



2026 SCSTA HIGH SCHOOL FESTIVAL
Saturday, March 21, 2026

Byrnes High School
150 E. Main Street
Duncan, SC, 29334

*"Encouraging a Passion for Excellence in Speech and Theatre
Education in South Carolina"*



Dear Colleagues,

We are so excited that you are interested in joining us for the 2026 SCSTA High School Festival. We have a lot of wonderful things happening this year. We are excited to celebrate theatre in South Carolina and give your students the chance to highlight what they have been working on this year.

Please join us! Whether you enter 4 or 40 students, it will be worth your while!!

This handbook contains detailed information about the festival. Please read all directions and information to ensure you and your students have a successful experience. Feel free to contact us with any concerns or questions, and look for all materials on our website at www.scsta.org.

Thank you. We look forward to seeing you on March 21, 2026!

Sincerely,

Taylor Smith, Festival Host
Byrnes High School
150 E. Main Street
Duncan, SC, 29334
864-949-2355 Ext.7943
taylor.smith@spart5.net

Jenn Simmons, HS Division VP
Gilbert HS
840 Main St
Gilbert, SC 29054
802-821-1968 (w)
jsimmons@lexington1.net

A Summary of New Festival Guidelines

1. We have added a NEW Speech event: **Impromptu Speaking!** Please check scsta.org for more information and rubrics for all festival events.
2. The **SCSTA Travel Assistance Grant** is available to assist schools with travel costs associated with attending the Annual SCSTA High School Festival. Applications are due by January 31 2026.
3. The SCSTA Membership unanimously voted, on March 16 2025, to increase membership and registration as well as student membership fees this year.
 - The SCSTA membership fee is **\$50 per school**.
 - The school membership fee awards coaches organizational voting privileges.
 - Your school must be a member of SCSTA to participate in the SCSTA High School Festival.
 - The **\$100 non-refundable SCSTA Festival registration fee per team** must be paid by February 1, 2026, to be eligible to compete in the High School festival.
 - Early Bird Discount: **\$75 if paid by December 15th, 2025**
 - There is a **\$10 SCSTA Student Membership Fee** to enter the festival, either as a competitor or observer.
 - These student membership fees may be paid in advance or at registration. We accept cash or school checks; no personal checks will be accepted.
 - Schools will be charged for all students entering the competition, regardless of whether they advance to the final rounds.
4. Please read this handbook thoroughly.
5. We may need to change and add information throughout the school year as we prepare for our festivals. Please make sure you are paying attention to all communication and checking scsta.org regularly.
6. *Important Distinctions:*
 - SCSTA defines a slate as including only the contestant's name, the title of the piece, the playwright, and the school number.
 - Storytelling and Poetry Interpretation should incorporate an introduction that includes the contestant's name, the title of the piece, the author, the THEME, and school number.

Important Information

EVENTS / CONTESTANTS:

- Each coaching teacher may enter up to and including a total of 40 students from your program/school. However, one team must have a full team (40 students) before adding a second team. Each team must pay a separate registration fee to enter the festival. For example, if one school has 2 coaches and each wants to bring a team of 40 students per coach, then they will be required to pay one single membership fee for their school and 2 registration fees to enter the festival. Teams from the same school will each receive their own school number and will be considered separate from the other.
- Students must be enrolled in 9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th grade.

COMMUNICATION:

All inquiries regarding the SCSTA High School Festival should be directed to our host, Taylor Smith at taylor.smith@spart5.net or our Division Vice President, Jenn Simmons at jsimmons@lexington1.net Taylor and Jenn will be communicating with you throughout preparation for the event and will be sending any updates or changes.

FEES:

- If you plan to participate in this year's festival, please complete the membership form on the scsta.org website, or use this link: [School Membership and Registration Form](#)
- The SCSTA membership fee is \$50 per school.
 - The school membership fee awards coaches organizational voting privileges.
 - Your school must be a member of SCSTA to participate in the SCSTA High School Festival.
- The \$100 non-refundable SCSTA Festival registration fee per team must be paid by February 1, 2026, to be eligible to compete in the High School festival.
 - Early Bird Discount: \$75 if paid by December 15th, 2025
- There is a \$10 SCSTA Student Membership fee to enter the festival, either as a competitor or observer.
 - These dues may be paid in advance or at registration. We accept cash or school checks; no personal checks will be accepted.
 - Schools will be charged for all students entering the competition, regardless of whether they advance to the final rounds.

ENTRIES:

- Your school **MUST** be registered and have paid your full membership fee by January 31st, 2026, to be eligible to compete. You will be paying your student entry fees at a later date.
- The [SCSTA HS Festival Entry Form](#) is due by Saturday, March 6, 2026.
- Individual students may enter up to TWO (2) events. PSAs are excluded from this limitation.
- Triple Threat Entries: A student **MUST** be entered into a Group/duet event, a solo event, and a SPEECH event to qualify for a triple threat. You may enter up to 3 students as triple threats.
- Content: You may not enter the same material in two different categories. For example, you may use two separate scenes from the same play in two different categories, but you may not enter a scene with a monologue in group acting and then have the same student do the same monologue in solo acting.
- In the rare case where a student is sick or otherwise unable to perform, and they are a member of a duet/group event, you may substitute that one student so the duet/group may still perform. However, the two events per student rule still apply.
- All known deletions and substitutions are to be communicated through [this form](#).

OBSERVERS / ATTENDANCE:

- TIME KEEPERS: Each school/coach is to provide ONE timekeeper. The timekeeper:
 - can be an adult volunteer/parent OR a trustworthy, non-competing student.
 - should bring a device to use for timekeeping (phone, stopwatch, etc.)
 - will not be charged an entry fee.
 - must attend a timekeeper briefing before both rounds of the competition.
 - will be assigned to round(s)/event(s) to keep official time
- CHAPERONES: Each school is expected to follow its own school's regulations regarding the amount/qualifications for chaperones. Each school/coach will be allotted one complimentary chaperone for every 10 students on your team and will not be charged an entry fee. For additional chaperones/observers, see below.
- ADDITIONAL OBSERVERS: Additional chaperones and observers (parents, siblings, non-competing students, etc.) must pay the required \$10 entry fee. Coaches are asked to teach proper viewing etiquette to all and encourage good sportsmanship from all their guests in attendance.

EVENT EXPECTATIONS:

- Professional dress is encouraged for all preliminary and final rounds
- All musical theatre events should have their music DOWNLOADED to a device in advance of their performance at the festival. Bluetooth speakers and/or A/V jacks will be available in every musical theatre event section.
- All attendees must stay in designated areas of the campus for the event.
- All attendees are expected to clean up after themselves and maintain the integrity of the host school.
- All attendees should follow the rules of audience etiquette. Only enter/leave a competition round in between performances, and only when necessary. Unless double-entered, all students must stay in one room during finals rounds.
- No photography or videography of any kind during competition rounds.
- Qualifications to advance to the final round will depend on the number of entries in each event. Some categories will only have a final round on March 21st. That will be communicated before that day, once all entry forms are received.

AWARDS:

First, second, and third-place trophies will be awarded to the highest-scoring students/groups in the final round of each event. Group event winners will be awarded medals in addition to a group trophy. We encourage students to wear any medals they received in the past to this year's competition. The three highest-scoring students in duet events will receive two trophies: one for each student.

All students who receive a score of 42 or higher, and who achieve the rank of a "Superior Rating" from the judge will be indicated on their adjudication form. Students receiving a Superior will not be recognized during the awards ceremony; however, coaches are welcome to recognize those students as they see fit after the festival.

MEALS:

While there are many fast-food locations around the area, due to the tight schedule of the day, multiple Food Truck options will be available for purchase. Information on these food trucks will be sent out closer to the festival.

Coaches and Judges are invited to join us for a catered lunch during our SCSTA HS Division Meeting, on campus. Please plan to attend this meeting. Bring a chaperone to take students to lunch so that you may attend!

SCSTA High School Festival

Schedule of Events

Saturday March 21, 2026

8am-9am	Registration	Fine Arts Center Lobby
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Please only have 1 person register the school, pay membership dues and pick up a packet. Each school can store personal items in the Band Room.

9-9:30 am	Opening Ceremony	Fine Arts Center
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9:15 am	Judges and Timekeepers Briefing	Library
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9:45- 11:30 am	Morning Preliminary Rounds	Various Classrooms
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Students are responsible for finding the rooms in which they will present.

11:30 am-12:45 pm	Lunch	Food Trucks/ Rebel Cafe
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Coaches, Judges, and SCSTA Executive Council members are provided a catered lunch held in the Library

12:45- 2:00 pm	Afternoon Preliminary Rounds	Various Classrooms
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Students are responsible for finding the rooms in which they will present.

2:30 pm	Finals Participants and Locations Posted Online	
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3-4 pm	Finals Round	Various Classrooms
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Students are responsible for finding the rooms in which they will present.

3-4 pm	Theatre Workshops	Classrooms TBD
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4:15 pm	Improv Show	Fine Arts Center
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4:45- 5:30 pm	Awards Ceremony	Fine Arts Center
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SCSTA High School Festival

Festival Events

For those who are **double-entered** in a session:

- Will be assigned to attend either solo events or group events first based on their school number.
- Ask the judges in the first event to allow you to perform first so that you can get to your next event quickly.

Do not panic! No one will be penalized because they are in another room competing in another category. The judges will wait for you.

Maximum Entries per Event

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT	1
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Solo Events

ORIGINAL COMEDIC MONOLOGUE	3
ORIGINAL DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE	3
COMEDIC MUSICAL THEATRE SOLO	3
DRAMATIC MUSICAL THEATRE SOLO	3
AUDITION MONOLOGUES	3

Group Events

MUSICAL THEATRE GROUP	1
GROUP ACTING	1
COMEDIC DUET ACTING	4
DRAMATIC DUET ACTING	4
MUSICAL THEATRE DUET	4

Speech/Design Events

PERSUASIVE SPEAKING	4
IMPROMPTU SPEAKING	4
STORYTELLING	4
POETRY INTERPRETATION	4
THEATRICAL DESIGN	4
ORIGINAL STAGED READING	1

SCSTA High School Festival

Coach's Checklist

- ☐ Complete the [SCSTA Membership and Registration Form](#)
- ☐ Submit [SCSTA W9](#) and requisitions to bookkeeper for purchase order
- ☐ Complete and submit the [SCSTA HS Invoice](#) to your bookkeeper for payment
- ☐ Send the check to SCSTA by Dec 15 2025 to receive the \$25 Early Bird Discount!
- ☐ Or send the full \$150 to SCSTA by January 31st, 2026
- ☐ Select students to compete and select appropriate pieces after reviewing adjudication forms on SCSTA.org.
- ☐ REHEARSE!
- ☐ **Submit [SCSTA HS Festival Entry Form](#) by March 6, 2026**
- ☐ Submit transportation requests for your bus to travel to Byrnes High School.
- ☐ Gather all materials needed for the competition, including any necessary props, costumes, and materials.
- ☐ Direct all questions to [Taylor Smith](#) and [Jenn Simmons](#)!
- ☐ Communicate deletions and substitutions with this [Festival Deletions Form](#)
- ☐ Remind students that the purpose of this event is to enjoy theatre, learn some new things, meet some new people, and have fun!
- ☐ **Attend the SCSTA High School FESTIVAL on March 21, 2026, at Byrnes High School (150 E. Main Street, Duncan, SC, 29334)**