

MUSIC FESTIVALS



Music directors often develop "tunnel vision" during March, April & May due to MUSIC FESTIVALS. As Spring music activities approach, music educators need to reflect upon the importance of music festivals and discuss the philosophy, benefits, risks, and responsibilities with their administration, parents and students. Many of the following ideas were expressed at a Texas UIL sponsored symposium on the risks and benefits of music festivals. Determining **real goals** for music festivals can help to achieve **real musical growth**.

PHILOSOPHY ABOUT VALUES OF MUSIC FESTIVALS

1. Are festivals our primary reason for performing or simply one of the many ways to test musical skills to develop musicianship?
2. Are we teaching young people to perform or using performance to teach musical insights and appreciation that will accompany our students throughout their lifetime?
3. Is our goal for festival performance perfection of the objective elements of music that "rate well" in festivals or the motivation of students to achieve real musical growth?
4. Do we participate in festivals only when we feel we can "rate well" or do we participate for the growth and evaluation we and the group can receive?
5. Is the festival with the MUSIC, OURSELVES OR OTHER GROUPS?

BENEFITS OF MUSIC FESTIVALS

1. Develops positive concepts about life and self; human values, self worth, desire to challenge oneself, self discipline.
2. Motivates toward achievement of musical excellence.
3. Provides performance standards and a process for evaluation against those standards.
4. Helps create a background for the lifelong appreciation of music.
5. Allows for opportunities to cope with success and failure.
6. Motivates for achievement in academics.
7. Brings forth interplay between young people and adults.
8. Produces the teamwork and allegiance necessary to work in a group toward a worthy goal.

RISKS OF MUSIC FESTIVALS

1. First Division ratings at festivals may receive more emphasis than learning about music. In other words, the end may become more important than the process.
2. Pressured for First Division ratings, directors may resort to negative motivation and rote teaching; these methods will not foster the self-control and musical understanding that can come from better teaching methods.

3. Directors, students, schools and communities may develop resentment toward others who receive First Division ratings.
4. Peers may look for negative qualities in their counterparts.
5. Students may develop "tunnel vision" for the music program if they lose sight of the need to also learn in other areas.
6. Directors and students may lose a sense of self-worth if they do not learn how to ACCEPT ADJUDICATION.
7. A community's evaluation of the music education program may be solely based on festival results, although there are other more important factors that must be recognized.
8. Too often, the greater the success the higher the expectations, so that peers and adults may fail to recognize students for the strides that they have made unless their ratings are equal to or better than previous years.

HOW TO INCREASE THE BENEFITS AND REDUCE THE RISKS OF MUSIC FESTIVALS

1. In word and action, emphasize the importance of the music not the importance of the festival.
2. Establish goals that stress progress toward musical goals rather than First Division ratings, medals and plaques.
3. Constantly take steps to enlighten students and patrons regarding the fact that success is an outgrowth of learning and not an end in itself.
4. Prepare students, administrators, and patrons for the SUBJECTIVE ADJUDICATION of music festivals.
5. Allow time after all festivals to reflect upon the achievement of musical goals rather than the results of the festivals.

DIRECTOR'S RESPONSIBILITY

1. Know and uphold all rules for music activities as stated in the *KSHSAA Handbook* and *Music Manual*.
2. Instill by word and example the respect for all invitational and KSHSAA festival regulations and the graceful acceptance of adjudication.
3. Foster a spirit of artistic involvement and aesthetic achievement for students participating in invitational and KSHSAA festivals.
4. Recognize the importance of the total educational process and remain sensitive to each student's needs in terms of his/her academic pursuits, family life, and extra-curricular activities.
5. Maintain a reasonable and proper balance of pre-school and out-of-school rehearsal schedules.
6. Maintain a proper balance between all areas of instruction: marching band, concert band, concert choir, show choir, jazz ensemble, orchestra, sight-reading, small ensembles, solos, etc.