



August 14, 2008

Dear Teachers

This spring Tom Booth, MTA President, created an ad hoc committee to review the secondary division's rules for the high school drama festival and the state festival. We charged this committee with discussing and making recommendation to the Executive Committee. Topics included:

- addressing the changing number of theatres in the north and south regions,
- schools and non-school groups that can and cannot attend the regional and state festival,
- address the increasing number of participants and the limitations of the host sites,
- order of performance at the regional festivals,

The committee was made up of Juniper Wallace (Brandon), Sandra Camphor (Ocean Springs), John Davenport (Oxford High), Myra Byrnes (Corinth), Mandy Kinney (Starkville), Suz Allmon (Oak Grove), Jo Durst (MSU), Robin Carr (USM), Melanie Harris (MSU), Tonya Hays (WINGS).

The committee discussed these topics at length and made the following recommendations. These recommendations were reviewed/discussed by the Board and **approved** by the Executive Committee. These were very hard discussions and very difficult decisions. I assure you that these were made with the best interest of the organization and the committee had representation from individuals from all over the state.

1. In order to address the number of schools participating in the North region (17 in 2007) and the Southeast and Southwest region (17 between the 2), the committee recommended a "Band-Aid" approach for this year (2008). For this year (this year only), we will go back to TWO regions -- NORTH and SOUTH. Each region will be able to send five (5) representatives to the State festival (this year only). This will make the two festivals more equitable because each region will have 17 participants and the same number of schools advancing. Between now and the spring, the Committee will pursue the idea of creating a CENTRAL region. This will allow us to change the dividing lines and make each region smaller and manageable. It will also provide us with an opportunity to grow each region.
2. **Non-school groups** will include all community based programs with students in the grades 9-12 or the equivalent. Non-school groups will not be eligible to advance to MTA State Festival. **Non-school student groups** are those community based programs that may include home school students as well as students enrolled in a traditional high school (including charter or magnet school). Non-school groups will not be eligible to advance to MTA State Festival. {WINGS, Actors Playhouse, etc.}. Non-School Student Groups will be eligible for all awards EXCEPT Distinguished Play Award.
3. **Home-school student groups** are those community based programs that ONLY include home school students. No students enrolled in a traditional high school may participate in this group or it will be classified as a non-school student group. Home-school groups will be eligible to advance to MTA State Festival (as long as they qualify as a home-school group). Home-School Groups will be eligible for ALL awards.
4. **Non-Traditional schools** will be eligible to participate in Regional and State MTA Festivals {Example: Adept School}. Non-Traditional schools will be eligible for all awards and benefits of a traditional high school
5. While no one on the committee, the Board or the Host sites want to limit the number of production at the regional festival we have reached capacity in terms of the number of schools that we can handle. Until the size of each region is addressed in 2009, we will have to limit the number of entries to 17 schools. The first 17 entries will be accepted. Those schools reaching the deadline, but missing the entry # cut off will be placed on a waiting list in the event a school withdraws.
6. The order of performance will be a random order immediately following deadline date. It will not be based on the order the packets are received by the Host site.

For a complete listing of rules for the regional and state High School Drama Festival visit the MTA website.

Sincerely,
Stephen Cunetto, Executive Director

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