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A handbook for hosting a district-wide festival for literature and the arts

Clayton Shane Wilson

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A HANDBOOK FOR HOSTING A DISTRICT-WIDE
FESTIVAL FOR LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education: Middle Grades Option

by
Clayton Shane Wilson
September 1999
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Approved by:

Dr. Irvin Howard, First Reader
Dr. Ellen Kronowitz, Second Reader
ABSTRACT

The spirit of healthy competition can be found in many areas of education. The most visible of competitive fields is athletics. Schools across the nation make the Friday night football game or the Tuesday night basketball game a community tradition. Less obvious, but just as important, are academic competitions in which students are allowed to shine through knowledge and creativity. The goal of this project is to provide districts with the tools necessary to host a festival for literature and the arts.

The components of this project include a description of a variety of events in Language Arts, Journalism, Music, and the visual and performing arts. It also includes specific rules for each event, rubrics to be used for judging the merit of the performances or products in each event, suggestions on judges' training, a time-line for preparing for the festival, sample ballots for judges, and thorough descriptions of the aspects involved in the actual festival.

The festival concept is meant to allow students and teachers to come together with others of similar interests to share in the advancement of the written and spoken word as well as the creativity of the visual and performing arts. The project is meant to serve as a tool for a host school coordinator. Schools and districts are welcome to use the suggestions provided, adapt what is necessary to
serve their own needs, and disregard that which does not meet their needs or for which their facilities cannot handle. It is the hope of this author that California middle schools strive to address deficiencies in literature and fine arts education programs and that this project will aid districts in filling those gaps to enrich the lives of students.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Preview

As most educational experts spout the requisite jargon about a need to improve literacy among school age children in America, they very rarely offer any actual means of addressing the issue. It is recognized by most people that there is a problem in developing literate students, but districts and schools across the country are scrambling to come up with programs that work in improving reading and writing skills. While the media focuses on the lack of literacy, some school districts have turned away from the negative and have formed various means to celebrate the success of students in the fields of literature and the arts. At the same time, these schools are creating a spirit of healthy competition for these students to gather with peers and share interests outside of the athletic arena.

In most middle schools, the only chance students have to stand out from the crowd in any form of competition with their peers is through sports. Football, basketball, volleyball, and track have annual events that allow those students with athletic talents to shine. Except for the annual Science Fair and Spelling Bee (events that not all middle schools participate in), those students whose talents lie more toward the academic rather than the
athletic never have a chance to meet with students of similar interests in the spirit of healthy competition.

Although it would be difficult to include all fields of academics within a single festival, it is possible to combine those within the realm of the written and spoken word with those of the artistic. Despite the fact that the state of California has in place a Visual and Performing Arts Framework, many individual schools as well as entire districts across the state are cutting funds to arts programs. "Education in the arts is essential for all students." (Visual and Performing Arts Framework, 1996).

To support the need for arts education the state education department states,

"The most important contribution of the arts to education is their ability to improve the way we teach and learn..."

Here's why:
- the arts inspire self-confidence and help keep kids interested in school.
- The arts help energize the school environment.
- The arts help kids develop critical skill for life and work.
- The arts improve student performance in other subject areas.
- The arts expose kids to a range of cultures and points of view.
- The arts can reach hard-to-reach students

And let's not forget that the arts are something a child should learn to understand and appreciate in and of themselves - not necessarily as a means to an end but for the sheer enjoyment of a great
play, a dance, a painting, or a song."
(Performing Wonders, Kids and the Arts: A Broadcaster Guide to Teaching Children About the Arts.)

The California Department of Education, in its 1996 Visual and Performing Arts Framework has listed ten essential ideas in Arts education. They are:

1. The arts are core subjects.
2. Arts instruction encompasses four components.
3. The arts enrich and are enriched by the other subjects.
4. The arts promote creativity, thinking, and joy.
5. The arts offer different ways to make meaning.
6. The arts reflect and influence cultures.
7. The arts promote aesthetic literacy.
8. Assessment is inherent in the arts.
9. Technology expands the arts.
10. The arts prepare students for full participation in society.

(Visual and Performing Arts Framework, 1996)

Used as a basis for any approach to implementing an Arts program, these essential ideas play a significant role in justifying the need for attention to arts education. In a
time when the arts are being reduced and literacy is of primary importance, to focus on the achievements of those who shine in these fields and to emphasize participation in these events would seem appropriate.

Significance of Project

I propose to create a handbook for hosting a district-wide festival for literature and the arts. This project is significant because its ultimate purpose is to be a tool for districts and host schools to use in encouraging students to take an interest in creativity, performing, and writing. To do this, the schools would use this handbook as a guide to hosting an annual festival.

In an effort to address the standards set forth in the Visual and Performing Arts State Framework as well as to address the needs of the newest version of the State Language Arts Framework, the events in the festival would fall under the following categories:

- Literature/Language Arts
- Speech
- Acting
- Art
- Choir
- Journalism

To be specific, the need for addressing the arts and language arts frameworks applies to Palm Springs Unified School District. In a district with four middle schools,
there is not one middle school with a fully implemented arts education program. All four schools have tried a variety of programs that have quickly come and gone. In developing and implementing a festival for literature and the arts, it is the author's intent to address the needs of the schools within the district, address a gap in the education of middle school students, and create a program that can be applied to any district.

Statement of Need

Due to budget cuts, a lack of trained teachers, and a lack of a sense of priority, Palm Springs Unified School District does a poor job providing a quality arts education for its middle school students. It is unfortunate that funding to arts programs are the last to be filled and the first to be cut, however, the need must be addressed. This project will attempt to address the needs of the students in the most cost effective manner while still maintaining the quality and integrity of healthy competition. The mission of this festival means to provide for students the opportunity to:

- Participate in contests in the spirit of fairness and sportsmanship, observing all rules - both in letter and spirit.
- Provide sponsors and advisers for individuals and teams without resorting to unethical tactics, trickery which attempts to skirt the rules, or any other unfair tactic which detracts from sound educational principles.

- Accepts decisions of officials and judges without protest and extend protection and courtesy to officials.

- Regard opponents as guests or hosts while placing personal and/or team integrity above victory at any cost.

- Maintain grace and poise in victory or defeat. Conduct that berates, intimidates, or threatens competitors, based on gender or ethnic origin, has no place in interscholastic activities.

- Provide information or evidence regarding eligibility of any contestant or school to local school administrators or the appropriate judicial bodies upon request.

- Understand and appreciate the educational values of competition and abstain from modifying or soliciting another teacher to modify grades for eligibility purposes, knowing that such behavior defeats the character-building purposes of
extracurricular competition.

- Abstain from any practice that makes a student feel pressured to participate in non-school activities.
- At all times, ensure that competition is relative to a more important overall educational effort, using competition as a tool in the preparation of students for citizenship and successful adulthood.

(adapted from Texas State U.I.L. Code)

There is a need for this type of festival for many reasons. One, these events foster creativity and literacy in students. Two, these events encourage the development of talents within students who are truly gifted in these fields. Three, this type of festival encourages cohesiveness within a district (since all are participating) and serves as a balance to the emphasis sports have received in schools.

Project Plan

The goal of this project is to provide a useful tool for school districts. Therefore, it is necessary to limit the number of categories covered within the framework of this festival. The categories and events within this festival will be as follows:

Literature/Language Arts Events:
Original Short Story
Spontaneous Creative Writing
Essay Writing
Speech Events:
Extemporaneous Speaking
Informative Speaking
Persuasive Speaking
Debate
Prose Reading
Poetry Reading
Humorous Interpretation
Dramatic Interpretation
Duet Acting
One Act Play Event:
Play Performance
Art Events:
Portfolio Submission
Individual Medium Submission
Choir Events:
Choir Performance
Solo Performance
Journalism Events:
Headline Writing
Photo Portfolio:
Sports Photo submission
Photo Essay Submission

Awards for each event will be based on first, second, and third place ranking in final rounds except One-Act play and Choir performances. These will have one round only. In addition, all students participating will receive a certificate and ribbon indicating participation in the district-wide event.

To host a successful festival, a school needs a blueprint and instruction manual. This handbook is meant to serve as both. It will include the following:

1. an introduction to the host school and an explanation of the mission and requirements of
the host school and its facilities.
2. the general rules for the festival, the
detailed mission of the festival, and an
explanation of how registration and fees
should be handled.
3. the specific rules for each event in every
category.
4. instructions on scheduling the festival (i.e.
on the master calendar for the district, as
well as the actual two day event).
5. Awards suggestions (medals, trophies,
scholarships).
6. rules for the judges as well as rating and
scoring rubrics for each category.
7. sample letters of invitation to participating
schools, sample registration packets, sample
registration fee schedules.

For the sake of the Master’s project, sample judging
ballots, registration forms, debate scaffolding forms,
sample invitations, as well as other forms normally
included in the handbook, will be included in the
appendices.

It is the hope of the author that this handbook will
inspire districts to foster the arts and literature and
encourage students to be creative. In an era when test
scores are low, this festival is a great opportunity to let students shine.

Limitations and Delimitations

It is the author’s intent to include events that are easily manageable yet sufficiently challenging to middle school students. It is also my intent to include events that can be coordinated by Language Arts and elective teachers in any middle school. Although a significant amount of time is required by the host school’s coordinator, it is possible to plan this festival well in advance and keep paperwork to a minimum. Participation by parents and staff of the host school is encouraged and makes the festival run smoothly.

Despite these efforts, there are some limitations to the festival:

- Lack of participation from all middle schools.
- Lack of administrative support within the district.
- Not enough interest from students within the school.
- Low literacy rates that keep certain students from feeling adequately prepared for the events.
- Lack of teacher support within district.
- Time constraints on host school and coordinator.
- Lack of knowledge, supplies, exposure to events by competitors and teachers.
- Incorrect interpretation of rules by competitors and teachers.

In addressing some of these difficulties, any possible questions and/or problems will be addressed in a chapter within the handbook on trouble shooting. Also, to save the host school time, all forms necessary - from registration forms to judges ballots to final awards forms - will be included and permission for use will be provided. Also, it is the assumption of the author that with minimal understanding, participating teachers will be able to include the basics of these categories within their teaching.

Research into this type of project is rather far-flung. Much has been written on the benefits of healthy competition among students and there are many examples of successful contests that range from sports to science fairs to academic decathlons. However, in California, not much is written on the need for competition within the arts and literary fields. One limitation of this project is the need to adapt research from other states and make assumptions based on samples of other proven academic festivals.
By providing an inclusive handbook, it is the author's goal to provide direction for a district and assist schools in addressing standards and the needs of students in arts education.
Definition of Terms

**Literacy:** the quality of being able to read.

**The Arts:** the branch of learning that includes the visual and performing arts, i.e. drama, painting, dance, and sculpture.

**Festival:** a period or program of festive activities, cultural events, or entertainment.

**Spontaneous:** reacting or creating without preparation.

**Extemporaneous:** done or spoken without special preparation; impromptu.

**Informative:** giving information or providing facts.

**Persuasive:** able, fitted, or intended to persuade.

**Debate:** a contest in which the affirmative and negative sides of a proposition are advocated by opposing speakers.

**Prose:** spoken or written language without metrical structure as distinguished from poetry or verse.
...The arts are one of mankind's most visual and essential forms of language, and if we do not educate our children in the symbol system called the arts, we will lose not only our culture and civility but our humanity as well. (Ernest Boyer, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching)

In a society where money talks, and high pressure is placed on schools to produce future employees with increasingly more complex technical knowledge, we sometimes forget what Mr. Boyer explains - that a world without art and literature is a world without humanity.

In 1999, the National Center for Educational Statistics published their findings from an extensive assessment of the teaching of arts education in America. This was the first assessment to be done in 20 years and the first ever to go beyond music and the visual arts to include theatre. (NCES NAEP website). The goal of this assessment was to give educators and the public a picture of where arts education is in American schools and where it should be. The findings of this report showed that (based on eighth grade students) a large percentage attended schools in which music and visual arts were taught, but that access to theatre and dance programs was limited. It also showed that most music and visual arts programs followed district or state designed curricula, but that
dance and theatre had no such formal programs. It also revealed that music and visual arts programs usually had classrooms specifically designated for such purposes, but that theatre and dance took place where space was available and not always consistent. However, as anyone can see on the national new media, even music and visual arts programs are being cut from schools - particularly inner city schools that are strapped for cash to keep the schools running.

The framework of the NCES assessment shows the relationship of the four areas of music, theatre, visual arts, and dance to the three arts processes of creating, performing, and responding.

It is important to stress the need for and importance of arts and literature as part of a complete education. California has in place a state framework for visual and performing arts, yet schools and districts across the state are cutting funds to these programs. In an effort to encourage schools and districts to motivate students to get involved in the arts and literature, Delaine Easton states that the California Department of Education and the California State Board of Education continue to support arts education for all students as a vital and fundamental part of the core curriculum. The arts foster students' abilities to develop problem-solving skills, flexibility, creativity, cooperative approaches,
persistence, and responsibility as well as oral and written language skills. (Visual and Performing Arts Framework).

While there is much research and opinion written to support the need for arts education in our public schools, little is being done to preserve the programs that are in place or to create programs where none currently exist. While no one will come out against arts education programs, it is highly suspicious that little is being done to solve these problems.

While it has been proven that healthy competition among students at all ages can be a positive motivator to achieve more, just look at any team sports program in California, it would also be safe to say that creating an atmosphere of healthy competition among students whose interests lie in literature and the arts would motivate them to strive for their best.

According to the Texas U.I.L. Code, an organized competition for students in academic fields, particularly arts and literature means to:

- participate in contests in the spirit of
  fairness and sportsmanship, observing all
  rules - both in letter and spirit.
- sponsor and advise individuals and teams
  without resorting to unethical tactics,
  trickery which attempts to skirt the rules, or
  any other unfair tactic which detracts from
sound educational principles.
- Accept decisions of officials and judges without protest and extend protection and courtesy to officials.
- Regard opponents as guests or hosts while placing personal and/or team integrity above victory at any cost. Maintain grace and poise in victory or defeat. Conduct that berates, intimidates, or threatens competitors, based on gender or ethnic origin, has no place in interscholastic activities.
- Provide information or evidence regarding eligibility of any contestant or school to local school administrators or to the appropriate judicial bodies upon request.
- Understand and appreciate the educational values of competition and abstain from modifying or soliciting another teacher to modify grades for eligibility purposes, knowing that such behavior defeats character-building purposes of extracurricular competition.
- Abstain from any practice that makes a student feel pressured to participate in non-school activities.
- At all times, ensure that competition is
relative to a more important overall educational effort, using competition as a tool in the preparation of students for citizenship and successful adulthood.

To support the need for arts education programs in American schools, many organizations have pushed forth a movement to support the arts are assist districts in improving programs. The New York State Theatre Education Association (NYSTEA) believes theatre is a powerful tool for understanding the human condition. The future of theatre in our society is dependent upon theatre education. Students of theatre acquire personal resources and life skills through intellectual, aesthetic, and emotional development. Though a strong theatre arts program, a student reads confidently and independently for a variety of purposes, including pleasure, aesthetic response, information, understanding, critical analysis, and evaluation.

Arts programs and festivals like the one suggested in this project are a cost efficient and highly motivating method of addressing performance based standards recently adopted by the California State Education Department. The events suggested in this project will address many of these standards in such a way that students will achieve the standards while finding the effort worthwhile. Many of the performance based standards that could potentially be
addressed through a festival for literature and the arts are:

- The student constructs meaning from a wide range of texts. *(addressed through writing, speech, interpretation, one-act play, and journalism events)*

- The student responds critically to fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama. *(addressed through speech, debate, interpretation, and one-act play events)*

- The student writes to tell a story. *(Original short story and Spontaneous creative writing events)*

- The student writes to inform. *(Essay event, Speech events, Debate event, Journalism events)*

- The student writes for self-expression or to entertain through creative works such as poems, scripts, fictional narratives, and autobiographical accounts. *(Original short story, Spontaneous creative writing, Essay events)*

- The student writes to persuade. *(Essay event, Persuasive Speaking event, Debate event)*

- The student writes to analyze and interpret. *(Essay event, introductions to Interpretation events, Debate event, Headline writing, Speech events)*

- The student generates and organizes ideas for writing to convey meaning. *(Writing events, Speech events)*
events, Debate event, Journalism events)

- Plus all standards that address the mechanics of writing can be addressed through writing and speech events.

- The student participates in a variety of speaking activities. (all events address speaking in public or interviews in some manner)

- The student expresses ideas orally. (Speech events, One-act play event, and interpretation events)

- Plus all of the sub-points under the major standards can be addressed through a festival of literature and the arts.

It is easy to see that these new standards adopted by California are a perfect fit to a festival oriented activity for a district. The students would benefit not only by achieving the standards in a meaningful manner, but would also enrich their knowledge base by observing peers from across a district interpret and express their own views of the world.

In 1989 the California State Board of Education adopted a policy that stated: Arts education, which includes dance, drama/theatre, music, and visual arts is an integral part of basic education for all students kindergarten through grade twelve; districts should develop a policy, allocate resources, and carry out a plan to provide a high quality comprehensive arts education program
for all students, based on the adopted visual and performing arts curriculum documents. Obviously, educators and politicians alike want to see the arts in our schools. It is up to the districts and teachers to show them the benefits of the arts programs that are currently hanging on and how badly needed programs are in districts that currently do not have them.

Summary

Competition brings out the best in students. The look of pride on a football or basketball player's face tells it all. It is only fair that, as Texas and many other states do, California should make available to students an outlet for creativity and self-expression in the arts.

Unfortunately, published research on the topic of competition in the arts is limited and obscure. The best research is by looking at the examples of successful competitions already in place for many years. The Texas University Interscholastic League competition, with its vast variety of competitive events held annually, and the National Forensic League competitions held annually with students from across the nation are two such examples of successful programs within the fields of literature and the arts. Outside that, examples range form National History Day to the National Spelling Bee to the variety of increasingly competitive Science Fairs.

While everyone says they support arts education, not
much is being done to keep it alive across this state. By utilizing a handbook such as the one this project creates, districts can encourage students to participate in literature and the arts and keep the spirit of arts education alive.
CHAPTER THREE
DESCRIPTION/IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAN

The hosting of a festival for literature and the arts does require advanced planning time by the host school. Time schedules, performance space reservations within the school (i.e. notifying teachers), recruiting judges, invitations, and many other things should be done well before the week of the event.

The festival itself is meant to be an enjoyable and satisfying time for participants, coaches, judges, and the host school. The two-day event should run smoothly with some advanced planning, preparation, and cooperation between host sponsors and students running the festival.

Description of Events

There are several events that can be held simultaneously during the two-day festival. These range from oral speaking events to music, to the arts. It is suggested that the host school choose the events best suited to their site facilities, but to also keep in mind the idea of multiple intelligences and choose a variety of events that will allow as many students as possible to participate.

The following is a brief description of the variety of events a host school can choose from (for detailed rules see Appendix A):

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• **Original Short Story:** This contest is designed to promote creativity in an academic format and to encourage stronger writing skills among students. Stories are to be written prior to the contest. Stories must be between 2,000 and 10,000 words. Subject matter should be appropriate for general audiences (i.e. no swear words, sexual descriptions, overtly violent descriptions, or behavior considered deviant by the average person). Stories should be typed and illustrations should not be included. Stories will be submitted for reading by three judges. Judges will read each story and rank them based on the creative writing rubric. Awards will go to first, second, and third place.

• **Spontaneous Creative Writing:** This contest is designed to promote creativity and improve writing skills among students as well as increase ability to think quickly in a narrative fashion. Students will be given lined paper and ball-point pens by festival host judges once they have entered the writing room. Once settled, each participant will be given a prompt and three pictures. From these pictures, participants will create an original story in 120 minutes. The story must contain a description of the action in
at least one of the pictures. After the time has expired, the three judges will read each story and grade them based on a rubric provided by the contest. All stories will be read by each judge. Scores will be averaged and stories will be ranked by average score. Awards will go to first, second, and third place.

- **Essay Writing:** The emphasis of this event is on writing skills and the competition itself builds upon those skills and helps students refine their writing abilities. In particular, this contest helps them to learn to write an essay that is clearly thought out and logical as well as one that is interesting and original. Supplies (i.e. paper, pens, thesaurus) will be provided by the contest hosts. Contestants will be given a choice between two prompts. Within these two prompts are specific directions that define the audience and provide a purpose for writing. Students are encouraged to analyze the prompts for the purpose of writing, the format, the audience, and the point of view. Students will have two hours to complete their essay on the chosen prompt. Three judges will read each essay and grade them based on a rubric provided by the contest. Scores will be averaged and
stories will be ranked by average score. Awards will go to first, second, and third place.

- **Extemporaneous Speaking**: The purpose of this event is to provide contestants with the opportunity to evaluate speeches given by others; to explore the use of the voice and body in speaking situations; to examine the different purposes of speaking; to organize ideas; to prepare and deliver various speeches; and to develop self-confidence. Contestants will draw three topics and have fifteen minutes to prepare a speech. Outlines and notes may be written on 3x5 index cards but memorization is encouraged. The speech should be between 5 minutes (minimum) and 10 minutes (maximum). Contestants should focus on clear thinking, formulating clear ideas organized onto logical sequences, and delivering those ideas to an audience effectively. The top three students from each preliminary round - based on rank - will advance to semi-finals and the top two students from each semi-final round - based on rank - will advance to the finals. One judge will be provided for each preliminary and semi-final round and a panel of three judges will be provided for the final round. Awards will go to first, second, and third place.
• **Informative Speaking:** The emphasis of this event is to provide students with the opportunity to develop research skills as well as present information through an oral presentation that is organized, clear in thought and purpose, and original. Contestants should research and write a speech on a timely issue that has some current interest value to an audience. The speech should be well organized, clearly presenting the topic in an informational manner (i.e. not taking a particular stand, but providing information about the topic in a balanced manner). The presentation of the speech must be memorized and between 5 minutes (minimum) and 10 minutes (maximum). Like other speech events, contestants will advance from prelims to semi's to finals and awards will go to first, second, and third place.

• **Persuasive Speaking:** Like informational speaking, this event provides students with the opportunity to develop research skills and oral presentation skills. The topic for this event should be one on which the contestant can take a specific stand and/or state an opinion. The memorized speech should be presented in a well organized manner, clearly attempting to persuade the audience either for or against the particular perspective.
The presentation of the speech must be memorized and between 5 minutes (minimum) and 10 minutes (maximum). Like other speech events, contestants will advance from prelims to semi's to finals and awards will go to first, second, and third place.

- **Debate:** The purpose of this event is to provide students with the opportunity to develop research skills for specific topics, analyze material needed to take a stand on a particular argument, clarify and organize thoughts quickly to defend a position, and present arguments as well as view an opponent's arguments with a sense of respect. Debate is a team event comprised of two students on each side. During the preliminary four rounds, each team will take the affirmative side of the designated resolution for two rounds and the negative side for two rounds. One judge will be provided for each preliminary round. Debate teams will advance to quarterfinals based on the win/loss record as well as speaker points assigned by the judge to each student's participation in each round. A three-judge panel will be provided for quarterfinals, semi-finals, and final rounds. Two final rounds will occur - one to determine first and second place; one to determine third and fourth place. Awards will go
to first, second, and third place teams.

- **Prose Reading:** The purpose of this event is to provide students with the opportunity to develop oral presentation skills and storytelling devices through the presentation of previously published material. Contestants will select for presentation a form of narrative fiction - either a short story or cutting from a novel. The selection should range from 5 minutes (minimum) to 8 minutes (maximum). The presentation should begin with a short, original, memorized introduction that includes the title and author of the selection. Students are encouraged to choose a selection that has a definite beginning, middle, and end and showcases their particular storytelling talents (i.e. dialects, vocal distinction, comedic flair, dramatic effect). Selections should be appropriate for an average audience and strong language, descriptions of excessive violence, or deviant behavior should not be included. One judge will be provided for preliminary rounds and a three-judge panel will be provided for semi-final and final rounds. Awards will go to first, second, and third place.

- **Poetry:** Like prose presentations, this event is an opportunity for students to develop oral
presentation skills through previously published material. Contestants are encouraged to choose a poem or a short collection of poems that best showcase their particular oral presentation talents. The presentation should include a short, original, memorized introduction that includes the title(s) and author(s) of the selection. The entire presentation should range from 5 minutes (minimum) to 8 minutes (maximum). Original poetry is not allowed. Students are encouraged - if choosing a selection - to choose poems that have a common theme. One judge will be provided for preliminary rounds and a three-judge panel will be provided for semi-final and final rounds. Awards will go to first, second, and third place.

• **Humorous Interpretation**: This event is an opportunity for students to develop acting and oral presentation skills as well as memorization skills through previously published material. Contestants are encouraged to find a monologue or scene from a published play, movie script, television script, or radio program that highlights comedy or light moments. Due to copyright concerns, students are not allowed to present stand-up routines or unpublished scripts, even from film productions. The presentation
should range from 5 minutes (minimum) to 10 minutes (maximum) and should be completely memorized. Students are encouraged to choose selections that showcase their particular acting talents (i.e. voice and dialects, comic timing, etc.) Movement during presentation is restricted to minimum blocking. Students are encouraged to focus on hand gestures and movement from the waist up. A short, original, memorized introduction that includes the title and author of the selection is required as part of the overall presentation. One judge will be provided for each preliminary round and a three-judge panel will be provided for semifinal and final rounds. Awards will go to first, second, and third place.

• **Dramatic Interpretation:** Like humorous interpretation, this event is an opportunity for students to develop acting and oral presentation skills and well as memorization skills through the use of previously published material. Contestants are encouraged to find a monologue or scene from a published play, movie script, television script, or radio program that highlight dramatic, sad, or strong emotional moments. The rules stated for Humorous
Interpretation will apply to Dramatic Interpretation. One judge will be provided for each preliminary round and a three-judge panel will be provided for semi-final and final rounds. Awards will go to first, second, and third place.

- **Duet Acting**: Similar to humorous and dramatic interpretation, this event is an opportunity for students to develop acting skills, presentation skills, and memorization skills. Unlike the interpretation events, this is a team event. Two students will present a scene from a published play, movie script, television script, or radio program. The scene can be of either a humorous or dramatic nature. Students are encouraged to select a scene that is balanced for the actors (i.e. allowing each actor equal or almost equal lines) and highlights the pair's particular acting strengths. The scene should range from 7 minutes (minimum) to 12 minutes (maximum) and must include a short, original, memorized introduction that includes the title and author of the scene. Blocking is encouraged but must be kept within a 6' x 6' imaginary square. The only props or staging allowed will be two ordinary chairs provided by the host school. Lighting, sound effects, and props are not allowed.
Costumes are allowed as long as they do not distract from the performance. One judge will be provided for preliminary rounds and a three-judge panel will be provided for semi-final and final rounds. Awards will go to first, second, and third place.

- **One-Act Play**: The purpose of this event is to provide students with the opportunity to work on all aspects of the production of a 40-minute play. During production of the play students will be able to participate in the competitive and artistic spirit with other schools, develop and appreciate strong acting skills, be exposed to a variety of interpretations of dramatic literature through live performances, and understand the nature of acting and performing arts. The one-act play or cutting from a longer play must be previously published. Original works are not allowed. Permission must be received from and royalties must be paid (if necessary) to the appropriate publishing company or agent representing the author. Production and directing of the performance must be overseen by a participating school staff member (i.e. Theatre Arts or English teacher). The total cast size must not exceed 15 student actors. Actors may
play multiple roles where necessary. Only students currently enrolled in the participating school may participate in the acting of the performance. Set pieces are restricted to a variety of basic set pieces that are flexible in use (see appendix for specific details). Small furniture items - chairs, tables, etc. - may be brought by the participating school. Costumes, makeup, props, and sound effects must be provided by the participating school. Light cues will be arranged by the director and the host school. Contestants will have a one-hour rehearsal for marking the stage the day before the contest. The play and the putting up and breaking down of the set must not exceed 60 minutes. A three-judge panel will be provided for the entire contest. Each school performs only once. The panel will rank performances based on a rubric provided by the contest and awards will be given to the top three performances as well as specific acting awards to those actors chosen by the panel. Note: This event can only be successful for a host school if a theater or auditorium is available for the performances.
- **Art Portfolio:** The purpose of this event is to provide students with the opportunity to present original works of visual art in a variety of artistic media and show their work that best exemplifies their particular artistic talents and to take constructive criticism graciously. Students are encouraged to develop a portfolio of work from the current year that reflects their best work and also shows their flexibility as an artistic through a variety of media. Students are required to show works from at least three different media. This may include: pen & ink, charcoal, watercolor, pastel, oil, handmade paper, pencil sketch, airbrushing, weaving, and other media for paper or canvas. Sculpture, metalwork, costume design, and other three dimensional artwork is discouraged because of possible transportation problems and lack of space for display. Works to be submitted should be no larger than 4' x 4' on canvas or paper. Students are encouraged to chose works that show their flexibility (i.e. still life, abstract, modern, commercial art). All work should be signed by the artist. Subject matter for the artwork should be appropriate for an educational setting. No graphic depictions of violence,
nudity, or deviant behavior are allowed. Artists will submit their portfolios for judging on the first day of the contest. A three-judge panel will score each portfolio based on a rubric provided by the contest. Judges will also interview each artist about his/her work and how he/she has grown as an artist through the year. The interview will last 10 to 15 minutes. Scores will be averaged and portfolios will be ranked according to scores. Awards will go to first, second, and third place. All artwork will be on display after judging for public viewing.

- Individual Medium: Similar to the portfolio event, the purpose of this event is to allow students to develop stronger technical skills within a visual media. Students will choose work completed during the current school year in a particular media (i.e. pen & ink, charcoal, watercolor, oil, pastel, airbrushing, weaving, handmade paper, etc.) for submission. The chosen artwork cannot also be included in the portfolio event. Students are encouraged to select a piece that best shows their talents and skills as a developing artist. All work must be signed by the artist. Works will be divided for judging as best as possible, but some lumping together of related
media may be required due to time limitations. A three-judge panel will be provided to review the individual works and score them based on a rubric provided by the contest. Artists will be interviewed by the panel about their particular work, why this medium was chosen, and how they have grown as an artist. The interview will last 10 to 15 minutes. Scores will be averaged and works ranked according to score. Each division will be awarded a first, second, and third place. All work will be on display for public viewing after judging is complete.

• Choir Performance: The purpose of this event is for students strengthen vocal music skills, to hear other interpretations of choral music and see other presentations of music as well as learn to work together for the good of the group rather than individual interests. A participating school must have an organized choir under the direction of a staff member. The choir can range in size from 5 students (minimum) to 50 students (maximum). Accompanying music - either live or taped - must be provided by the participating school. Sound equipment for taped music and a piano will be provided by the host school. The presentation, whether one song or a montage of
related pieces, must not exceed 12 minutes in length. Songs should avoid controversial topics and unacceptable language. Religious music (i.e. hymns, gospel, etc.) is acceptable. A three-judge panel will be provided for the contest. Each school will scored according to a rubric provided by the contest. Scores will be averaged and schools ranked according to average. Awards will go to first, second, and third place.

- **Solo Performance:** Similar to the choir performance event, this event is an opportunity for students to strengthen vocal music skills and presentation skills on an individual basis. Students are encouraged to choose a music selection that best suits their vocal abilities and showcases their musical strengths. The selection must not exceed 6 minutes in length and must be suitable for an educational purpose. Unacceptable language, descriptions of violence, or deviant behavior will be allowed. Accompanying music must be on tape and must be provided by the student. Sound equipment and microphones will be provided by the host school. A three-judge panel will be provided. Performances will be scored according to a rubric provided by the contest. Awards will be given to first, second, and third
• **Headline Writing:** The purpose of this event is to strengthen students' writing abilities through concise word choice and critical decision making. This event consists of teams of 2-4 students. The students are given three articles from a typical newspaper. The students are to come up with three potential headlines for each article and rank them as their first, second, and third choices. Students will have 90 minutes to complete the task. Students are encouraged to consider important focus points of the articles, attention-grabbing phrasing, and word choice. A judge will review each headline group according to a rubric provided by the contest. Each group of three headlines for each article will be assigned points based on the rubric and all three groups will be averaged for an overall score for the team. Teams will be ranked according to scores and awards will go to first, second, and third place.

• **Sports Photography:** This event is an opportunity for students to strengthen their skills as photographers and use this tool as a means of emotional expression communication. Each student will submit one original candid 8x10 black and
white photograph of an amateur athletic event. This photograph should show an athlete in action during a game or during practice. The object of the contest is to capture the spirit of the sport and the athlete. Students will be interviewed by the judge about the event and circumstances surrounding the photo. Interviews will be 5 to 10 minutes. One judge will be provided by the contest. The judge will score the submissions according to a rubric provided by the contest and submissions will be ranked according to score. Photos will be on display for public viewing after judging is completed. Awards will go to first, second, and third place.

• **Photo Essay:** The purpose of this event is to provide students with an opportunity to develop talents and increase technical knowledge of the art of photography. It is also meant to help students develop a sense of self-expression and think critically about themes in communication. Contestants will submit five original 8x10 black and white photographs that involve a common theme (i.e. a day in the life, homework, lunchtime, etc.). The theme can be school related or community related. Subjects of photographs should be appropriate for educational purposes. No
depictions of violence, sexual behavior, or deviant behavior will be allowed. Photos should be organized and progress through a particular message the artist is trying to communicate. Photos should be presented in clear plastic presentation sheets inside a notebook. One judge will be provided by the contest and will score submissions according to the rubric provided by the contest. Scores will be averaged and ranked. Awards will be presented to first, second, and third place. Photo essays will be on display for public viewing after judging is completed.

Description of Pre-planning for Host School

The planning of a district-wide festival should begin with the creation of the Master calendar for the school and, if possible, the district. It is important for the host coordinator to reserve the dates well in advance so that interested teachers from across the district will know when to start working with students to prepare for the contest. By adhering to the following timeline, host schools should find the preplanning of this event to be a smooth experience:

**Beginning of the Year:** Determine dates of festival and reserve dates on school's master calendar and, if possible, the district master calendar. Host a Festival Kick-off meeting and invite Language Arts,
elective, Fine Arts, Journalism, and Choir teachers. This meeting should be an introduction to the festival concept and should be a chance for the host coordinator to get the schools within the district excited about the idea. It is also a chance for other schools within the district to volunteer assistance and ask questions. **Note:** The kick-off meeting is especially important the first year of the festival. It is also a good idea to continue if teacher turnover in the district becomes a problem.

**Three Months in Advance:** Determine the events that are appropriate for the festival and those that most closely reflect the talents and interests of the student population of the district. Determine the schedule for all events as well as all rounds of all events to be held during the two days of the festival. This is also a good time to determine room assignments for the contest. Classrooms will be used extensively during this contest. It is wise to try to assign rooms in blocks (i.e. all prose rounds should be close together, all duet rounds should be close together). Check auditorium equipment for light, sound, and other problems and repair if necessary. Check choir room (or room used for choir performance) for sound equipment problems. It is also possible to check with local theaters or the high school about reserving space for
one act play or choir performances if necessary. Check with other clubs and organizations on campus (i.e. PTA, cheerleaders, ASB) about hosting the refreshments as a fundraiser. These clubs can provide food for students participating in the contest. Talk with sponsors about reasonable charges and get a commitment. It is also possible to check with local fast food chains about donating or reducing the price of meals and bringing them on campus for this festival. Talk with the PTA or ASB about organizing entertainment for students as they wait for events. This can range from arts and crafts to games of skill to music and movies. This is also an important time to build stock set pieces for use during the one-act play contest. These should be stored safely until festival. Risers for choir performance should also be built or ordered if necessary.

Two Months in Advance: Send out invitation packets to schools within the district. If this festival is being held primarily for middle school students, it is best to invite only the other middle schools. This is meant to be an opportunity for students to meet with their peers. The invitation packet should include a cover letter explaining the purpose of the festival, the contest form (including the registration fee chart), a copy of the schedule for the festival (subject to
change), a copy of the judging rubrics for all events, and a copy of the rules for all events. It is important to include the name and phone number of the host coordinator.

**Six Weeks in Advance:** Send out invitations to potential judges. Judges can be teachers at the host school, parents of non-participating students, high school seniors who have shown talent within a particular field, members of volunteer organizations, or senior citizens and business leaders from the community. It is particularly valuable to try to get judges with an expertise within a certain field. Try to get journalists from local papers to judge journalism events, and if possible, make use of the local community college professors. The invitation should include a cover letter explaining the festival and a form for the judge to express interest in judging particular events. Be sure to include the name and phone number of the host coordinator and a self-addressed and stamped envelop for return forms. It is wise to keep a list of names and phone numbers of all potential judges and call each one two weeks after invitations are sent out to get a verbal commitment if possible. The best resource for judges is parents and teachers at the host school. Make use of these resources.
One Month in Advance: At this time, contest forms should start arriving from the invited schools. As soon as they arrive, the coordinator should begin to assign contestants to preliminary rounds. Room assignments should be determined and set. The coordinator should contact a key person at each of the invited schools about invitations not yet received, any questions or concerns about schedules or rules, and ask each school to help provide judges. Judge forms should begin to arrive and phone contacts should be made to encourage participation. Parent volunteers should be assigned to specific tasks. Festival coordinator should order awards, ribbons, and participation certificates.

One Week in Advance: The week of the festival should run smoothly if preplanning has been done. During this week, the coordinator or designee should order food for the coaches lounge and judges lounge. This is meant to be a nice perk for the teachers and judges who have volunteered their time to help the contest. The food should be provided without charge to the teachers and judges. PTA or ASB might provide this. Food should be ready to be picked up by coordinator or designee early on the first day of the festival. During this week, the coordinator should also assign student volunteers to specific jobs during the
festival. These can be as simple as festival guides who stand in the halls directing contestants to rooms, timekeepers for specific events, tabulation room attendants to help to coordinator with results of each round, runners and messengers, coaches and judges lounge attendants, and any other jobs necessary. This is also the time to assign parent and teacher volunteers to specific jobs that might include registration of schools on the first day of the festival, tabulation personnel, judges, etc. Before the first day of the festival the coordinator should pick up the awards and check them for mistakes. This is also the time to send notices to teachers in the host school notifying them if their room will be used during the festival. Remind them to put away any valuable items or easily destroyed items. The coordinator and volunteers will be responsible for clean-up after the festival. Prior to the first day of the festival all ballots for all events should be copied. If possible, it is efficient to have the names of contestants on the preliminary round ballots. It is also a good idea to have signs made and posted for the contest notifying participants of important places such as the registration tables, tabulation room, coaches lounge, and judges lounge.
The Morning of the Festival: Student and parent volunteers should meet with host school coordinator early on the morning of the event. Volunteers should be assigned to their first tasks. Host coordinator should stay at registration tables during peak registration time to solve problems. Prior to the first rounds of the events, coordinator should send student runners to individual rooms to make sure judge, ballots, timekeeper, and contestants have arrived. During the festival the coordinator should maintain contact with the tabulation room and the parent volunteers in charge of creating the final results lists. Coordinator should have a parent volunteer (or responsible student if necessary) in charge of each of the following:

- refreshment coordination
- tabulation room
- timekeeper assignments
- registration
- off-site events (if necessary)
- one-act play event

All should run smoothly during the contest if coordinator has planned for back-up judges, name changes of contestants, and time restraints.
A Brief Description of Inviting Schools to the Festival

Once a school has decided to host a festival for literature and the arts, it then becomes a matter of getting other schools to get as excited about the idea. With the tremendous demands placed on teachers in California schools, it is important to present this new program as an exciting and valuable experience for middle grade students. The interest generated within the host school can become contagious throughout a district, especially with support from district administration.

For the inaugural festival, it is recommended that a school keep the invitees to a manageable number - 4 to 5 schools will give the festival many students for competition and still keep the numbers manageable. It is also good to start with schools in the same district since they also will be encouraged by district administration. It is recommended that schools of the same age range stay together. In other words, if this is intended to be a middle school festival, it is not recommended inviting high school students. The age difference does create a disadvantage. It is fine for a host school to invite schools from outside the district, especially if numbers or interest is low within the district.

Number of participants can become a concern. For a first time festival, it is highly recommended that the host coordinator plan a kick-off meeting with Language Arts and
elective teachers from all schools within the district. This is a good opportunity to survey interest from potential coaches and also to find out which events the students at all of the schools would be most interested. During the first few years of the festival, participation might be low. This is understandable and okay. Even if one student is allowed to show off his/her work and allowed to hear constructive criticism from adults then the festival is worth the time and effort. Remember, the goal of the festival is to allow students to come together in the spirit of healthy competition and to allow them to see the work of their peers and have that work examined by and suggestions given by adults other than teachers.

The festival invitation should include the following:

- A cover letter stating the goal
- A festival form for signing students up for the events
- A schedule of the times of the events
- A scale for registration fees
- A map to the school
- A self-addressed and stamped envelop for returning the sign-up form and fees
- Rules for each event and rubrics used for judging the events.

It is important for a host school to understand that this festival will have some initial costs. Most of the cost can
be made-up through the charging of registration fees to the participating schools. Actual charges are up to the host school. The fees should be based on the number of students participating from the school. This can range from a flat fee at certain numbers or can be as simple as charging $5 per student in each event and a flat fee for each one-act play and choir group.

Registration forms should be sent back to the host school as soon as possible. It is important for the cover letter to include the name and school phone number of the host coordinator should any questions arise. An account should be set up with the PTA or ASB at the host school for incoming registration fees.

A Brief Description of Event Scheduling

While scheduling can get complicated, the festival should run smoothly if the schedule is efficient but flexible. It is important for scheduling purposes that registration begins as early as possible. In the event that a district will not allow for early release of participating students, registration should begin as soon as transportation allows. Since this is an educational activity, it is the hope of the author that principals and district administration allow students out of school early to participate.

Since the different categories of events are vastly
different in time requirements, it is necessary to create an individual schedule for each event. These schedules should make the best use of the time available during the two days of the festival. Some suggestions to assist in developing schedules are:

Schedule registration for all schools, regardless of events for one common time. This allows the coordinator to take care of major issues immediately.

Speech events are the most time consuming and require the most space. This group of events should be done first. Each round should have no more than eight participants for judging efficiency. It should be safe to schedule each preliminary round every hour and a half. Judges should be encouraged to write plenty of constructive suggestions for each performer, so more time might be needed. This is especially true for semi-final and final rounds.

One-act play event, if being held at a separate venue, can run on a schedule of its own. Depending on how many schools are participating in this event, it should be safe to schedule one
performance every hour and a half. It is also possible for each group to meet with the judge after the performance, if time allows, for suggestions for improvement and critique. It is important to stress to the judge not to mention how performances are ranked until the awards ceremony.

Interviews for art events should be scheduled for every twenty minutes. The actual interview should be fifteen minutes with five minutes to allow the judges to make notes between participants.

Choir events should be scheduled similar to one-act play event. Time should be allowed for set-up and take down of risers, if necessary. Solo performances should be scheduled every twenty minutes to allow time for judges to make notes.

A Brief Description of Event Rubrics

Judges will receive a copy of the rubric created for the events to be judged. The rubrics can be created by the host school coordinator to better suit the performance standards for a specific district or a host school can use
the ones provided in the appendices of this handbook. The purpose of the rubrics is to provide a standard of excellence on which judges can base their decisions. The rubrics provided in this handbook are based on a four-point system. Each level is provided with a description of what a performance or product should look like to qualify for that rating. The rubric levels for use in ranking should look something like the following:

4 - Superior
3 - Excellent
2 - Good
1 - Needs Improvement

To get a better idea of what the qualifications for each level might look like, please see the appendix for rubrics.

A Brief Description of Judges' Training

To ensure a satisfying festival and quality judging, it is important to train the judges for the particular events. It is, of course, helpful if a coordinator can find judges who work in a particular field that is associated with the events they will judge. Language Arts teachers can judge creative writing and essay events, local journalists can judge the journalism events, community college theatre professors or experienced local directors can judge the one-act play events and college music professors can judge the choir events. If none of these are available, it is
possible to quickly train people with some experience in the fields to know what to look for according to the rubrics. The most important suggestions for judges' training are the following:

Train the judges to stick closely to the rubrics. It is important for the integrity of the festival that judges honestly look at each performance or product and hold it strictly to the rubric. Judges who are too easy or too hard on participants defeat the purpose of the festival.

Explain to the judges what constructive criticism looks like and suggest that they try to find constructive comments for each performance or product. A part of the learning process for each student is to learn how to improve a performance or product based on the suggestions of adults or experts. It is important for judges to make suggestions for each performance or product at each level. It is also important for judges not to suggest that a performance is perfect and cannot be improved since this defeats the purpose of the festival.

It is important to train judges to be as unbiased as possible. To avoid some potential problems
tell judges that they should avoid, if possible, judging participants with whom they have a personal relationship. If a judge teaches the student, is a friend of the family, or in another way has known the student prior to the festival, this may create accusations of favoritism or bias. The coordinator can prevent some of this ahead of time when assigning judges to rounds. Judging assignments can also be changed prior to rounds if necessary. Sometimes it is not possible to avoid this situation, especially in final rounds, and the coordinator should notify the judges in advance and inform them to be unbiased in their judging of participants.

Instruct judges to avoid letting personal preference or bias about the subject matter of a speech or essay or the title and/or author of a selection affect their opinion of the overall performance. It is important for the judge to look at the student's performance rather than a controversial topic or a selection that the judge considers poor.
A Brief Description of General Rules for the Festival

In order for the festival to run smoothly and be an enjoyable and memorable learning experience for all those involved it is necessary to have specific rules for behavior and etiquette during the festival. Many of the basic behavior expectations can be based on the behavior expectations of the host school or the district. It is helpful to restate these expectations in the materials to be sent to each school so that complications can be avoided. If the host school would like to create a list of its own behavior expectations and festival etiquette some suggestions are:

1. Participants will exhibit good sportsmanship throughout the festival regardless of personal outcomes.

2. Coaches and students will refrain from negative comments and unjustified complaints about the festival, judges, other participants, or results of rounds.

3. Coaches with legitimate concerns can report to the coordinator of the festival to discuss problems.

4. The decisions of the judges are final. Students and coaches will refrain from confrontations and arguments with judges.

5. The coach is responsible for the behavior of
his/her student participants.

6. Although there is no specific dress code, student participants are expected to recognize the importance of their visual impression on judges and others and dress respectfully for the festival and appropriately.

7. Student participants are not allowed in the tabulation room, judges' lounge or coaches lounge unescorted.

8. Student participants are not allowed in areas of the host school marked off-limits.

9. Student participants will respect the use of the host school classrooms and leave items in the classrooms alone.

Behavior expectations and festival etiquette rules are not meant to limit the experience of student participants, rather they are meant to assist in creating an atmosphere in which all students can feel safe in expressing themselves through their performances or products. Most expectations are basic rules of behavior that one would find in any educational situation.

Summary of Festival

The Festival for Literature and the Arts can be a wonderful educational experience for students and teachers. The amount of work involved in practicing, rehearsing,
honoring skills, and supporting students' developing talents
can reach a final pay-off when the students get a chance to
put their skills to the test against their peers. Festivals
held in other states, Texas in particular, have been
successful for many years. The look in the eyes of students
as they advance from one level to the next, or when they
walk up on stage to receive an award is remarkable.

The first festival held in a district can be
frightening and mistakes are expected. It is a rather
daunting undertaking that is truly worthwhile. Each annual
festival should learn from the years previous. Adaptations,
changes in rules and events, scheduling, and all of the
other aspects of the festival are a learning process. The
host coordinator should use these suggestions provided here
as a jumping-off point for their own ideas.

Organizational skills, assistance from district and
site administration, help from students and parents are
important parts of hosting a successful festival. A host
coordinator is expected to make the best use of all the
help offered from students, teachers, and parents. This is
not an undertaking easily accomplished by one individual.

Best of luck and thank you for supporting the
advancement of the written word, the spoken word, and the
visual arts.
Appendix A:
Event Rules
Event Rules

The following are general rules for each of the events suggested in this project for a festival for literature and the arts. The rules describe the purpose of the event, time requirements, materials needed, and general requirements/description, of the event. This appendix is meant to be a springboard for host school coordinators to use to develop their own events or to adapt those suggested to suit the needs of their district standards and student interests. It is suggested that a host school send copies of the rules for each event as a part of the registration packet to invited schools. Rules should be explicit in terms of the framework of the performance or product but should not limit creativity in the student. Rules should be fair and consistent for each event and should be within reach of the capabilities of the students within the district.
Original Short Story
Rules

Purpose: to promote creativity in an academic format and encourage stronger writing skills among students.

Materials: stories should be typed legibly with a one inch margin on all sides. Print should be on one side of the page and stories should be printed on white paper only. A title page stating only the title of the story and the author's first and last name should be included. Stories should be stapled in the upper left hand corner or paper-clipped in the upper left hand corner only. Do not bind the story or place it in a folder.

Length of Story: 2,000 to 10,000 words illustrations should not be included in story

Requirements: - stories must have been written during the current school year (after September first or first day of first semester according to district calendar).
- subject matter should be appropriate for educational setting (i.e. no swear words, sexual descriptions, depictions of overtly violent acts, or deviant behavior).
- original story can be on any topic of interest to the student writer.
- stories must be the original work of the individual submitting it. Individual authorship only, no co-written or group written works will be accepted.
- judges will rank stories according to the rubric provided by the festival.
Spontaneous Creative Writing
Rules

Purpose: to promote creativity and improve writing skills among students as well as increase ability to think quickly in a narrative fashion.

Materials: contest will provide lined paper and ball-point pens upon entering writing room.

Time Requirements: students will have 120 minutes to complete their stories.

Requirements:
- students will be given a prompt and three pictures.
- the original story must contain a description of the action in at least one picture.
- written stories must be legible.
- students are not allowed to bring any materials (books, notebooks, computers) into the writing room.
- students may not leave the writing room once the contest has begun.
- no talking is allowed in the writing room.
- subject matter of the original stories should be appropriate for an educational setting (no swear words, sexual descriptions, depictions of overtly violent acts, or deviant behavior).
- Judges will rank stories according to the rubric provided by the festival.
Essay Writing
Rules

Purpose: to improve writing skills and help students refine writing abilities, to help students learn to write essays that are logical, interesting and original in a given time period.

Materials: Festival will provide lined paper and ball-point pens upon entering the writing room.

Time Requirements: Student writers will have 120 minutes to complete the essay.

Requirements:
- Contestants will be given 2 prompts.
- Essay must address only one prompt.
- Students are encouraged to focus on purpose of essay, format and organization of essay, type of audience, point of view, and subject matter.
- Essays should be logical and clearly define the problem or statement being made about the topic.
- Body of essay should focus on supporting/defending the points made by the writer.
- Essays must be legible.
- Subject matter should be appropriate for an educational setting (no swear words, sexual descriptions, depictions of graphic violence, or deviant behavior).
- Students may not leave the writing room once the contest has begun.
- No talking in the writing room.
- Participants may not bring materials into the writing room (books, notebooks, computers).
- Judges will rank essays according to the rubric provided by the festival.
Extemporaneous Speaking
Rules

Purpose: to provide students with the opportunity to evaluate speeches given by peers, explore the use of voice and body in speaking situations, to examine the different purposes of speaking, organize ideas quickly, prepare and deliver speeches, and to develop self-confidence.

Materials: students may bring printed material into the speech prep room, but may not bring electronic equipment (i.e. computers). Students must provide 3x5 index cards for speech outlines if desired. No materials other than 3x5 cards may be used during the presentation of the speech.

Time Requirements: 15 minutes to prepare speech in prep room and 5 to 10 minutes for speech presentation.

Requirements:
- students will draw three topics that range from broad general topics to current events.
- students will choose one topic from those drawn.
- no talking is permitted in speech prep room.
- students may use any printed material they bring with them to assist in creating their speech.
- speeches should focus on major points of the issue and be thorough in providing information on the topic.
- judges will rank speeches according to the rubric provided by the festival.
- the top three contestants will advance from prelim rounds to semi-finals and the top two contestants will advance from semi-finals to finals.
- awards will go to first, second, and third place in finals round.
Informative Speaking
Rules

Purpose: to provide students with the opportunity to develop research skills as well as present information through oral presentation that is organized, clear in thought and purpose, and original.

Materials: Speeches should be memorized. Visual aids, electronic devices, scripts are not allowed.

Time Requirements: Speech presentation should be 5 minutes (minimum) to 10 minutes (maximum).

Requirements:
- The topic for this event can be anything of interest to the student.
- Topics should be appropriate for an educational setting. Controversial topics are allowed as long as the subject matter is handled respectfully.
- Speech should clearly present the topic in an informational manner (i.e. not taking a particular stand, but providing information about the topic in a balanced manner).
- Presentation of speech is limited to movement of the body from the waist up. Movement of the feet (pacing, striding) is discouraged.
- Speech should contain some information (quotes) from experts or other published sources to give substance to the topic.
- Judges will rank speeches according to the rubric provided by the festival.
- The top three contestants in each prelim round will advance to the semi-final round and the top two contestants from each semi-final will advance to the final round.
- Awards will go to first, second, and third place in finals round.
Persuasive Speaking
Rules

Purpose: to provide students with the opportunity to develop research skills and oral presentation skills, to give students the opportunity to create speeches that are organized, clear in thought and purpose, and original.

Materials: Speeches should be memorized. Visual aids, electronic devices, scripts are not allowed.

Time Requirements: Speech presentation should be 5 minutes (minimum) to 10 minutes (maximum).

Requirements:
- The topic for this event can be anything of interest to the student.
- Topics should be appropriate for an educational setting. Controversial topics are allowed as long as the subject matter is handled respectfully.
- Speech should clearly present the topic in an informational manner (i.e. not taking a particular stand, but providing information about the topic in a balanced manner).
- Presentation of speech is limited to movement of the body from the waist up. Movement of the feet (pacing, striding) is discouraged.
- Speech should contain some information (quotes) from experts or other published sources to give substance to the topic.
- Judges will rank speeches according to the rubric provided by the festival.
- The top three contestants in each prelim round will advance to the semi-final round and the top two contestants from each semi-final will advance to the final round.
- Awards will go to first, second, and third place in finals round.
Team Debate
Rules

Purpose: to provide students with the opportunity to develop research skills for specific topics, analyze materials needed to take a stand on a particular argument, clarify and organize thoughts quickly to defend a position, and present arguments as well as view an opponent's arguments with respect.

Materials: Students may bring any printed material to the debate round they feel is necessary. This should include all materials needed to present their side of the argument including evidence for rebuttal. Students may also bring materials related to the resolution to refute the opposing team's position. Electronic devices and visual aids are not allowed. Material for taking notes during the debate round is encouraged.

Time Requirements: each team member on both sides has the opportunity to speak twice within the debate structure. Careful examination of the order is encouraged during preparation. Total time allotted for a debate round is approximately 65 minutes. Speech times are:

- First Affirmative Speech - 8 minutes
- Prep time - 3 minutes
- First Negative Speech - 8 minutes
- Prep Time - 3 minutes
- Second Affirmative Speech - 8 minutes
- Prep Time - 3 minutes
- Second Negative Speech - 8 minutes
- Prep Time - 3 minutes
- First Neg. Rebuttal - 5 minutes
- First Aff. Rebuttal - 5 minutes
- Second Neg. Rebuttal - 5 minutes
- Second Aff. Rebuttal - 5 minutes

Debate Resolution: The host coordinator or the district should choose a resolution that is of interest and can be handled capably by students within their district. Resolution topics should be current and should have some meaning to students. Resolutions should be a topic that clearly can be argued either for or against. The debate resolution should be something that is easily accessible within the scope of research. An example of a resolution is:

Resolved: School districts should create a policy that requires student athletes to maintain a C average in order to participate in school sponsored sports events.
Requirements:
- debate is a team event comprised of two students on each side.
- preparation for the festival should consist of preparing a case and plan defending the affirmative side of the resolution.
- preparation should also include researching possible materials to be used in refuting another team's affirmative case, thus preparing for a negative defense.
- during the four preliminary rounds a team will present the affirmative side of the resolution for two rounds and the negative for two rounds.
- quarter-final, semi-final, and final rounds sides will be determined by coin toss.
- detailed instruction on debate form and basic rules can be found in many publications.
- teams will advance out of prelims based on win/loss record as well as speaker points assigned by the judge to each student's participation in the round.
- judge will decide winner of round based on the rubric provided by the festival.
- awards will go to first, second, and third place.
Prose Reading

Rules

Purpose: to provide students with the opportunity to develop oral presentation skills and use storytelling devices through the presentation of previously published material.

Materials: Script should be typed or handwritten and presented in a standard, hard-covered, solid-colored notebook. Visual aids, costumes, and props are not allowed.

Time Requirements: Including the introduction the entire performance should range from 5 minutes (minimum) to 8 minutes (maximum).

Requirements: - students should select for presentation a form of narrative fiction, either a short story or a cutting from a novel.
- presentation should begin with a short, original, memorized introduction that includes the title and author of the selection.
- students are encouraged to choose a selection that has a definite beginning, middle, and end.
- students are encouraged to choose a selection that showcases their particular storytelling talents.
- selections should be appropriate for educational purpose (no swear words, sexual description, overtly graphic depictions of violence, or deviant behavior).
- presentation of performance is limited to movement of the body from the waist up. Movement of the feet (pacing, striding) is discouraged.
- judges will rank performances according to the rubric provided by the festival.
- the top three contestants in each prelim round will advance to the semi-final round and the top two contestants from each semi-final will advance to the final round and awards will go to first, second, and third place.
Poetry Reading

Rules

Purpose: to provide students with the opportunity to develop oral presentation skills and use poetry devices through the presentation of previously published material.

Materials: Script should be typed or handwritten and presented in a standard, hard-covered, solid-colored notebook. Visual aids, costumes, and props are not allowed.

Time Requirements: Including the introduction the entire performance should range from 5 minutes (minimum) to 8 minutes (maximum).

Requirements: - students should select for presentation a form of verse or lyric fiction, either a poem or a selection of poems.
- presentation should begin with a short, original, memorized introduction that includes the title and author of the selection.
- students are encouraged to choose a poem of length or a collection of poems around one theme.
- students are encouraged to choose a selection that showcases their particular oral presentation talents.
- selections should be appropriate for educational purpose (no swear words, sexual description, overtly graphic depictions of violence, or deviant behavior).
- presentation of performance is limited to movement of the body from the waist up. Movement of the feet (pacing, striding) is discouraged.
- judges will rank performances according to the rubric provided by the festival.
- the top three contestants in each prelim round will advance to the semi-final round and the top two contestants from each semi-final will advance to the final round and awards will go to first, second, and third place.
Humorous Interpretation
Rules

Purpose: to provide students with the opportunity to develop acting oral presentation skills as well as memorization skills through previously published material.

Materials: Performances should be memorized. Visual aids, electronic devices, scripts are not allowed.

Time Requirements: Performances should be 5 minutes (minimum) to 10 minutes (maximum).

Requirements: - students are encouraged to find a monologue or scene from a published play, movie script, television program, or radio program and it should be light and humorous in nature.
- due to copyright concerns, students are not allowed to present stand-up routines or unpublished scripts, even from film productions.
- if a scene with multiple characters is chosen, contestants should focus on smooth transitions between characters and consistent and unique voices for each character.
- students are encouraged to choose a selection that showcases their particular acting talents.
- selections should be appropriate for educational purpose (no swear words, sexual description, overtly graphic depictions of violence, or deviant behavior).
- presentation of performance is limited to movement of the body from the waist up. Movement of the feet (pacing, striding) is discouraged.
- judges will rank performances according to the rubric provided by the festival.
- the top three contestants in each prelim round will advance to the semi-final round and the top two contestants from each semi-final will advance to the final round.
Dramatic Interpretation
Rules

Purpose: to provide students with the opportunity to develop acting oral presentation skills as well as memorization skills through previously published material.

Materials: Performances should be memorized. Visual aids, electronic devices, scripts are not allowed.

Time Requirements: Performances should be 5 minutes (minimum) to 10 minutes (maximum).

Requirements: - students are encouraged to find a monologue or scene from a published play, movie script, television program, or radio program and it should be dramatic or serious in nature.
- due to copyright concerns, students are not allowed to present stand-up routines or unpublished scripts, even from film productions.
- if a scene with multiple characters is chosen, contestants should focus on smooth transitions between characters and consistent and unique voices for each character.
- students are encouraged to choose a selection that showcases their particular acting talents.
- selections should be appropriate for educational purpose (no swear words, sexual description, overtly graphic depictions of violence, or deviant behavior).
- presentation of performance is limited to movement of the body from the waist up. Movement of the feet (pacing, striding) is discouraged.
- judges will rank performances according to the rubric provided by the festival.
- the top three contestants in each prelim round will advance to the semi-final round and the top two contestants from each semi-final will advance to the final round.
Duet Acting
Rules

Purpose: to provide students with the opportunity to develop acting oral presentation skills as well as memorization skills through previously published material.

Materials: Performances should be memorized. Visual aids, electronic devices, scripts are not allowed. Two chairs will be provided at the festival for use as props, no other props or sets may be used. Costumes are allowed as long as they do not detract from the performance.

Time Requirements: Performances should be 7 minutes (minimum) to 12 minutes (maximum).

Requirements: - this is a team event consisting of two student actors.
- contestants should choose a scene that is balanced (allowing each actor equal or almost equal lines) and one that showcases their particular acting talents.
- the scene can be either humorous or dramatic in nature.
- performance must include an original introduction that includes the title and author of the performance.
- blocking is encouraged, but must be kept within a 6'x 6' imaginary square.
- lighting, makeup, and sound effects are not allowed.
- judges will rank performances according to the rubric provided by the festival.
- the top three teams in each prelim round will advance to the semi-final round and the top two contestants from each semi-final will advance to the final round.
One-Act Play
Rules

Purpose: to provide students with the opportunity to work in all aspects of the production of a 40-minute play; to foster an appreciation of good acting, good directing, and good drama; to improve acting skills and oral interpretation skills; to learn to take direction from others; and to learn to work as part of a team.

Materials: Performances will adhere to the following limitation and requirements for sets and props allowed:
- the basic set will be provided by the festival which will consist of the following:
  - standard box set draperies
  - two 4'x6' wooden platforms
  - two 4'x4' wooden platforms
  - two 4' inclined ramps
  - two 4' step units
  - two 1'x6' rectangular pylons
  - two 1'x4' rectangular pylons
  - two 6' standard door units
  - two 6' two-fold flats
  - two 6' three-fold flats
  - two 4' solid wooden cubes
  - two 2' solid wooden cubes
  - standard six or nine area light plot is included as part of basic set.
- props, furniture, and other small set pieces must be provided by participating schools.
- sound effects must be provided by the participating school, sound equipment will be provided by host school.
- storage for props, costumes, and other materials will be provided by the host school during the festival, transportation of materials is the responsibility of the participating schools.

Time Requirements: total length of performance must not exceed 40 minutes. There will be 10 minutes for the actors to set up the stage and 10 minutes to break down the stage. All lighting cues, including blackouts, fades, set changes, etc. must be included in the 40 minutes performance time. A festival time keeper will be backstage to warn the actors of the time. The time begins after the first light cue occurs or lines are spoken.
Requirements:

- only students currently attended the represented school may participate in the performance. Adult actors are not allowed.
- there is no amateur rule, students enrolled in the represented school who are also professional actors may participate.
- the director(s) of the performance must be full-time employees of the represented school/district. Schools may not pay a professional actor/director to direct one-act. A school may have two co-directors for a one-act play.
- Directors shall not accept aid from professional actors, directors, designers (other than parent volunteers) in the creation of the performance.
- directors should choose a one-act play or a cutting from a full-length play that does not exceed the time limit.
- permission from publishing company and royalties must be obtained before performance at festival.
- the number of cast members for the performance must not exceed 15. Actors may play multiple roles.
- no more than four students may serve as crew for the performance.
- no real firearms are permitted on stage. Discharge of a real firearm on stage or in the wings is not permitted.
- prompting of actors is not permitted.
- the director is not permitted backstage, in the light booth or in the wings during the actual performance. He/she is allowed in these areas during the rehearsal and strike periods.
- order of performances will be set by the host coordinator. Rehearsal schedule will be in reverse order from performance order (i.e. last to rehearse will be first to perform.)
- student volunteers trained in the particular areas of technical expertise will be provided by the host school to assist with technical aspects of the performances. A student from the host school will operate the lights for all the performances during the festival.
- the judges for the one-act play portion of the festival will be trained in the field of theatre arts. They will have experience in the field and will be knowledgeable in
the aspects of directing students. Options for judges include professors at local community colleges, directors from local theatre companies, or high school theatre teachers from outside the district. - the judges will rank all plays according to a rubric provided by the festival. - each school will perform only once. - awards will be given in the following areas: - first, second, and third place will be awarded to the top performances. - best actor and actress will be awarded to the top male and female participants according to judges' discretion. - all-star cast will be awarded to actors and actresses according to judges' discretion. - subject matter of performed plays should be appropriate for educational purposes (no swear words, sexual description or acts, overtly violent acts, or deviant behavior).
Art Portfolio

Rules

Purpose: to provide students with the opportunity to present original works of visual arts in a variety of artistic media, to show their work that best exemplifies their particular artistic talents, and to take constructive criticism graciously.

Materials: Works to be submitted in the portfolio should be no larger than 4' x 4' on canvas or paper. Sculpture, metalwork, costume design, and other three dimensional artwork is discouraged because of possible transportation problems and lack of space for display.

Time Requirements: All artwork should be that which was started and completed within the current school year. Each student will meet with the judge for a 15 minute interview in which the judge will discuss the student's growth as an artist and the meaning of the artwork.

Requirements:  
- students are encouraged to develop a portfolio from the current school year that reflects their best work and shows their flexibility as an artist of various media.
- students are required to show works from at least three different media that can include:  
  - pen & ink
  - charcoal
  - watercolor
  - pastel
  - oil
  - handmade paper
  - pencil sketch
  - airbrushing
  - weaving
  - other media for paper or canvas
- students are encouraged to select works that show their flexibility in subject matter (i.e. still life, abstract, modern, commercial art should all be included).
- all work must be signed by the artist.
- subject matter of artwork should be appropriate for educational purposes (no depictions of nudes, sexual situations, overtly violent situations, or deviant behavior).
- artists will meet with the judge for a 15 minute interview in which they will discuss their growth as an artist and the
meaning behind their work.
- a three-judge panel will judge all artwork and rank portfolios according to a rubric provided by the festival.
- awards will go to first, second, and third place.
- all portfolios will be placed on display for public viewing once judging has finished.
Individual Media Rules

Purpose: to provide an opportunity for students to develop stronger technical skills within a visual media.

Materials: Works to be submitted in the portfolio should be no larger than 4'x 4' on canvas or paper. Sculpture, metalwork, costume design, and other three dimensional artwork is discouraged because of possible transportation problems and lack of space for display.

Time Requirements: All artwork should be that which was started and completed within the current school year. Each student will meet with the judge for a 15 minute interview in which the judge will discuss the student's growth as an artist and the meaning of the artwork.

Requirements: - students are encouraged to select work from the current school year that reflects their best technical and artistic skills and shows their expertise in a particular medium.
- students are required to show works from at least three different media that can include: - pen & ink - charcoal - watercolor - pastel - oil - handmade paper - pencil sketch - airbrushing - weaving - other media for paper or canvas
- works will be divided into categories when possible, but some lumping together of related media may be required due to time limitations or lack of entries.
- subject matter of artwork should be appropriate for educational purposes (no depictions of nudes, sexual situations, overtly violent situations, or deviant behavior).
- artists will meet with the judge for a 15 minute interview in which they will discuss their growth as an artist and the meaning behind their work.
- a three-judge panel will judge all artwork and rank according to a rubric provided by the festival.
- awards will go to first, second, and third place.
Choir Performance
Rules

Purpose: to provide students with the opportunity to strengthen vocal music skills, to hear other choral interpretations of music as well as learn to work together for the good of the group rather than individual interests.

Materials: Performances should be memorized, accompanying music should be either taped or musicians provided by the participating school. Costumes (i.e. choir robes, uniforms, coordinated outfits) are encouraged for the look of the choir. Sound equipment and a piano will be provided by the host school.

Time Requirements: The presentation, whether one song or a montage of related pieces, must not exceed 12 minutes in length.

Requirements:  
- participating school must have an organized choir under the direction of a current staff member.
- choir can range in size from 5 students (minimum) to 50 students (maximum).
- songs should avoid controversial subjects and unacceptable language.
- religious music (i.e. hymns, gospel, etc.) is acceptable.
- a three-judge panel will judge all performances and rank according to a rubric provided by the festival.
- awards will go to first, second, and third place.
Solo Music Performance
Rules

**Purpose:** to provide students the opportunity to strengthen vocal music skills and presentations skills on an individual basis.

**Materials:** Performances should be memorized. Taped accompanying music must be provided by the contestant. Sound equipment (microphone, tape player) will be provided by the festival.

**Time Requirements:** The performance must not exceed 6 minutes in length.

**Requirements:**
- students are encouraged to choose a selection that best suits their particular vocal abilities and showcases their strengths.
- songs should avoid controversial subjects and unacceptable language.
- religious music (i.e. hymns, gospel, etc.) is acceptable.
- a three-judge panel will judge all performances and rank according to a rubric provided by the festival.
- awards will go to first, second, and third place.
Headline Writing

Rules

Purpose: to provide students with the opportunity to strengthen writing abilities through concise word choice and critical decision making.

Materials: All materials will be provided by the festival. Students will be provided with articles, lined paper, and ball-point pens in the writing room.

Time Requirements: Students will have 90 minutes to read the articles and complete the tasks.

Requirements: - this is a team event consisting of teams of 2-4 students.
- students are given three articles of different types.
- teams will work together to come up with three potential headlines for each article and rank their choices first, second, and third.
- students are encouraged to consider important focus points of the articles, attention-grabbing phrasing, and word choice.
- a judge will review each headline group according to a rubric provided by the festival.
- Each group of three headlines for each article will be assigned points based on the rubric.
- all three groups from a team will be averaged for an overall score.
- teams will be ranked according to scores.
- awards will go to first, second, and third place.
Sport Photography
Rules

Purpose: to provide the opportunity for students to strengthen their skills as photographers and use this tool as a means of emotionally expressive communication.

Materials: Photographs should be 8x10 black and white and mounted on black or white flat mats.

Time Requirements: All work should be that which was started and completed within the current school year. Each student will meet with the judge for a 5 to 10 minute interview in which the judge will discuss the event in the photograph and the circumstances surrounding the event.

Requirements: - students will submit one original, candid, black and white 8x10 matted photo of an amateur athletic event.
- this photo should show an athlete in action during a game or during practice.
- the object of the submission is to capture the spirit of the sport and the athlete.
- interviews will last 5 to 10 minutes.
- the judge will score the submissions according to the rubric provided by the festival and submissions will be ranked according to score.
- awards will go to first, second, and third place.
- photos will be on display for public viewing after judging is complete.
Photo Essay
Rules

**Purpose:** to provide students with the opportunity to develop talents and increase technical knowledge of the art of photography as well as help students develop a sense of self-expression and critical thinking about themes in communication.

**Materials:** Contestants will submit five original, 8x10, black and white photographs that involve a common theme. Photos should be presented in clear plastic presentation sheets inside a notebook.

**Time Requirements:** All work should be that which was started and completed within the current school year. Each student will meet with the judge for a 5 to 10 minute interview in which the judge will discuss the themes represented in the photographs and why that particular theme is important to the photographer.

**Requirements:**

- students are encouraged to choose a theme that is important to them personally.
- photos should be organized and progress through a particular message the photographer is trying to communicate.
- the theme can be school related, family related, or community related.
- subject matter should be appropriate for educational purposes. No depictions of violence, sexual behavior, or deviant behavior is allowed.
- the judge will score the submissions according to the rubric provided by the festival and submissions will be ranked according to score.
- awards will go to first, second, and third place.
- photos will be on display for public viewing after judging is complete.
Appendix B:
Rubrics and Ballots
Rubrics

It is the responsibility of the host school and the coordinator to create and set the rubrics to be used by the judges to determine the quality of the performances and products at the festival. It is suggested that the coordinator introduce the topic at the introductory meeting at the beginning of the year so that teachers from across the district can assist in determining what should be considered the highest quality within reach of students in the district.

It is important to carefully design the rubrics since they are the ultimate tool that judges will use to determine the outcome of the events. There are many samples of rubric design to be found in educational journals. A good place to start is by looking at the performance based standards set by the district.

How should the festival events address the needs of the standards?

What are goals from the standards that are within reach of the students participating in the festival?

Suggestions for the basic design for a rubric might be:

4 - Superior
3 - Excellent
2 - Good
1 - Needs Improvement

Each level should have specific descriptions of what a performance or product should look like to reach that level.

The following pages are some samples for a coordinator to use as a foundation for creating rubrics specifically designed for his/her district.
Writing Rubric  
(Original Short Story, Spontaneous Creative Writing, Essay)

4 - A superior response will capture the readers interest and remain on the topic. Though it may have occasional errors, it will be generally well written, well organized, and adequately developed. It will reflect individual style and creativity.

3 - Like a superior paper, an excellent paper will answer all parts of the question in some detail. However, it may be weak in one or two characteristics of the superior response (i.e. logical connection between parts or insufficient detail.) It will have some mechanical errors.

2 - A good score will reflect papers which are not adequately developed in all parts of the subject or that do not relate the parts to each other. They will have more errors in mechanics and language usage than a 3 or 4 paper (i.e. a fragment that can be attached by changing punctuation, a comma splice, etc.) These errors, however, are not serious barriers to meaning and can readily or editorially be corrected.

1 - A score of Needs Improvement reflects papers which fail to treat some part of the topic or which fail to relate logically the parts of the essay, or which include substantial digression. These papers may include a number of serious errors. Serious errors impede meaning and can only be corrected by rewriting. The meaning is in some places unclear and general development is weak.
Public Speaking Rubric
(Extemporaneous, Informative, Persuasive)

4 - A superior delivery will have focus and remain on topic without straying. It will be well organized, with explanation and support of statements. It will show effective delivery through voice (tone, pitch, volume), body language, expression, and it will express originality and creativity. This level will use precise, engaging language and have few errors in English language usage.

3 - Like a superior, an excellent speech will have a focus and remain on topic. However, it may be somewhat weaker in one or two characteristics of the superior response (i.e. not quite the detail or rich language of the superior). There may be occasional errors in English usage, but the delivery will still be strong.

2 - This score reflects speeches which are not as developed in all parts of the topic content as the above rankings, but make a good attempt. They may have purpose, but are weakly delivered. They will have more errors in English language usage, will be shorter with less information/persuasion given, and may lack some detail. However, these errors are not serious barriers to the listener understanding the meaning of the speech.

1 - A score of Needs Improvement reflects speeches which are not clear in purpose. It will be shorter and contain less organization so that it seems to jump from idea to idea without clear connection between them. It lacks much detail as to reasons or explanations. There may be some errors in English language usage and delivery may be stiff with little voice fluctuation or involvement.
Oral Interpretation Rubric
(Prose, Poetry, Humorous, Dramatic Interpretation)

4 - A superior delivery will have appropriate animated expression and will show speaker's understanding of the piece. It will show effective delivery through voice (tone, pitch, volume), body language, expression.

3 - Like a superior delivery, an excellent delivery will have appropriate animated expression and will show speaker's understanding of the piece. Delivery will be effective in most areas. There may be few errors so slight and gracefully incorporated into the delivery as to be unnoticed.

2 - This score reflects delivery that is adequate but is lacking in expression and body language. Memorization (for humorous and dramatic interpretation) will be good but have noticeable errors.

1 - This score reflects delivery that is adequate but lacks interest or sparkle. The speaker may be stiff, monotone, with little energy or fluctuation in delivery. Memorization problems hinder performance.
Ballots

It is important for the host school coordinator to create ballots that address the events chosen for the festival and ballots that tie in to the district's performance based standards. Ballots can be simple and direct or can be thorough in details for the judge. It is important for the ballots to relate directly to the rubrics provided to the judges for each event. There should be plenty of space for judges' comments and suggestions. Debate ballots should be copied on carbonless three-ply forms so that one copy can go to each team in each round. If time allows it is strongly suggested to have the names of contestants on the ballots for each preliminary round. This will eliminate accidental misplacement of ballots as they are distributed. Ballots should include space for judges signature and ranking scores.

The following pages are some sample ballots that can be used as a starting point a coordinator to develop his/her own custom ballots for a successful festival.
Sample Writing Ballot

Event: Original Short Story  Spontaneous Creative Writing Essay

Contestant Name: ____________________________________________

School Name: ______________________________________________

Title of Writing: ____________________________________________

1. Does the essay/short story address the prompt clearly and stay on topic? 1 2 3 4

2. Does the essay/short story use details or explanations to support the main idea? 1 2 3 4

3. Does the essay/short story organize ideas and bring the story or essay to a logical conclusion? 1 2 3 4

4. Does the essay/short story observe standard conventions of language and mechanics? 1 2 3 4

5. Does the essay/short story display creativity and originality in the use of language and perspective? 1 2 3 4

Overall Score of this product: 4 - Superior 3 - Excellent 2 - Good 1 - Needs Improvement

Comments: __________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

Judge's Signature: _____________________________________________

Rank in round: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Sample Speaking Events Rubric

Event: Extemporaneous  Informative  Persuasive
Contestant Name: ____________________________________________
School Name: ________________________________________________
Title of Speech: ______________________________________________

1. Does the speech address the prompt clearly and stay on topic?  
   1  2  3  4

2. Does the speech use details or explanations to support the main idea?  
   1  2  3  4

3. Does the speech organize ideas and bring the topic to a logical conclusion?  
   1  2  3  4

4. Does the speech display interest and fluctuation in voice, language and mechanics?  
   1  2  3  4

5. Does the speech display creativity and originality in the use of language and perspective?  
   1  2  3  4

Overall Score of this product:  
4 - Superior  
3 - Excellent  
2 - Good  
1 - Needs Improvement

Comments: ____________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

Judge's Signature: ____________________________________________

Rank in round: 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8
### Sample Oral Interpretation Ballots

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event:</th>
<th>Prose</th>
<th>Poetry</th>
<th>Humorous</th>
<th>Dramatic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contestant Name:</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Name:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title of Selection:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author of Selection:</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Is the presentation memorized and free from stumble or mistakes?  
   1 2 3 4
2. Are transitions between characters smooth and not distracting to performance?  
   1 2 3 4
3. Is the presentation of the selection energetic and can it hold interest of the audience?  
   1 2 3 4
4. Does the performance capture the spirit and meaning of the selection?  
   1 2 3 4
5. Is body language and eye contact appropriate for the performance without becoming distracting?  
   1 2 3 4

Overall Score of this product:  
   4 - Superior  
   3 - Excellent  
   2 - Good  
   1 - Needs Improvement

Comments:  
__________________________________________________________________________  
__________________________________________________________________________  
__________________________________________________________________________  
__________________________________________________________________________  
__________________________________________________________________________  

Judge's Signature:  
__________________________________________________________________________

Rank in round: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Appendix C:
Sample Letters and Forms
Sample Letter of Invitation to Participating Schools:

Dear Middle School,

You are cordially invited to participate in an exciting gathering of creative and artistic students for our first annual Festival for Literature and the Arts. The festival will begin at noon on Friday, ___________ and all day Saturday, ___________ on the campus of (host middle school).

Join us for creative writing, passionate debate, gripping performances and dramatic visual works of color and light. At our festival, students will have an opportunity to meet others with similar interests and learn from each other. Teachers and coaches will have an opportunity to meet and share exciting ideas and hear what new projects are being tried throughout the district. In the spirit of healthy competition, our students will be pushed to stretch beyond their comfort zones and try something new and look at the world in an entirely new way.

Please see the enclosed registration form for the categories offered at this year’s festival. Students will be allowed to participate in multiple events in the festival so long as the events do not incur a time conflict (see contest schedule). Please find enclosed a copy of the general contest rules as well as the individual category rules. Rules will be strictly observed and the decision of the host school coordinator will be final.

Sweepstakes awards for the schools with the highest overall points (first, second, and third place) will be awarded as well as first, second, and third place trophies for individuals and teams in each category (one-act play contest is an exception, see category rules).

A wide range of refreshments will be available for students at reasonable prices during the contest and will be provided by the (club hosting refreshments).

Please fill in the registration form and submit a check for participation fees to the address on the registration form.

We hope to see you there! Join us for fun and excitement and an opportunity your students will never forget. If you have any questions please contact ______________ at (host school phone number).

Thank you,
Johnny Q. Public
Host School Coordinator

This sample letter is provided to give the host coordinator an idea the information needed by the invitees. Please feel free to adapt this sample to suit your individual needs.
Sample Schedules for Contest

Speech Events
Friday:
12:00 - registration
1:00 - General orientation and welcome
2:00 - Category A preliminaries (Extemp. Speaking, Prose, H. Interp)
Team Debate Round I
3:30 - Category B preliminaries (Informative Speaking, Poetry, D. Interp)
Team Debate Round II
5:00 - Category C preliminaries (Persuasive Speaking, Duet Acting)
Team Debate Round III

Saturday:
8:00 - Category A semifinals
Team Debate Round IV
10:00 - Category B semifinals
Team Debate Quarterfinals
12:00 - Category C semifinals
Team Debate semifinals
2:00 - All Individual Event and Duet Acting Finals
Team Debate Finals
6:00 - Awards Assembly

One-Act Play Event
Friday:
12:00 - registration
1:00 - general orientation and welcome
2:00 - 7:00 - one act team stage orientation and tech rehearsal (each school will have one hour to adjust to stage and instruct host school tech crew on needs of show)

Saturday:
10:00 - One-act play performances begin / School A
11:30 - School B
1:00 - Lunch break for Judges
1:30 - School C
3:00 - School D
6:00 - Awards Assembly
* One-Act play schedule may be adjusted to accommodate more schools.

Literature/Language Arts Events
Friday:
12:00 - registration
1:00 - general orientation and welcome all original short story submissions must be submitted by this time for judge readings

Saturday:
9:00 - 12:00 - Original Short Story author interviews
(one interview every quarter hour with judges)

9:00 - 12:00 - Essay Writing
9:00 - 12:00 - Spontaneous Creative Writing
1:00 - 4:00 - Essay/Spontaneous Writing judging
6:00 - Awards Assembly

Art Events
Friday:
12:00 - registration
1:00 - general orientation and welcome portfolios and individual media submissions must be available for judge previewing

Saturday:
8:00 - 3:00 - judge interviews with artists in portfolio and individual media
3:00 - 6:00 - Art submissions on display open to public
6:00 - Awards Assembly

Choir Events
Friday:
12:00 - registration
1:00 - 7:00 - solo performances

Saturday:
9:00 - 4:00 - Choir performances (one performance each hour with a break for judges' lunch)
6:00 - Awards Assembly

Journalism Events
Friday:
12:00 - registration
1:00 - Headline writing preliminaries Photo submissions available for judge previewing
3:00 - Headline writing finals

Saturday:
9:00 - 12:00 - Photo submission interviews with judges
6:00 - Awards Assembly
Sample Registration Form

This form is a model for use in registering participants from invited schools. Host coordinators can adapt this sample fit the needs of a particular festival.

Dear Participating School,

Please fill out this form with the names of students participating in the upcoming festival. Please include the first and last names of each participant. We look forward to a great festival and are excited you are able to join us.

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<th>Original Short Story</th>
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<td>Humorous Interpretation</td>
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<th>One-Act Play Performance</th>
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<td>Title of Play</td>
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<td>Author of Play</td>
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<th>Choir Performance</th>
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<td>Title of Selection(s)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Choral Director</th>
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<td>Name of Choir (optional)</td>
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Sports Photography
1. ___________________________________________ 2. ___________________________________________
3. ___________________________________________ 4. ___________________________________________

Photo Essay
1. ___________________________________________ 2. ___________________________________________
3. ___________________________________________ 4. ___________________________________________

Registration Fees Schedule

Individual Events
   number of students x $5

Team Events (Debate/Duet/Headline Writing)
   number of students x $10

Group Events
   One-Act Play Event - $50
   Choir Event - $50

Total ________

If you have suggestions of volunteers for judging events that are not employed by your school, please provide their names and telephone numbers below:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

(Please note that this is a sample registration form and it can be customized to fit a specific festival.)
REFERENCES

Books:


Articles:


**Internet Resources:**


