

Kathy Briggs
OMEA Choral Chair



**Changes to the OSAA Qualifying and State Choir Events
for the 2026-2027 School Year**

There are many changes being implemented this year to Oregon high school choir state qualifying contests and the OSAA State Choir event. All high school choir directors are encouraged to read the OSAA Choir Handbook in its entirety to be well-informed.

- OSAA Choir Website: <https://www.osaa.org/activities/cho>
- OSAA Choir Handbook: <https://www.osaa.org/docs/handbooks/chohandbook.pdf>
- Oregon ACDA Website: <https://www.oregonacda.com/>

Changes

Qualifying Choirs The OSAA proposed combining 1A/2A/3A categories. Due to strong opposition from ACDA and school districts across the state, that proposal did not pass. The categories will remain the same. However, despite strong opposition from the ACDA and choir directors, OSAA reduced the number of qualifying ensembles. **See 3.4.1** - A maximum of 20 - 6A choirs, 12 – 5A choirs, 10 – 4A Choirs, 6 – 3A Choirs and 8 - 2A/1A choirs shall be scheduled to perform at the state championship.

Qualifying Scores for State To qualify for State a choir must receive a score of 81 or higher from two of the adjudicators. **See 3.3.1.** Choirs in a state qualifying event or league event are still ranked by their combined (not averaged) judges' scores in the contest report sent to OSAA to determine the league automatic qualifier and help determine which qualifying choirs are selected from the tape pool. This process has not changed. The rule that the league champion choir must also have an average score of 85 or higher from the three adjudicators has been removed. There was a previous change to "4.9.1 Awards" regarding awards given at qualifying festivals that has now reverted back to the original rule. The rule

had previously been changed to ratings (Superior, Excellent, Good, Fair, Limited) awarded at qualifying festivals being determined by the average of the three judges' scores. This rule has been reverted to its original language of rankings and that rankings at qualifying festivals are determined by adding (not averaging) the total of the three scores. **See 4.9.1** Neither rankings nor ratings shall be posted publicly but only shared with directors for their group only. **See 4.9.3**

Ratings (not rankings) at State ACDA conducted two surveys, both which indicated a strong majority of our state's high school choir teachers desired a move to a rating system instead of a ranking system at the OSAA State Choir event. ACDA made a proposal for this change to the OSAA Championship. The OSAA Championship Committee met this past spring to hear feedback on the proposal. The championship committee took into consideration the survey results, several letters to the OSAA committee, and in-person/zoom testimonials from choir directors and students at the meeting. The proposal was approved. **See 6.12.** Awards will be determined by the average of the three judges scores plus the sight-reading score. All choirs that earn a Superior rating at State will be presented with an OSAA trophy.

New Adjudication Rubric ACDA collaborated with renowned conductor and adjudicator Dr. Angela Kasper to create a new, improved adjudication scoring rubric. The new accessible and user-friendly rubric and rationale were shared with choir teachers at the August 2026 ACDA Summer Workshop. Per OSAA rules, judges at all qualifying festivals statewide must use the new rubric. All currently certified choral adjudicators are still eligible to adjudicate qualifying contests until their certification expires. However, it is *strongly recommended* that they attend an ACDA training this year to familiarize themselves with the new rubric. Qualifying festival hosts are *strongly encouraged* to check with their hired adjudicators to ensure they are familiar with the new rubric far in advance of their event. Adjudication training and certification workshops to learn about and work with this new rubric are scheduled for Oct 17 in Salem, at the OMEA conference in Eugene in January, and online in February. Current adjudicators not yet due to re-certify will be able to attend these workshops free of charge to receive training on the new rubric. See the OSAA website and the ACDA website for the new adjudication rubric and rationale.

Updated Sight-Reading Rubric The sight-reading rubric language has been changed regarding the wording around errors. It has been clarified to read "total amount of errors" instead of "errors per part". See the OSAA website and the ACDA website for the updated sight-reading rubric.

FAQs

Why did the OSAA reduce the number of qualifying schools selected to perform at State?

The OSAA championship threshold task force asked the OSAA state championship committee to lower the percentage of participating team sports, individual sports, and activities competing at state to 30%-40%. According to OSAA, this promotes equity across team sports, individual sports, and activities.

Why did the ACDA/OSAA change the state contest from rankings to ratings?

This has been a topic of discussion for decades among Oregon high school choir teachers. ACDA conducted two surveys of our state music teachers – one in 2021 and another in 2025/2026 – both which indicated a strong majority of our state's high school choir teachers desired a move to a rating system instead of a ranking system at the OSAA State Choir event. The 2021 survey results showed 78.4% in favor of the change. The 2025/2026 survey received responses from 71 Oregon high school choir directors from all parts of our state, representing small and large schools, 1A-6A. 64 teachers were in favor and 7 were opposed, showing 90% of teachers are in favor of this change. Based on this data from our Oregon high school choir teachers, ACDA made a proposal for the change to the OSAA Championship Committee. The OSAA Championship Committee met this past spring to hear feedback on the proposal. The championship committee took into consideration the survey results, several letters to the OSAA committee, and in-person/zoom testimonials from choir directors and students at the meeting. The proposal was approved.

Why are there still rankings at qualifying events if we no longer have them at the state event?

Rankings are still needed at qualifying events to determine which outstanding choirs are invited to perform at the OSAA state choir event. The automatic qualifier is determined by rankings, and the ranking of the choirs with qualifying scores is needed to help determine who is selected from the tape pool.

Are rankings shared at qualifying contests now?

No. Rankings from qualifying events will be shared only with OSAA to determine automatic qualifiers and qualifying tape pool choirs. Neither rankings nor ratings will not be posted but only shared with directors for their group only. Only the automatic qualifier at each OSAA league qualifying event will be publicly known.

Are rankings or ratings shared at State now?

There will be no rankings (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.) at State. Trophies will be presented to all choirs in each division who earn a Superior rating. A list of all choirs receiving a Superior rating and a “masked” score array of sight reading score totals with school names removed shall be posted on the OSAA website. **See 6.13**

Do certified adjudicators need to be re-certified for the new rubric?

It is *strongly recommended* that current certified adjudicators attend an ACDA training this year to familiarize themselves with the new rubric. Festival/Contest hosts are *strongly encouraged* to check with their hired adjudicators to ensure they are familiar with the new rubric far in advance of their event. All currently certified choral adjudicators are still eligible to adjudicate qualifying contests until their certification expires, but it is in their and our students’ best interest that they receive training on the new rubric. Adjudication training and certification workshops to learn about and work with this new rubric are scheduled for Oct 17 in Salem, at the OMEA conference in Eugene in January, and online in February. Current adjudicators not yet due to re-certify will be able to attend these workshops **free** of charge to receive training with the new rubric. See the OSAA website and the ACDA website for the new adjudication rubric and rationale.

2026-2027 ACDA ADJUDICATION WORKSHOPS

October 17

South Salem HS

Training on the new rubric for current certified adjudicators is FREE

Certification/Re-certification (\$55)

www.oregonacda.com

January 15 or 16

OMEA Conference

Eugene, OR

Training on the new rubric for current certified adjudicators is FREE

Re-certification (\$55)

www.oregonacda.com

February 20

Online (and recorded)

Training on the new rubric for current certified adjudicators is FREE

Certification/Re-certification (\$55)

www.oregonacda.com

How was the new adjudication rubric developed? Has it been tested with adjudicators and choirs?

The new rubric was developed by a subcommittee of the ACDA board in conjunction with consultant Dr. Angela Kasper. The push came out of a summer ACDA conference where we examined the fallacies with the current system. It was tested last spring at several festivals where judges filled out the previous rubric as well as the new one and again at the 2026 State Choir Championships by board members in attendance (not the actual state judges).

Will judges at both league/qualifying contests and at state use this new rubric? Will the tape pool adjudicators use this same rubric?

Per OSAA rules, judges at all qualifying festivals statewide must use the new rubric. All events and adjudicators are required to use the new rubric, including state-qualifying festivals, league contests, tape pool adjudicators, and the state choir competition.

Can adjudicators give half scores? On the scale of 1-5, can they award a 4.5 in a sub-category?

No, judges cannot give half scores. The adjudication rationale document, found on the OSAA and ACDA websites, explains how the scores of 1-5 apply. Further training and practice with the new rubric will be available at the above-mentioned adjudication workshops.

Why are there two sets of rating names? What is the need for both Superior/Excellent/Good/Fair/Limited and Exemplary/Strong/Proficient/Emerging/Rudimentary?

Superior, Excellent, Good, Fair, and Limited are the names of the awards. Exemplary, Strong, Proficient, Emerging, and Rudimentary are the pedagogical descriptors.

Why are the Superior and Excellent ratings highlighted on the Adjudication Rationale document?

These ratings represent scores of 81 or above, the pre-requisites for qualifying to advance to State.

