



High School Division State Drama Festival Festival Rules: 2022-2023

For the 2023 High School Festival, the METG reserves the right to make changes to any rules listed below due to the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic. If you have questions regarding any of the information below, please contact metg@metg.org.

CHOICE OF MATERIAL

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Time Limit – Schools must present one-act plays or approved cuttings that do not exceed forty-minutes in length including time for audience reactions and scene changes. Any play exceeding the time limit will be disqualified from advancing; however, cast and crew members will still be eligible for all-star company awards.

Royalties – Each school is responsible for obtaining written permission from the publisher and for paying appropriate royalties for each performance of its entry. Allow enough time to obtain permission, as this can be a lengthy process.

Permission to cut longer works must be obtained in writing. Plays not in public domain require permission from the publisher to perform cuttings. Contact the publisher of the play to inquire how to request permission to perform cuttings. MANY PLAYWRIGHTS WILL NOT PERMIT CUTS TO THEIR WORK. Most publishers will require a very specific description of the cutting to be performed before giving permission. Requests for permission to perform cuttings may take up to two weeks or more for processing. Any omission, addition or rearrangement of scenes, characters, scripted actions, and language is considered a cutting and permission must be requested.

If a school fails to meet these requirements, it will not be allowed to advance to the next level of festival.

Proof of permission to perform and of royalty payment must be submitted to the HS President by February 17, 2023. If this is not received, you may not be allowed to perform at Prelims.

PLAY RESTRICTIONS

A school may not enter a play in Festival that it entered in the previous three years.

A school may not enter a play title that was performed in the previous year's State Finals. For the 2023 High School Drama Festival, the following titles may not be entered:

There are no title restrictions for 2023 as there was no 2022 State Finals.

STRONG SUBJECT MATERIAL OR LANGUAGE

If a production contains subject material, stage business or language that might not be appropriate for a general audience, the participating director must add a disclaimer to his/her program page.

A play selected for entry must be approved by the participating school's principal as indicated by his/her signature on the Entry Form.

USE OF MUSIC AND DANCE

A musical or cutting from a musical is not permitted unless the publisher grants specific written permission for the play to be performed without the sung material. Scene-change music, incidental music, background music, and songs which occur in the text of a non-musical play are permitted. Dance is permitted if it occurs in the text of a non-musical play. Interpretive movement, with or without music, is also permitted if it occurs in the text of a non-musical play. In any case, all music and/or dance must have prior approval from the Guild President. A use of music request form is sent to all directors and must be completed by February 17, 2023.

BEHAVIOR

If a participating student is found in possession or under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the festival supervisor will have the option to disqualify that participating school from the festival.

STUDENT-DIRECTED PLAYS

Plays may be student directed. In this case, a faculty member, or a designated adult, approved by the school and able to answer questions, must supervise and attend the January organizational meeting and at each additional round of Festival.

COMPETITIVE VS NON-COMPETITIVE ENTRY

Any school entering a competitive production is expected to continue to the Semifinals, the Finals and New England's if selected.

Schools may enter the festival as a non-competitive entry but will be a part of the Massachusetts Theater Celebration and will not perform at the competitive Festival.

CASTING

All actors in a production must be undergraduates in grades 7- 12 in the same school district (except in the case of single-sex schools).

No student may appear in two separate productions.

Fifth-year students are eligible to participate if they are enrolled full time in the school district. Home schooled students may participate with any member school. All-boy or all-girl schools may draw upon students of the opposite gender from another school or district for casting and tech purposes provided there is approval from the administration of the other school. Final approval must be given by the METG president.

Should an all-boy and all-girl school draw upon each other, each school may enter its own production or enter jointly.

Cast substitutions in cast members from one festival level to another will be granted by the President only in cases of Council-approved emergencies.

The maximum size of cast and crew, including all adult personnel and chaperones traveling with the production, cannot exceed 60. The ratio of students to adults may not exceed 10 to 1.

RIGHTS AND ROYALTIES

COPYRIGHTS

A work that is created on or after January 1, 1978, is automatically protected from the moment of its creation and is given a term enduring for the author's life, plus an additional 50 years after the author's death.

For works made for hire, and for anonymous and pseudonymous works, the duration of copyright will be 75 years from publication or 100 years from creation, whichever is shorter. Works copyrighted before January 1, 1978, endure for a first term of 28 years and are eligible for renewal. The new copyright law has extended the renewal term from 28 to 47 years.

ROYALTY PAYMENT

A performance royalty fee is due any time a play is performed in whole or in part for an audience, whether the audience pays admission, and no matter how small the audience might be.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Plays in the public domain may be performed without payment of royalty. These are usually plays that are over 100 years old, unless the author's family has renewed the copyright, or the written version of the play is copyrighted by the adaptor.

TECHNICAL REHEARSAL

Participating schools are permitted a technical rehearsal at the host site before all rounds of festival. Scheduling of that rehearsal is done in cooperation with the host site personnel. The amount of time allowed for the tech rehearsal depends on the festival level:

Preliminary Round: 90 minutes for NEW schools or NEW directors to festival 75 minutes to returning schools

Semi-final Round: 60 minutes

Final Round: 50 minutes

Timing of your tech rehearsal at Prelims and Semis begins once your set has been off-loaded onto the stage. Timing of your tech rehearsal at Finals is from truck to truck or truck to storage depending upon the decision of the Festival Stage Manager. The time allowed for each tech rehearsal is strict. No directors should ask for more time than is allotted. Plan accordingly and be as efficient as you can.

SCENERY

Any school may use necessary properties, scenery, special effects, and costumes to enhance its production. The following restrictions apply:

SIZE

Such materials must be able to fit on the Host School's stage. The Host School must have the space to store such materials.

The set must be designed to maneuver through standard single doorways.

SAFETY

The safety of students is paramount to the Guild. If elements of the set, uses of the set or props, blocking or any other element of a production seem to pose a physical hazard to the students, then the Guild reserves the right at each round of Festival to require modifications be made before the performance or before the next round of Festival.

The on-site supervisor has the right to make the final decision regarding appropriate safety measures, reserving the right to make a ruling on behalf of the Guild, and in cases of extreme safety issues, to halt or disqualify a show, following established Guild procedures. If in doubt, directors should bring potential safety issues to the attention of the Guild BEFORE a Festival, or to the attention of the day's supervisor at the morning directors' meeting.

TIME LIMIT

Each school is allowed a timed five-minute set-up and a five-minute strike of its set to and from the wings. Each of these moves must be executed with every emphasis on the safety of the students involved.

Scenery may be moved from storage to the wings and from the wings back to storage without being timed. Schools must ensure that the movement of sets to and from storage does not delay the festival day schedule.

There is to be no pre-assembly of any part of a set in the wings prior to the five-minute timing.

Safety of set assembly/breakdown is paramount. If the Festival Stage Manager sees an unsafe setup situation, he may stop the timing clock, allow for the safety issue to be resolved and then restart the clock to finish the setup. Schools will have up to 30 minutes to correct a safety issue. If after 30 minutes the safety issue cannot be resolved, the safety element in question will need to be cut from the show and the setup crew will continue with the timed assembly.

USE OF FIRE, SMOKE MACHINE, ETC.

Since all schools must adhere to their Host School's fire codes and regulations, the participating school must obtain approval from the Host School for the use of incendiary devices and/or smoke effects. Under no circumstances will an open flame be allowed on stage.

SET STORAGE

Set storage before or after the actual festival date is at the discretion of the Host School.

FLYING SCENERY

Scenery that is flown must be attached/removed during the five-minute setup/strike periods, unless the Host School has enough grid space to fly and conceal such scenery so as not to impede another school's production.

The Host School has the right to determine set-up procedures for flying scenery in accordance with its safety regulations. This might involve the host school flying a part of your set to accommodate their safety regulations. In this case the host schools flying of the set will not be included in the timing of the entry's setup.

ADULT SUPERVISION DURING SET-UP AND PRODUCTION

Only students may be actively involved in the assembly of set materials on stage.

The director may not touch the scenery during the set-up and strike, but he/she may be onstage in an advisory capacity.

At no time may directors or any other adult technical personnel take part in the actual running of productions.

No adults may be backstage during a production, except for the Host School's technical staff.

CURTAINS AND SET-UP

The opening, closing, trimming or adjustment of curtains and teasers will not be timed or considered in any way to be part of the five-minute set-up period.

LIGHTING

Host Schools will provide an adequate general lighting plot that can accommodate the needs of participating schools.

SUPPLEMENTARY LIGHTING

Schools may bring supplementary lighting equipment only if:

The host school must be able to accommodate and pre-hang such additional material. Anything not pre-hung becomes part of the five-minute set-up).

Such materials must be made available to all other productions at the site and made known to all participating directors at that site before their technical rehearsal.

Cabling and taping down of supplementary lighting is not part of the five-minute set-up.

REFOCUSING OF LIGHTS

A reasonable amount of time needed to check or refocus special lights between productions will be permitted provided it does not interfere with the day's schedule.

Refocusing of lights will be restricted to specials only. General area lights may not be refocused. The time needed to refocus lights will not be included in the five-minute set-up period.

OPERATION OF LIGHTING CONTROL SYSTEM

Lights for a performance must be run by a student from the performing school unless otherwise restricted by the Host School.

If a participating school has no students to run lights, it may request such assistance from the Host School.

SOUND /OPERATION OF SOUND EQUIPMENT

The Host School will provide adequate sound equipment.

Sound for a performance must be run by a student from the performing school unless otherwise

restricted by the Host School.

If a participating school has no student to run sound, it may request such assistance from the Host School.

SUPPLEMENTARY SOUND EQUIPMENT

A participating school may bring supplementary sound equipment, with the following stipulations:

The Host School must be able to accommodate and preset such equipment. Anything not pre-set becomes part of the five-minute set-up period.

Such equipment must be made available to all participating schools at the site and made known to all participating directors at that site before their technical rehearsal.

FINAL NOTE TO DIRECTORS

Above all, inspire in your students a friendly and welcoming attitude about the entire experience. Take the opportunity to set a positive tone, which will carry right through the festival. Encourage your students to be good sports, to applaud all winners, to speak positively about their competitors, and to make new friends.

HAVE A GREAT FESTIVAL!