

“Premiere Année en Louisiane”
A Handbook for Choral Directors
2010

www.lmeamusic.org



Offered by the Louisiana Music Educators Association to
'first-time' choral directors and to
vocal music educators newly entering the state.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the world of choral music in Louisiana. The information contained in this handbook was compiled to help guide you through your first year as a choral director in our state. As you “sift” through the next few pages, remember that practices throughout the state will vary. Topics and resources are included in this handbook as a general overview of various aspects of the profession encountered by ‘first year’ choral directors. Remember, this is simply a guide – your administrative staff, music supervisor, LMEA District Director, as well as other choral directors in your parish can help to answer further questions you may have.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

There are numerous music organizations with which you may become involved. You are encouraged to support your professional associations. These organizations sponsor many worthwhile vocal music activities, publications, and music lists.

NATIONAL

NAFME – National Association for Music Education: www.NAfME.org

Music Educators Journal

Teaching Music

ACDA – American Choral Directors Association: www.acda.org

Choral Journal

Guide For Beginning Choir Director

An Annotated Inventory of Distinctive Choral Literature For
Performance at the High School Level

OAKE – Organization of American Kodaly Educators: www.oake.org

Kodaly Envoy

AOSA – American Orff Schulwerk Association: www.aosa.org

STATE

LMEA – Louisiana Music Educators Association: www.lmeamusic.org

(State affiliate of NAFME)

The Louisiana Musician

(District websites may be accessed on the LMEA website)

LAACDA – Louisiana American Choral Directors Association: www.laacda.org

LAKE – Louisiana Association of Kodaly Educators

Red Stick Chapter of AOSA: www.redstick.com; Email: redstickorff@gmail.com

OTHER

UIL – University Interscholastic League (Texas List) www.uil.utexas.edu/music
(Other lists may include only portions of the UIL)

Choristers Guild – The Chorister www.choristersguild.org

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES / RELATED FORMS

As a new director, you need to learn to submit activity dates to your principal as quickly as possible. Many schools use a ‘first-come-first-served’ approach to secure calendar dates. Consideration is often based on the school facilities needed for these activities. The use of off-campus facilities may alleviate some conflicts. However, most schools require administrative approval for use of off-campus facilities. And, proof of liability insurance may be required by these facilities.

Be certain to make proper substitute arrangements well in advance. You will also have to complete a variety of forms for scheduling and participating in choral activities. Some of these forms, along with a brief description of each, are listed below:

ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS

REQUEST FOR CALENDAR DATE FORM: Lists date requested, facilities needed, person(s) in charge of activity, substitute information, overnight lodging, etc.

IN-PARISH PROFESSIONAL LEAVE: Should be filed for any activity within the parish. Asks for date of activity, substitute information, brief description of the activity, request for reimbursement, etc.

OUT-OF-PARISH PROFESSIONAL LEAVE: Should be filed for any activity outside the parish and submitted a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the activity.

BUS FORM: Required by most parishes for use of school bus or charter bus for transporting students to an activity. School bus drivers may charge a transportation fee. Observe deadlines for submission of these forms. Make sure to reserve your charter bus as early as possible and confirm the reservation date in writing. Uses for any bus transportation require administrative approval.

STUDENT / PARENT FORMS

FIELD TRIP PERMISSION: Be sure this form is completed and that students and parents have signed by the deadline. School administrators may require that you submit a list of participating students to all faculty members.

PRE-ARRANGED ABSENCE: Secured by the teacher from the administration. Lists date(s) and reason for absence, requires student and parent signatures, and administrative approval. Student has his/her teachers sign the form acknowledging the

upcoming absence. Students should make arrangement with teachers at this time for any make-up work. The form is then returned to you and you either keep them on file or return them to the main office.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE: In some parishes this form is required for overnight trips. Parent signature may be required. Check with your administration for designated individuals and procedure for authorized search.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT: This form may be required for students to participate in after-school activities. The form should be notarized and a copy of the student's medical insurance card attached. You will need to be sure to have these forms with you during an activity so that if an emergency arises, documented permission to have a student treated is available.

DRUG TESTING: Some parishes may require students to submit this form in order to participate in performing ensembles. Follow procedures with caution and clarity.

LODGING REPORT: Required for out-of-town trips with students when hotel accommodations are needed. Check with your school administration well in advance for necessary forms or information needed to begin the process for a school 'away' trip. Be certain to prepare and present a trip portfolio to your administration that includes an itinerary, chaperone information list, student information list, and any other pertinent contact or activity information.

COMMUNITY RELEASE: Some parishes may require this form to secure written permission for acceptable use of student pictures or names for publication, and/or for internet use.

VIDEO PRE-APPROVAL: Some parishes may require that a teacher complete this form before showing a Video/DVD to students.

In addition to dates and activities you plan for your students, there are also dates set by your parish, or by district and state organizations. You need to make it a point to acquire these dates as soon as possible. Dates of music activities that you should have on your calendar, as well as your school's activity calendar, are listed below.

LMEA ACTIVITIES THAT REQUIRE FORMS / FEES

- September – First Round District All-State Auditions
- September thru January – District Honor Choir Auditions
- October – Second Round All-State Auditions (district pays \$12 per entry)
Held second Saturday of October every year at these locations:
Even Years – Pineville Sr. High Odd Years – Lafayette High
- November – All-State Convention / Baton Rouge Crowne Plaza Hotel
4728 Constitution Ave. / 225-925-2244
- November thru April – District Solo-Ensemble Assessments
- February / March – District Large Ensemble Assessments
- April / May – State Large Ensemble Assessment
- May – State Solo Assessment

For more information, you will want to attend your fall and spring LMEA District meetings and keep in touch with your District Director and other choral directors.

CHECK THE LMEA WEBSITE: www.lmeamusic.org TO LOCATE THE CONTACT INFORMATION FOR YOUR DISTRICT DIRECTOR, VOCAL CHAIRMAN, OR ANY OTHER PERSONNEL FOR QUESTIONS CONCERNING ORGANIZATION ACTIVITIES.

These activities require application forms located in the September issue of the Louisiana Musician and online in the LMEA handbook (www.lmeamusic.org). Be sure to complete all requested information on these forms. Observe the deadline to mail the completed form along with a check for the fee made payable to LMEA. Dates listed in the magazine may be changed after publication. Be sure to check with your District Director for all LMEA music activity dates scheduled for your district.

SEE THE ACDA AND OAKE WEBSITES FOR INFORMATION ON FORMS AND DEADLINES FOR ACTIVITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU AND YOUR STUDENTS.

PARISH MEETING DATES (Available through your parish music / fine arts supervisor, or your school administration).

In-Service Meetings

Teacher Contact Meetings

FINANCING YOUR PROGRAM

There are numerous ways to help you and your students fund the choral program. Detailed documentation, including receipts of all financial transactions, should be kept on file.

IIN-SCHOOL ACCOUNTS

TEXT BOOK ACCOUNT: Requests are made through your administration. A list of all 'State-Adopted' textbooks is available. It is best to preview anything of interest on this list to be certain that it meets the needs of your classes.

SCHOOL ACCOUNTS: This account may be established for use by your Choral Department or may be shared by the Music Department. A Department Budget may be required for funds to be disbursed from this account. The finances in this account may be used to purchase general supplies, music, or other items needed for your program. Be sure to complete the appropriate forms for deposit and withdrawal, purchase orders, invoices, and any other financial transaction, and keep a copy of each for your records. Administrative approval is necessary for all transactions.

ADMINISTRATIVE FUNDS: These funds may be available upon request from your administrator for necessary purchases in your department not included in your Department Budget.

LIBRARY FUNDS: Make requests through your librarian or administrator for audio-visual aides, books, magazines, etc. Materials purchased through this fund become property of the library and must be checked out for classroom use.

IN-SERVICE FUNDS: Make requests through your administrator. These funds may be available for educational experiences, conventions, etc.

EMERGENCY FUNDS: An administrator usually controls these funds. If an emergency arises, check with your administrator for availability.

When using school funds or accounts, the proper forms must be completed and signed. It is your responsibility to complete these forms and gain administrative approval before your place any order. Make friends with your bookkeeper!!

OUT-OF-SCHOOL ACCOUNTS

Some choral programs within the state have booster or parent organizations that may help raise money for your program. They may have a separate bank account outside the school. Any money raised through these organizations is deposited in this account. It is recommended that you have 3 parents' signatures on this account (2 needed to sign checks) and that your name NOT appear on this account. It is also advisable that your organization develop a bookkeeping system to keep up with the expenses, and that you have the books audited yearly for protection. Some parishes require that a copy of this account and a copy of the audit be kept on file in the school's bookkeeping department or at the school board office. It is important to remember that any items purchased by this organization for school use are donated to the school and become SCHOOL PROPERTY. Be sure to add these items to any inventory list your administration requires. You may consider balancing the control of this account by establishing the legal authority to dissolve this account at your discretion or the discretion of the administration.

PERSONAL REIMBURSEMENT

PLAN AHEAD!! Unless you use purchase orders and/or arrange IN ADVANCE with your administration or parent organization, you may not be reimbursed for purchases or expenses. Bids may be required for some purchases. Work closely with your administration, school bookkeeper, and/or parent organization finance officer and follow established policies.

FUND RAISING PROJECTS

All fund-raising must be approved by the administration. Submit a budget including all pertinent information about the project (i.e. vendor brochure, type of product or activity, number and list of participants, expected cost and projected profit, etc.)

Other responsibilities that may be involved in the process:

1. Choose the project (salesman, product or activity) and inquire concerning the company's return policy and return date
2. Complete necessary forms for administrative approval (include a brochure or written description of the activity)
3. Secure the date(s) the fundraiser will take place
4. Order merchandise (remember to complete a purchase order)
5. Storage of merchandise in a secure place
6. CHECK THE ORDER thoroughly when it arrives for any missing or damaged items and document on the invoice
7. Distribute merchandise to parents/students (BE CERTAIN TO KEEP ACCURATE RECORDS, preferably with a signature)
8. Collect money and returned merchandise (document with a written receipt in duplicate)
9. Report profit/loss (forms from bookkeeper)
10. Return of unsold merchandise, in good condition

Your administration may require documentation of every aspect of a fund raising activity on both 'In-School' and 'Out-Of-School' accounts. Precisely follow these procedures. Your involvement as a supervisor of fund raising activities is vital.

RECRUITMENT

Make a concerted effort to recruit new students into your program. Maintain a relationship with your feeder schools. Communicate!! Performances by your students, visits, teacher consultation, exchanges, auditions, inclusion of your feeder in a concert, etc. are just a few ways to promote the future of your program. Recruitment within your own school should be a constant consideration. The size and quality of your program is limited only by your own artistic ability and by the development of support from administration, parents, students and community. Sincerely promote the accomplishments of your students. Avoid promoting yourself by the accomplishments of your students. Professionalism speaks for itself.

ETHICAL CONDUCT

Teachers in the music profession are often in the public eye. Professional and ethical conduct is expected at all times. It is unethical for a teacher to make statements to students, parents, or any other teacher that may prove detrimental to the reputation of any other school personnel. Cooperation among members of the music department is essential to an effective school music program. Give consideration of the effect that your decisions may have on other members of the music department.

Conduct and demeanor of the music teacher at concerts, field trips, and overnight tours or conventions should be beyond reproach. Your first concern should be for the educational benefits and safety of your students, not for personal pleasure. Model accordingly.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Public law 94-142 or Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) calls for educating handicapped students in the least restrictive environment. This has raised concerns in some schools in regard to music education. A list of helpful resources is available from your supervisor or administration.

ORGANIZATION OF MATERIALS

LIBRARY: Organization and inventory are up to you. You may wish to use a ready-made system available on-line or through music companies, or you may devise (inherit) your own. It is essential to know what you possess and to have a check-out system so that you know where all your materials are at any given time. Train dependable students to help in your music library.

TEXTBOOKS: You are generally responsible to store and inventory textbooks in your area. Be sure to use a check-out system when loaning these materials. Your school probably has a system if the textbook(s) were purchased through the Textbook Fund or a School Account.

UNIFORMS: If school-owned, you are responsible for storage, inventory, and maintenance. Use a check-out system for use and return of uniforms. Rental procedures vary among school systems. Some parishes may have uniform purchasing policies. Check with your administration or parish supervisor for this information. The system for having uniforms cleaned should be as efficient and inexpensive as possible.

INSTRUMENTS: You are responsible for storage, inventory, maintenance and repair. If instruments are rented to students in a general music program, rental contracts and repair records must be maintained. Check with your parish music supervisor for availability of a parish fund for piano tuning, instrument repair, purchases of guitar string and accessories, etc. Rental fees for instruments may be used for repair and/or replacement.

MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT: You are responsible to store and inventory items such as choral risers, speakers, or other equipment. You will be asked by a department chairman or the administrative staff to inventory all furniture/equipment in your area. Inventory forms provided by the person who requests the inventory.

Inventory procedures vary. If you organize efficiently, you will be better able to handle inventory requests as they are made and monitor the 'use life' of your materials. It is recommended that you keep a copy of all inventory lists. Begin the inventory process as soon as you begin the job.

CHORAL SIGHT READING

LMEA promotes music literacy through the inclusion of the Sight Reading event at district and state choir assessments. No one method of Sight Reading instruction guarantees success. Your knowledge and enthusiasm of your chosen method, coupled with regular training, will prove to be effective instructional tools. The Kodaly Method of Solfege (Hand Signs), Numbers, and Letter Names are three methods generally taught in our state.

You will want to familiarize yourself with LMEA Sight Reading procedures and rules for LMEA assessments. Your students will build confidence in the process through routine practice of the 8-minute instruction period that you develop for assessment Sight Reading. Refer to the LMEA Handbook or consult with your assessment chairman or state vocal chairman for questions relative to any aspect of this event.

VOCAL ALL-STATE AUDITION PROCESS

All nine districts in LMEA participate in First Round all-state auditions during the month of September. Some districts pair the First Round all-state audition with district/parish honor choir audition. You will want to purchase the First Round cycle of songs for your library. A rehearsal/audition CD is available through your district audition chairman and can be duplicated and distributed to provide students a means of preparation for the event. Sight Reading is required as part of the First Round audition process. A fee is required for students to participate in the audition and should be paid to the district organization before the audition occurs. The cycle of audition songs is as follows:

- 2010 –'Crucifixus', Antonio Lotti, (8-part), Walton Music W6006 (Sung in Latin)
- 2011 –'Heilig', Mendelssohn, Double Choir, Walton Music, HL08500702, (Sung in German)
- 2012 –'O Vos Omnes', Pablo Casals, (8-part), Tetra, TC128 (Sung in Latin)
- 2013 –'Let All the Nations Praise the Lord', Leisring, (8-part), Shawnee Press Inc. A0094,
(Sung in English)
- 2014 –'Richte Mich, Gott', Mendelssohn, (8-part), Warner Bros., LG70179 (Sung in German)

The cycle repeats unless the list is revised and published in the current LMEA Handbook.

All nine districts of LMEA participate in Second Round all-state auditions by sending their top 40 voices selected from First Round (5 in each of the 8 parts) to Pineville Senior High on even number years and Lafayette High on odd number years. The song for the

Second Round audition is selected by the guest director of the Mixed Choir. The song title is published in the May issue of the Louisiana Musician (available on the LMEA website). A rehearsal / audition CD is provided by the month of May to each district. Your copy is available through your audition chairman.

A current fee of \$12 per participant is required for audition. As per board decision, eligibility for districts to participate in Second Round requires District Directors to meet the deadlines to submit the entry form and fee to the Vocal Chairman by:

- 1 - September 30 for district entry forms;
- 2 - and the October board meeting held on the first Saturday of October for the district's audition fee.

Sight Reading is required as part of the Second Round audition process. Audition criteria for both First and Second Rounds are located in the LMEA Handbook online: www.lmeamusic.org

All-State Mixed Choir membership is selected at Second Round by the top 20 ranking members in each voice for a total of 160 members. The Women's Chorale membership is selected at Second Round determined by those who rank 21-36, for a total of 64 possible members. At the discretion of the board, Second Round scores are not published.

LMEA VOCAL ASSESSMENTS

DISTRICT SOLO / ENSEMBLE ASSESSMENT

Each of the nine LMEA districts host a Solo / Small Ensemble Assessment. Dates vary with each district and are published in the September Issue of the Louisiana Musician. Consider appropriate age and difficulty level in selection of music.

Two requirements are imposed for High School students who aspire to proceed to State Solo Assessment:

- 1 – students are required to perform solo music from the UIL List;
- 2 –students must perform at the district level for the designated solo event adjudicator and 'qualify' to proceed to the state assessment

See the LMEA Handbook for fees, forms, procedures, awards, and other information for this event.

STATE SOLO ASSESSMENT

The State Solo Assessment event is open to high school students who qualify at district by the designated solo event adjudicator. The song selection must be from the UIL List. The date and location of the event are published on the LMEA website. See the LMEA Handbook for fees, forms, procedures, awards, and other information for this event.

DISTRICT 'CHORAL' LARGE ENSEMBLE ASSESSMENT

Each of the nine LMEA districts hosts a 'Choral' Large Ensemble Assessment. Dates vary with each district and are published in the September Issue of the Louisiana Musician. The LMEA Handbook contains information for every aspect of this event. As you read and familiarize yourself with the process and requirements for participation in this event, you will also want to contact other choir directors and your district assessment chairman or district director for answers to any questions that arise.

STATE 'CHORAL' LARGE ENSEMBLE ASSESSMENT

Choirs must qualify to enter this event by receiving a Superior Rating in the Concert event and at least an Excellent Rating in the Sight Reading event at District Choral Assessment. Choirs who receive a Sweepstakes rating at State Choral Assessment qualify to attend State Assessment the following year without participation in District Choral Assessment that year. The State Choral Assessment event is held during the last week of April each year. The site on even numbered years is the Lake Charles Civic Center. The site for odd numbered years is various university campuses around the state. See the LMEA Handbook for details on the process and requirements for participation in this event.

On behalf of LMEA, we wish you the very best in your first year of teaching and conducting choral music in Louisiana. If you have suggestions for expansion of this document, or have questions, please feel free to contact your LMEA Vocal Chairman, Elementary Chairman, or District Director.

Submitted by: The "Premiere Année en Louisiane" Handbook Committee