

FAQs

The Wisconsin School Music Association (WSMA) is a statewide organization that organizes many events for student musicians. State honors ensembles, marching band competitions, a composition competition, and District and State Solo & Ensemble are among the most visible of these. We at MHS choose to take part in S&E each year because the skills learned through the process of this study are incredible for a student's personal growth, both musically and in general. If you have any questions about anything below, please send me an email at skurr@mcpasd.k12.wi.us.

Q: What exactly is Solo & Ensemble?

A: Members of the MHS band, choir, orchestra, and students who play piano come to MHS throughout the day to perform prepared solos and ensembles for adjudicators in rooms around the school. Also joining us for the day will be students from Glacier Creek and Kromrey and a few students from other districts around the area.

Q: When/where is S&E?

A: S&E takes place on Saturday 2/19 at MHS, 8 am-4 pm.

Q: Is S&E a required orchestra class event?

A: Each MHS Orchestra student is required to prepare a solo (with accompaniment) and an ensemble (trio, quartet, quintet) on their orchestra instrument. Further, the expectation is to perform these pieces. The easiest and best way to complete the performance aspect is through our S&E event. So the event itself is not required, but a performance is. If a student chooses not to participate (or cannot because of scheduling conflicts), a different performance venue will need to be found. on the Concerto Showcase Concert on March 17. The competition is open to the public: feel free to stop by for any or all of the evening and even bring a book to read while you listen. Students attending for some part can receive grade credit for the Community Connections or Docendo Discimus assignments. It is an incredible night that highlights the hard work and dedication of our MHS band, orchestra, choir, and piano musicians.

Q: Is there a cost to participate in S&E?

A: Yes, but also possibly no. WSMA charges the school for each event, and we in turn charge students for all events through MyPaymentsPlus. Students who are part of the Free/Reduced Lunch can simply go through the process on MPP and nothing will be charged to your family. Students whose families are not in the FRL program but who would like assistance can ask for

that in the registration form. Please do not let money be a barrier to participation—I would rather have the school cover your costs!

Q: What if a student wants to take part in S&E but is not available at all on 2/19?

A: There are some other WSMA festival sites around the area that happen on different weekends. Mr. Kurr can help you find a good day and location.

Q: How are events scored/judged?

A: The adjudicators for WSMA events are mostly other teachers who are giving up their Saturdays for not-too-much money in order to help out music programs like ours. They are not The Enemy, standing between us and a good rating. Their job is to provide good feedback and perhaps a rating based on their professional skills.

Students can go one of 2 ways with scores:

- **Rated:** A-rated event receives a score from 1-5, 1 is best. Any Class A event can also receive a score of 1*, meaning they further qualify for the State S&E event (at UW-Platteville in late April). Students can also choose to purchase a medal based on their rating. [SO and Sinfonia events all default to this option]
- **Comments Only:** A student can choose to receive verbal and written feedback only and skip the rating. [Cardinal Orchestra events default to this option] Any student/ensemble can choose either option. In fact, students can change their minds as late as the week of the event (super easy to change—1 click of the mouse). There is no difference in the course requirements or grading between rated or comments only, and there is no grade attached to any score. This event is about the learning we do as we prepare and the feedback we receive and not about a rating.

Q: How does the accompanist thing work?

A: Working with an accompanist is one of the skills we teach in our study of S&E literature. In most solos, students perform with an accompanist. Also in most cases, the school will contact, arrange, schedule, and pay for accompanists. If you are feeling generous, you could offer (in the registration form) to cover the accompanist cost. For some students in private instruction studios, the private teacher will arrange a specific accompanist—that is your cost.

Q: Are audiences allowed performances?

A: Yes! All performances are open to the public. Having said that, there might be some limitations. If there are COVID mitigations or if the room is too small we could limit audience size. A student who is looking to have nobody in the audience can request politely for people not to watch (and it would be a pleasant thing for people to respect those wishes), but WSMA rules prohibit a performance from being closed.

Q: How do special time requests work?

A: If a student has a firm and unmovable conflict for a portion of the day, we can schedule around that if we know ahead of time. Students can indicate on their registration form if they need special time consideration.

This is only used for special cases and is not used for scheduling preferences. So “My swim meet happens in Sun Prairie until noon” is legit, “I like to sleep late on Saturday” is not. WYSO is not legit in this case because WYSO excuses absences for school programs (I will also do my best to avoid a WYSO conflict, but that does not fall into a special time request). All special time requests made in the registration form need to be accompanied by a description of the reason for the request. Any request without an accompanying reason will be disregarded—really, they will be.

Q: Where can we find the event schedules?

A: We will be posting all S&E information, including event schedules, on the Orchestra Booster webpage: <https://www.mcporchestra.org/> Schedule drafts will probably start to come out at school the first week of February, but for students’ eyes only. The first official draft will likely come out early the week of 2/7.

Q: Do all students receive medals for performing?

A: Medals are an option for any student in any event. If you want a medal, you need to indicate that on the registration (and not wait until after the results are in!) and it will add \$4 to your fee charged in MPP (yes, students on FRL can add them). Medals will be passed out in May at the Music Department Awards Reception. If you are choosing Comments Only for an event, do not choose a medal.

Q: How does a student register for S&E?

A: By following one of the links below. Every single event for every single person needs a separate entry through the link: Each member of a string quartet completes an entry, each student fills out a separate entry for their solo and their ensemble, etc. Orchestra events are one link and piano entries are separate, please. If a student is also doing a band or choir event, they should register for that event through that teacher.

STRING EVENTS = <https://forms.gle/ee3Eu8i346SdevrTA>

PIANO EVENTS = <https://forms.gle/feCRnj5rwwpcZScYA>

Q: What should a student do who is not able to participate at all in any S&E event?

A: If a student cannot take part because of scheduling conflicts, COVID concerns, or other reasons, I need to know ASAP, as do the student’s ensemble members. Any changes to availability are important for me to know about, so please keep me informed. In fact, if a student or family is having second thoughts, please let me be part of your decision-making process.

Q: How do the event number codes work?

A: All WMSA events have a code that identifies them. For example, the Eccles Sonata for Violin is listed as 2111aS04.

2111 = 2 means string event, 1 means solo, 11 means violin
A = class difficulty (A is the most advanced, C is the easiest)
S04 = each different solo/ensemble has a number

Q: What is the deadline for registration?

A: TUESDAY, JANUARY 11. Yes, that is coming up quite quickly. I have included a little leeway in there so I have time to track students down if they have not filled out any registry entries. I do need time to enter events into the state portal, so timely completion is appreciated.

Q: Can changes be made to registration after completion?

A: Yes. I am the Festival Manager and work with all the entries from all schools involved. It is easy to make changes, like titles and time requests and Comments Only/Rated and cancellations and late adds and so forth.

Not that I want to make lots of changes, but it is possible. Switching to other festival dates is not something I have as much control over, so consider that carefully.

Q: What about COVID?

A: Ah, yes. At the moment, nothing in the district's current guidance would automatically cancel S&E on 2/19 because our event fits within all of these guidelines. WSMA also has some procedures in place for contingency plans. We will be taking all the expected precautions and more: placing our performance sites farther apart, encouraging social distancing, limiting audience sizes in rooms, mask requirements, etc. If conditions warrant, we will consider making further changes or even a cancellation.

Q: When will fees be posted on MPP?

A: Although registration is due 1/11, I will not post fees until late in January or even early February. Pushing this back means that a COVID cancellation can be more nimbly be met before fees are charged and paid. There will be an email sent out when the fees will be posted to MPP.

Q: Will you need help with the event?

A: YES, YES, YES! We will be approaching students and family members to assist in several capacities, from set-up or tear-down to monitoring performance site doors to bringing food for the judges to entering scores into the computer software. Please keep a lookout for a request for volunteers coming in early February.