

ALL DIVISIONS

DISCUSSION ITEM (no vote): Submitted by TMAA.

The Texas Music Adjudicators' Association has been discussing possible changes to the current UIL Sight Reading process for band, orchestra and choir for the past two years. A committee was formed consisting of the TMAA Executive Board, as well as one middle school and one high school representative from all three divisions. The committee members include Greg Countryman – President, Mark McGahey – Past President, Jeff Turner – President Elect, James Drew – Concert Band Vice President, Steve Wessels – Marching Band Vice President, Craig Needham – Orchestra Vice President, Cheryl Wilson – Vocal Vice President, Brad Kent – UIL Music Director, Jerry Babbitt – UIL Executive Secretary Liason, Amy Allison – MS Band, Gloria Ramirez – HS Band, Joanna DeVoto – MS Orchestra, David DeVoto – HS Orchestra, Bo Shirah – MS Vocal, Christopher Rhodes – HS Vocal, Mark Rohwer – Vocal, Bob Vetter – Band, Jay Dunnahoo – TMAA Executive Secretary.

Our goal is to amend the explanation period to have as few rules as possible; and, to make the procedure for this evaluation more like the process you would use in your classroom when learning a new piece of music. Over the past year, the committee members have been practicing various procedures with their own ensembles from varsity to sub non-varsity groups. The committee met at the 2017 TMEA Convention, discussed their experiences while using various procedures with their ensembles, and developed a tentative procedure we would like to share for discussion. We feel the new process will assess the students' musical knowledge, as well as their individual and ensemble skills; however, unlike the concert evaluation, there would be minimal rehearsal time prior to the performance.

Some key aspects of the procedure under consideration are:

1. The new procedure would not be true “sight reading”, so the name could be changed from UIL Concert & Sight Reading Evaluation to UIL Performance & Music Literacy Evaluation. We feel this name more clearly reflects what would be “judged” and the new terminology could also make it more likely for this evaluation to eventually be exempt from the “No Pass, No Play” law.
2. The current instruction/explanation period(s) would be replaced with one Rehearsal Period that could be structured at the director's discretion and include any combination of student-led and/or director-led instruction. The students and director would be able to reproduce the music in any manner they wish. The only exception is that the music could not be recorded and no recording of the music could be played. Acceptable techniques could include singing, playing, clapping/counting rhythms, as well as small group or full ensemble rehearsal.

3. The amount of time for the Rehearsal Period for different divisions (band, orchestra and choir) is still under discussion. We are considering making the Rehearsal Period equal to the total instruction time in the current system for the first year, and then all times would be reduced by one minute starting with the second year of the new evaluation system (reduced two minutes for ensembles with a current 10-minute explanation/instruction period).
4. There would no longer be a score study period.
5. Only one director would be allowed to instruct/conduct the ensemble.
6. Consideration has been given to the judges not being in the room during the Rehearsal Period, since even under the current system the judges are supposed to evaluate only the performance of the sight-reading piece. To ensure all procedures are followed, one of the judges, or possibly a person designated by the Region Executive Secretary, might remain in the room during the Rehearsal Period.

The committee is still in the developmental stage, so our final recommendations could be different from what has been described. We encourage you to experiment with the process and provide the committee with feedback and suggestions. This information will also be posted on the TMAA website (www.txtmaa.org) for your review. Please take a few minutes in today's region meeting to discuss what has been presented; however, we are not asking for a vote or consensus at this time. Any formal proposals would have to be approved by the TMAA Executive Committee, the Music Advisory Committee and the various regions throughout the state before any changes would be implemented. Thank you for your time today and please feel free to contact any committee member with your input.

Greg Countryman, President
Texas Music Adjudicators Association