
Music and Speech Festivals (rated) vs Championships (ranked)

"A Friendly Discussion"

Mike Plunkett-Oklahoma Secondary School Activities Association-2021



Things to Consider

→ ***This is a discussion, not going to solve this issue today!***

(1914 first public school music competition in Kansas, 1931 first debate championship)

→ ***Should Fine Arts events be competitive***

→ ***Who do Fine Arts competitions benefit?***

→ ***Is competition good for fine arts students?***

→ ***An Opportunity To Evaluate Your practiced skills?***

Compared to “each other”, or compared to “a standard”?

- Rated activities can have multiple entries with the same final rating. Everyone is put into categories with unlimited quantity in each category. Multiple entries with the highest level of accomplishment. No real “winner” is crowned. A standard can be regional, state or national.
- Ranked activities will ultimately end up with 1 winner. 2nd place will be determined, so will 204th place. It can be great if you’re the winner, maybe not so much if you are 204th. “Big fish in little Pond” syndrome. “BSIK”
- Both Rated and Ranked activities can be used with success.
- Both offer incentives to improve, but in different ways (in my opinion).

Typical Standards

→ Division I (**Superior**)

→ A first rate performance for the event and the class of participants being judged. A top performance, with few technical errors exemplifying a truly musical expression. Worthy of the distinction of being recognized as being among the best.

→ Division II (**Excellent or Above Average**)

→ a) An unusual performance in many respects but not worthy of the highest rating due to minor defects in performance or ineffective interpretation. A commendable performance showing a high standard of musical accomplishment.

→ Division III (**Good or Average**)

→ a) An average performance lacking in many essentials, balance, tone, intonation, precision, etc. The performance shows accomplishment and marked promise. Right notes and right rhythms.

Typical Standards

- Division IV (**Fair or Below Average**)
 - a) Below AVERAGE performance and not worthy of a higher rating because of basic weakness in most of the fundamental factors. Performances suggest lack of training or rehearsal time and a need for greater emphasis on fundamentals.
- Division V -- (**Poor**)
- An ineffective performance indicating major deficiencies in tone quality, intonation, balance, blends, and musical expression. The fundamentals of a good performance need careful attention. The director or student should check his methods, instrumentation, etc. with those of a more mature organization. This performance has major problems and has much room for improvement.
- Comments Only-- (**CO**) Any event (including solos and ensembles) may be entered for “comments only” if the director so chooses. The decision to perform for “CO” can be made any time prior to the performance (large groups must declare it prior to the concert performance). It will be the responsibility of the contest manager and director to see that the soloist or group is announced to the adjudicator(s) as “Comments Only” immediately prior to the performance. A group cannot choose to perform for comments only for just one part of their performance (Concert and Sight-reading) at any district or state level contest.

Should Fine Arts events be competitive?

- “If I wanted to be in a competition, I would do athletics! Do we need a scoreboard in Fine Arts?”
- By ranking everyone, it motivates us improve. Competition creates a desire to be our best.
- I get to compare my skills with others in my age/skill level.
- Life is a competition, why shouldn't Fine Arts be the same? “Everyone gets a Trophy” is not realistic!
- Fine Arts are too subjective to be judged. Way To Much BIAS!

Bias in Fine Arts

- A judge can have a bias in Fine Arts events and affect the outcome much easier than in athletics.
- A judges predetermined bias...A school's "reputation" can factor into subjective performances.
- In bowling, whether I think you're a good bowler or not can't influence the ball going own the lane. Whether I think you're a good shooter or not does not affect the ball going in the hoop. But in Fine Arts a bias about a show, a song, the way a kid looks, or how they presents themselves can influence the outcome.
- Because of this possible bias, maybe we should not have a ranking in fine arts events. Too many variables.
- "Do you need to tell the kid he said the wrong line in a play? He knows he played the wrong rhythm in that quartet!" Do you need to tell the Quarterback, "Hey, don't throw that interception again!"
- Its only some persons opinion. I think it s a pretty car, you think its an ugly car. Judges are NOT the 3 wise men!

Why even have contests or festivals?

- It allows you to compare your practiced skills with others in your age/skill range. **RATED OR RANKED....**This is important. What good does it do to just practice in the room with your classmates? Its like practicing a play and never performing it.

Who do Fine Arts competitions benefit?

- “If we have 100 kids enter a contest, and 75 of them reach the “superior” standard, we have 75 winners, not just 1 winner!”
- “If we have 100 kids enter a contest, and 75 of them reach the “superior” standard, we have 75 kids who tied!”
- Society in general wants to see a winner. You want to see how you stack up against other opponents. Everyone loves a champion.
- Can more harm be done if winners are selected? 32 teams enter an event, and there is only 1 winner, the rest can feel like “they lost”.
- Are ranked festivals for the students, or the egos of the teachers?

Is competition good for fine arts students?

- Can we weigh the benefits (if any) of competition versus the harm it causes (if any) when kids do poorly?
- “Comments Only”-Possible Compromise? Still get experience without negative Rating/Ranking

Different ways to rate a performance

- All judges scores are equal-average all ratings to determine winner.
- “Olympic Scoring”. Drop the High and Low-No single judge can sway the average.
- IF your picking winner, be prepared to break ties.
- Many different criteria for breaking ties.

Breaking 2-way Ties in Ranked Festivals

→ Example of Judges Preference as a tie Breaker

	Play	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Total	Ranking
I	School A	2	1	3	6	2nd
II	School B	7	6	4	17	
III	School C	1	4	1	6	1st
IV	School D	4	5	7	16	
V	School E	3	2	2	7	3rd
VI	School F	5	3	5	13	
VII	School G	6	7	6	19	

Breaking 3-way ties by percentages

→ In the event three or more plays are tied, you then use percentages. First 100%, second 50 %, third 33 1/3%, 4th 25%, fifth 20%, sixth 16 2/3 %, seventh 14 ¼ %, eighth 12 ½ %.

→

	Play	Judge	Judge	Judge	Total	Ranking
I	Play A	2 (50)	5 (20)	1 (100)	8 (170)	2nd
II	Play B	1 (100)	1 (100)	6 (16.6)	8 (216.6)	1st
III	Play D	3 (33.3)	2 (50)	3 (33.3)	8 (116.6)	3rd
IV	Play E	6	7	7	20	
V	Play F	4	3	2	9	
VI	Play G	5	4	4	13	
VII	Play H	7	6	5	18	

Can they Still be Tied?

- If a three-way tie still exists, to keep from advancing more than 2 plays, a three-way tie would be broken from the following criteria: 1) total acting points; 2) total points; 3) number of people selected for the all-star cast, and 4) lowest cumulative rank of all-star cast members.

	Play	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Total	Ranking
I	Play A	1 (100)	4 (25)	3 (33 1/3)	8	2 nd (158 1/3)
II	Play B	3 (33 1/3)	1 (100)	4 (25)	8	3 rd (158 1/3)
III	Play C	2 (50)	5 (20)	1 (100)	8	1 st (170)
IV	Play D	5	2	2	9	
V	Play E	4	3	5	12	

Unbreakable Ties??

	Play	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Total	Ranking
I	Play A	1	1	1	3	1
II	Play B	2	2	2	6	2
III	Play C	3	4	5	12	3
IV	Play D	5	3	4	12	3
V	Play E	4	5	3	12	3