

THE BIG DAY

Here are some common tips for making Music Performance Assessment (MPA) as focused, successful and 'crisis-free' as possible. Make a copy of this document to your drive and feel free to edit to your own liking, and practice making it a regular part of your MPA preparation.

1. **Transportation** – Order buses, through your school's bookkeeper, at least 2 weeks in advance then confirm at least 2 days prior. If you need wheelchair access buses, be sure that information is included in your request. The Transportation Office number you use to confirm buses is 407-317-3800 x3826. In the event your buses don't show on weekdays call as follows - before 5:00 PM, the same number as above (407) 317-3800 x3826; after 5:00 on weekdays, call 407-317-3800 x3483. For weekends and emergencies, the 'on-call' manager has a pager and can be reached at 407-419-0500. Remember to enter a phone number to allow for a call back (this pager is known not to be reliable). If all else fails, it is possible to contact the OCPS Security Office at 407-317-3333 who can then contact transportation.

2. **Parent Newsletter** – It is always a good idea to inform parents, in writing, of all information pertaining to The Big Day. Include information explaining what MPA is; all times related to the student; required dress; role of the parents as chaperones, in the audience, and in the sight-reading room; and what the ratings mean. Be sure to give a copy to your principal when you invite him or her, and keep a copy posted in the room in the event you are asked to clarify the information after the event, or are accused of not giving accurate information.

3. **Sight-Reading Practice** – Of course sight-reading should be a regular part of any effective curriculum (3 – 5 days per week), but it is also important to practice the sight-reading adjudication process before MPA as well. Several times prior to The Big Day, prepare sight-reading folders containing an appropriate selection, have the students go outside and re-enter the '**mock-adjudication room**' practicing the proper mood and decorum necessary. Use a stop-watch and allow everyone to feel comfortable with how to use time wisely. Practice greeting the adjudicator & listening to his/her instructions, what is allowed during your preparation time, and how to exit. When appearing at a Pre-Assessment Concert, be sure to include a "sight-reading room," with a mock-adjudicator. Practice all procedures discussed above.

4. **Percussion Checklist & Assignments** – After reviewing the scores and percussion parts to your 3 selections, make a list of all percussion instruments (large and small) which will be needed on "The Big Day." Review the list of percussion equipment available at the site (read MPA instructions from the FBA/FOA Chair &/or host), and determine what your students will need to bring with them. Remember, if in doubt, it's best to have extra than to have percussionists (or you) in crisis because of missing equipment or mallets/beaters on stage. Have a box, or two, to carry all needed mallets, beaters, triangles, etc., and use it during class time, as well as at Pre-Assessment Concerts, Sight-Reading Practice, and every time you perform. Be sure to spend a few moments with the percussion section determining what they should do during stage set-up. For many younger players, this may not be a normal part of their daily routine, and they will need to be taught each step of the set-up process (EX: they leave warm-up early, set up their area and assemble all of their instruments prior to the band entering). Assign specific individuals to always be responsible for the equipment box being loaded and unloaded.

5. **Handling Music** – Select 2 individuals who are not performing on that day (student assistants, officers, chaperones, etc.) and have them collect all folders before loading the bus. Folders will be passed out to students when they are seated in the warm-up room. These same individuals should collect them as students exit the stage following their performance

6. **“Briefcase” Pack** – At last, your preparation. Empty your “briefcase” of all non-essential items, and prepare for the day: baton, tuner, your scores, judge’s scores (3 original scores, or 4 depending on your component requirements, with measures numbered), any special permission forms, and one extra set of parts for each selection. Add ideas to number 6 as you use this each year.

7. **Emergency Kit** - Include in a container of some kind (back pack, tote, box..) various “emergency” items: Extra reeds, valve oil, miniature screwdrivers, extra sets of strings, rosin, duct-tape, instrument supplies, extra music, uniform supplies/accessories (bow-ties, cummerbunds, socks, safety-pins), **First Aid Kit**, medical forms, allergy medicines (EX: epipens from school nurse), parent contact information

8. **Warm-up Room** – Establish a relaxed, focused atmosphere during this time. Do not allow a ‘crisis’ to destroy that focus: a broken reed/string, an instrument problem, a student issue, or intonation problems that only get worse. This is when it’s especially helpful to have a colleague or two in the room with you – your job is to keep the positive flow going, and hand problems to someone else. Your role is to reinforce your normal warm-up & tuning procedures, start each selection to establish a good start and build confidence, check tempo changes, entrances/releases, etc. Do not “rehearse” – but use this time to build confidence so the ensemble is prepared to perform at their highest level. It is important to confirm that there will, or will not, be music stands in the warm-up area. If there are none available, have chaperones bring a box of folding stands.

9. **Know the Rules** - Read your component ([FBA](#), [FOA](#), [FVA](#)) handbook for the event and make sure you understand the rules and regulations. Examples are: Is there a required list from which music is chosen? Must you number measures in your score? Is there a specific requirement regarding the need for original music VS photocopied music? Are there regulations in place for original compositions and digital music? Are there regulations regarding specific instrumentation or numbers of students in the ensemble?

With regular use, this checklist will save you undesirable stress and strain during a very busy time. This should allow you to focus on your ensemble, and give the best performance possible.

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