

TO: EASTERN AND WESTERN STATE SOLO AND ENSEMBLE MUSIC INSTRUCTORS
FROM: Amy Schendel, EASTERN STATE SOLO & ENSEMBLE FESTIVAL CHAIR
Zach Haris, WESTERN STATE SOLO & ENSEMBLE FESTIVAL CHAIR
RE: 2026 STATE SOLO & ENSEMBLE FESTIVAL INFORMATION

2026 Montana State Solo and Ensemble Festival Information

Send all forms and fees:

Eastern State Music Festival	Western State Music Festival
Amy Schendel, Organizing Chair Billings Public Schools Fine Arts Department 415 North 30th Billings, MT 59101 Phone: 406-281-5048 Email: schendelac@billingsschools.org	Zach Harris, Organizing Chair Attn: Zach Harris/Molly Kohoutek Helena High School 1300 Billings Ave, 59601 Phone: 406-560-4403 Email: zharrishea@gmail.com

APPLICATION PROCEDURE AND FEES

The rating sheet used at the District Festival, properly signed, and indicating a Superior rating serves as the application for solo and ensemble entries. These forms and the appropriate fees must be mailed to the chairperson of the applicable State Music Festival. The fees are assessed at the rate of \$20.00 per student - regardless of the number of events a student enters. Accompanists pay no fees, but accompanists are restricted to a maximum of 25 entries.

*Each school/discipline will be allowed to bring one large ensemble, including Jazz Band (12+ members) to the State Festival for a flat fee of \$200. Any student in that large ensemble that are performing other events will still have to pay the \$20 per student fee.

The forms must be postmarked no later than midnight on the first Tuesday after your District Music Festival. Forms must be mailed **FIRST CLASS**.

Organizing chairs will send electronic registration forms through email to directors. Please fill out the complete information on the registration form by the same deadline (Tuesday after the District Festival is complete).

Your digital registration form will indicate the amount you owe to participate in festival. Your payment should be sent with your forms. Whenever possible, one check covering fees from each school should be forwarded with the applications to the Festival Chairperson. **DO NOT**

SEND CASH! No refunds will be given to soloists or ensembles regardless of reason.

Western Festival – When the Helena School District receives a school registration, they will bill your district individually. Please reach out to Zach Harris for any questions

2026 Festival Sites

Eastern Division

Billings Skyview High School
1775 High Sierra Blvd
Billings, MT 59105
May 1-2, 2026,

Western Division

Helena High School
1300 Billings Ave.
Helena, MT 59601
May 1-2, 2026

SOLO AND ENSEMBLE ELIGIBILITY

Only those soloists or ensembles which have received Superior ratings in their District Festival may take part in the solo and ensemble events at the State Festival. An ensemble including stage band may exceed sixteen (16) in number providing no parts are doubled and the ensemble has been selected from a curricular/credit-bearing performing group. If parts are doubled, sixteen (16) is the maximum number for an ensemble. (Not including accompanist). Accompanists are restricted to a maximum of 25 entries.

SOME IMPORTANT GUIDELINES FOR PERFORMERS

- Events will be scheduled in sixty (60) minute blocks throughout the two-day session. Students will be heard by an adjudicator for comments during the first forty (40) minutes and remain to attend a master class based on the presentations heard within the cluster. Refer to the MHSB Handbook for clarifications of this format. The exception to this format is a Stage Band/Jazz Group will be assigned a 20-to-30-minute block of time.**
- Larger ensembles and stage bands are encouraged to do no more than two selections of varied styles. Soloists and ensembles are limited to six (6) minutes performing time and to only one solo per category. They should stay well within this six-minute framework in order to provide for clinicians to present a master class.
- Please provide the adjudicator with a copy of your music with measures numbered. Copyright restrictions are expected to be honored at the State Festival. Illegal copying of materials is punishable by fine, imprisonment or both. Failure to comply with the copyright law will result in no rating.
- You are not required to perform the same repertoire which you performed at the District Festival.
- Each performer is expected to be present for the entire 60 minutes of the performance/master class to which they are assigned.
- No schools, directors, private teachers or students should expect the festival chair to accede to special scheduling requests, irrespective of other activity conflicts.** Scheduling students from the same school into a few time-blocks or a single day may seriously undermine the educational intent of the festival and diminish the opportunity to hear other students.

- A tentative schedule listing the entries from each school will be forwarded to each music director as soon as possible after applications have been received. Please report any scheduling problems to the Festival Organizing Chair immediately.

HOUSING AND MEALS

Housing arrangements for Festival participants should be made by local school administrators. The Festival Chair encourages contact with the desired motel/hotel as soon as possible. A number of fast food and local restaurants are located within a close proximity of the festival sites. Concessions will be available at each festival site.

NOTE TO DISTRICT ORGANIZING CHAIRPERSONS

It is your responsibility to make arrangements for the distribution of rating sheets to all school directors and teachers involved in your Festival, immediately following the closure of the District Music Festival.

The State Festival Chairpersons will make every effort to retain outstanding adjudicators who are experts in their respective fields of endeavor, and all will meet MHSAs guidelines which include certification with the MHSAs Adjudicators Seminar. This will be done to assure students the best possible educational experience.

NOTE REGARDING PRIVATE MUSIC TEACHERS

All entries in the State and District Music Festivals must be made through local high schools and approved by the local superintendent or principal. Any student who is studying with a private music teacher and who is eligible for participation in the State Music Festival must be a member of a "Curricular/Credit-bearing Performing Group" and must enter through auspices of their respective school organization.

RATING SHEETS

Ratings sheets will be available in the Festival Headquarters within a **reasonable** time after ALL entries from a school have been processed. **ONLY MUSIC DIRECTORS** may pick up the rating sheets. Please allow time in your travel plans for this processing to be completed after the final time block in which your students perform. Ratings will be posted digitally in a timely manner.

PERFORMANCE TIMES

Please check with your respective Festival site for registration and performance times. Directors must register their entire group before students can participate in the festival.

