

2026 Middle School District Festival Information
Saturday, May 9 – Southwest, Southeast (with Strings), North Festivals & South Central

General Information

1. Participating schools must have paid the NHMEA School District Participation Fee.
2. Any 6th, 7th, or 8th grade student presently participating in the local middle school music program, if one exists, may be recommended by his or her director. 6th graders may only participate if they are part of a school containing Grades 7 and 8, and are performing at the level of the 7th and 8th graders. 6th graders attending an elementary school only going up to Grade 6 are not eligible for this festival. The nomination guidelines are outlined on the following page.
3. Each eligible school submitting online applications by the deadline will receive representation of at least two students in each performing group, unless only two are nominated and they play the same instrument. In this case, schools are not guaranteed to have both students selected.
4. Instrumental students should not be moved to a secondary instrument (bass clarinet, horn, viola, etc.) on which they are inexperienced, with the thought that they will have a better chance of “making it.”
5. Students will be chosen for the festival on the basis of directors’ recommendations. Please make sure that the students recommended meet the guidelines. Since acceptance and seating will be determined by the applications, please be as specific, but as concise as possible when completing the online registration, as long as the required information is still included. The success of the festival and your students’ experience will depend to a great extent on the care taken in considering students.
6. Notification of students selected will be emailed to directors by mid-February, and music will be sent upon receipt of registration forms and registration fees. If selected, students should commit to practice music and attend rehearsals conducted by the school director. It is the director’s responsibility to make sure that students are adequately prepared.
7. School directors have the authority to refuse to send any of their selected students who they feel are not prepared or for disciplinary reasons. The District Coordinator of the school’s district should be notified immediately when this occurs. A reasonable effort will be made to replace that student if time permits.
8. The student registration fee for the festival is \$25.00 per student. This will cover conductors’ fees and other expenses of the festival, as well as a meal for students. Fees will be due in February when directors receive notification of students selected. Note: if the school pays for your students, you may wish to estimate the total and encumber that money now so that receipt of your music will not be held up in March. A purchase order cannot be accepted at that time in lieu of payment.
- 9. Students selected will be committed for the entire day of the festival - rehearsals and concert - and will not be allowed to leave for part of the day for other activities outside of the festival. If a student can not commit to the entire day, it is the director’s responsibility to notify the coordinator to find a replacement. Specific schedules will be sent with music.**
10. Please be sure that your students and parents understand your transportation arrangements, the obligation to learn music, and festival attendance requirements before you complete nomination forms. It is strongly suggested that directors secure written permission from a parent or guardian before nominating students. **Please also note that NHMEA policy requires that at least one director from your school be in attendance throughout the whole festival day.**

In completing Middle School Festival nomination forms, please observe the following:

1. List all students in order of ability, regardless of instrument/voice or grade level.
2. Please include information that will be helpful in selection. (Examples: Put player on low part due to braces; student is strong on bass drum, timpani, and bells, but does not play snare.)
3. Nominations will be completed online, and the link is on the NHMEA website. Please make sure to fill out all required fields.
4. Please submit one nomination form with all nominations from your school
5. All nominations must be submitted by **FRIDAY, January 9, 2026**. Early applications are welcome.

Middle School District Festival Band Nomination Guidelines

Students nominated by directors should be able to:

- Play 2 octaves within the functional range of their instrument in keys prominently found in band music (Bb, Eb, F, C, Ab, G).
- Independently read and count in simple and compound meters.

Middle School District Festival Chorus Nomination Guidelines

Students nominated by directors should be able to sing within the range indicated by their director on the nomination form. This named range will determine voice part.

- Identify and sing the pitches on the staff notated for their voice part.
- Have a basic grasp of rhythmic notation for Level 2-3 music.
- Be capable of memorizing music.

Middle School District Festival String Orchestra Guidelines

Students nominated by directors should be able to:

- Play major scales up to 3 sharps and 2 flats, one octave or more.
- Play whole, half, dotted half, quarter, dotted quarter, eighth, dotted eighth, and sixteenth notes and rests.
- 1st violins must be able to play up to 3rd position
- 2nd violins must be able to play 1st position
- Violas must be able to play 1st position
- Cellos must be able to play up to 4th position
- Basses must be able to play up to 4th position

Parents who have questions should communicate with their child's music teacher.

School directors only may contact the Middle School Festival Chairperson if you have questions or would like to be more involved:

Elisa Saunders

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