



Utah Music Educators Association

Dear Directors,

With so many outstanding orchestras wanting to participate in the UMEA State Junior High/Middle School Orchestra festival, the UMEA Board has now approved to make the festival a two day event. This change allows more schools an opportunity to perform and receive outstanding clinics from nationally renowned directors outside the state of Utah.

The festival will be hosted by the University of Utah on March 14-15, 2017. Orchestras that are selected to participate will have the opportunity to perform in Libby Gardner Hall. The festival has proven to be a rewarding experience for all orchestras that have participated in the past and directors and students are able to gain new knowledge and insights to help sustain and lift their programs to an even higher level of excellence. With so many quality programs wanting to participate and benefit from the festival experience, we decided to look to our friends in Texas and other states to learn from them and make the festival of greater benefit to our students and string programs in Utah. With this format, a maximum of 25 orchestras will be able to perform over the two day festival. All selected orchestras will perform a 20 minute or less program of grade level II literature or above and then be able to participate in a clinic with one of the out of state guest clinicians. All participating orchestras will receive a participation plaque recognizing their significant achievement for the qualification and participation in the state festival performance.

The selected orchestras will be based upon the current blind audition format, and will require a slow piece, and one other contrasting piece of the director's choosing, or one piece with contrasting sections. Orchestras should choose their musical selections to show their technical abilities.

The festival schedule will be based on the total number of orchestras who are chosen to participate. Please put both dates (March 14-15) on your calendar and schedule your buses. When the audition process is complete, you will be notified as to which day your orchestra will perform.

The second day of the festival will include the top 6-8 orchestras from the auditions. At the conclusion of their performance, they will have a clinic and then an added component to the festival of sight reading. Those orchestras that receive superior ratings from both festival judges, as well as a superior rating from the sight reading judge, will be sanctioned as sweepstakes recipients. All orchestras performing on the second day can receive this distinction of excellence and this format provides for greater goals to be set and achieved by any group that applies.

Orchestras who don't reply within the specified time may forfeit their placement to another ensemble. Schools are welcome to have more than one orchestra group apply (due to the size of some schools and programs), but will only be allowed to have one performing group per day.

I look forward to your participation in the festival. If you have questions, please contact me at deanne.helquist@nebo.edu. I will make every effort to assist you.

Sincerely,

Deanne Helquist
Orchestra Director
Mapleton Jr. High School
Maple Mountain High School
UMEA State Junior High Orchestra Festival Chair