

Plainview-Old Bethpage Central School District

100 Washington Avenue - Plainview, NY 11803

Joshua Golbert – Director of Music and Performing Arts

516-434-3283 ♦ FAX 516-937-6431

e-mail: jgolbert@pobschools.org

www.pobschools.org



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Dear Parents,

I would like to take this opportunity to tell you about the NEW YORK STATE SCHOOL MUSIC ASSOCIATION (NYSSMA) SOLO AND ENSEMBLE EVALUATION FESTIVAL. Please take a few moments to read the following description of this event, in the format of questions and responses to the most commonly asked questions.

Q. WHAT IS NYSSMA?

A. NYSSMA (New York State School Music Association) is the state professional organization for music educators. One of the major events that NYSSMA sponsors is the Solo and Ensemble Evaluation Festival each spring.

Q. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS FESTIVAL?

A. This festival provides the opportunity for student musicians to perform a musical selection before a professional adjudicator. The adjudicator will be a music teacher from outside the school district. Utilizing a rating system based on several musical categories (e.g. tone, intonation, technique, accuracy, interpretation, scales and sight-reading) each student receives a summative rating as well as verbal and written constructive criticism. This is an authentic assessment which has been utilized for many years and has become the model for other state assessments. Preparing a NYSSMA solo is an optional, extra task, above and beyond the regular band, chorus or orchestra work. This preparation requires a substantial commitment of time for additional and consistent home practice. The most successful students participating in NYSSMA study with a private teacher. We have always encouraged students to study privately in preparation for NYSSMA.

Q. WHAT MUSIC MAY BE USED FOR THIS PERFORMANCE?

A. The music to be performed for the festival must be selected from the latest NYSSMA Manual – *Edition XXX, effective July 2012*. **Please make sure your private teacher is using the most recent manual.** The music teachers will assist each student in choosing an appropriate selection for performance. Music for each instrument and voice is listed by difficulty levels 1 through 6, with 1 being the least difficult and 6 being the most difficult.

Each student participating must bring two original copies of the music to the festival – one for his/her use and one for use by the adjudicator. Piano accompanist scores are acceptable for use as the second copy if they include the solo part.

Photocopied music is not permitted at the festival and may result in your child being disqualified from NYSSMA. *Music that has been legally downloaded and paid for is acceptable for use at NYSSMA festivals, but you are strongly encouraged to bring your paid receipt with you to the festival.*

Q. WHAT BENEFITS ARE RECEIVED BY PARTICIPATING IN THIS FESTIVAL?

A. Participation at NYSSMA offers the student an objective assessment of his/her musical progress from a trained, professional adjudicator. NYSSMA Solo Festival grades are also used in the selection process for All County Music Ensembles. High school students (grades 10 and 11) can also audition for participation in an ALL-STATE ensemble, through the performance of a Level 6 selection at the All State Solo Festival. Participation in these festivals can also be listed on college applications.

Q. WHAT COSTS CAN BE ANTICIPATED?

A. The festival registration fees are:

For brass, percussion, strings, voice & woodwind:

Levels 1 – 4	\$ 14
Levels 5 – 6	\$ 21
ALL-STATE	\$ 26

For piano:

Levels 1 – 4	\$19
Levels 5 – 6	\$26

Students may need additional out of school assistance/coaching in preparing for the NYSSMA Festival. It is expected that students preparing for NYSSMA have a private teacher. A list of private teachers and high school tutors can be obtained from your school music teacher. If you decide to do this, you need to arrange for this coaching privately. Vocalists should perform with an accompaniment. There will be additional costs involved to utilize a piano accompanist. Again, you need to arrange for this privately. All students must also have an extra *original copy* of their music for the adjudicator to use.

While students are not required to receive private instruction in order to attend NYSSMA, the POB teachers can provide limited support in the group setting in which they teach, and are not able to provide one-on-one preparation. In addition, the school district cannot compensate teachers for individualized instruction or accompaniments provided outside of the school day.

Q. WHEN AND WHERE DOES THE FESTIVAL TAKE PLACE?

A. Each spring, between March and June, NYSSMA Festivals are taking place throughout the state. Students in the Plainview-Old Bethpage Schools can participate in the following festivals:

Levels 1-6 Classical Piano (no jazz piano)	March 14 & 15	Jericho HS	Register by 1/10
Classical Guitar	May 2 & 3	Lynbrook HS	Register by 1/27
Levels 1-6 (Instruments, Voice, Jazz, Jazz Piano – <i>please note that this date is different than our district calendar states</i>)	May 5 & 6	Bethpage HS	Register by 1/27
All-State (Instruments, Voice, Jazz)	May 9 & 10	Syosset HS	Register by 1/27

Times: Weekdays from approximately 4:00 pm to 9:00 pm, and weekends from approximately 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.

If your child is interested in participating in a NYSSMA Festival, please complete the attached registration form. Be sure to check the festival and fee on the registration form. Return the completed form and a non-refundable check (payable to **POBCSD**) for the festival fee to your child's music teacher.

If you have a preferred date, you may indicate it on the registration form, but please understand that **we cannot guarantee when your child will be scheduled to perform during the NYSSMA festival.** Please mark the festival dates on your calendar, and be aware of SAT test dates your child may commit to. If your child does not attend the NYSSMA festival for any reason, fees will NOT be refunded. If you have an important event that may produce a conflict, please indicate it on the registration form. We will do our best to accommodate the situation. Times cannot be changed at the last moment.

Finally, it is the policy of NYSSMA Zone 13 and the Plainview-Old Bethpage Music Department that each student shall only perform one solo per instrument/voice in a given year. If there are any problems at a festival adjudication, they need to be made known and addressed at that time to the Festival Chairperson. Once the festival is over the grades are final.

Please do not hesitate to contact your child's music teacher or me at the District Music Office (434-3283) with any questions you may have.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- You must meet the deadline for the return of the Registration Form and fees: January 10 for classical piano, and January 27 for Level 1-6 vocal/instrumental/jazz, All-State Jazz, and Instrumental/Vocal All State.
- All music must be chosen from the NYSSMA Manual – Edition XXX (effective 7/12). You will need two (2) original copies of the music. You can use a piano accompanist score as the second copy if it includes the solo part. You may also want to check with your private teacher to see if they have an extra copy of the music that you could borrow for the festival.
- **No photocopied music is permitted at NYSSMA.** Music that has been legally downloaded from the internet and paid for is acceptable for use at NYSSMA festivals, but you are strongly encouraged to bring your paid receipt with you to the festival.
- Pianos will only be available for accompaniment for vocal evaluations and ALL-STATE evaluations.
- *All checks must be made payable to POBCSD* – no cash please. Please send a separate check for each festival location that your child is attending.
- NYSSMA fees cannot be refunded if your child does not attend the festival.
- Grades will not be posted at the festival. They will be distributed a few days after the festival through the school music teacher.
- Students participating in NYSSMA must be in the first grade of school or higher.
- Return the registration form on the following page to your child's school Music Teacher.

Return this REGISTRATION FORM to your child's school music teacher. If your child is registering for more than one instrument, please submit a separate form and check for each solo. Checks should be made out to "POBCSD."

NYSSMA SOLO / ENSEMBLE REGISTRATION FORM (Please print clearly)

Name _____ School _____ Grade in School _____
First Last

Home Address _____ Phone No _____
Street Town

School Music Teacher's Name _____

Instrument or Voice Part _____ Circle One: *Solo Ensemble*

Name of Solo _____ NYSSMA Level _____ NYSSMA Manual Pg # _____

Composer/Arranger _____ Name of Accompanist (ALL-STATE): _____

Important – please check if this is a **jazz** solo (ask the teacher if you are not sure): _____

Please check the correct festival. PLEASE USE A SEPARATE FORM AND CHECK FOR EACH FESTIVAL YOU ARE REGISTERING FOR.

___ **Levels 1-6 Classical Piano** (no jazz piano) March 14 & 15 Jericho HS Register by 1/10

___ **Classical Guitar** May 2 & 3 Lynbrook HS Register by 1/27

___ **Levels 1-6** May 5 & 6 Bethpage HS Register by 1/27
(Instruments, Voice, Jazz, Jazz Piano – please note that this date is different than our district calendar states)

___ **All-State** (Instruments, Voice, Jazz) May 9 & 10 Syosset HS Register by 1/27

FEES: (DO NOT STAPLE CHECKS TO THIS FORM – MAKE CHECKS OUT TO "POBCSD")

Instruments, Voice, _____ Levels 1 – 4 \$ 14 _____ Levels 5 – 6 \$ 21 _____ ALL-STATE \$ 26
Guitar, Jazz, Jazz Piano (10 minutes) (15 minutes) (15 minutes)

Classical Piano _____ Levels 1 – 4 \$ 19 _____ Levels 5 – 6 \$ 26

Indicate if you have a preferred audition date/time. Preferences cannot always be accommodated.

Preferred date/time: _____

Please note, if you have more than one child performing in the festival, and would like them to be scheduled around the same time, you should request the same preferred date/time for all of your children. Similarly, if you are performing more than one solo, and would like both solos to be scheduled close together, please select the same preferred date/time above for each solo.