

# METG Middle School Division

## Judging Guidelines

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The following are instructions given to the judges during the training session to help them judge at festival. Judges will be looking for these qualities in your show.

**Please remember that the Massachusetts Middle School Drama festival is primarily an educational enterprise. Always keep in mind that these are Middle School students and that for many of them, this may be their first theatrical experience.**

Our participants will be expecting your commentary to provide them with useful feedback. It is the expectation of the METG that you will provide festival participants with an objective critique that will help each company reflect on the effect of its artistic choices.

**At the Middle School level we are not asking you to compare performances, but we do recognize that the productions will vary in size, style, complexity, form and content. Additionally, Middle School Theatre programs vary widely in structure, staffing, technical capability and budget allocation.**

It is, therefore, the intent of the METG that the successful EXECUTION of the WHOLE production is your primary consideration as you formulate your evaluations of all productions.

### Directives to Judges

**Student executed work including, but not limited, design, construction, writing, acting and directing should be considered as a component of the overall production and will be considered as part of the Judge's evaluation. Middle School Directors, actors and crew members ALL need feedback that assists them in being objective about their work. Each festival entry should be judged on how it was able to create a complete and compelling production. Judges are instructed to cite specific evidence using the criteria below – provided by the rubric - to support their evaluation.**

- **Projection and Articulation:** *Actors can be heard and understood throughout the entire production.*
- **Physicality:** *Actors utilize movements, facial expressions and gestures to support and enhance the production.*
- **Characterization:** *Actors display vocal and physical commitment to their characters. They have made choices to support their characters.*
- **Purpose and Objective:** *Actors identify and perform goals, obstacles and tactics for their characters. They play actions to support and enhance the performance.*
- **Pacing and Energy:** *Ensemble displays pacing and energy throughout the performance which is intentional and enhances the performance.*
- **Understanding of Text:** *The text (and context) is understood by all involved in the production. Subtext and meaning are communicated to the audience and are used to enhance the production.*

- **Composition and Blocking:** *Use of movement and stage pictures clarifies actions, reveals relationships between characters and displays characters' connections to their environment.*
- **Communication and Focus:** *Actors and technicians listen and respond to each other and display focus and safe practices through the performance.*
- **Technical Elements:** *Scenery, lights, costumes and props enhance the performance and support the actions.*
- **Stylistic Interpretation:** *The moods and rhythms of the piece are established and the overall concept of the style supports the interpretation of the script.*

**REMEMBER: YOU ARE ASKED TO EVALUATE THE EXECUTION OF THE PIECE.**

When preparing your written evaluation, please speak to all the points mentioned above.

It is important that your comments are clear. Directors, actors and technical crews need to understand from your comments how you perceive the execution of the piece. Frame your critique so that it constructively suggests alternative choices that, in your opinion, would have told a more compelling and engaging story. Use specific examples to support opinions and illustrate your points.

What suggestions would you make to the director/cast/crew for them to work on in their next rehearsal?

**Again, please keep in mind that these participants are Middle School students and that, for many of them, this festival day is their first theatrical performance experience.**