writing this spring.

CAPITALIZE & CENTER YOUR TITLE

2

CHARACTERS (explanation of order)

First Character - any relevant description text

Second Character - any relevant description text

Third Character - any relevant description text

Etc.

SETTING

Necessary information about the setting

NOTES

Optionally, include information a casting director might need to know prior to auditions AND/OR information about text formatting (for example, what does a "—" mean when you write it? Do you need to clarify that before a reader begins?) Omit this section if you have no notes.

CHARACTERS (in order of appearance)

Janet – 70s, a gardener of sorts

Norman – 30s, Janet's only child and primary caregiver

Holly – any age, a literal bush, hardy and sharp-witted,

Rose – any age, a literal flower, wilted and codependent

SETTING

The backyard of a McMansion in suburban middle America

Evening, late spring / early summer, 2020; global health crisis

NOTES

Directors have no obligation to portray the plants as plants. It would be equally acceptable for the audience to encounter three Southern ladies having a backyard brunch.

When a line ends with a dash (–), a thought has been lost.

Characters may respond with an anticipatory hesitation, waiting for that thought to possibly return, before following with a line.

6. Dramatic Text

- a. **DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ON THESE PAGES.**
- b. Capitalize and center your title.
- c. Indicate the scene, if your play has such divisions, using title case and Arabic numerals (i.e. 1, 2, 3).
- d. Set the margins for stage directions at center, and left align or left justify the stage direction text. Italics are optional.
- e. Capitalize the name of a character the first time it is mentioned in a block of stage directions. Use sentence case for names each subsequent iteration.
- f. Center and capitalize character names
- g. Left align or left justify dialogue text.
- h. Include brief internal stage directions as parenthetical, italicized words or phrases.
- i. Center the margin and left align or justify complete-phrase or complete-sentence internal stage directions.
- j. Include “(cont.)” at the end of a page if the same character's dialogue continues across the break. Also include “(cont.)” alongside the character's name at the top of the following page.

CAPITALIZE & CENTER YOUR TITLE

Scene 1 (if your play is divided into scenes)

Stage directions should be left aligned with a margin at the center of the page. Italics optional. Full adjust is optional.

Capitalize the first time a character's name is mentioned in the stage directions.

CHARACTER NAME: CAPITALIZED & CENTERED

Dialogue should be in sentence case and should follow a consistent grammar and punctuation scheme. (Internal stage directions.)

Block out complete-sentence internal stage directions.

You only need to rewrite the speaking character's name if the dialogue is continuing on the next page. Include “(cont.)” at the end of a page if dialogue continues after the page break.

BED OF ROSES

Scene 1

AT RISE: JANET sits quietly at a garden table in a suburban backyard. The wind rustles through the oak leaves that canopy her back patio. We hear a front door open and clang shut. Janet smiles, closes her eyes, and sighs.

JANET

Norm? Is that you?

She looks over her shoulder and a light flicks on in the kitchen.

Norman! If you'd have told me you were swinging by, I could have put some tea on or something. I wish you would've called first. How's that new girlfriend of yours? Is she still looking for a job? Have y'all tried Applebee's? They'll hire just about

(cont.)

JANET (*cont.*)

anybody! She could work at Applebee's.

*NORMAN clatters in through
the screen door to the patio.*

*He's huffy, but JANET has
her back turned, so she
doesn't notice.*

NORMAN

Mama. Mother. Mom.

JANET

(*Startled*) Yes, Baby, hello. What?

*JANET starts to get up, but
NORMAN waves his hand for
her to stay where she is.*

NORMAN

Hi, Mom. I'm sorry I let it get to be so late. (*Rushing through
pleasantries*) Do you know where my old copy of the— of that
old John Grisham novel is? The— the— I don't remember what
the title— The one about the lawyer?

7. Templates with the defined MTA style sheet parameters are available for download:
 - a. Microsoft Word
 - b. [Google Docs](#)
 - c. Adobe InDesign
8. NOTE: There may be mild disparities among templates or manuscripts.
 - a. That's okay!
 - b. The MTA style sheet exists to provide a standard submission format so that readers (including adjudicators and staged reading actors) can focus on the without having to switch among font and typesetting styles.
 - c. Playwrights who use specialized software to help with the formatting of their manuscripts should seek to match the style sheet parameters, but have no obligation to use the MTA templates.
 - d. All scripts should be exported to PDF and saved with a logical filename (that does not include any part of the playwright's name) prior to submission.

Evaluation

- Purpose: As MTA is an organization that includes education among its core values, providing written evaluative feedback to all submitting playwrights aligns with our values. Offering constructive criticism also encourages playwrights to submit to the contest, as evaluative feedback provides an opportunity for playwrights to understand how their work is being received by educated professionals.
- Each submitted manuscript will be evaluated by a panel of three volunteer adjudicators.
 - a. Adjudicators for the Adult Playwriting Contest will be selected by the Adult Playwriting Division Chair, and the panel of adjudicators for the Secondary Playwriting Contest will be selected by the Secondary Playwriting Chair.
 - i. Division chairs will seek to engage diverse panels of credible adjudicators with education, experience, and skill in dramatic writing.
 - ii. Division chairs should notify the executive director and the current president of the adjudicators for both the preliminary and final rounds of the contest by September 15.
 - b. Division chairs will remove the cover page (P1, which includes the submitting playwrights' contact and biographical information) and send a PDF copy of the anonymized script to each adjudicator.
 - c. Each member of the preliminary panel of adjudicators will read every submission in its entirety and complete a one-page comments form (attached) that will be provided to each playwright following the announcement of the year's winning script.
 - d. Each adjudicator will also complete a one-page score sheet (attached) to be provided to each playwright following the announcement of the year's winning script.
 - i. The Playwriting Division Chairs will collect and tabulate score sheets from the panelists.
 - ii. The scripts in each division with the three (3) highest scores will advance to a final round for evaluation.
 - e. The preliminary evaluation window will be from October 1 – November 1, although preliminary panel adjudicators are encouraged to complete their reading and evaluations well in advance of the deadline.
 - i. Division Chairs will each generate and send an email to all submitting playwrights in their division that lists the titles and authors of the scripts that will advance to the final round.
 - ii. This email must be sent on or before November 5.
 - iii. In addition to the submitting playwrights, this email should CC the executive director and current president.
 - f. The executive director and/or president will make arrangements for the formal announcement of the contest winners on or before December 10.
 - i. The Secondary Contest winners will be announced at each regional High School DramaFest.
 - ii. The executive director and/or president will formally notify the winner of the Adult Contest by email.
 - iii. MTA will prepare and disseminate social media announcements to publicize the division winners and invite the public to attend the staged reading of their plays at the state festival.

PLAYWRITING AWARDS

- The winning play in the adult competition receives
 - a. A staged reading at the MTA Conference,
 - b. Free festival registration,
 - c. Hotel accommodations for the evening of their staged reading, and
 - d. A \$500 cash prize.
- The winning play in the secondary competition receives
 - a. A staged reading at the MTA Conference,
 - b. Free festival registration,
 - c. Hotel accommodations for the evening of their staged reading, and
 - d. A \$250 cash prize

ADJUDICATOR RESPONSE AND SCORE SHEET SAMPLES


MISSISSIPPI THEATRE ASSOCIATION
ADJUDICATOR RESPONSE FORM
 PLAYWRITING CONTEST

PLAY TITLE: _____ YEAR: _____

ADJUDICATOR NAME: _____

CONTENT	EFFECT ON THE READER (What is compelling about this script? What aspects or moments caught your attention?)
	STORY (Originality, Concept, Execution, etc.)
	USE OF LANGUAGE (Consistency, Dialect / Accent work, etc.)
	VOICE (Effective use of Monologue/Dialogue, Specificity to Character, Appropriateness to Concept, Believability, etc.)
	PACE / TIMING (Appropriateness to Concept, Consistency, Rhythm, etc.)
EFFECTIVENESS OF DRAMATIC CONCEPTS	CHARACTER
	DIALOGUE
	DRAMATIC ACTION
	CONFLICT & RESOLUTION
CRAFTSMANSHIP	RELATIONSHIPS (Are relationships – character / other characters, character / environment, and character / self – clear?)
	NARRATIVE STRUCTURE (Does the structure support the content and purpose? Is the structure rewarding?)
	GENRE (Does the play appeal to a specific audience? Does the play accomplish what it sets out to do?)
	MECHANICS / GRAMMAR / SYNTAX (Does the script make consistent, effective use of its mechanical structures?)
	STYLE (Is the writing style appropriate to the target audience? Does the writing style support the content?)
	FORMAT (Does the script meet standard expectations for dramatic formatting? Is formatting consistent throughout?)


MISSISSIPPI THEATRE ASSOCIATION
ADJUDICATOR SCORE SHEET
 PLAYWRITING CONTEST

PLAY TITLE: _____ YEAR: _____

ADJUDICATOR NAME: _____

Evaluators should put the number corresponding with the rating for each criterion in the appropriate box (i.e. Superior = 4; Excellent = 3; Good = 2; Fair = 1). The scores for the category will be added together to make up the Category Score (Acting, Directing, Design). The three category scores will then be added together to determine the final Evaluation Score.

(Note to tabulator: If you are using the scoring spreadsheet, input a 1 in the appropriate cell instead of the corresponding rating of 1, 2, 3, or 4. The spreadsheet will then calculate the accurate subtotals and totals.)

		FAIR (1)	GOOD (2)	EXCELLENT (3)	SUPERIOR (4)
CONTENT	EFFECT ON THE READER				
	STORY				
	USE OF LANGUAGE				
	VOICE				
	PACE / TIMING				
CONTENT SUBTOTAL					
CONTENT TOTAL					
EFFECTIVENESS OF DRAMATIC CONCEPTS	CHARACTER				
	DIALOGUE				
	DRAMATIC ACTION				
	CONFLICT & RESOLUTION				
	RELATIONSHIPS				
DRAMATIC CONCEPTS SUBTOTAL					
DRAMATIC CONCEPTS TOTAL					
CRAFTSMANSHIP	NARRATIVE STRUCTURE				
	GENRE				
	MECHANICS / GRAMMAR / SYNTAX				
	STYLE				
	FORMAT				
CRAFTSMANSHIP SUBTOTAL					
CRAFTSMANSHIP TOTAL					
TOTAL EVALUATION SCORE					

OTHER INFORMATION

- A winning playwright in the Adult Division may not submit to the contest during the following year. There are no restrictions on re-entry for a winning playwright in the Secondary Division.
- By submitting to the Adult Playwriting Contest, entrants agree to allow MTA to contact them to request their service on the following year's adjudication panels.
 - a. Winners of the Adult Playwriting Contest should expect to be invited to serve on the following year's finalist panel.
 - b. Entrants who are particularly interested in serving on a subsequent year's adjudication panel should reach out to the Division Chairs to have their contact information added to the pool.
 - c. Division Chairs may share entrant and adjudicator contact information with the Individual Events Division Chairs, who also require a substantial quantity of respondents.
- The Playwriting Contests adhere to the MTA policy on censorship. In brief:
 - a. MTA supports a policy permitting the widest possible range of dramatic material.
 - b. Adjudicators may in NO CASE may prohibit a submission from advancing exclusively on the basis of the presence of mature language, themes, or content.
 - c. MTA reserves the right to include appropriate disclaimers in the annual festival literature to notify audiences attending the staged readings of mature language, themes, and content.

OPERATIONS MANUAL: INDIVIDUAL EVENTS DIVISION

DUTIES OF THE INDIVIDUAL EVENTS CHAIR (SECONDARY AND ADULT)

1. Maintain the guidelines for the Individual Events festivals for use on the website and the manual.
2. Work with the Secondary and Community Theatre divisions to increase awareness and interest in individual events.
3. Determine the best events for competition for each division.
4. Handle all judging recruitment.
5. Determine and communicate reasonable deadlines.
6. Announce and present the Individual Event awards at the appropriate Awards Ceremony.
7. Respond to e-mails from the President and the Executive Director in a timely manner.
8. Review festival materials as requested by the President and the Executive Director.
9. Prepare and submit a division report to the board following the state festival.
10. Provide content for newsletters, blog posts, and social media as requested by the President and the Executive Director.
11. Attend all board meetings and develop ideas to make the division stronger; propose these ideas to the board.
12. Review the division guidelines in the MTA handbook and edit so that they remain up-to-date. Submit handbook changes to the MTA secretary two weeks prior to a board meeting.
13. Attend meetings (such as the Secondary Workshop, Town Hall Meetings, Arts on the Capitol Day, etc.) when requested by the President and the Executive Director.
14. Stay mindful that this position means that sometimes the IEF Chair and Vice Chair will have to miss performances, be back stage, or do work at the festival that separates them from the main festival events. Bear in mind that these positions are to better the organization and not the individual interest of the Chair or Vice Chair.
15. Update and maintain any websites or public forum created for Individual Events.

SECONDARY INDIVIDUAL EVENTS GUIDELINES

Institutional Eligibility

- A participating school or organization (henceforth referred to as a *school*) must be a registered organizational member of MTA.
- A school may enter ten (10) students or teams in each main event.
 - a. Example: South Central High School may enter 10 students in Acting Male, 10 students in Acting Female, 10 students in Acting Duet, etc.
 - b. Pilot events may have different entry allotments; these limits will be defined in the pilot guidelines for new events.
- In addition to the institutional registration fee, a participating school must pay a registration fee for each event.
 - c. Solo event registration is \$10 per entry.
 - d. Duet event registration is \$20 per entry.
 - e. Group event registration is \$30 per entry regardless of the number of students participating in the entry.
- School must provide two (2) designated adults to act as door guards and/or timekeepers.

Individual Eligibility

1. Every student that participates in the MTA Individual Events Festival must be a member of MTA either through a participating school that is an organizational member of MTA, or, in the case that the student is homeschooled, that student must be an individual member of MTA.
2. Each participant must be enrolled in grades 9-12.

3. Each participant may enter up to five (5) events. (Example: Beth Ann Franklin may enter Acting Solo: 9th and 10th Grade, Acting Duet, Musical Group, Original Scene, and Costume Design.)
4. Any violation of these rules will automatically disqualify the school's entry.

Eligibility Requirements for All Students

- Each school that participates must fill out the MTA festival registration form with complete individual event registration.
 - a. Additional information may be required from participating school.
 - b. Directors will be contacted by the Secondary IEs Chair or Vice Chair as additional information is needed.
- The Secondary IEs Chair should be contacted if a school needs to make a substitution; requests for substitutions will be considered on an individual basis.
- Incomplete registrations will not be accepted.
- Winners will be announced at the Secondary Awards Ceremony.
- **Dropped events received after the festival registration deadline remain subject to the registration fee.**

Preliminary Rounds

1. Secondary Individual Events will have digitally submitted preliminary rounds for both performance and design/technical events.
2. The guidelines regarding virtual submissions are outlined in their respective sections below.

Festival Timeline:

- **October 15:** Registration due for Schools participating in 2IEs
- **November 1:** Virtual Preliminary Design/Technology Submissions Deadline.
- **November 15:** Virtual Preliminary Performance Submissions Deadline
- **December 10:** Preliminary Judging Complete
- **On or before December 15:** Finalists Announced
- **January 17:** 2IEs Final Round
- **January 18:** Awards Ceremony
- **Following MTA:** Teachers Receive Respondent Feedback

Adjudication

1. Each round will have two (2) to three (3) qualified judges.
2. No oral adjudication will be given; written adjudication will be a part of the evaluation process.
3. All main events will have a second, deciding round.
 - a. FINAL ROUND scores will determine ranks and outcomes.
 - b. First round scores will be used to break ties.
 - c. Final rounds in events with fewer than thirty (30) entries will include the top half of entries by first round score.
 - d. Final rounds in events with more than thirty (30) entries will include the top fifteen (15) entries by first round score.
 - e. In the event of a first round tie for performers in the #15 slot, all tied entries will be accepted to the final round.
4. Individual entry scores will be recorded on ballots and returned to entrants, but tabulation spreadsheets will not be shared with participants or the public.
5. Adjudication sheets will be available for directors to pick up following the awards ceremony.

Awards

1. Medals will be given to the **top three (3) finalists** in each main event.
2. In the event of a tie, each winner in the category will receive recognition/medal (these medals may have to be mailed).
3. In duet and group categories, each participant will receive a medal.

Timekeeper Responsibilities

1. Each school must provide one teacher to serve as a timekeeper. Parents are not allowed to serve as timekeepers.
2. Timekeepers must be available for the duration of the in-person individual events round.
3. Timekeepers are responsible for their own timing device.
4. Timekeepers will receive a packet of timekeeper ballots containing the list of entries in their round.
5. General time-keeping guidelines are as follows:
 - a. Time begins on the performer's first intentional word or action after slate.
 - b. Time ends on performer's "thank you" at the end of the piece.
 - c. Neither slate nor "thank you" is included in a performer's time.
 - d. Timekeepers are expected to record times for all entries and to make note of any that go over time.
 - e. If a performer exceeds the time limit, a 5-second grace period will be allowed.
 - i. Timekeepers will make a note that the performer entered the grace period.
 - ii. A 3-point penalty will be applied to the entrant's score by the MTA officials; timekeepers are not responsible for applying this penalty.
 - f. After the 5-second grace period (e.g. 5:06 for Acting Duet participants), the timekeeper must say "thank you" to stop the performer.
 - i. After the grace period, performers are disqualified.
 - ii. Timekeepers should denote that the performer(s) exceeded the grace period, was(were) stopped, and did not finish their performance.
 - iii. Timekeepers are **not** expected to notify entrants of their qualification status.
6. Individual time limits for categories are as follows:
 - a. Acting Female / Acting Male: 3 minutes
 - b. Acting Duet: 5 minutes
 - c. Acting Group: 5 minutes
 - d. Musical Female / Musical Male: 5 minutes
 - e. Musical Duet: 5 minutes
 - f. Musical Group: 5 minutes
 - g. Original Scene: 5 minutes

Doorkeeper Responsibilities

1. Each school must provide one adult to serve as a doorkeeper.
 - a. Parents or teachers are allowed to serve as doorkeepers.
 - b. Students are not allowed to serve as doorkeepers.
2. Doorkeepers must be available for the duration of the in-person individual events round.
3. Doorkeepers will be stationed outside of the performance room and will not be able to watch performances.
4. Duties include the following:
 - a. Opening the door between performance flights
 - b. Maintaining a low noise level in the hallway at all times
 - c. Assisting students in locating the correct performance room
 - d. Ensuring door stays closed during performances and that no spectators or performers enter or exit during performances
 - e. As needed, collecting judges' score sheets to give to MTA officials

Contact

1. Teachers: contact the secondary IEs chair with questions or concerns

- a. Chair: Lauren Ray
- b. Co-vice chair: David Kelly
- c. Co-vice chair: Roxie Hood
2. Email to: IndividualEvents@mississippitheatre.org

INDIVIDUAL EVENTS CATEGORIES

1. Performance Events:

- a. Acting Solo: 9th & 10th Grade
- b. Acting Solo: 11th Grade
- c. Acting Solo: 12th Grade
- d. Acting Duet
- e. Acting Group
- f. Musical Solo: 9th & 10th Grade
- g. Musical Solo: 11th Grade
- h. Musical Solo: 12th Grade
- i. Musical Duet
- j. Musical Group
- k. Original Scene

2. Design Events:

- a. Scenic Design
- b. Costume Design
- c. Publicity Design
- d. Open Division for Evaluation Only (ODEO)

Event Requirements

- Students may participate in no more than five (5) individual events.
- Students may not enter the same event twice.

PERFORMANCE EVENTS: GENERAL INFORMATION

These rules apply to all performance events; read them carefully!

Time Requirements

- All performance events have specific time limits.
- Performers must slate before beginning their performance; slate is not included in the time limit.
 - a. A slate should include: student's name, school code, title of selection(s), and the name of the playwright(s).
 - b. If performing a musical piece, slate should include the title of the selection, title of the show, and the name(s) of the playwright(s).
 - c. E.g. "John Smith; School 9436; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare and *Rabbit Hole* by David Lindsay-Abaire."
 - d. E.g. "Hello, we are John Smith and Jane Jones from School 9436, and we will be performing *The Nerd* by Larry Shue."
 - e. E.g. "Hello, my name is Jane Jones from School 9436, and this is "Children will Listen" from *Into the Woods* by James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim."
- Performers should conclude by saying "thank you."

- **Time will begin with first word, musical sound, or intentional movement after the slate and will conclude with performer's "thank you."**
- Participants will have a 5-second grace period after allotted time.
 - a. At the end of the 5-second grace period, timekeeper will say "THANK YOU," and the entrant must stop immediately.
 - b. If an entry exceeds the grace period during the first round, it will NOT be eligible to advance to a final round. These entries will receive first round ballots with scores and feedback from the adjudicators.
 - c. If an entry exceeds the grace period during the final round, it will be disqualified from ranking in the top three but will receive final round ballots with scores and feedback from the adjudicators.
 - d. If a participant exceeds the allotted time but does not exceed the grace period, time will be recorded and a 3 point penalty will be issued to the participant's score.
 - e. The penalty for entering the grace period does not automatically disqualify student from advancing to a final round or ranking in the top three performances in the event.

Material Selection

- Material must be drawn from published plays.
 - a. Works from other literary forms such as poetry, fiction, stand up/sketch comedy, or song lyrics are not permitted.
 - b. Original works are prohibited except in the Original Scene category.
 - c. Musical Theatre material must be from published musicals. Popular music will not be permitted unless it is included in the score of a published musical.
 - d. Entrants will be required to identify the company that holds the rights to the play or musical from which their material is selected as part of their registration.
- In events with more than one participant, each participant should be actively involved in the scene.
- Selections should be appropriate to the performers and should provide interest, intelligibility, and literary value.
- Performers should demonstrate evidence of understanding in regards to the selection's context and intent.
- Entrants should use discretion in regards to language and subject matter.
 - a. Directors will attest that they have seen and approved the material their students are performing and that it appropriately reflects the standards of the student's school and community.
 - b. Adjudicators should direct concerns about content to the Individual Events Chair and should in NO CASE address a competitor directly with concerns about the content of their selection.
 - c. MTA supports a policy permitting the widest possible range of dramatic material and is not responsible for the perceived decency of selections that students enter in the Individual Events Festival.
- No student may enter any Individual Event except ODEO: Technology with a selection that their school is bringing to any MTA-sponsored festival during the current school year.
- No student may enter any Individual Event except ODEO: Technology with a selection that their school brought to any MTA-sponsored festival during the previous school year.

Attire

- No costumes or theatrical makeup is allowed.
 - a. Entrants who have created wearable theatrical artifacts for ODEO (costumes, props, puppets, etc.) may display these on a mannequin or dress form.
 - b. Entrants should not don their wearable theatrical artifacts for the interview process.
 - c. Entrants may not use live actors to model their wearable theatrical artifacts.
- Participants are encouraged to dress as they would for a general audition or job interview.
- All-black attire is welcome, but not required.

Equipment

- No hand props should be used.
- No set pieces are allowed for performance categories.

- Certain sound equipment will be provided by the festival:
 - a. Auxiliary cords and speakers will be provided for musical events.
 - b. **CD players will NOT be provided.**
 - i. Participants may bring their own portable CD player if necessary.
 - ii. Power outlets are not guaranteed.
 - c. Bluetooth speakers are discouraged.
 - i. If a participant chooses to use a Bluetooth speaker, the speaker must be connected BEFORE entering competition room.
 - ii. NO extra time will be allotted for Bluetooth complications.
 - d. Students in musical categories must provide another student or teacher to start their music.
- Only straight-back chairs (provided by host institution) are allowed:
 - a. Solo events will be provided with one chair.
 - b. Duet events will be provided with two chairs.
 - c. Group events will be provided chairs up to the number of performers in the group. Groups may not use more chairs than they have performers in the group.

Preparation

- All pieces should be memorized and rehearsed for time.
- Slates should be rehearsed.
- All pieces should be blocked for movement.
- Sample Secondary IEs ballots are available to view online.
- Judges' tips and tricks are available online.
- Design templates and samples are available online.

Miscellaneous:

- Students and sponsors are encouraged to observe individual events.
- Audience etiquette is expected in ALL events. An audience etiquette quick-reference guide is available online.
 - a. No cell phone use of any kind is allowed by observers inside the performance rooms.
 - b. Any violation of this rule may result in observer being asked to leave.
- Each event will be separated into "flights" (groups of performers).
 - a. At the end of each flight, the doorkeeper will open the door to allow participants and observers to enter and exit the room.
 - b. There will be no entry or exit during a flight.
- In the event of a tie for top scores, awards will be mailed to participants as necessary.

Performer Substitution in Final Rounds

- Due to the temporal separation between the preliminary performance event submission deadline and the in-person finals date, there may be rare occasions where a student performer who earns the right to finals is unable to attend or participate. In such a situation, the following guidelines will apply.
 - a. In solo events, an absent student will forfeit their entry; no additional entries will be added to the finalists pool.
 - b. In duet events, an entry with an absent student will forfeit their entry; no additional entries will be added to the finalist pool.
 - c. In group events, an entry with an absence may make substitutions under specific circumstances.
 - i. A school may substitute understudies for fewer than half of the participating performers.
 - » E.g. An entry with three or four participants may substitute one performer; an entry with five or six participants may substitute two performers.

- » An entry with half or more absent performers will forfeit; no additional entries will be added to the finalist pool.
- ii. If an entry is eligible, schools must communicate their intent to make a substitution in writing (via email to individualevents@mississippitheatre.org) prior to 8:00 AM the day of the in-person final round.
 - » This email should come from the director or other official adult representative affiliated with the program.
 - » This email must not come from any student, nor should it come from a parent of participating students.
- iii. The understudy must be eligible to compete in the event.
 - » A student is eligible to understudy if they entered four or fewer events in the preliminary round, none of which were the same event that requires the substitution.
 - » A student who entered five events (even if they did not advance to finals) is ineligible to understudy.
 - » A student who entered the same group event as the absent student (even if that entry did not advance to finals) is ineligible to understudy for that event.
- iv. The understudy must verbally acknowledge that they are a substitution during the entry's slate.
 - » E.g. "We are Horace Griffin, Genevive Haddon substituting for Grace Reigner, and Florence Gillespie. This is an original scene entitled, 'Haven't you heard?' by Florence Gillespie. 4092."
 - » E.g. "Mark Rainer, George Hull, Hadley Brillely stepping in for Lina Nguyen, Archen Yhost, understudy for Uhry Rosenblatt, and Marco Thomas. The Book of Will by Lauren Gunderson. 2173."

PERFORMANCE EVENTS: REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

These requirements include details for each category.

Areas of Competition

- Acting Solo: 9th & 10th Grade
- Acting Solo: 11th Grade
- Acting Solo: 12th Grade
- Acting Duet
- Acting Group
- Musical Solo: 9th & 10th Grade
- Musical Solo: 11th Grade
- Musical Solo: 12th Grade
- Musical Duet
- Musical Group
- Original Scene

Preliminary Round Video Submission:

1. All performances will be submitted for evaluation via links on the 2IEs entries organizer.
2. Teachers will be responsible for submitting accurate links to their students' performance videos.
3. Entrants will pre-record and upload their performances to the internet.
 - a. Entrants are encouraged to upload to YouTube or Google Drive.
 - b. Teachers should ensure that all videos are accessible to be viewed by anyone with the link.
4. MTA is not responsible for corrupted or unwatchable videos, including links with restricted view access.
5. Entrants should preview their upload prior to final submission to ensure that everything is working correctly.
6. Filming:
 - a. Adjudication and evaluative response will focus on the quality of the performance rather than the quality of the video recording.
 - b. Performers are strongly encouraged to use their tools effectively.

- c. A computer or a smartphone camera is sufficient for recording.
 - d. Elaborate, studio-grade equipment is unnecessary.
 - e. Video entries should each contain one complete performance and should not have any noticeable editing.
 - i. Trimming the beginning or the end of an entry so that the recording begins with the performer's slate and ends with their "thank you" is acceptable.
 - ii. Adjusting sound settings after the filming is complete in order to better hear the audio is acceptable.
 - iii. Cutting in the middle of a performance (for example, to splice two different takes of two monologues together in an Acting Solo entry) is **not acceptable** and will result in the entry being **disqualified**.
7. Framing:
- a. Submissions must be filmed in LANDSCAPE (horizontal) orientation; **submissions filmed in portrait (vertical) orientation will be disqualified.**
 - b. The performer should be the primary focal point of the video submission.
 - i. Performers are encouraged to find a neutral backdrop and should not use green-screens or virtual backgrounds.
 - ii. Adjudicators understand that extenuating circumstances may make it difficult or impossible to eliminate all clutter from a performer's private space and are asked to bear this in mind as they complete their evaluations.
 - c. The camera lens should be placed at or slightly above eye-level.
 - d. Each entrant should make a deliberate choice about how close their camera is to their face.
 - i. Performers in monologue are encouraged to select full-body, knees-up, or waist-up framing.
 - ii. Performers in events with more than one performer are encouraged to select full-body or knees-up framing.
 - iii. **Adjudicators want to see all of the important blocking, movement, and gestures in the performance; the framing of the video should allow for this.**
 - e. Performers should consider best practices in regards to framing (including but not limited to cropping across major muscle groups rather than at joints, leaving adequate clutter-free negative space, and composing the frame to focus on their face).
8. Lighting:
- a. Performances should be easy to see!
 - b. Performers are encouraged to situate their camera between themselves and two separated light sources - a combination of lamps and natural light are effective.
 - c. Performers should avoid standing directly in front of a light source as this creates a silhouette and obscures the details of their performance.
9. Audio:
- a. Performances should be easy to hear!
 - b. Entrants should listen to their audio playback prior to submitting their video.
 - c. Performers should record themselves in a space that enhances vocal clarity and minimizes echo and excessive background noise.
 - d. Performers are prohibited from using bluetooth earbuds or other external microphones / voice amplifying devices as contemporary smartphones and computers have adequate microphones for capturing nearby audio.

Acting Solo

- TIME LIMIT: 3 minutes. (Does not include slate.)
- **Two contrasting monologues are required.**
- Both monologues are performed by one actor portraying only one character in each of the monologues.
- Refer to Performance Events: General Information for full rules and guidelines.

Acting Duet

- TIME LIMIT: 5 minutes. (Does not include slate.)
- Performed by two performers, each portraying one character.

- Refer to Performance Events: General Information for full rules and guidelines.

Acting Group

- TIME LIMIT: 5 minutes. (Does not include slate.)
- Performed by **three to ten** (3-10) performers.
- Selection should be as equally balanced among all characters as possible.
- Refer to Performance Events: General Information for full rules and guidelines.

Musical Solo

- TIME LIMIT: 5 minutes. (Does not include slate.)
- The performer must present one selection.
- Performers must use pre-recorded, non-vocal musical accompaniment.
 - a. No live accompaniment will be allowed.
 - b. For in-person rounds, all music must be downloaded onto the entrant's device.
 - c. See "Equipment" under General Information for full guidelines.
- Refer to Performance Events: General Information for full rules and guidelines.

Musical Duet

- TIME LIMIT: 5 minutes. (Does not include slate.)
- Performed by two performers, each portraying one character.
- Entrants must present one selection.
- Each participant must be actively involved in the performance.
- Performers must use pre-recorded, non-vocal musical accompaniment.
 - a. No live accompaniment will be allowed.
 - b. For in-person rounds, all music must be downloaded onto the entrant's device.
 - c. See "Equipment" under General Information for full guidelines.
- Refer to Performance Events: General Information for full rules and guidelines.

Musical Group

- TIME LIMIT: 5 minutes. (Does not include slate.)
- Selection must be a musical theatre piece performed by **three to ten** (3-10) performers.
- Entrants must present one selection.
- Each participant must be actively involved in the performance.
- Performers must use pre-recorded, non-vocal musical accompaniment.
 - a. No live accompaniment will be allowed.
 - b. For in-person rounds, all music must be downloaded onto the entrant's device.
 - c. See "Equipment" under General Information for full guidelines.
- Refer to Performance Events: General Information for full rules and guidelines.

Original Scene

- TIME LIMIT: 5 minutes. (Does not include slate.)
- Performed by **two to five** (2-5) performers.
- The selection must be an original work for 2-5 performers, and the writer must be involved with the development of the scene.
 - a. The purpose of the 2-5 character limitation is to encourage students to write well-developed scenes.
 - b. The selection should be as equally balanced between the characters as possible.

- Scenes may be serious or humorous in nature or may contain elements that are both comedic and dramatic.
- Entrants must provide a verification statement confirming that they are the author and original performers of the selection.
 - c. The verification should be submitted to the Individual Events Chair the by the preliminary IEs submission deadline.
 - d. The verification must be signed by the teacher and participating students.
- Refer to Performance Events: General Information for full rules and guidelines.

Open Division for Evaluation Only (ODEO): Performance

In 2022-2023, MTA piloted the Open Division for Evaluation Only (ODEO). For 2026-2027, ODEO will follow the guidelines below and **will be divided into a performance category and a design/technology category**. Entries in ODEO will not be advanced to an in-person final round; all ODEO evaluation will be completed with the online preliminary entries.

Rationale

1. For several years, secondary teachers and students have asked for a broader diversity in categories in MTA's secondary Individual Events (2IEs).
2. As there are many legitimate theatrical performance styles, it is impractical to offer different categories for every imaginable type of legitimate work that secondary students could create.
 - a. MTA would like to offer the broadest possible variety of entry opportunities.
 - b. It makes sense to offer a combined category in which entrants can define the type of work they have produced.
3. For 2026-2027, MTA will offer an ODEO: Performance category that will allow for theatrical performance styles that do not otherwise fit into the MTA IEs performance categories.

Statement of Purpose

1. The Mississippi Theatre Association offers the Open Division in Design and Execution for Evaluation Only (ODEO) to meet the ongoing needs as outlined above.
2. ODEO invites entrants to share their work with qualified respondents and receive feedback regarding the quality of their product.
3. Entrants are offered a fruit basket-style division in which respondents provide constructive feedback and thoughtful evaluation but do not identify placement (including podium finishers/winners).
 - a. Entrants will film their performance to share with respondents who will complete a response form and offer written evaluative feedback and constructive critique.
 - b. Entrants earning high scores will be recognized with a ribbon identifying the excellent or outstanding nature of their work.
 - i. The number of excellent and outstanding designations will reflect the number of excellent and outstanding submissions.
 - ii. There will NOT be a pre-defined or limited number of allowable excellent or outstanding designations.

Entries

1. Entrants may submit *any* legitimate theatrical performance work that does not fit into the other MTA IEs performance categories and is not otherwise prohibited.
 - a. Entrants may submit work from realized or theoretical productions, including original and unpublished works.
 - b. Entrants **MAY NOT** enter ODEO: Performance with material from a selection that their school is bringing to any MTA-sponsored festival during the current school year.
 - c. Entrants **MAY NOT** enter ODEO: Performance with a selection that their school brought to any MTA-sponsored festival during the previous school year.
 - d. Entrants may not present submissions of performance work for non-theatrical purposes. Unacceptable submissions include but are not limited to:
 - i. Stand-up or sketch comedy
 - ii. Tik-Tok Videos
 - iii. Movie monologues/scenes from films

2. Schools will designate the category for the type of work they will present.
 - a. Although MTA has developed examples of categories that could fall under the performance heading, the list is by no means comprehensive; entrants should consider MTA's categories list a guideline and should feel empowered to define their own category.
 - b. Examples of acceptable ODEO: Performance categories include:
 - i. Original Monologue
 - ii. Short Film
 - iii. Puppetry
 - iv. Live-Accompanied Musical Theatre Performance
 - v. Musical Theatre Dance
3. Entrants should follow the general guidelines for Attire and Preparation.
4. Performers may use equipment as necessary for the performance.
5. Submissions for ODEO: Performance will follow the guidelines for preliminary round video submissions.
6. TIME LIMIT:
 - a. All ODEO: Performance submissions have a five-minute (5:00) maximum time limit.
 - b. Submissions exceeding the five-minute time limit will be penalized according to the parameters outlined in PERFORMANCE EVENTS: GENERAL INFORMATION.
7. ODEO: Performance entries will be submitted as solo, duet, or group.
 - a. Solo entries involve one performer.
 - b. Duet entries involve two performers.
 - c. Group entries involve three (3) to ten (10) performers.
 - d. All performers in an entry do not have to be doing the same type of performance (but they can).
 - i. E.g. A duet entry could include a live accompanist and a singer or could include two instrumental musicians.
 - ii. E.g. A group entry could include three dancers or could include three dancers and a puppeteer.
8. An entry in ODEO: Performance DOES constitute one of the five (5) events a student may enter.
9. No student may enter ODEO: Performance more than one time. (E.g. Stephen Harris may not enter ODEO with an original monologue and also as a performer in a short film. Stephen must choose one or the other.)

Evaluation Metrics & Scoring

1. Entrants in ODEO: Performance will be evaluated on ballots with general criteria for performance.
 - a. Ballots will be scored out of 25 points.
 - b. The 25-point ballot will be assigned degrees along the following scale:
 - i. Outstanding: 24-25 points
 - ii. Excellent: 20-23 points
 - iii. Good: 16-19 points
 - iv. Fair: 8-15 points
 - v. Poor: 0-7 points
 - c. A panel of three ballots will receive a cumulative score of 75 points. Each entry will be awarded an evaluative designation along the following scale:
 - i. Outstanding: 68-75 points
 - ii. Excellent: 56-67 points
 - iii. Good: 40-55 points
 - iv. Fair: 16-39 points
 - v. Poor: 0-15 points

- d. Entries receiving an evaluation of Excellent and Outstanding will receive recognition during the Secondary Individual Events awards ceremony.
- e. There is neither a minimum nor a maximum limit on the number of entries that may be recognized as Excellent or Outstanding.

SAMPLE ACTING PERFORMANCE EVENT ADJUDICATION FORM

The adjudication forms for all of the acting performance categories use the same evaluation criteria. The event is noted in the top right hand corner, and the entries are scored out of twenty-five (25) total points, divided as described in the Criteria for Evaluation section.



MISSISSIPPI THEATRE ASSOCIATION SECONDARY INDIVIDUAL EVENTS FESTIVAL ACTING PERFORMANCE CATEGORY

EVENT:
ACTING
GROUP

PERFORMER(S) NAME(S): _____

SCHOOL: _____ **PERFORMANCE NUMBER:** _____

SELECTION: _____

Adjudicators: Mark the box corresponding with your rating for each criterion. Provide constructive written feedback on this form. Use the reverse for additional comments. Do not give oral feedback.

General Requirements for Performance Events:

- All performance events must be memorized.
- Performers must slate before beginning their performance; slate must include the name(s) of the student(s), the school code, the selection title(s), and the name(s) of the playwright(s).
- Performers should conclude by saying "thank you."
- Time begins with the first word or intentional movement after the slate and concludes with the performer's "thank you."
- Material must be drawn from published plays or musicals.
- Students should use discretion in regards to language and subject matter.

See MTA's Secondary Individual Events Operations Manual for complete, detailed rules and regulations.

			POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT	OUTSTANDING
CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION	ACTING TRANSITIONS (2 POINTS)	- Slate is clear and contains all appropriate components. - Transition into and/or between selection(s) is clear and skillful. - Final moment and transition to exit is smooth and consistent.					
	MATERIAL SELECTION (3 POINTS)	- The selection is appropriate to the performer(s) and provides interest, intelligibility, and literary value. - The performer(s) demonstrate(s) evidence of understanding in regards to the selection's context and intent.					
	CHARACTERIZATION (5 POINTS)	- The performance is physically and emotionally believable. - Commitment to character is clear and consistent. - Choices and/or tactics toward an objective create a relationship with real or implied partner(s).					
	VOICE (5 POINTS)	- Vocal techniques support the character's emotions and subtext. - Performer(s) employ(s) dynamic vocal skills (including but not limited to expression, projection, articulation, intonation, pace, rhythm, and breath support) to enhance the delivery of the selection.					
	PHYSICALITY (5 POINTS)	- Gestures, facial expressions, blocking, and movement effectively strengthen communication of the character's situation and subtext. - Movement and staging are appropriate to the selection.					
	EXECUTION (5 POINTS)	- The performer(s) demonstrate(s) sustained concentration and commitment to moment-to-moment choices. - Integration of voice, body, and acting techniques effectively establishes and develops the relationship(s) and communicates the story of the selection.					

TOTAL SCORE /25

EVENT TIME: 5:00 **PERFORMANCE TIME:** _____ **DEDUCTIONS:** _____

ADJUDICATOR NAME: _____ **AFFILIATION:** _____

SAMPLE MUSICAL PERFORMANCE EVENT ADJUDICATION FORM

The adjudication forms for all of the musical performance categories use the same evaluation criteria. The event is noted in the top right hand corner, and the entries are scored out of twenty-five (25) total points, divided as described in the Criteria for Evaluation section.



MISSISSIPPI THEATRE ASSOCIATION SECONDARY INDIVIDUAL EVENTS FESTIVAL MUSICAL PERFORMANCE CATEGORY

EVENT:
MUSICAL
DUET

PERFORMER(S) NAME(S): _____

SCHOOL: _____ **PERFORMANCE NUMBER:** _____

SELECTION: _____

Adjudicators: Mark the box corresponding with your rating for each criterion. Provide constructive written feedback on this form. Use the reverse for additional comments. Do not give oral feedback.

General Requirements for Performance Events:

- All performance events must be memorized.
- Performers must slate before beginning their performance; slate must include the name(s) of the student(s), the school code, the title of the musical, the title of the selected piece, and the name(s) of the playwright(s).
- Performers should conclude by saying "thank you."
- Time begins with the first word, musical sound, or intentional movement after the slate and concludes with the performer's "thank you."
- Material must be drawn from published plays or musicals.
- Students should use discretion in regards to language and subject matter.

For complete, detailed rules and regulations, see MTA's Secondary Individual Events Operations Manual.

			POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT	OUTSTANDING
CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION	ACTING TRANSITIONS (2 POINTS)	- Slate is clear and contains all appropriate components. - Transition into selection is clear and skillful. - Final moment and transition to exit is smooth and consistent.					
	MATERIAL SELECTION (3 POINTS)	- The selection is appropriate to the performer(s) and provides interest, intelligibility, and literary value. - The performer(s) demonstrate(s) evidence of understanding in regards to the selection's context and intent.					
	CHARACTERIZATION (5 POINTS)	- The performance is physically and emotionally believable. - Commitment to character is clear and consistent. - Choices and/or tactics toward an objective create a relationship with real or implied partner(s).					
	VOICE (5 POINTS)	- Vocal techniques support the character's emotions and subtext. - Performer(s) employ(s) healthy, dynamic vocal skills (including but not limited to pitch, projection, articulation, intonation, pace, rhythm, and breath support) to enhance the delivery of the selection.					
	PHYSICALITY (5 POINTS)	- Gestures, facial expressions, blocking, and movement effectively strengthen communication of the character's situation and subtext. - Movement and staging are appropriate to the selection.					
	EXECUTION (5 POINTS)	- The performer(s) demonstrate(s) sustained concentration and commitment to moment-to-moment choices. - Integration of voice, body, and acting techniques effectively establishes and develops the relationship(s) and communicates the story of the selection.					

TOTAL SCORE /25

EVENT TIME: 5:00 **PERFORMANCE TIME:** _____ **DEDUCTIONS:** _____

ADJUDICATOR NAME: _____ **AFFILIATION:** _____

SAMPLE ORIGINAL SCENE ADJUDICATION FORM

The Original Scene adjudication form has unique evaluation criteria due to the nature of the event. The entries are scored out of twenty-five (25) total points, divided as described in the Criteria for Evaluation section.



MISSISSIPPI THEATRE ASSOCIATION SECONDARY INDIVIDUAL EVENTS FESTIVAL ORIGINAL PERFORMANCE CATEGORY

EVENT:
ORIGINAL
SCENE

PERFORMERS' NAMES: _____

SCHOOL: _____ **PERFORMANCE NUMBER:** _____

ORIGINAL SCENE TITLE: _____

Adjudicators: Mark the box corresponding with your rating for each criterion. Provide constructive written feedback on this form. Use the reverse for additional comments. Do not give oral feedback.

General Requirements for Performance Events:

- All performance events must be memorized.
- Performers must slate before beginning their performance; slate must include the students' names, the students' roles in the development of the scene, the school code, and the selection title.
- Performers should conclude by saying "thank you."
- Time begins with the first word or intentional movement after the slate and concludes with the performer's "thank you."
- Material must be an original work for two to five actors.
- Students should use discretion in regards to language and subject matter.

For complete, detailed rules and regulations, see MTA's Secondary Individual Events Operations Manual.

			POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT	OUTSTANDING
CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION	ACTING TRANSITIONS (2 POINTS)	• Slate is clear and contains all appropriate components. • Transition into selection is clear and skillful. • Final moment and transition to exit is smooth and consistent.					
	CHARACTERIZATION (5 POINTS)	• The performance is physically and emotionally believable. • Commitment to character is clear and consistent. • Choices and/or tactics toward an objective create a relationship with real or implied partner(s).					
	VOICE (4 POINTS)	• Vocal techniques support the character's emotions and subtext. • Performer(s) employ(s) dynamic vocal skills (including but not limited to expression, projection, articulation, intonation, pace, rhythm, and breath support) to enhance the delivery of the selection.					
	PHYSICALITY (4 POINTS)	• Gestures, facial expressions, blocking, and movement effectively strengthen communication of the character's situation and subtext. • Movement and staging are appropriate to the selection.					
	PLAYWRITING (5 POINTS)	• The elements of the scene work together to support the story. • The structure of the scene is intentional and consistent; it provides a framework for and enhances the dramatic action. • The scene provides well-developed, dimensional characters, clear obstacles, and dialogue that is consistent with the world of the play.					
	EXECUTION (5 POINTS)	• Performers demonstrate sustained concentration and commitment to moment-to-moment choices. • Integration of voice, body, and acting techniques establishes and develops relationships and communicates the story of the selection. • The writing provides a satisfying story structure, well-developed characters, and authentic dialogue that enhances the action.					

TOTAL SCORE /25

EVENT TIME: 5:00 **PERFORMANCE TIME:** _____ **DEDUCTIONS:** _____

ADJUDICATOR NAME: _____ **AFFILIATION:** _____

DESIGN EVENTS: GENERAL INFORMATION

These rules apply to all design events; read them carefully!

Areas of Competition

- Costume Design
- Publicity Design
- Scenic Design
- Open Division for Evaluation Only (ODEO)

Material Selection

1. Material selected for entry in design categories may but does not have to come from fully-realized productions.
2. Students may opt to create a theoretical design.
 - a. Adjudicators should evaluate the design elements provided in the submission.
 - b. There will be no penalty designs that have not been in production.
3. All design must be wholly the work of the entrant.
 - a. If a student was part of a design team on a show, they may not submit their team's collaborative design as their entry into the Individual Events Festival.
 - b. If a student was part of a design team and can clearly identify the work that is wholly their own, they may submit that as their entry into the Individual Events Festival.

Preliminary Round Digital Submission:

1. Preliminary submissions for design and tech events will consist of a link to a .PDF of the pages of the entrant's production binder or digital production file.
 - a. [Sample Production Binder](#)
 - b. [Sample Digital Production File](#)
2. Teachers will be responsible for submitting accurate links to their students' documents.
 - a. Teachers should ensure that all documents are accessible to be viewed by anyone with the link; MTA is not responsible for links with restricted view access.
 - b. Entrants should review their files prior to final submission to ensure that everything is in order.
3. Files must include all of the elements of the production binder (synopsis, design statement, complete research, process drawings, and category-specific requirements including copies of all requisite artifacts.)
4. Files may (optionally) also include hyperlinks to:
 - a. Photo galleries or videos of the design development process
 - b. Other sites or shared files the entrant would like the adjudicators to consider as part of their preliminary submission.
 - i. E.g. For an ODEO entry in Choreography, the student might include a link to their movement notation or a video of their choreography in performance.
 - ii. E.g. For an ODEO entry in Stage Management, the student might include a link to a Google Sheet French Scenes breakdown.

Design Defense and Explanation

1. Finalists in Design events will present their work in-person to a panel of adjudicators.
2. Designers should conduct research for the complete production and should support a developed aesthetic and concept for the world of the entire play.
3. Each event will be separated into "flights" (groups of presenters) for adjudication.
4. Students who enter design categories must be present when their submission is adjudicated.
5. Entrants should prepare a short verbal statement that gives a very brief overview of their chosen play and that introduces their design concept and choices.

- a. This statement should be approximately 30-60 seconds.
 - b. MTA provides and recommends that students use a [template script](#) for developing this verbal statement.
6. Entrants should be prepared to answer questions from the adjudicators regarding their choices.

Display Board

- 1. Displays must not exceed a footprint of 30x36".
- 2. Black foam core is recommended.
- 3. Tri-Fold boards are acceptable.
- 4. Displays must include the designer's name and school code.
- 5. Displays must include a brief, typed design concept statement that explains the designer's concept for the production and justifies their specific design choices.
- 6. Displays must include the appropriate finalized design artifacts that the entrant is presenting. Refer to the specific category criteria for more details.
- 7. Displays must include inspirational images.
 - a. These images should be artistic inspiration and do not have to be based in research.
 - b. Inspiration can be a collage of shapes, colors, photos, or other multimedia.
- 8. Displays must include a representative sample of production research.
 - a. This may take the form of images or typed text or both.
 - b. Research into prior, realized productions of the same play should not be included on the display board but may be included in a "Production History" section of the production binder.

Production Binder OR Digital Production File

- 1. 3-ring, clear view binder OR comparable digital presentation
- 2. Cover sheet
 - a. Place a cover sheet in the front, clear view pocket
 - b. The cover sheet should include:
 - i. The title of the production.
 - ii. The name(s) of the playwright(s) and other necessary credits (such as composers, lyricists, publishing company, etc.).
 - iii. The name of the designer.
 - iv. The name of their school.
- 3. Originality Statement
 - a. Print and complete a copy of the [MTA Originality Statement](#).
 - b. This should be a signed statement by the entrant's teacher acknowledging that the design submitted is wholly the creative product of the entrant and is original in nature.
 - a. Place the signed Originality Statement in the front inside pocket of the production binder.
- 4. In the rings of the production binder, include:
 - a. A brief, student-generated synopsis of the play.
 - b. A copy of the typed design statement explaining the designer's concept for the production and justifying their specific design choices.
 - c. Complete research
 - i. Research should demonstrate the designer's understanding of the given circumstances of the entire play and be clearly linked to the cohesive design concept for the entire production.
 - ii. Research may include images and/or text.
 - iii. Research may be drawn from primary and/or secondary sources.

- iv. Investigation of prior productions of the same play should be separated into a “Production History” section of the production binder.
 - » Overall research should extend beyond prior, realized productions of the play.
 - » Students should recognize that creative work is copyrighted to the original designer and should avoid plagiarizing designs from prior, realized productions of their play.
 - » Designers must credit the original designer on any drawings or photographs of prior design from earlier productions that they include in their research.
 - » E.g. Although properly-credited images of the original Broadway production of *Into the Woods* would be acceptable in the production history section of the production binder for an entry of the same show, student designers should focus their research around their original concept.
 - » Production History research images should not be included on the entrant’s display board.
- d. Process drawings
 - i. Include preliminary sketches, thumbnail drawings, doodles, etc. to show how the design evolved.
 - ii. Designers are encouraged to include abandoned ideas to illustrate and support the steps of their process.
 - iii. Designers may also mount process drawings on their display board.
- e. Category specific design requirements. (See each category below for details.)

DESIGN EVENTS: REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

Scenic Design

1. Selection Criteria
 - a. Designers should develop and present one original scenic design from a single production.
 - i. If designing a multi-set production, only one scene’s design is required.
 - ii. Research must be for the complete production and should display a developed aesthetic and concept for the world of the entire play, even if designing a multi-set production.
 - b. Entrants may choose to design in the broadest range of theatrical spaces, including proscenium, thrust, or black box settings.
2. Scenic Design Production Binder
 - a. The scenic design production binder should include everything required for a production binder. (See Design Events: General Information.)
 - b. Scenic design production binders should also include:
 - i. A necessities list
 - » This list should include everything that the text of play requires for the production to work.
 - » The necessities list should be clearly organized, typed, and printed.
 - » E.g. A production of *Arsenic & Old Lace* must have a window, a window seat, a staircase leading upstairs, an exit to a basement, an exit to a kitchen, and an exit out a front door.
 - ii. A storyboard that illustrates changes between scenes if the production requires multiple sets.
 - iii. A scale ground plan. (See below for more details.)
 - iv. Research that is relevant to scenic-design specific choices (including production materials, architecture, etc.)
3. Artifact #1: Scale Ground Plan
 - a. Must be $\frac{1}{8}$ " = 1'0" or $\frac{1}{4}$ " = 1'0" in scale
 - b. Must include a title block containing:
 - i. Production title and author
 - ii. Design category name
 - iii. Designer’s first initial and last name
 - iv. Designer’s school

- v. Performance venue
 - vi. Scale
 - vii. Date (indicating the approximate time the design was developed)
 - viii. Page number out of total pages (this will typically be 1/1, as only one ground plan is required for this event)
 - ix. Appropriate credit for any templates / pre-fabricated ground plans used
 - x. See the title block template and sample below for clarification.
- c. The ground plan must demonstrate clean communication of the design.
 - d. The ground plan can be the original, drafted work of the student or may be a traced draft of the performance venue; designers may also work directly on top of a printed or digital ground plan.
 - e. One copy should be mounted on the display board, and another copy should be included in the production binder
4. Artifact #2: Color Rendering OR Scale Model
- a. There are no extra points for submitting both a rendering and a model. Either is sufficient.
 - b. The rendering or the model must be present (photos are not acceptable).
 - c. Models should either be $\frac{1}{8}$ " scale ($\frac{1}{8}$ " = 1'0") or $\frac{1}{4}$ " scale ($\frac{1}{4}$ " = 1'0").
 - d. Renderings should be mounted on the display board.
 - e. Scale models should fit within the 30x36" display space.

5. Title block template:

TITLE OF PRODUCTION by Author of Production		
DESIGN CATEGORY NAME		
DESIGNER FIRST INITIAL, LAST NAME	DESIGNER SCHOOL	
PERFORMANCE VENUE		
SCALE	DATE	PAGE NUMBER / TOTAL
APPROPRIATE CREDIT FOR ANY TEMPLATES USED		

6. Title block sample

THE CONVERT by Calista Wynn		
SCENIC DESIGN		
F. HELLMAN	SOUTH CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL	
SCHS BLACKBOX THEATRE		
SCALE: $\frac{1}{4}$ " = 1'0"	DATE: OCTOBER 2020	1/1
GROUND PLAN PROVIDED BY D. ZAVALA		

7. Refer to Design Events: General Information for full rules and guidelines.

Costume Design

- 1. Selection Criteria
 - a. Designers should develop and present a minimum of three (3) complete costume designs for a single production.
 - i. The entrant may choose to design costumes for various characters.
 - ii. The entrant may choose to design multiple costumes for a single character.
- 2. Costume Design Production Binder
 - a. The costume design production binder should include everything required for a production binder. (See Design Events: General Information.)
 - b. Costume design production binders should also include:
 - i. Costume plot
 - » Include all characters for the entire production.

- » Create a spreadsheet-style document.
 - » Include costume descriptions for each character.
 - » Identify costume changes throughout the production.
 - ii. Costume renderings (See Section 3 for specific details.)
 - iii. Research that is relevant to costume-specific choices (including fabrics, silhouettes, etc.).
3. Artifacts #1-3: Costume Renderings
- a. Designers should complete a minimum of three (3) color renderings.
 - i. There is no maximum limit of color renderings.
 - ii. One (1) of the required three (3) color renderings may (but is not required to) reflect a hair and makeup design.
 - b. Renderings should be eight (8) to twelve (12) inches tall.
 - c. Croquis / body templates are permitted and are available on the MTA website.
 - d. Renderings that are mounted on the display board should be neatly labeled.
 - i. Labels should identify the character in the design.
 - ii. Labels may also identify the scene or act, especially if the designer has created multiple costume designs for the same character.
 - e. Renderings in the costume design production binder should be neatly labeled according to the following criteria:
 - » Upper Left-Hand Corner: Production Title and Playwright(s) Name(s)
 - » Upper Right-Hand Corner: Character's Name, Act Number, Scene Number (as applicable)
 - » Lower Right-Hand Corner: Designer's Name
 - » NO other text should be included on the labels
 - f. Swatches for each rendering should be included in the lower left-hand corner of the rendering.
 - i. Swatches may be cut from physical fabric.
 - ii. Swatches may be printed images.
4. Refer to Design Events: General Information for full rules and guidelines.

Publicity Design

1. Selection Criteria
- a. Entrants must design a comprehensive publicity plan that characterizes and markets a single theatrical production.
 - b. Entrants must create a design that can be used as the focal point of a poster, a program/playbill, and a digital/ social media campaign to publicize their chosen production.
 - i. Designers may use the same graphic for each of these applications.
 - ii. Designers may also develop designs for tickets, merchandise, or other publicity.
 - » Examples of merchandise include but are not limited to buttons, t-shirts, or other show swag.
 - » Tickets, merchandise, or other publicity is optional, and - if included in the presentation - may be represented through digital mock-ups rather than realized products.
 - c. Designs may be hand-drawn or developed digitally but should ultimately be formatted for mass-production.
 - d. Entrants may invent performance details including venue, time / date, ticket prices, producing organization, cast list, special thanks, sponsorships and advertisements, etc.
 - e. All rights and billing information required by the publisher must be present on the designs that would require it for a typical production.
 - i. Posters, playbills, and social media are generally required to include publisher information
 - ii. Merchandise is not typically required to include publisher information
2. Publicity Design Production Binder
- a. The publicity design production binder should include everything required for a production binder. (See Design Events: General Information.)

- b. Publicity design production binders should also include:
 - i. Publicity timeline / calendar
 - » Include a plan for sharing information about both auditions and performances
 - » Include the physical and digital spaces where information will be shared
 - » Include the individuals who will be responsible for sharing publicity information
 - ii. Publicity budget information
 - » Identify printing costs for different media formats
 - » If the design work includes merchandise, identify production costs and potential profits
 - » Even for theoretical productions, designers should provide researched, realistic costs for print materials
 - » If the designer has/would have access to in-house or donated printing supplies or processes, designers should note that in their budgeting information and assign a monetary value to these things.
 - iii. All creative assets for the production including:
 - » The unifying graphic design.
 - » The poster design. (See below for specific details.)
 - » The playbill design. (See below for specific details.)
 - » The social media design. (See below for specific details.)
 - » Images of any additional relevant products.
 - c. Designers are encouraged but not required to develop and include a press release that could be shared with local news media outlets.
3. Artifact #1: Poster Design
 - a. A full-size, printed copy of the finished poster should be mounted on the display board.
 - b. Format posters in standard tabloid style
 - i. Minimum size: 11x14"
 - ii. Maximum size: 24x36"
 - c. Posters should include:
 - i. All billing and rights information as required by the license holder
 - ii. All information an audience member would need to come see the production (date, time, venue, etc.)
 - iii. Ticket price(s)
 - iv. Producing Organization
 4. Artifact #2: Playbill Design
 - a. A printed copy of the playbill should be included with the display.
 - b. There are many acceptable formats for playbills.
 - i. Any well-polished paper handout is acceptable.
 - ii. Standard bi-fold, half-letter size (5.5x8.5") is a common playbill format.
 - iii. MTA welcomes creative formatting in the playbill development process
 - » A business card with a QR code to a digital playbill could suffice in lieu of a traditional, printed playbill.
 - » Some productions may have show-specific playbills that are relevant to their story.
 - » E.g. A production of *Newsies* might hand out their playbills in a newspaper format, or a publicity designer for a play about WWII propaganda might offer their playbills as 1930s-style leaflets.
 - c. Playbills must include:
 - i. All billing and rights information as required by the license holder
 - ii. Cast and crew list (for theoretical productions, designers may invent these details)
 - d. Playbills may also include (but are not limited to):

- i. Sponsorships and advertisements
 - ii. Special thanks
 - iii. Directors' notes
 - iv. Cast and crew bios
 - v. Play synopsis
 - vi. Distilled research text and/or images
 - vii. Announcements of upcoming productions or events
5. Artifact #3: Social Media Design
- a. A sample social media post should be included with the display.
 - b. Entrants may choose the social media platform on which to share their design.
 - c. Social media posts must include:
 - i. All billing and rights information as required by the license holder
 - ii. A sample of text that could accompany an image post
 - iii. Venue
 - iv. Time and date of the production
 - v. Ticket price(s)
6. Refer to Design Events: General Information for full rules and guidelines.

Open Division for Evaluation Only (ODEO)

In 2022-2023, MTA piloted the Open Division for Evaluation Only (ODEO). For 2026-2027, ODEO will follow the guidelines below and **will be divided into a performance category and a design/technology category**. Entries in ODEO will not be advanced to an in-person final round; all ODEO evaluation will be completed with the online preliminary entries.

Rationale

1. For several years, secondary teachers and students have asked for a broader diversity in design and technology categories in MTA's secondary Individual Events (2IEs).
2. As there are many legitimate theatrical design and technology fields, it is impractical to offer different categories for every imaginable type of legitimate work that secondary students could create.
 - a. MTA would like to offer the broadest possible variety of entry opportunities.
 - b. It makes sense to offer a combined category in which entrants can define the type of work they have produced.
3. Most theatrical design and technology work can be categorized as either "design" or "execution" work.
 - a. By giving entrants the option to select which of these two designations best fits their submission, respondents will be empowered to critique a wide variety of diverse, legitimate theatrical work.
 - b. "Design" includes any submission focused on the planning and development of a vision for elements of a theatrical production (such as a sound or lighting design).
 - c. "Execution" includes any submission focused on the craftsmanship and creation of specific theatrical artifacts (such as a stage management handbook or constructed costume).
4. For 2026-2027, ODEO will also offer a performance category that will allow for theatrical performance that does not otherwise fit into the MTA IEs categories.

Statement of Purpose

1. The Mississippi Theatre Association offers the Open Division in Design and Execution for Evaluation Only (ODEO) to meet the ongoing needs as outlined above.
2. ODEO invites entrants to share their work with qualified respondents and receive feedback regarding the quality of their product.
3. Entrants are offered a fruit basket-style division in which respondents provide constructive feedback and thoughtful evaluation but do not identify placement (including podium finishers/winners).

- a. Entrants may submit *any* legitimate theatrical work from realized or theoretical productions, including current festival productions and unpublished works.
- b. Entrants will develop a presentation to share with respondents who will complete a response form and offer written evaluative feedback and constructive critique.
- c. Entrants earning high scores will be recognized with a ribbon identifying the excellent or outstanding nature of their work.
 - i. The number of excellent and outstanding designations will reflect the number of excellent and outstanding submissions.
 - ii. There will NOT be a pre-defined or limited number of allowable excellent or outstanding designations.

Material Selection

- 1. Entrants may submit *any* legitimate theatrical work that does not fit into the other MTA IEs categories for ODEO: Technology.
 - a. Submissions may come from realized productions *including* current festival productions and unpublished works.
 - b. Submissions may come from theoretical productions.
 - c. Entrants should not present submissions of work for non-theatrical purposes. Unacceptable submissions include but are not limited to:
 - i. Halloween Costumes
 - ii. Cosplay (unless it is within the context of a theatrical production such as *She Kills Monsters*)
 - iii. Holiday Decor Design
- 2. The submission should be wholly the creative work of the entrant.
 - a. Entrants who have collaborated on a theatrical process may enter work that can be uniquely identified as their own.
 - b. Entrants submitting a component from within a collaborative process should clarify the particulars of their contribution during the interview process.
- 3. Entrants should follow all other Material Selection guidelines for Individual Events entries.

Entries

- 1. ODEO: Technology entries will be entered as either "Design" or "Execution."
- 2. Schools will designate the category for the type of work they will present.
 - a. Although MTA has developed examples of categories that could fall under the Design and Execution headings, the list is by no means comprehensive; entrants should consider MTA's categories list a guideline and should feel empowered to define their own category.
 - b. The only categories that are NOT acceptable for ODEO: Technology entries are the main event design categories offered by MTA's 2IEs.
 - i. Costume Design
 - ii. Publicity Design
 - iii. Scenic Design
 - c. Entries in **ODEO: Technology (Design)** should demonstrate a cohesive design for an element of a theatrical production that solves the specific problems presented by the production's text and that integrates seamlessly into the world of the play.
 - d. Examples of acceptable **ODEO: Technology (Design)** categories include:
 - i. Makeup Design
 - ii. Sound Design
 - iii. Lighting Design
 - iv. Puppetry Design
 - v. Projections Design

- vi. Wig Design
- vii. Props Design
- e. Entries in **ODEO: Technology (Execution)** should demonstrate theatrical technology work that focuses on the development and craftsmanship of a specific theatrical artifact or collection of theatrical artifacts for a production.
 - i. A theatrical artifact is any tangible product that is used in a production.
 - ii. Examples of theatrical artifacts include constructed costumes, props, wigs, puppets, etc.; organized direction, stage management, or technical direction binders; choreography plots / plans; etc.
- f. Examples of acceptable **ODEO: Technology (Execution)** categories include:
 - i. Direction
 - ii. Stage Management
 - iii. Technical Direction
 - iv. Choreography
 - v. Lighting Hang and Focus
 - vi. Sound Mixing/Editing
 - vii. Costume Construction
 - viii. Wig Construction/Styling
 - ix. Puppet Construction
 - x. Props Construction
- 3. Entrants in both Design and Execution categories should conduct research for the complete production and prepare to defend its relevance in their interview process.
 - a. Work entered designated “design” should support a developed aesthetic and concept for the world of the entire play, even if the design sample is for a scene or excerpt.
 - b. Work entered designated “execution” should clearly demonstrate the connection between the production / design team’s work and the theatrical artifact(s) the entrant has created.

Digital Submission:

- 1. Submissions for ODEO: Technology events will consist entirely of a link to a .PDF of the pages of the entrant’s production binder or digital production file.
 - a. [Sample Production Binder](#)
 - b. [Sample Digital Production File](#)
 - c. ODEO: Technology entries are not expected to create a display or presentation binder and will not have an in-person interview during the IEs finals round at MTA.
- 2. Teachers are responsible for submitting accurate links to their students’ documents.
 - a. Teachers should ensure that all documents are accessible to be viewed by anyone with the link; MTA is not responsible for links with restricted view access.
 - b. Entrants should review their files prior to final submission to ensure that everything is in order.
- 3. Files must include all of the elements of the production binder (synopsis, design statement, complete research, process drawings, and category-specific requirements including high-quality images of all requisite artifacts.)
- 4. Files may (optionally) also include hyperlinks to:
 - a. Photo galleries or videos of the design development process
 - b. Other sites or shared files the entrant would like the adjudicators to consider as part of their preliminary submission.
 - i. E.g. For an ODEO entry in Choreography, the student might include a link to their movement notation or a video of their choreography in performance.
 - ii. E.g. For an ODEO entry in Stage Management, the student might include a link to a Google Sheet French Scenes breakdown.

Evaluation Metrics & Scoring

1. Entrants in ODEO: Technology will be evaluated on ballots with criteria for design or execution.
 - a. Both types of ballots will be scored out of 25 points.
 - b. The 25-point ballot will be assigned degrees along the following scale:
 - i. Outstanding: 24-25 points
 - ii. Excellent: 20-23 points
 - iii. Good: 16-19 points
 - iv. Fair: 8-15 points
 - v. Poor: 0-7 points
 - c. A panel of three ballots will receive a cumulative score of 75 points. Each entry will be awarded an evaluative designation along the following scale:
 - i. Outstanding: 68-75 points
 - ii. Excellent: 56-67 points
 - iii. Good: 40-55 points
 - iv. Fair: 16-39 points
 - v. Poor: 0-15 points
 - d. Entries receiving an evaluation of Excellent and Outstanding will receive recognition during the Secondary Individual Events awards ceremony.
 - e. There is neither a minimum nor a maximum limit on the number of entries that may be recognized as Excellent or Outstanding.

SAMPLE DESIGN EVENT ADJUDICATION FORM

The adjudication forms for all four design categories use the same evaluation criteria. The event is noted in the top right hand corner, and the entries are scored out of twenty-five (25) total points.



MISSISSIPPI THEATRE ASSOCIATION SECONDARY INDIVIDUAL EVENTS FESTIVAL DESIGN CATEGORY

EVENT:
COSTUME
DESIGN

DESIGNER NAME: _____

SCHOOL: _____ **PRESENTATION NUMBER:** _____

SELECTION: _____

Adjudicators: Mark the box corresponding with your rating for each criterion. Provide constructive written feedback on this form. Use the reverse for additional comments. Do not give oral feedback.

General Requirements for Design Events:

- Material must be drawn from published plays or musicals.
- Entries in design events may but are not obligated to come from fully-realized productions.
- Students should use discretion in regards to language and subject matter.
- In the interview with the adjudicators, entrants will defend their work by demonstrating their understanding of the practical feasibility of the design, the unifying design concept, and relevant historical and/or cultural research.

For complete, detailed rules and regulations, see MTA's Secondary Individual Events Operations Manual.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION			POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT	OUTSTANDING
	PRESENTATION (5 POINTS)	• The designer effectively defends their artistic choices. • The presentation includes a short, prepared verbal statement that gives a brief synopsis of the play and that describes the designer's concept and choices. • The designer provides concise, thoughtful answers to questions about their work.					
	CONCEPT (5 POINTS)	• The design has a clear, cohesive, and meaningful concept that is appropriate to the selected material. • The designer effectively describes their concept and its relationship to the production as a whole.					
	RESEARCH (5 POINTS)	• The design demonstrates sufficient historical and/or cultural research and appropriately addresses the given circumstances of the selection. • The designer effectively communicates the relationships between the text of their selection, their research, and their design.					
	PRACTICALITY (5 POINTS)	• The overall design includes all required components. • Design elements are realistically feasible in regards to creation, safety, and usability by performers. • The designer communicates a clear understanding of the practical constraints that could impact the production of their design.					
	CRAFTSMANSHIP (5 POINTS)	• The artistic elements of the presentation are polished and demonstrate the designer's attention to detail and artistic proficiency. • The design work itself is clean and displayed in a way that enhances the designer's ability to defend their artistic choices.					

TOTAL SCORE /25

ADJUDICATOR NAME: _____ **AFFILIATION:** _____

SAMPLE DESIGN ENTRY

Sample Costume Design Entry

- [Costume design binder](#)
- [Video of printed and assembled costume design binder](#)
- [Costume design digital presentation file](#) (this may be presented in lieu of the design binder)
- [Costume Design Display](#)



ADULT INDIVIDUAL EVENTS GUIDELINES

Individual Eligibility

- Every person who participates in the Adult Individual Events Festival must:
 - a. Be a member of MTA through payment of annual dues
 - b. Be registered for the MTA State Festival
 - c. Remit payment of \$10 for each event entry
- Adult participants must be at least 18 years of age and not enrolled in a high school or homeschool program.
- Each participant must fill out a festival registration form and indicate which individual event(s) in which they will participate. If participating in a partnered event, they must also indicate their partner's name.
- The festival will be held on both Friday evening and Saturday afternoon of the state festival to allow for Community and Secondary Division attendees to participate. Performance schedules will be determined and assigned after registration and will work to accommodate participant conflicts.
- No participant may enter more than two (2) events; no one may enter the same event more than once.
- If the categories have more participation than expected, then the Adult IE Chair has the authority to divide the categories into solo, duets, and groups.

Registration

- Pay your registration by using the MTA registration form for individuals or as a member of a participating group by using the group registration spreadsheet.
- Then, on the registration form, indicate the event(s) in which you intend to participate.
 - a. If you are in a partner event, list your partner's name as well.
 - b. Your partner must do the same on their individual registration.

ADULT INDIVIDUAL EVENT CATEGORIES

- Acting – one monologue, one participant (5 minutes) OR one selection, two participants (5 minutes)
- Musical – one selection, one participant (5 minutes) OR one selection, two participants (5 minutes)

GENERAL INFORMATION: RULES AND REGULATIONS

These rules apply to ALL events; read them carefully!

- No costumes or theatrical makeup are allowed.
- No hand props should be used.
- All performance events have specific time limits. Failure to adhere to time limits automatically disqualifies participant from a superior rating or any awards.
- Material must be drawn from published or original plays, screenplays or teleplays. Works from other forms such as poetry or fiction are not permitted.
- In duets, each participant must be actively involved in the scene.
- Slate should include the participant's name(s), title of the selection, and name of the author. Time limit does not include the slate.
- Timing of the presentation will begin after the slate.
- The top 3 winners in each category will be announced at the Awards Ceremony.

Acting

- Performed by one (1) actor portraying one (1) character OR two (2) actors portraying two (2) characters.
- Material must be drawn from published plays.
- Time limit is five (5) minutes total (not including slate).

- The selection should be memorized.
- If the entry involves two actors, the selection should be as equally balanced between the two characters as possible.
- No properties, costumes, or stage makeup are allowed.
- Entrants are permitted one straight-back chair per performer for staging; chairs will be provided by the host theatre.
- A participant may not enter a monologue which they also perform within a Community Theatre Festival entry.
- Participants may not enter a selection from a play entered in the Community Theatre Festival.

Musical

- Performed by one actor portraying one character OR two (2) actors portraying two (2) characters.
- Participant may only present one selection.
- Material must be drawn from published plays.
 - a. Works from other forms, such as poetry or standard popular songs are not permitted.
 - b. Selections may include dialogue.
- If the entry involves two actors, the selection should be as equally balanced between the two characters as possible.
- Certain sound equipment will be provided by the festival:
 - a. Auxiliary cords and speakers will be provided for musical events.
 - b. **CD players will NOT be provided.**
 - i. Participants may bring their own portable CD player if necessary.
 - ii. Power outlets are not guaranteed.
 - c. Bluetooth speakers are discouraged.
 - i. If a participant chooses to use a Bluetooth speaker, the speaker must be connected BEFORE entering competition room.
 - ii. NO extra time will be allotted for Bluetooth complications.
 - d. Students in musical categories must provide another student or teacher to start their music.
- Time limit is five (5) minutes (not including slate).

OPERATIONS MANUAL: STUDIO THEATRE DIVISION

DUTIES OF THE STUDIO THEATRE DIVISION CHAIR

1. Develop and maintain the guidelines for the Studio Theatre festival.
2. Work to increase awareness and interest in Studio Theatre.
3. Determine and communicate reasonable deadlines.
4. Announce and present the Studio Theatre festival awards at the appropriate awards ceremony.
5. Respond to e-mails from the President and the Executive Director in a timely manner.
6. Review festival materials as requested by the President and the Executive Director.
7. Prepare and submit a division report to the board following the state festival.
8. Provide content for newsletters, blog posts, and social media about the Studio Theatre division as requested by the President and the Executive Director.
9. Attend all board meetings and develop ideas to make the division stronger; propose these ideas to the board.
10. Review and edit the division guidelines in the MTA handbook so that they remain up-to-date. Submit handbook changes to the MTA secretary in a timely manner.
11. Attend meetings (such as the Secondary Workshop, Town Hall Meetings, Arts on the Capitol Day, etc.) when requested by the President and the Executive Director.
12. Stay mindful that this position means that sometimes the Studio Theatre Chair and Vice Chair will have to miss performances, be backstage, or do work at the festival that separates them from the main festival events. Bear in mind that these positions are to better the organization and not the individual interests of the division Chair or Vice Chair.

PURPOSE OF FESTIVAL

The MTA Studio Festival (Studio) is an adjudicated one-act play festival that will take place during the Mississippi Theatre Association state festival in January. Eligible schools will declare their intent to participate in December, and MTA will advance the two top-performing schools to compete in the SETC Studio Festival at the SETC Annual Convention in March.

Studio recognizes that powerful theatre does not require elaborate sets or technical spectacle. It thrives in the strength of the story, the presence of the actors, and the clarity of direction. Therefore, both division and festival are meticulously designed to:

- **Center the Craft.** By minimizing technical demands, Studio highlights the essentials of performance - the actors, the text, and the director's vision - allowing authentic storytelling to take center stage.
- **Promote Access and Inclusivity.** There is a wide range of resources available to participating schools. Studio strives to level the playing field and to ensure that all participating students - regardless of external support, organizational budgets, or access to equipment - are evaluated predominantly on the strength of their acting, ensemble, and direction.
- **Simplify Logistics.** With minimal set and technical requirements, Studio purposefully reduces the burden of transportation and setup, making participation more accessible and emphasizing creativity over technical complexity.

STUDIO AT MTA AND SETC

The MTA Studio Theatre Festival operations manual is adapted from the SETC Studio Theatre Festival guidelines, which were derived from Alabama's Studio Festival guidelines and adopted for the 2026 annual convention.

Where the MTA guidelines deviate from SETC's rule set, **major differences are noted in bold.** Schools advancing from MTA to SETC will be expected to adapt to the SETC Studio Theatre Festival guidelines, which may require and/or permit participants to make certain changes between the MTA state festival and the SETC annual convention.

Studio participants with questions about this operations manual or Studio in general should reach out to the MTA Studio Theatre Division Chair.

STUDIO ELIGIBILITY

1. Schools advancing from a regional DramaFest and participating in the MTA Secondary Division Festival are ineligible to participate in the Studio Festival.
2. Any school that otherwise meets the eligibility requirements for participation in the Secondary Division is eligible for the Studio Festival.
3. The **one show per festival rule** means that a theatre group cannot enter a production in a regional DramaFest and also enter all or part of that production in the Community Theatre Festival, Theatre for Youth Festival, Studio Festival, Secondary Individual Events, or any other MTA festival.
 - a. See the Single Festival Entry Guidelines in the MTA Handbook for clarification.
 - b. The selection a school enters into the Studio Festival must be unique to that school during this year.
 - c. At this time, there are no further restrictions of titles for the Studio Festival.
4. A school may represent their state at SETC as either a Secondary School Theatre Festival competitor OR a Studio Theatre Festival competitor, not both.

STUDIO ADJUDICATION AND RESPONSE

1. The Studio Festival will be adjudicated by a panel of two (2) to three (3) qualified theatre professionals.
 - a. Adjudicator selection will follow MTA's Guidelines for Adjudicator Selection, but will be prioritized based on expertise in acting performance and direction.
 - b. Adjudicators will ideally be selected from out of state; if Mississippi-based adjudicators are selected, they must attest that they have no connections to any of the performing groups that might result in bias for or against that production.
 - c. The same theatre professionals may not adjudicate the Studio Festival in consecutive years.
2. Studio will (generally) follow MTA's established systems for adjudication and response.
 - a. Adjudicators will complete a written evaluation form and a score sheet for each production in the festival. These will be scanned for MTA's file and the originals will be returned to the director following the MTA Awards Ceremony.
 - b. If participating groups are obligated to leave before the MTA Awards Ceremony, the Executive Director or President will email the scanned forms to the primary contact's email address provided at the time of registration.
 - c. Following the completion of each production's strike time, the adjudicators will address the group and provide generous criticism that aligns with their written response and scores.
 - i. The verbal response from the adjudicators will be allotted no more than fifteen (15) minutes or no more than five minutes per adjudicator. (I.e. If the adjudication panel consists of two respondents, the response time will be limited to ten (10) minutes.)
 - ii. Depending on the available facilities and the schedule, this verbal response may happen in the performance space and be open to the public or may be sequestered in a private room to allow for the subsequent performing group to begin their Tech Time.
 - » The open or private nature of the verbal response will be consistent for all productions in the Studio Festival.
 - » The open or private nature of the verbal response will be determined prior to the MTA State Festival and communicated to all participants in Studio.
 - » Studio Festival participants may elect to opt out of a verbal response from the adjudicators. Groups opting out should communicate that to the Studio Chair in writing (email) prior to the start of the festival. Opting out of verbal response will not impact scores or written evaluation in any way.
3. Adjudication will prioritize an evaluation of the strength of the acting performance, the ensemble, and the direction.
 - a. Although Studio allows for productions to employ certain conventional technical elements, the adjudication rubric deliberately omits evaluation criteria focused on theatre technology.

- b. Adjudicators should focus their responses on the evaluation criteria and avoid referencing the production's technical elements except as they pertain to acting performance, ensemble, and direction.
- 4. The two top-scoring Studio Festival productions based on the adjudicators' score sheets will advance to represent Mississippi in the SETC Studio Festival.
 - a. These two productions will be announced as "Runner-Up Best Production" and "Best Production."
 - b. At the MTA Awards Ceremony, the Studio Chair will announce the third-place production and note that this organization will represent Mississippi at SETC in the case that one of the advancing productions is unable to attend.
 - i. This award will be announced before the announcement of the runner-up and winning production.
 - ii. The third-place production will receive a physical award.
- 5. Adjudicators will be briefed on the Studio Festival guidelines that schools are expected to follow.
- 6. Adjudicators will be provided the Studio Guidelines for Adjudication, which have been adapted from the Secondary Guidelines for Adjudication and which are included in this Operations Manual.

STUDIO FESTIVAL GUIDELINES

TIME LIMITS

Each production must adhere to the following rules regarding performance length:

- 1. Production blocks have a total time of fifty (50) minutes broken down as follows:
 - a. Tech Time (15 Minutes)
 - i. A 15-minute tech time will be provided immediately prior to the 30-minute performance time.
 - ii. Adults registered as members of the group (e.g. directors, teachers) may accompany the student performers and technicians on stage and in the booths as necessary during tech time.
 - iii. The auditorium house will be open to spectators during this time; adjudicators may be present but will not be evaluating the group's work during tech time.
 - iv. During tech time, all provided scenic items must be removed from the on-stage 10x10' box and set behind the go lines to create a bare performance area.
 - v. Props may be removed from their box and set behind the go lines during this time.
 - vi. Groups may also spike set pieces, clarify technical cues, and discuss or rehearse performance elements such as
 - » Movement (e.g. blocking, stage combat/fight calls, choreography)
 - » Composition and spacing (e.g. scenic changes, actor entrances and exits)
 - » Sound checks (e.g. vocal, music, any recorded elements)
 - » Light checks
 - vii. Performers, set pieces, and props must be clear of the performance space (behind the go lines) at the end of this 15-minute time period.
 - viii. Groups who do not need the full 15 minutes for their tech time may notify the Studio Chair and the festival stage manager who will decide whether to hold for audience entering the house until the fifteen minute timer expires or begin the production early.
 - » The Studio Chair and festival stage manager will aim to be consistent in this decision.
 - » There must be priority placed on maintaining the festival schedule.
 - b. Performance (30-Minutes)
 - i. Each performance must run no longer than 30 minutes from bare performance space to bare performance space
 - » Performance timing will begin when the first performer crosses the go line or when the first dialogue or production-relevant sound is heard.

- » Production timing will end when the performance space is clear and a designated representative from the group says, "Clear!"
- ii. There is no minimum performance time limit.
- iii. Productions may not borrow unused time from their tech or strike. (I.E., a group that only takes eight minutes of their fifteen minute allotted tech time cannot present a 36-minute production and still be considered "under time.")
- iv. Any production that exceeds the 30-minute performance time limit will be disqualified.
 - » This means that the group may not receive recognition as the first, second, or third-place production and will not be eligible to represent Mississippi at SETC.
 - » The production will be eligible for all other Studio awards.
- c. Strike (5-Minutes)
 - i. After the performance, the group must reset all provided scenic elements to the 10x10 box, remove any spike tape, and return all props to their box and the box to the designated holding/storage area.
 - ii. Groups are not required to use all of the allotted time.
 - iii. Immediately after the group is clear, all participants will report to the designated space for the adjudicators' verbal response.
 - iv. **SETC allots a ten (10) minute strike time.** In light of the Secondary festival guidelines, MTA believes that the strike process can be completed in five minutes. If it becomes evident that an adjustment is necessary, an adjustment will be made.

MATERIAL SELECTION

The Studio Festival will follow MTA's guidelines regarding censorship and notifications regarding disclaimers for mature themes, content, and language.

Each production must adhere to the following rules regarding script usage:

1. One-Act Plays written to fit within the confines of the festival time frame.
2. Cuttings from Larger Works
 - a. Performances using cuttings from plays or musicals with a run time that exceeds 30 minutes must provide proof of rights to perform the edited version.
 - b. Proof of rights must include
 - i. Correspondence from the licensing company explicitly granting permission for the cut version
 - ii. The name of the original script and playwright
 - iii. A copy of the cut script
 - iv. **SETC's rules also require:** an explanation of how the author's original intent and complete story arc are preserved in the adaptation
3. Original Works
 - a. Original works are permitted.
 - b. Productions choosing to present an original work must provide documentation crediting the devising team and their written permission to perform the piece for competition.
 - i. The title of the piece and the playwright or devising team credits.
 - ii. Written permission from the playwright or devising team to produce their work.
 - iii. A copy of the original or devised script
 - iv. **SETC's rules also require:** an explanation of how the author's original intent and complete story arc are preserved in the adaptation

PERFORMANCE SPACE

1. The performance space will be marked with go lines.
2. MTA will share the specifications (dimensions, etc.) of the space once the venue is determined.

3. **Walk-through:** MTA will offer a 1-hour group walk-through of the performance space prior to the first performance of the festival.
 - a. Participation in the walk-through is strongly encouraged; this is an opportunity for all participating schools to tour the venue and become familiar with the layout and staging area.
 - b. Each school may bring up to 3 delegates for the walk-through, one of which should be the primary contact adult (director, teacher, etc.) responsible for the group.
 - c. The festival stage manager will orient the delegates to the sound and light boards and any other facility-related equipment.

TECHNICAL AND DESIGN ELEMENTS

To maintain a spirit of equity, promote creativity, and focus on performance over production, Studio Festival performances must adhere to the following guidelines related to other technical elements of theatre.

- Studio intentionally minimizes emphasis on technical elements.
- None of the technical elements outlined below are required; this section outlines the limitations that exist to promote equity among participating organizations.
- Adjudicators should limit references to technical elements to the context of the adjudicated evaluation criteria.

SET PIECES

1. The Studio Festival will provide the following set pieces.
 - a. Eight acting blocks (16x16x16" weight-bearing cubes)
 - b. One weight-bearing table (30" wide x 30" deep [table top] x 31.13" high)
 - c. Two straight-backed chairs
2. No additional set pieces may be used; productions are not required to use all of the provided set pieces.
3. The provided set pieces will be basic and unembellished. They will be painted black, although manufactured and structural components may retain their original metal finishes.
4. The provided set pieces will be placed in a 10x10' square ("box") at the center of the performance space before each performance and returned to the box during the production's strike time.

COSTUMING

1. MTA will not provide a dressing room or dedicated dressing room time to Studio Festival participants.
 - a. All garments, accessories, makeup, and wigs must be donned/applied/affixed before arriving at the performance facility and must be removed away from the performance facility.
 - b. If any costume elements create any sort of mess in the performance space, the clean-up of that mess will be included in the performing group's strike time.
2. Retail Blacks
 - a. All costumes must consist solely of black garments that could reasonably be worn in everyday settings.
 - b. Retail Blacks include items like:
 - i. Black t-shirts, blouses, or sweaters
 - ii. Black denim jeans, slacks, pants, dresses, or skirts
 - iii. Predominantly black shoes
 - c. Theatrical costumes (including black theatrical costumes) are not permitted.
 - d. This guideline is intended to promote a level playing field, not to penalize or complicate the production process.
 - i. Minor incidental accents or manufacturer's details will not be considered violations.
 - ii. Examples of these include:
 - » A black polo shirt with a small white logo.
 - » Metal grommets, buttons, zippers, or hardware on otherwise black garments.
 - » Belt loops, stitching, or tags that are not fully black.

» Soles, trim, or manufacturer logos on predominantly black shoes.

3. Focused Costuming

- a. **SETC provides guidelines for a limited selection of characters to be in full costume. They call this “Focused Costuming,” and the particulars are outlined in their festival handbook.**
- b. As the evaluation criteria for Studio emphasizes the importance of acting performance and ensemble, **MTA will not permit Focused Costuming (full theatrical costuming for any characters) in the Studio Festival**, trusting that participating groups will be able to differentiate characters through their performance.
- c. MTA's Studio Division chairs are committed to re-evaluating the decision to deviate from this SETC regulation following the 2027 MTA State Festival.

4. Accessories

- a. Performers are allowed to wear accessories.
- b. Accessories may be used to reflect a character, but should not visually replace or substantially conceal the performer's retail black garments.
 - i. Jewelry, watches, headwear, belts, gloves, and other small wearable items are considered accessories and are permitted by this rule.
 - ii. Large outerwear or garment pieces that substantially cover or obscure the required retail black clothing would be considered costumes and are prohibited.
- c. If an item is removed and manipulated as an integral part of the story, it should be classified as a prop.
 - i. Performers may wear their accessories into the performance space.
 - ii. See the props guidelines for information about bringing props into the performance space.
- d. **SETC has a rule that 75% of a performer's retail blacks remain visible underneath accessories.**
 - i. MTA does not see a pragmatic solution for identifying garment visibility by percentage.
 - ii. MTA will not attempt to police this SETC rule.

5. Makeup

- a. Basic, corrective makeup using natural colors is allowed.
- b. Makeup may be used to reflect the characters/style of the production.
 - i. Theatrical, stylized, and/or special effects makeup that is outside of what would reasonably be worn in everyday settings is prohibited.
 - ii. Makeup products that are designed for theatrical application (e.g. Ben Nye and Mehron) are permitted if they are applied to meet the above criteria.
- c. All makeup must be applied before arriving at the performance facility and removed away from the performance facility.

6. Hair

- a. Hair styles may be created to reflect the characters/style of the production.
- b. Wigs or partial wigs that could reasonably be worn in everyday settings may be used to create or enhance performer's hair styles.
- c. Any wigs or partial wigs used must be affixed before arriving at the performance facility and removed away from the performance facility.

PROPS

1. Props must be integral to the story.

- a. Only props that are essential to the action of the play and directly referenced or used within the context of the script are permitted.
- b. Props may not be used as set dressing.
 - i. Props may not be used solely for aesthetic purposes or as background elements.
 - ii. This includes objects placed to suggest a setting rather than support the action.
 - iii. For clarification, if a prop is on stage, it must be used by an actor in the action of the play.

2. All props utilized by a production must be contained within one container (“props box”) up to the size of a standard 27-gallon storage bin.
 - a. Performing groups are expected to provide their own props box.
 - i. Many major retailers (Walmart, Home Depot, Lowe’s, Amazon, Costco) sell 27-Gallon Totes.
 - ii. Examples include the Sterilite 5065 27-Gal. Industrial Tote and the Greenmade 27 gal Black/Yellow Snap Lock Storage Box.
 - iii. Groups may elect to use a container that is smaller than the allotted bin, but the 27-gallon storage bin is the largest permissible props box.
 - b. The lid must be able to close completely with all props inside of the box.
 - i. Oddly shaped items (e.g. golf clubs, bassoons) that do not fit into the closed props box are not permitted.
 - ii. Musical instruments must fit into the production’s props box.
 - iii. Musicians who need to keep their instruments with them for security and/or tuning may show the Studio Festival chairperson that it fits within the props box with the lid closed and then maintain possession of their instrument throughout the Festival.
 - c. Groups using a smaller container are still limited to one props box.
 - d. **SETC requires that all props fit within a smaller, 18-gallon bin but has different regulations for musical instruments.**
3. Weapons
 - a. Real weapons of any kind, such as a sword or knife, etc., are prohibited.
 - b. Use of simulated weapons cannot violate any local board of education policy of the participating school or the host site.
 - i. Schools using simulated weapons must provide a letter from the school principal authorizing their use and must confirm permission with the site host that the use of simulated weapons is allowed by the host school and/or system.
 - ii. Violation of this rule will result in total disqualification from the Studio Festival; productions in violation of local, school, or venue policies regarding simulated weapons will not be eligible for any awards or recognition.
 - iii. Err on the side of over-verifying the policies surrounding simulated weapons by contacting the Studio chairs, the local authorities, and the host site for any clarification of the rules.
4. Prohibited items
 - a. The use of any materials that cannot be completely cleaned during the production’s strike time is strictly prohibited. These materials include but are not limited to:
 - i. Confetti
 - ii. Glitter
 - iii. Silly string
 - iv. Stage blood
 - b. Live animals are prohibited. (Dead animals are also prohibited, please and thank you.)
 - c. The use of open flames, smoke-producing devices, or combustible materials is prohibited.

LIGHTING & SPECIAL EFFECTS

1. Lighting for all performances will be limited to a simple “lights up” and “lights down” format
 - a. “Full up” and “full down” percentages will be determined by the host facility.
 - b. Fades are contingent on the facility’s equipment.
 - c. **The SETC guidelines prohibit fades entirely.**
2. No additional theatrical lighting instruments may be used, including spotlights.
3. Small, hand-held practical light sources used as props are permitted.
 - a. These props may not be used as substitutes for the Festival’s theatrical lighting system.

- b. These props must be included in the production's props box.
 - c. Examples include but are not limited to flashlights, battery-operated candles, battery-operated strings of twinkle lights, LEDs on keychains, and camera flashes.
4. Special effects are prohibited including haze, fog, aerosol atmosphere, pyrotechnics, projection effects, moving lighting effects, or other independently operated theatrical effect devices.

SOUND AND MUSIC

1. Use of recorded music and sound
 - a. The use of pre-recorded music and sound effects is permitted.
 - i. Participating groups are responsible for complying with applicable copyright and licensing requirements.
 - ii. The primary contact adult should keep a written record of the permission to use recorded sound.
 - b. Any participating school using recorded sound will use the sound system provided by the host facility.
 - i. A sound system with the ability to connect a playback device (computer, phone, or tablet) via an AUX cable (3.5mm) will be provided.
 - ii. If a production's playback device does not connect to a standard AUX cable (3.5mm), the group must provide the appropriate adapter. This adapter does not have to fit into the production's prop box.
 - c. No additional electronic sound equipment - including functional microphones in any form - may be used.
2. Musical Instruments
 - a. Productions may utilize live instrumental musicians as members of their performance company.
 - i. Instruments must be played by student members of the production.
 - ii. Adults (volunteer or paid professional musicians) are prohibited from accompanying a production.
 - b. Accompanying instruments should remain offstage and outside the playing space.
 - c. If the production dictates that a character plays an instrument, that character may carry and play their instrument under the props guidelines.
 - d. Musical instruments must be able to fit in the production's props box.
 - e. Musicians who need to keep their instruments with them may show the Studio Festival chairperson that the instrument fits within the props box with the lid closed and then maintain possession of their instrument throughout the Festival.

Items and/or equipment not explicitly mentioned in these guidelines will not be permitted for use during the Studio Festival, even if available at the host site. Final decisions about prohibited items and equipment that are not explicitly outlined in this operations manual will land with the Division chair.

STUDIO FESTIVAL AWARDS

1. Play Rating Certificates
 - a. These printed certificates are given to each participating group to quantify the quality of their presented work.
 - b. The rating should be aligned with the adjudicators' averaged production score.
 - i. 1 - 15 = Fair
 - ii. 16 - 30 = Good
 - iii. 31 - 45 = Excellent
 - iv. 46 - 60 = Superior
2. Theatre Arts Awards
 - a. A maximum of ten certificates may be awarded.
 - b. Adjudicators should use these awards to recognize theatrical excellence in areas not otherwise acknowledged such as:
 - i. Excellence in Original Concept Development

- ii. Outstanding Student Playwriting
 - iii. Excellence in Student Direction
 - iv. Outstanding Choreography
- 3. All Star Cast
 - a. Each school should receive at least one All Star cast member.
 - b. All Star cast members should not receive another acting award, such as Best Actor/Actress; they should only receive one.
- 4. Outstanding Performance in a Lead Role (x2)
- 5. Outstanding Performance in a Supporting Role (x2)
- 6. Outstanding Ensemble
- 7. Outstanding Direction
- 8. 2nd Runner-Up Best Production
- 9. Runner-Up Best Production (Advances to SETC Studio Festival)
- 10. Best Production (Advances to SETC Studio Festival)

STUDIO GUIDELINES FOR ADJUDICATION

- 1. A panel of two or three qualified theatre professionals will adjudicate studio theatre entries.
 - a. The Studio Chair is responsible for identifying potential adjudicators and recommending them to the MTA Vice President, who is responsible for securing these adjudicators.
 - b. The panel of adjudicators should meet MTA's guidelines for adjudicator selection (see p. 15).
- 2. The central role of the adjudicator is to provide useful critical feedback in a thoughtful, caring way. Adjudicators should provide written and verbal feedback that helps participants grow as artists and people, through enriched understanding of their own collaborative work.
- 3. All adjudicators will be asked to participate in a festival adjudicators meeting where the Studio Chair will answer questions and clarify expectations.
- 4. A brief, verbal adjudication will occur at the conclusion of each production in the festival.
 - a. Adjudication will not exceed 15 total minutes, with each adjudicator being afforded 5 minutes of verbal feedback.
 - b. Responses should consist of a positive general assessment of each production and should include the adjudicator's strongest impression of specific elements of the production.
 - c. Constructive criticism should be coupled with positive reinforcement.
- 5. Best practices for all adjudication include:
 - a. Positive reinforcement to each performing school group about the strengths of their work alongside constructive, critical feedback to help the artists grow.
 - b. Clear suggestions and observations about how the work could be stronger.
 - i. Provide questions for the artists to consider and answer for themselves.
 - ii. Provide concrete proposals or creative alternatives.
 - c. Specific, detailed commentary about the evaluated theatrical elements.
 - i. When possible, provide specific examples and observations about as many participant roles as are applicable
 - ii. Address how the multiple elements work together in each production.
 - iii. Maintain a clear focus on the Studio evaluation criteria.
 - d. Sensitivity to the participants and acknowledgment of challenges and limitations faced by the performing group.
 - e. Admission of subjectivity.
 - i. Remind artists that adjudicators are selected for their expertise and have credible insight to offer.
 - ii. Remind artists that each adjudicator also has their own tastes, preferences, and perspectives.

- iii. The job of the artist is to listen, consider the feedback, and determine for themselves what is most valuable; remind artists that they are not obligated to agree with or execute all of your ideas and comments.
- f. Awareness of diversity.
 - i. Be mindful of assumptions about the students you meet and work against those assumptions during the adjudication process.
 - ii. Care for the words you choose to talk about the members of a company.
 - iii. Consider what pronouns you use to describe particular roles in the theatre. (E.g. Directors are not always “he;” costume designers are not always “she,” etc.)
 - iv. Remember that student participants have a range of abilities and that not all artists will receive adjudication the same way; err on the side of kindness.
- g. Should you find yourself needing to address themes or experiences with which you do not have personal experience, feel free to ask questions.
 - i. “What were you hoping to do with [this specific moment]?” or “What was your intention with [a specific choice]?”
 - ii. Do not hesitate to amend previous statements or recommendations in light of new information or understanding. This models learning and adapting to new knowledge for our young artists.

SAMPLE ADJUDICATOR COMMENTS FORM

 MISSISSIPPI THEATRE ASSOCIATION ADJUDICATOR RESPONSE FORM STUDIO DIVISION THEATRE FESTIVAL 	
SCHOOL: _____ YEAR: _____	
PRODUCTION: _____	
ADJUDICATOR NAME: _____	
ACTING	VOICE • Performers can be heard and understood. Vocal choices support character development throughout the production.
	ENERGY & FOCUS • Performers display appropriate pacing and energy. Actors show consistent commitment and focus.
	CHARACTERIZATION • Performers make effective and consistent character choices. Character relationships are clear.
	UNITY OF ENSEMBLE • The company presents a cohesive ensemble. Performers and technicians collaborate to deliver a smooth, seamless production.
	MOVEMENT & PHYSICALITY • Action appears focused and intentional. Movement contributes to the performance.
ENSEMBLE	AWARENESS & CONNECTION • The company appears prepared, organized, and aware of each participant's individual purpose and the purpose of the company as a whole.
	INTERPRETATION & EXECUTION • The company utilizes movement and stillness to evoke mood and meaning. The delivery of lines enhances the unity of production and effectiveness of storytelling.
	OVERALL IMPACT • The company fully embodies collective storytelling with cohesion, delivering a unified performance.
DIRECTING	OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS • The production conveys a solid understanding of the world of the play through consistent choices and conceptual clarity. The end result indicates extensive preparedness and provides educational and/or entertainment value. PACING, COMPOSITION, & BLOCKING • The production consistently uses motivated and appropriate movement. Thoughtful control of tempo and pacing enhances the performance's rhythm and clarity. Creative use of stage pictures enhance the storytelling.

MTA FESTIVAL CHECKLISTS

HOST RESPONSIBILITIES CHECKLIST

Hotels

- Hotel accommodations: minimum of 100 rooms.
- Host site should secure blocks of room in at least 2 hotels and attempt to get group rates.
- Attempt to get free rooms for adjudicators. Generally, hotels will keep the block open until the middle or end of December.
- Hotel should have a large meeting room or gathering space for party or informal get-together.

Production Facilities

- Select location for the Secondary Festival and Community Theatre Festival Productions (henceforth referred to as “main festival.”)
- Select a separate location for the Theatre for Youth Festival.
 - a. The Theatre for Youth Festival is held on Friday only.
 - b. Theatre for Youth participants are predominately high school students, so the venue needs to be in reasonably close proximity to the main festival.
- Identify a minimum of 5 locations in close proximity to the main festival for workshops.
 - a. The number and needs for festival workshops will vary each year.
 - b. The MTA Board of Directors will identify and communicate who the workshop presenters will be as early as possible.
- Identify and secure a location for the general business meeting and awards luncheon. The budget will be determined by the MTA Board of Directors.
- Identify and secure locations for evening socials
 - a. Recommend a place for people to gather Friday night after productions to talk and party.
 - i. Friday night is fairly informal and may not need any actual reservations.
 - ii. This locale does not need to be as large as the space for the Saturday social.
 - b. Secure one location for the Saturday night adult social
 - c. Secure a separate location for the high school students’ Saturday night social.
- Identify and secure a room for adjudicators and board members to use as a “base” during the festival.
 - a. MTA will provide food and drinks for board members and adjudicators throughout the day.
 - b. These refreshments will be paid for with MTA funds.

Registration Information: Host Responsibilities

- Create packets for registrants
 - a. Include community promotional information including but not limited to:
 - i. Maps
 - ii. List of local restaurants, attractions, and other entertainment opportunities
 - b. Generally, one packet has been created for each individual who registers for the conference.
 - c. Community theatre participants may arrive together or separately; group their packets together and disseminate them as appropriate.
- Ensure that there are sufficient on-site registration forms, extra city maps, restaurant guides, etc.

Productions

- In addition to the following, review the section in the MTA Handbook under Community Theatre Festival Rules / Guidelines – Facilities of the Host Theatre.
- Secure volunteers to be backstage hosts.

- a. Backstage hosts must be present for all load-ins, load-outs, rehearsals and performances.
 - b. We must have sufficient competent people who are educated in how to run lights, sound, and other backstage equipment present and willing to work for the duration of the festival
- Send the Executive Director name(s) of the Technical Director(s) that can be contacted regarding stage, lighting, and sound requirements.
 - a. Prioritize communicating this information, as it must be received before the Board of Directors can send correspondence to potential participating groups.
 - b. Include all necessary contact information.
- Provide a copy of the lighting plot and dimensions of their stage. (A ground plan is ideal if one exists.)
 - a. Include a list of equipment that is available at the theatre.
 - b. See the copy of the form in the MTA Handbook Community Theatre Festival Rules/Guidelines -- Host Site Technical Information Sheet

Social Events

- A large social will be held on Saturday night for the adults and for the high school age students but they will need to be at separate locations.
- Someone from the host site will need to locate someone to either provide or cater the Sunday morning brunch. The price will be presented to the MTA board of directors for approval.
- A budget will be provided to the host theatre for these socials.

Publicity

Host site should designate a local person to handle publicity.

Volunteers

Volunteers will be needed for the following areas:

- Man the registration booth
- Backstage and load-in / load-out crew
- Socials, brunch, etc.
- Time keepers for the secondary and the community theatre chairs
- Concessions can be provided and the host theatre may keep the profits

Awards Ceremony

- Identify and secure a nice, professional setup for the awards ceremony.
- At a minimum, ensure that there are:
 - a. Two large, well-decorated tables with tablecloths, plants, etc.
 - b. Podium with microphone
- The MTA board of directors will handle awards / plaques.

Theatre for Youth Festival

- The Theatre for Youth Festival is a separate event from the main festival.
 - a. It is typically held at another location.
 - b. It is generally on the Friday of the festival.
 - c. It requires that the host site work with the local schools to bus children into the productions.
- All arrangements for the Theatre for Youth festival should go through the Theatre for Youth Division Chair.

REGISTRATION CHECKLIST

(Executive Director)

One of the biggest and most important aspects of the host's responsibilities is the festival registration process.

- Send MTA members welcome letter and copy of individual registration form.
- Remind Community Theatre Division Chair to send a letter to all Mississippi community theatres
 - a. Encourage them to become members of MTA and attend the festival.
 - b. Include organizational and individual registration forms.
- Verify whether the Secondary Division Chair will be able to attend regional festivals
 - c. Prepare and present (or have the Secondary Chair / Vice Chair present) the directors / sponsors of the schools advancing from the regional festivals with an informational packet
 - d. Include:
 - i. A welcome letter
 - ii. Organizational and individual registration forms
 - iii. Code of conduct forms
 - iv. Technical questionnaire
 - v. Hotel information
- Verify that each Division Chair knows to collect registration information from their division entrants
 - a. Division chairs will keep a checklist of what theatres have and haven't submitted.
 - b. Collect copies of registration forms and other information from the Division Chairs.
- Maintain accurate records of registering organizations and individuals
 - a. Keep a list of schools, theatres, and individuals who have registered.
 - b. Keep a list of who has and hasn't paid organizational dues and festival registration fees.
 - c. Keep a list of who has and hasn't submitted the proper forms.
- Produce name tags for each individual who has registered for the conference. Name tags should include Name, Theatre, Official Designation (office, host, volunteer, etc.)
 - a. As registration forms are collected, host site will need to keep a list of how many t-shirts are needed and prior to festival group all t-shirts by school, theatre, and individual.
 - b. It has worked best in the past to have all of the high schools' t-shirts, community promotional information, programs, and name tags grouped together in a box. Once the teacher registers, they can distribute these items to their group.
- Provide schools and theatres with a receipt for their registration fees.
- Tickets purchased at the door: \$25 for weekend pass; \$15 for a day pass and \$5 for a block pass.

MTA FESTIVAL TIMELINE: COMMUNITY THEATRE DIVISION

Festival-Related Responsibilities of the Division Chair

- Reference the Community Theatre Division section in the MTA Handbook
- Send letter to community theatre encouraging participation in festival.
- Acquire a timekeeper for festival.
- Send confirmation of registration.

Registration

- Prepare and send letter from community theatre chair inviting community theatres to participate.
 - a. Send this letter mid-October so that it will arrive before the Community Theatre Festival registration window opens
 - b. Include as available (from the MTA Handbook):

- i. Community Theatre Festival Rules
 - ii. Map of Theatre with dimensions and light plot
 - iii. Theatre registration form
 - iv. Individual registration form
 - v. Map to theatres
 - vi. Local and community festival contact information
 - vii. Community Theatre Festival Registration Deadline: December 1
 - viii. Community Theatre Festival Paperwork Submission Deadline: December 15
 - ix. Deadline for Individual Pre-Registration: January 1
 - x. Housing options, rates, and deadlines
 - xi. MTA Festival Technical Questionnaire
 - xii. Address for sending registration and scripts (Remind theatres to submit their materials to the Community Theatre Division Chair, not the host theatre.)
- c. See a sample letter in the Community Theatre Division Section of the MTA Handbook.

Registration procedures:

- Send confirmation to each director within two weeks of receiving an application to verify their performance slot.
- Collect the registration forms and send to Executive Director no later than December 15.
- Collect scripts from directors and send to adjudicators no later than December 15
- Provide directors with the performance order and tentative festival schedule by December 20
- Confirm with director that they have the theatre rules, theatre map, light plot, necessary forms, and proper contact information should they have questions.

MTA FESTIVAL TIMELINE: SECONDARY DIVISION

Festival-Related Responsibilities of the Division Chair:

- Send letters to high schools in August encouraging them to participate in the regional festivals.
 - a. Explain the goals and objectives of both the regional and the state festival.
 - b. Encourage non-participants to attend as observers.
 - c. Give dates and locations for the regional festivals and the state festival.
- Ensure that there is an MTA representative at each regional festival. (This can be the Secondary Division Chair and Vice Chair if there is no conflict.)
 - d. Present the directors / sponsors of the schools advancing from the regional festivals with an informational packet immediately following the regional festivals with the pertinent information for registration for the state festival.
 - e. This must be immediate because the registration deadline follows so short after the regional festivals.
 - f. Include:
 - i. A welcome letter
 - ii. Organizational and individual registration forms
 - iii. Code of conduct forms
 - iv. Technical questionnaire
 - v. Hotel information
- Present an informational packet to the state festival winner and runner-up immediately following the state festival.
 - a. Meet with winning school's director prior to leaving the conference
 - b. Explain the deadlines and procedures for the SETC annual convention.
- Acquire timekeepers

Packet for Regional Winners must include:

- Letter congratulating them as winners.
- Registration forms for production and individuals.
- Secondary Festival Rules
- Map of MTA State Festival theatre facility with dimensions and light plot
- Organizational and individual registration forms
- Map to theatres
- Local and high school festival contact information
- Deadline for registering production: December 15
- Deadline for individual registration: January 1
- Deadline for submission of production registration info: January 1
- Housing options, rates, deadlines
- MTA Festival Technical Questionnaire
- Remind directors / sponsors to send registration and scripts to Chair not the host theatre.
- Consent Form Agreement – Student Code of Conduct
- Alcohol and Other Drug Policy

Registration procedures:

- Collect the registration forms and send to the Executive Director by December 20.
- Provide directors with the performance order and tentative festival schedule by December 20.
- Confirm with director that they have the theatre rules, theatre map, light plot, necessary forms, and proper contact information should they have questions.
- Remind directors to bring programs
- Provide information about the workshops and socials.
- Assist directors / sponsors with completing registration materials, as applicable.

OTHER FESTIVAL DUTIES / TIMELINES**Individual Registration Mailer**

- Responsibility: Executive Director & President
- Deadline for Mailer:
- First Mail out:
 - a. Letter from President about the festival
 - b. Location of festivals, dates, and housing options
 - c. Map to theatre
- Second Mail out:
 - a. Send confirmation of registration to individuals within two weeks of receipt.
 - b. Send tentative schedule to individuals by:
- Send registration information to Executive Director by:
- Name tags, counts for programs, etc.

Adjudicators

- Responsibility: Vice President
- Suggested names:
- Other Responsibilities:

- a. Housing
- b. Transportation (work with Executive Director)
- c. Gift
- d. Hosts
- e. Lounge
- f. Get Bios and headshots from adjudicators

Social functions

- Responsibility:
- Adult Social
 - a. Budget:
 - b. Location:
 - c. Food:
- Youth Social
 - a. Budget
 - b. Location:
 - c. Food:
- **Total Budget:**

Registration

- Responsibility: Executive Director and Festival Host
 - a. Host:
 - i. Collect materials for packets
 - » City map
 - » Restaurant guide
 - » Local information
 - ii. Schedule someone to be at the registration desk
 - iii. Assemble packets for each group (along with Executive Director)
 - » City packets
 - » Receipts
 - » Programs
 - » Director's schedule
 - b. Executive Director:
 - i. Other things needed at the registration table:
 - » On-site registration forms
 - » Receipt pad
 - » Tablecloth, arrangements
 - » Extra city guides, maps, restaurant guides

Workshops

- Adult
- Youth

Publicity**Secure Awards**

- Responsibility: Executive Director

Historian/Program Information

- Responsibility: Executive Director / Mississippi State University Library

Program compilation and production

- Responsibility: President / Executive Director