

# CHORAL FESTIVAL/ASSESSMENT POLICIES

## I. Eligibility for State Choral Festival/Assessment

All school choruses must perform in a Maryland District Festival/Assessment in order to apply to the Maryland State Choral Assessment. Choruses receiving a rating of I in the District Festival/Assessment on grades 2 through 6 are eligible for participation in the State Choral Festival/Assessment. Each adjudicated piece must be the same grade level performed at the District level.

Although District Chairpersons are responsible for organizing their District Choral Festivals/Assessments in a manner which best suits the needs of their individual district, it is to be understood that any chorus in any district wishing to attend the State Choral Festival/Assessment must have participated in a District Festival/Assessment that meets the following State Choral Guidelines:

### Music Requirements

- Choruses shall perform three (3) selections:  
A short warm-up selection, not to be adjudicated, followed by two selections from the current MCEA Choral Music List.
- Directors may choose to enter any one of the six MCEA graded levels of music at the District level which best suits the ensemble. These six graded levels of music are:  
1 – Easy    4 – Moderately Difficult  
2 – Moderately Easy                                      5 – Difficult  
3 – Average    6 – Very Difficult
- Only music grades 2 – 6 are eligible for the State Choral Festival/Assessment.
- It is recommended that directors choose both adjudicated selections from the same grade level. If selections are made from more than one grade level, the chorus must enter the Festival/Assessment at the lower grade level.
- No changes of music may be made after the application deadline. No “TBA” indications are allowed, even for the warm-up selection.

### Music for Adjudicators

All directors MUST furnish three (3) scores for each of the two adjudicated selections. Measures must be numbered. Failure to provide three (3) measure-numbered scores for each of the two adjudicated selections may result in a penalty of one grade lower.

The Maryland Choral Educators Association expects full compliance with U.S. copyright laws for all music and scores to be used in choral assessments.

### Sight Reading

Sight Reading is required of all choruses in both the district and state choral festivals/assessments.

- Middle and high school choruses will sight read music at the grade level of entry. If two adjudicated selections are two or more grade levels apart, the group will sight read one grade level lower than the higher level selection.  
Schools with two performing ensembles with shared personnel performing the same grade level adjudicated selections will not sight read at the same grade levels. One group will sight read at the assigned level, and the other will sight read at a higher level. The

level of sight reading for each group will be decided by the adjudicator in the sight reading room.

- Sight Reading Procedure is explained in the script used by all sight reading Adjudicators.

## **Sight Reading Script**

There are two sections to the sight reading procedure, a rhythmic section and a melodic section. The process for each 8-measure section is similar. You will have a study period, a practice performance and a performance that is judged. I will lead you through the rhythmic section. Your teacher will work with you on the melodic section.

### **Rhythmic Sight Reading**

On my signal, you will turn the example over. You have one minute to study the example silently and independently. I will then set the tempo on the metronome and lead you through the exercise, once for practice and a second time for a grade.

**Study Period** Your one minute of study begins now.

#### **(demonstrate beat counts)**

(quarter note = 66 for 3/4 and 4/4 time, and dotted quarter note = 54 for 6/8 time) (Explain that 6/8 is compound time, and that although only two beats are felt, the music is subdivided into six 8th note counts.)

I will be using a metronome to set and maintain the tempo throughout the exercise. When clapping, please use two fingers, (demonstrate) so everyone will be able to hear the metronome and stay with the beat. This is how I will count off for 4/4 time, 1, 2, 3, begin. (for 3/4 time, 1, 2, begin; for 6/8 time, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, begin.)

#### **First Performance**

(Count off with the metronome.)

**Second Performance** (Adjudicated) (Count off and begin the second performance.)

## **Melodic Reading Instructions**

During the melodic section, your director will be given five minutes to study the melodic example with you, with the following guidelines:

- The director may indicate key or time signatures or point out certain difficult passages and talk about them.
- The director may choose to have the choir practice the rhythms aloud, or speak through the example on solfege syllables.
- Curwen hand signs may be used by the students and director at any time.
- There is to be no vocalizing - singing or humming - by the director or choir, with one exception (below).

The director may choose to have students read silently through the example without vocalizing. To facilitate this internal reading, at your director's request, I will play the scale and tonic chord of the melodic sight reading example followed by the starting pitch for each section. The chorus may sing along with the scale, may sing an arpeggio with the tonic chord and hum their starting pitch(es). I will establish tonality and give starting pitches only once during the five-minute study period.

At the conclusion of the study period, I will play the scale, tonic chord and starting pitches, and you may sing along. Your director sets and maintains a tempo, and leads you through the exercise, once for practice and a second time for a grade. After the practice performance, you will be given **one additional minute for study**. I will establish tonality before the performance that counts.

### **Melodic Sight Reading**

#### **Study Period - Five Minutes**

You may begin your five minutes of study. (Establish tonality upon request, only once. Play the scale from “do to do,” ascending and descending (or up and down), the tonic chord and the starting pitch or pitches. Students are allowed to sing along with the scale, may sing the tonic arpeggio or whatever they are used to, and hum their starting pitch.)

#### **Establish Tonality**

**First Performance** (not adjudicated) During this first performance, the director may conduct, tap, snap, or clap a steady pulse but may not sing, speak, tap, snap, or clap exact rhythms for the choir.

**Study Period, one minute**

You have one minute to discuss the example. Remember, there is to be no vocalizing.

**Establish Tonality**

**Second Performance** (adjudicated)