

WHAT IS AN M.S.B.O.A. FESTIVAL?

Almost all public schools and many private and parochial schools in the state of Michigan belong to the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association (MSBOA). This organization was founded in the last 1920's as a way to promote the growth and quality instruction of school music ensembles in the state. Each year MSBOA sponsors hundreds of different festivals throughout Michigan.

The state is divided into 16 districts. MCC is located in District 1. When we travel to band festival, we will be performing amongst bands from our geographical area of the state. Performance times are decided by school size classification, from class D (smallest) to class AA (largest), as well as number of members in the group and if it is a MS or HS group. This is known as the district band festival.

At a band festival, each band must perform three pieces of music: a march, a piece chosen from a list of pieces appropriate for the age of the performers and size, and one piece freely chosen by the director. A panel of three judges will listen to and evaluate the bands performance using judging criteria agreed upon by all members of MSBOA. After the on stage performance is over, the band goes to a different location and performs a task known as sight-reading. The band will get an envelope containing a piece of music they have not seen before. They have 5 minutes to prepare this piece without playing their instruments. At the conclusion of the five minutes they will perform the piece for a judge who was been in the room watching and evaluating the band during the entire process. After the performance the sight reading judge will talk with the band.

Each judge's final grade is turned into a roman numeral, with a grade of A+, A, or A- equal to a "I" (one), a B+, B, or B- equal to a "II" (two) and so on. The four judge's ratings are averaged together to produce a final rating from V (five) to I (one) with one being the highest. A band earning a final rating of II (two) earns a plaque for the wall of the band room and red medals for all of the band members. A band that earns a final rating of I (one) will earn a plaque for the band room wall, blue medals for all of the band members, and the opportunity to advance to the State Festival, held in April.

Band festival is an important tool for both the performers and the teacher to see how their performance practices sound to a panel of experts and to identify both areas in need of improvement and areas that are already well developed. Band festival is a fun, exciting experience for the student who takes the event seriously and prepares their music for a successful performance.

Ratings will be posted publicly in the cafeteria or foyer area of the host school shortly after each band is finished with sight reading.

It is my sincere hope that you sons and daughters are enriched by this experience and enjoy a level of success commensurate with their level of effort put into their preparation.

You can learn more about MSBOA at their website: www.msboa.org

You can visit our band website at its new address: www.saberbands.com

Sincerely,

Robert Gras, Director of Bands
Manistee Catholic Central