

Dear music teachers,

It is time to nominate students for the 2026 NYSSMA Zone 12 Junior Area All State **QUEENS** Festival, presented by MEANYC! [Click here](#) to learn more about the NEW second site for students in Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Staten Island districts.

NOMINATIONS AND STUDENT COMMITMENT FORMS ARE DUE BY NOVEMBER 14TH!

Please read all the way through this email, even if you attended last year.

Where: Forest Hills High School, Queens, NY

When: February 6th (4:30 PM-8:00 PM rehearsal) and February 7th (9:00 AM-3:00 PM concert)

Student Participation Fee: \$30.00 per student (to be paid via ONE school check upon acceptance, not now!). This fee pays for individual student participation only. Please note the price increase is from NYSSMA and all payment goes directly to NYSSMA. Private and charter schools must be a NYSSMA participating school and pay dues to NYSSMA. NYC DOE schools are already participating schools and do not need to do this step. We are excited to announce the **David LaMorte Scholarship**. This scholarship will pay for eight students to attend the festival. Money should not be a barrier in participating, as funding is available. in need. Applications will be available after acceptances are released.

Ensemble Choices: Concert Band, Jazz Band, Mixed Chorus, Modern Band, String Orchestra

Eligibility: NYC students in grades six, seven, or eight. Public school, private school, and charter school students are eligible.

Chaperone Requirements: At least one adult chaperone from each participating school must attend on each day. This can include teachers/admin/parent chaperone.

Nomination Maximums: In order to ensure equity and fairness, no school should nominate more than 10 students per ensemble. Schools with multiple teachers in the same discipline (example: two concert band teachers) cannot nominate more than 10 students per ensemble. Please nominate a variety of students rather than students that all play the same instrument.

When nominating students (no more than 10 per ensemble per school), please consider nominating students who are:

- Responsible, dedicated, trustworthy, and a team player.
- Capable of reading basic notes and rhythms. ([Click here](#) to see our anticipated repertoire. You can decide if it is a good fit for your students)

- Your very best students in terms of musicianship and responsibility (we do not recommend choosing students who have a hard time returning forms in a timely manner or tend to not show up for rehearsals)

If a student is interested in more than one ensemble (ex: concert band, jazz ensemble, and modern band), please rank their ensemble preference on Da Capo.

Modern Band submissions ONLY will require a video audition. The audition video will be uploaded to Da Capo. **Please click [here](#) to see the Modern Band audition video requirements.**

We are nominating students on the Da Capo website. The site is very user friendly. Here is [a link](#) to instructions that may be useful. There is also a [tutorial video](#).

If you have any questions about using Da Capo, please contact the president of Da Capo, Patrick Hait, at patrick@dacapowebdevelopment.com.

You may be familiar with Da Capo if you have ever registered students for NYSSMA. If you already have a Da Capo account, you are ready to go! If you don't have an account, it is free to register. The site is <https://aas.dacapomusicfestivals.com/>. You begin by clicking “Nominate: AAS (manual nomination)” on the left hand side. **Please note that Da Capo has an AAS page and a NYSSMA Solo Festival page. You must use the AAS website I linked.**

If you still need help after reading the instructions and trying out Da Capo, please [click here](#) to register to attend an optional Zoom session for help.

Da Capo will ask about NYSSMA scores. Please leave it blank if your student did not participate in a solo NYSSMA festival. ***NYSSMA scores are NOT REQUIRED for selection.***

When nominating on Da Capo, please make sure to leave *detailed* written comments on students' experience and ability. Teachers who write “N/A” or “very strong player”, etc, will not have those students considered.

[Please click here to see how we choose accepted students and to view quality recommendation examples.](#)

After nominating all students, click “view all student nominations” on the left hand side. You will notice a space to rank students. ***We are able to rank by instrument/vocal part.*** The ranking system has been switched to "By Most Deserving Child - By Instrument".

If teachers nominate, for example:

- 2 tenor saxophones, 3 flutes, and 4 clarinets, they can rank them 1 and 2. You can rank your saxes 1 and 2, then the flutes 1-3, then clarinets 1-4.
- 7 Soprano 1s, they can rank these seven students from 1-7.
- Only one trumpet, they can only rank as "1" because there is only one trumpet.

Continue ranking in the order you'd like students to be considered. **The comments and ranking are VERY important to us as it will help guide our selection of students.** **Please note that in some cases, instrumentation needs may supersede your ranking.**

Teachers must print, hand out, and then collect and upload the student commitment form to the Da Capo website in order for their students to be considered for an ensemble. You can find the commitment form **AFTER** you have registered all students. Click "view student commitment form" on the left hand side. Print the whole PDF, as the student's names and information will already be pre-filled on the PDF. **Please note that any student without a commitment form uploaded on the Da Capo site by the nomination deadline will not be considered for the festival. Forms must be uploaded to Da Capo. Emailed commitment forms will not be accepted.**

Due to overwhelming numbers of nominated students last year, we had to cut many students from each ensemble last year. Please prepare students that they may not all get in.

For general or ensemble specific questions, please contact:

- **Festival Chair:** Sara Shikowitz, msfestivalchair@meanyc.org
- **Chorus Chair:** Carissa Allen, callen23@schools.nyc.gov
- **Concert Band Co-Chairs:** Jenn Schechter, jschechter@schools.nyc.gov, Joenatan Lopez, JLopez30@schools.nyc.gov, Justin Wolf, JWolf5@schools.nyc.gov
- **Jazz Band Chair:** Pieter Voorhees, pvoorhees@schools.nyc.gov
- **Modern Band Chair:** Amanda Gonzalez, agonzalez75@schools.nyc.gov
- **Orchestra Chair:** Carmen Elias, celias@schools.nyc.gov

Please share this opportunity with other middle school music educators! We are excited to bring this special music making festival to you and your students.

Sincerely,

The Queens Zone 12 Junior Area All State team