

WMEA – WIAA State Solo and Ensemble Contest

Rules and Regulations

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(2025-2026 Academic Year)



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1 – Student Eligibility Requirements

- 1.1 Participating students are required to be members of an appropriate large performing group accredited class (band/percussion, orchestra, choir, or show/jazz/madrigal ensemble) at their high school. Each student must be an active member in the division of competition as his/her primary participation in the class at the time of both the regional and state events. **Exception:** For ensembles only, students meeting eligibility in the brass, woodwind, or percussion divisions may compete on any instrument category listed within any of those divisions. Students who qualify for the state solo contest in the piano, guitar, and harp categories must be a member of one of the school's ensembles mentioned above, though they do not have to play the piano, guitar, or harp in that ensemble. Piano, guitar, and harp soloists may also be eligible if members of an accredited piano, guitar, or harp class at their high school.
 - 1.1.1. In the event that no accredited orchestra class exists at their high school as defined in rule 1.1, a student may be deemed eligible to qualify for the state solo & ensemble contest by being a member of one of the accredited ensembles mentioned in rule 1.1 as offered by the school. In this case, the student is not required to play a string instrument in that ensemble as their primary means of participation.
- 1.2 All students must be in grades 9-12.
- 1.3 All members of an ensemble must be from the same school. If at any time an ensemble member is no longer attending that school, that ensemble member is no longer eligible.
- 1.4 Students must attend a school that is a WIAA member enrolled in the appropriate music area. Participating students have four consecutive years of eligibility beginning with their ninth grade year.
- 1.5 **The following divisions and categories will be included in the State Solo Contest.**

Woodwind Division	Brass Division	Percussion Division	Vocal Division	String Division	Other Division
Flute-Piccolo	Trumpet/Cornet	Snare Drum	Soprano**	Violin	Piano
Clarinet	French Horn	Timpani	Mezzo Soprano	Viola	Classical Guitar
Alto-Bass Clarinet	Trombone	Multiple Percussion	Alto	Cello	Harp
Oboe-English Horn	Euphonium/Baritone Horn	Mallets	Tenor	String Bass	
Bassoon	Tuba		Baritone		
Soprano-Alto Saxophone			Bass		
Tenor-Baritone Saxophone					

***double winners and alternates will be selected in this category*

- 1.5.1 Variations on instruments within a category must share the name and not be a separate category. For example, the alto flute could be performed in the flute category and would need to be used at state if selected, but the alto clarinet could not be used in the clarinet category as it has its own category. The flugelhorn may be used in ensembles but not as a solo instrument. Banjo is an acceptable instrument in the solo classical guitar category.
- 1.5.2 A soloist's accompanist may be an adult, a student or electronic accompaniment and may change between the regional and state contests.
- *See Rule 3.13.3 for further information. A single accompanist on piano, guitar, harp or electronic audio track is the only accompanist permitted. An electronic accompaniment must be an integral part of the solo composition. The accompaniment cannot substitute a live accompanist with MIDI renditions or recordings of piano, guitar or harp; and cannot be a karaoke or 'practice track' style accompaniment. Solo piano entries may not be accompanied unless accompanied by a composed electronic audio track. Soloists may not accompany themselves.
- 1.5.3 The Multiple Percussion category includes students performing a combination of typical percussion instruments and accessories. Incidental piano if scored within another percussion part, steel drums, drum sets and body percussion will be considered multiple percussion.

In all cases, only one piano may be used during a performance. Multiple percussion solos or parts in ensembles must be scored parts.

1.6 The following divisions and categories will be included in the State Ensemble Contest.

SMALL categories are 2-4 students plus accompaniment; LARGE categories are 5-16 students plus accompaniment:

Woodwind Ensemble Division	Brass Ensemble Division	Percussion Ensemble Division	String Ensemble Division
Woodwinds - Small Woodwinds - Large	Brass - Small Brass - Large	Percussion - Small Percussion - Large	String - Small String - Large
Soprano/Mezzo/Alto Vocal Ensemble Division	Tenor/Baritone/Bass Vocal Ensemble Division	Mixed Vocal Ensemble Division	Other Ensemble Division
Soprano/Mezzo/Alto Vocal – Small Soprano/Mezzo/Alto Vocal – Large	Tenor/Baritone/Bass Vocal – Small Tenor/Baritone/Bass Vocal - Large	Mixed Vocal – Small Mixed Vocal - Large	Mariachi Ensemble Guitar Ensemble
Composition Division			
Original Compositions			

- 1.6.1 Individual students performing in ensembles on woodwind, brass, or string instruments qualify at the regional contest by playing an instrument listed in the Woodwinds, Brass, or String Divisions’ solo categories and must perform on the same instrument at the state contest, though the part may change. (E.g., a student may not change from clarinet to bass clarinet, though that student could change from Clarinet 3 to Clarinet 2.)
- 1.6.2 Percussionists in ensembles qualify as “Percussion” category and may perform on any percussion instrument(s) at regional and state contests.
- 1.6.3 Vocalists in ensembles qualify as “Vocal” category and may sing any vocal part at regional and state contests. (E.g., at regional a vocalist could sing Soprano 1 on piece 1 and Alto on piece 2, and then sing Soprano 2 at state.)
- 1.6.4 Only one piano (single pianist), guitar, harp or electronics may be used in an ensemble and will not count in the ensemble number for category assignments. See Rule 1.5.2 for further definition of acceptable “electronics.”
- 1.6.5 A participant performing on piano, guitar, harp or electronics in an instrumental ensemble must be a student who meets all student eligibility requirements. (Clarification: Between the region and state event, it is allowable to drop the piano, guitar, harp or electronics participant, but you cannot add or change.) See Rule 1.5.2 for further definition of acceptable electronics.

- 1.6.6 An ensemble must consist of at least two (2) and no more than sixteen (16) instrumentalists/vocalists (not including piano, guitar, harp or electronics). Personnel may not change during the ensemble's performance time. See Rule 1.5.2 for further definition of acceptable electronics.
- 1.6.7 Ensembles may not be conducted externally.
- 1.6.8 An instrumental ensemble shall be placed in the division which includes the most instruments. (E.g., two trumpets and one clarinet would be a brass ensemble; three violins, two trumpets, and two percussion would be a string ensemble.) An ensemble which has an EQUAL number from two divisions as the largest representation must choose its division at the time of registration at the regional level. (E.g., a trumpet/ clarinet duet must choose to be a woodwind ensemble or a brass ensemble.) This division may not change.
- 1.6.9 A mix of vocal and instrumental solo categories, as scored, is allowed in large ensembles and will be placed in the division with the largest representation. (E.g. fourteen tenor/baritone/bass singers, two flutes would be Tenor/Baritone/Bass Vocal-Large; six soprano/mezzo/alto singers, six tenor/baritone/bass singers, and string quartet would be Mixed Vocal-Large.) There can be no mix of voice and instrument categories in a small ensemble.
- 1.6.10 Small ensembles will be limited to one performer per part. Large ensembles may have multiple performers per part.
- 1.6.11 Ensemble personnel must be the same as those who qualified at the regional event. An ensemble may participate with fewer students than participated at the regional level as long as the new size does not change the ensemble category or division and each individual student participates in the same category as they qualified (no substitutions allowed).
- 1.6.12 Incidental percussion may be performed by singers in a vocal ensemble, as scored in the music.
- 1.6.13 A single category is available for Guitar Ensembles, which may include at least two but no more than sixteen guitars. All event rules apply to the category, with the following specific exceptions:
- 1.6.13.1 Guitar may not be combined with any other solo category within the ensemble.
 - 1.6.13.2 A single harp, piano, or electronics accompanist may be used and will not count toward the ensemble count. That accompanist must be a student meeting all eligibility requirements. See Rule 1.5.2 for further definition of acceptable "electronics."
 - 1.6.13.3 All parts must be written (no tablature) and performed as scored.

- 1.6.14 A single category is available for Mariachi Ensembles, which may include at least two but no more than sixteen participants. All event rules apply to the category, with the following specific exceptions:
- 1.6.14.1 Instrumentation may include any combination of traditional and non-traditional mariachi instruments and vocalists.
 - 1.6.14.2 Participants playing instruments may also sing during the entry's performance.
 - 1.6.14.3 For the Mariachi Ensemble category only, amplification of the vocalist(s) is permitted. The use of a single microphone for vocals only is allowed. No amplification of instruments will be permitted. All amplification must be self-contained (battery powered if necessary), provided by the ensemble, and set up within the assigned performance time.
- 1.6.15 A single category is available for original compositions.
- 1.6.15.1 All participants must meet eligibility requirements in Rules 1.1 through 1.4. Exception: Eligible courses may include any accredited music class at their school.
 - 1.6.15.2 Participants and entries must follow all guidelines and requirements detailed in Appendix A.

NOTE: Please see Appendix A for all guidelines regarding the composition category.

- 1.7 A student may qualify for the state contest in more than one instrumental solo category. If a student performs in more than one solo category, they must perform different literature in each category. If individual students are in more than one ensemble, they must perform different literature in each ensemble. While vocalists may compete in more than one solo category at the region contest, they may not qualify for state in more than one solo category. If vocal soloists have a preference if chosen for state in more than one category, they must notify the region contest manager in writing one week prior to their region event.
- 1.8 A student may be a member of more than one (1) ensemble.
- 1.9 Alternates accepted for the state contest will be notified by the event manager.
- 1.10 Soloists who qualify for the state contest and then change schools may participate in the state contest if the following conditions are met:
- 1.10.1 The school change was caused by a residence change.
 - 1.10.2 The new school is in the same region as the original school.
 - 1.10.3 The student is participating in the appropriate music class at the new school.
- 1.11 Ensemble members who qualify for the state contest and then change schools may not participate in the state contest.

2 – Regional Contest Requirements

- 2.1 Only one first-place region winner in each category will automatically qualify for the state contest. (The soprano voice category will qualify TWO winners.)
- 2.2 All region winners and alternates must have received a “I” rating in their region contest to qualify for the state contest. If no one receives a “I” in a given category, there will be no state qualifier in that category. (NOTE: “+” and “-” ratings are not “official” ratings. A “I-” carries the same weight as a “I” in determining eligibility and qualifiers from a region.)
- 2.3 If a “I” rating is given in a category at the regional level, there must be a state qualifier in that category from that region. (NOTE: “+” and “-” ratings are not “official” ratings. A “I-” carries the same weight as a “I” in determining eligibility and qualifiers from a region.)
- 2.4 First and second alternates will be selected in each category if two or more performers receive a “I” rating. It will be the responsibility of the adjudicator to determine which performers are alternates. (NOTE: “+” and “-” ratings are not “official” ratings. A “I-” carries the same weight as a “I” in determining eligibility and qualifiers from a region. ALSO: the Soprano solo category will qualify TWO first alternates and TWO second alternates each.)
- 2.5 Ensembles wishing to be eligible for state must observe rule 1.6.6 (personnel may not change during the ensemble’s performance time) at the regional contest.
- 2.6 Alternates will be considered for the State Solo and Ensemble Contest and will be notified so by the State Solo and Ensemble Contest manager under the following circumstances:
 - 2.6.1 If the first place winner in a region contest cannot participate in the State Solo or Ensemble Contest, the alternate (if there is one) in that category in that same region will qualify for the state contest.
 - 2.6.2 A maximum of twenty-two (22) participants will be allowed in each category at the State Solo and Ensemble Contest. (There are twenty-two separate regional contests.) If the total number of state qualifiers in a category is less than twenty-two, alternates will be selected to perform on a priority basis based on the number of entries in that category from each regional contest. First alternates from the region with the largest number of entries in a given category will be first selected for the State Solo and Ensemble Contest. If there are still openings remaining after all first alternates have been selected, the same procedure will apply to second alternates.
 - 2.6.3 In case of a tie for alternate selection based on regional category participation, the total number of students participating in the Regional Solo or Ensemble Contest will determine the selection order.
 - 2.6.4 If a state-qualifying soloist moves to a school outside the region they qualified

from, they are no longer eligible for the state contest.

- 2.7 One adjudicator must judge all candidates in a given category at the regional level. If this is not possible, a playoff (singoff) must be held. The same judge may adjudicate all entries in more than one category.
- 2.8 The adjudicator will select the winner from the eligible pool of soloists/ensembles. The selections of the adjudicator shall be final; it shall be the responsibility of the event manager to ensure that the appropriate number of students is selected.
- 2.9 Each region may choose whether or not to allow a maximum of two consecutive time slots. Even if two consecutive time slots are allowed at the region level, participants will be limited to one time slot at the state event. Participants with multiple entries in a category are only eligible to be considered based on their first performance in that category.
- 2.10 Adjudicators who judge at any regional contest must be qualified in the division to be adjudicated. Except in an emergency situation, for any given regional event no K-12 school music educator may adjudicate a category which includes his/her students, no adjudicator who gives private lessons may adjudicate a category which includes his/her own private students and no adjudicator may adjudicate a category which includes his/her own children.
- 2.11 The school represented by state eligible entries wishing to perform at a region contest that were not registered using the online registration system by the published deadline will be assessed a fine of \$50 per late solo entry, and/or \$100 per late ensemble entry. Payment, or a signed agreement to pay must be received by the Wednesday prior to the region event. Non-state eligible entries may be allowed to participate with no additional penalty fee, for comment only, at the discretion of the region contest manager on a space available basis. No entries will be added to the region contest schedule after the Sunday prior to contest day.
- 2.12 An entry that performs at a time slot other than as assigned or authorized by the contest manager will perform for comment only.
- 2.13 Entries at the regional level that use any kind of electronics other than a piano provided by contest management during performance will perform for comment only and not be eligible for the state contest. See Rules 1.5.2 and 1.6.14.3 for only exceptions allowed.

3 – State Contest Requirements

- 3.1 Three judges will listen to each soloist or ensemble. Three **published*** copies of each piece need to be provided for the judges. In extreme cases where it is difficult or impossible to provide published copies, photocopies may be used but will not be returned following the performance. In such instances where photocopies are used, a letter from a music supplier or publisher must be provided stating that the music could not be obtained in a timely fashion and any legal copyright requirements or stipulations will

subsequently be followed by the participant, including but not limited to destroying the copies used and purchasing replacement copies. Without such a letter, the participant will perform for comment only and will not be eligible for first, second or third place honors.

*A soloist or ensemble may perform an unpublished original composition with written permission of the creator.

- 3.1.1 A soloist, ensemble, and accompanist must perform from an original manuscript or published part unless the music has been memorized.

Photocopied pages may be used to facilitate page turns if the original pages are present.

NOTE: Please see the guidelines on page 5 concerning the use of photocopies.

- 3.2 Memorization is not required at the state contests.
- 3.3 No electronics of any kind may be used during performance in any category or division at the State Solo and Ensemble Contest. See Rules 1.5.2 and 1.6.14.3 for only exceptions allowed.

3.4 Types of literature

- 3.4.1 Other than for a brief cadenza as indicated by the composer, all music must be scored. (E.g., no performing exclusively from tablature or chord symbols.)
- 3.4.2 **Vocal**—Students will perform an art song or music representing master literature.
- 3.4.3 **Instrumental**—Jazz, pop, or rock is not acceptable.
- 3.4.4 **Percussion**—A student or ensemble may perform rudimental, ancient, or symphonic type works.
- 3.4.5 **Judges are instructed** to grade down in the literature category if the previous rules are not met.

3.5 Points of judging

- 3.5.1 **Musicianship**—Musical feeling and interpretation that is in good taste and includes tonal balance, percussion, phrasing, tempo, expression, artistic effectiveness, etc.

- 3.5.2 **Tone**—Beauty of tone quality.
- 3.5.3 **Intonation**—Correctness of pitch or playing in tune
- 3.5.4 **Technique**—Correct and proper tonguing, articulation, bowing, fingering, diction, rudiments, etc.
- 3.5.5 **Literature**—Quality of literature should be representative of state level competition.
- 3.6 In hyphenated categories, students (soloists or members of an ensemble) must perform the same instrument type as which they qualified at the regional level. This does not apply to categories delineated with a slash.
- 3.7 Participants do not have to perform the same music at the state contest that they performed at the regional level.
- 3.8 A soloist may NOT perform a piece he/she has performed at a previous year's State Solo Contest.
- 3.9 An ensemble may NOT perform a piece any member of that ensemble has performed at a previous year's State Ensemble Contest.
- 3.10 Each soloist desiring an accompanist must provide his/her own. Only one piano will be available in each performance room.
- 3.11 Each ensemble desiring an accompanist must provide its own. Only one piano will be available in each performance room.
- 3.12 Adjudicators hired to judge at the state contest must be qualified in the division to be adjudicated. In categories where there are at least two adjudicators, they may be school or private teachers of some participants, but they must use their best professionalism to avoid bias for or against their students. Except in an emergency situation, no adjudicator may adjudicate a category which includes his/her own children.
- 3.13 Scheduling**
- 3.13.1 Performances will be scheduled at 10-minute intervals. Plan no more than seven minutes of performing time. Students will be stopped if they exceed their total time limit of 10 minutes.
- 3.13.2 No categories will be "mixed." That is, judges must hear all competing like instruments/vocal parts or ensembles before anyone from another category performs.
- 3.13.3 Solo scheduling will be done to accommodate accompanist conflicts according to the accompanist listed on each registration form. Accompanist changes or additions will be considered in scheduling only if received in writing no later than five weeks prior to the date of the contest. Solo accompanists who are listed for more than 18 accompaniments will not be guaranteed freedom from conflicts. If any accompanist is

listed for more than 18 students, the contest manager will not change schedule conflicts for them and it will be the accompanists' and soloists' responsibility to find an alternative solution.

3.13.4 Ensemble scheduling will be done so as to accommodate conflicts between groups from the same school.

3.13.5 Scheduling will be done randomly and not subject to request or change.

3.13.6 An entry that performs at a time slot other than as assigned or authorized by the contest manager will perform for comment only.

3.14 Scoring

3.14.1 Each judge will give written comments and a rating (I, II, III) to all participants. Each judge will rank all participants from first to last. These rankings will be added, and the student with the lowest score will be the winner; the next lowest score will be awarded second place; and the next lowest score third place. In case of tie, if two judges rank one student lower, then he/she will receive the higher placing. If a tie still exists, the judges must meet and break the tie by consensus.

3.14.2 If a majority of judges deems a participant to be the winner, that participant will be designated the winner no matter what the ranking of the minority of judges.

3.14.3 The adjudicators will select first, second and third place. The selections of the adjudicators shall be final and it shall be the responsibility of the event manager to ensure that the appropriate number of students is selected.

3.14.4. Scoring Breakdown: The judges will use the following system in their ratings:

- I Superior:** A performance at the highest level of artistry and technical proficiency that can be expected of a high school student.
- II Excellent:** An outstanding performance lacking only minimal artistic and technical characteristics. This would certainly be a “I” at the regional contest level.
- III Good:** A performance of merit, but needing refinement.

The final rating for each student will be a composite of the judges’ ratings. Plus and minus ratings will not be used to compile the final ratings. Each composite rating for three judges will be calculated as follows (fewer judges will be averaged, with a “tie” going to the higher rating):

I	II	III
I-I-I	I-II-II	I-III-III
I-I-II	I-II-III	II-III-III
I-I-III	II-II-II	III-III-III
	II-II-III	

Only students who receive a composite rating of “I” will be eligible for consideration for first, second, or third places.

- 3.15 **Announcement of winners:** The top three finalists from the morning categories will be posted as soon as they can be tabulated. Afternoon top-three finalists will not be posted. All first-, second-, and third-place winners will be announced at the award ceremony at the end of the day’s activities. The results posted on the website will list the top three placements and then alphabetically list all students receiving a composite “I” rating.

4 – Appendix A: Composition Category Guidelines

Appendix A applies only to rule 1.6.15 – Composition Category

4.1 General Composition Requirements

- 4.1.1 Compositions may be in one or more movements and in any style, but must be a minimum of 1 minute and maximum of 7 minutes and cannot include improvisation or be live-composed.
- 4.1.2 Instrumentation is limited to categories or voice/instruments that appear in the State Contest Rules document. (Example: vocal soloist, mixed ensemble, etc.)
- 4.1.3 The composition must be an original work; arrangements and orchestrations will not be accepted.
- 4.1.4 Music must be submitted via email (score with a computer generated or live audio mp3) a minimum of two weeks before the contest to the coordinator. (Other audio file formats will not be accepted.)
- 4.1.5 Judging will be based solely upon the merits of the composition, without consideration of the quality of the mp3.
- 4.1.6 A composition can contain between 1 and 16 parts/instruments plus accompaniment if desired (piano, guitar, harp, or electronics, 16 + 1). Divisi is allowed as long as it does not go beyond 16 players.
- 4.1.7 A live performance is permitted at the regional event (up to the discretion of the region) but NOT at the state event.
- 4.1.8 The composition category cannot count toward placement in any other category. (Example: If a brass quintet were to perform, that would not count toward Large Brass Ensemble placement.) If desired, that group can perform the piece in the qualifying category (i.e., two separate performances). If selected for a performance category, all State Contest Rules apply. (i.e., ensemble size, instrumentation).
- 4.1.9 If a composer uses (1) text that is copyrighted or (2) text that is in the public domain, composers are still bound to follow all WMEA Guidelines that appear in the State Contest Rules document.
- 4.1.10 If a composition is selected to represent that region at the state level in the composition category, the composer may alter, improve, or create a new composition for the state competition if desired. (Similar to an ensemble choosing a new piece to perform or a soloist refining their performance.)

4.2 Notated Score Requirements

- 4.2.1 The score must be computer generated using music-notation software and sent in PDF format that is printable on 8.5 x 11-inch letter-sized paper. Handwritten music will not be accepted.
- 4.2.2 Measures of the composition must be numbered, preferably at the beginning of each system.
- 4.2.3 All materials must be labeled with the name of the composition and composer.
- 4.2.4 The score must not include the teacher's name or any reference to school/institution or biography.
- 4.2.5 Musical narrative or a written description about the piece is allowed.
- 4.2.6 No change may be made to the manuscript once it has been submitted.