

THEATRE ACTIVITIES

(New changes for the current season are in red)

Directors must be familiar with sections of General Policy, which are applicable to the Theatre Events section.

Event dates can be found at www.themifa.org

The MIFA will offer two types of Theatre events - Main Stage and Studio Productions as part of the State Festival. Main Stage shows make full use of the storage area and spike time by using technical materials to help realize the final production. A Studio Production show focuses heavily on the actors and the script, making little to no use of extensive technical aspects of a show. The Studio event was designed to allow schools to participate with minimal expenses associated with a traveling show.

I. ELIGIBILITY - MAIN STAGE AND STUDIO PRODUCTIONS

- A. Any senior high school in Michigan is eligible to participate in the MIFA theatre program; however, the school must be a member of the Michigan Interscholastic Forensic Association.
- B. Adult participation is not allowed during the forty-five (45) minute performance period. However, adults may assist with any production aspects outside of the 45-minute performance period, including but not limited to: load in/load out, transitioning equipment in and out of the performance area, spike time, and set strike. It is highly encouraged that students complete as much of the production work themselves as possible.
- C. All official host personnel that impact festival administration must be adults. Other backstage technical host positions may be occupied by high school students from the host school. These students must be supervised by an adult.

II. TYPES OF PLAYS - MAIN STAGE AND STUDIO PRODUCTIONS

- A. Any published or unpublished one-act play, cuttings from longer plays, or original one-act plays are eligible for use in the festival. On an annual basis the nature of the plays will alternate between 'Serious' and 'Humorous' for both Main Stage and Studio Productions. Please see www.themifa.org for the annual rotation. A school that presents a production that is not of the appropriate nature will be disqualified from the festival and be ineligible for awards.
- B. Any school may enter one (1) production in each event - Main Stage or Studio Production. Please be aware that these productions may not always be assigned to the same

site and may perform concurrently at any given festival. At the State Theatre Festival Main Stage and Studio productions will perform simultaneously. Be aware when casting.

A school may not repeat a production within a four-year (4) time period. A violation of this rule will result in the disqualification of the school.

C. Knowledge of the appropriate royalties for a production and the payment of any necessary fee for each production is the responsibility of each participating school.

D. MIFA recognizes that community standards in regard to script selection will vary from community to community. Therefore, the choice of a play and the interpretation of a script should reflect sensitivity to racial, ethnic, and/or gender characteristics of individuals or groups.

III. DEFINITIONS

The following terms are used extensively in Speech Activities to explain the rules of the theatre events.

Performance Time: the 45-minute time period during which all production elements are being utilized in the presentation of the play to the audience. All production elements must cease at the conclusion of the performance, once “clear” or “scene” has been called to stop the timing of the show.

Performance Area (or Playing Area): the area of the stage that is guaranteed to be lit during the performance time. It is a box that is clearly taped out on the stage floor, and is thus sometimes simply referred to as “the box”.

This area must be kept empty of production items prior to spike time. However, members of a company may walk through this area during shift/transition time. Items may also be carried through this area during shift/transition time, as long as they are not placed on the stage floor within the defined playing area. Production items may be placed within the box once spike time begins.

Actors are not confined to the performance area in any way. Actors may begin or end the show inside or outside of the designated performance area.

Shift Time (or Transition Time): Time that is allocated to a company moving their production items between their designated storage area and the playing area. This is sometimes called “load around the box time”. When a company is moving items from storage to the playing area, all items must be placed outside of the designated playing area (the box) until timing begins for spike time. While this time is primarily used for moving production items, members of a company may use this time to assemble set pieces, plug in electrical items, etc. if time allows.

The use of any production elements to “set the mood” for the upcoming show during this time is prohibited.

Shift time is given both prior to and following all productions. Often, one company will be loading into the production area as another company is moving their items from the production area into storage; therefore, it is imperative that everyone involved move in a safe, efficient, and respectful manner.

Spike Time: Time that is allocated to a company to set up all technical elements necessary for their production. At this point, production elements can be moved inside of the designated performance area (the box). Examples of tasks occurring during this time include assembly of set pieces, organization of props, and plugging in and testing items requiring electricity.

While lights and sound may be tested during this time, continuous use of lights and sound to “set the mood” for the upcoming show is prohibited. For example, actors may conduct a sound check with music playing in the background to establish an appropriate volume level. Lighting may be used to spike set pieces and scenes on the stage. However, playing music in the theme or style of the show for the entire spike time period is an example of “setting the mood” for the show and is not permissible.

All production elements must cease at the conclusion of spike time prior to the presentation of the company’s production. All lights should be turned off except lighting that is needed to safely seat the audience and light the emcee; this lighting should be turned off prior to the timing of the show.. House lights should always be turned off prior to the timing of the show. Production elements may only begin once the emcee announces to the performing school that the timing of their show has begun.

IV. STUDIO PRODUCTION RULES

TIME LIMITS/PLAYING AREA

The keeping of time should be precise in order to maintain an even playing field for all parties.

LOAD IN/LOAD OUT - STUDIO PRODUCTIONS

There is no Load IN/OUT for Studio Productions, nor is a time assigned. Studio productions will have to move their Prop, Costume, and sound pieces into the storage area next to the stage before the production’s spike time. This can be done during the 10 minute set up time. Studio Productions will have the option to use the “Common Set” pieces. Hosts at the Regional level and MIFA at the State Festival will provide the following set pieces: Six blox (BLOX with an X is defined as: An object with a flat base, top and sides, typically square or rectangular minimum 16”x16”x16”), One standard folding table (6-8 feet), Four folding chairs for sitting only (no standing) and a 4’ x 8’ x 8’ h platform/riser. Any additional props or sound equipment will be stored in the designated storage area and will not exceed a total of 125 cubic feet. For

reference, that is approximately 5' long x 5' wide x 5' tall. There is no dimensional limit; however, the director must be able to prove that all items fit with the space constraints described here).

Additional clarification is provided below in scenery, lights, sound sections.

PERFORMANCE - STUDIO PRODUCTIONS

Ideally, Studio Productions will take place in a black box style theater but may also be hosted in a cafetorium, large band/choir room or similar intimate performance environment. Studio Productions should anticipate a minimum performance area of 500 square feet (25' wide x 20' deep). Seating of judges and audience members (approximately 90-100 max) should be in close proximity to performance.

A. Timing Sequence for Studio Productions

Transition (move from storage to wings/backstage)	10 minutes
Spike	15 minutes
Performance (includes all production elements)	45 minutes
Transition (move off stage back to storage or loading)	<u>10 minutes</u>
	80-minute cycle

B. Participants may not start setting up for spike time until all backstage judges are in the performance space and the official timekeepers give them a signal to begin. The location of all technical and performance personnel is at the discretion of the director. The nonperformance area will be designated in writing by the festival director one week in advance of the festival.

C. This includes setting up any set, properties, and technical matters.

D. The festival hosts are to arrange for two (2) official timekeepers unaffiliated with the performing school. The festival host is responsible for ensuring that all judges for the festival are in the auditorium before the timing process begins. Directors will provide the host with directions on the most appropriate place for the official timers to be stationed to ensure an accurate recording of the timing of a production. At least one of the timers must be able to view offstage areas during the setting up, playing, and striking of each production.

E. Timing procedures and the type of signal to be given to begin should be determined by each director and the festival host before the festival starts or prior to announcements. The festival host should announce, prior to each production, the name of the school and the title of the show. The process for announcing the start of timing, which **MUST** include the statement,

“(School Name), your timing begins now”, should be decided by the host and director. The determining factor for ending the timing of the production is by visual verification of a blackout light cue and/or the performing school calling “scene”.

- F. Timing of the performance is to start from the moment the timer states “your timing begins now” and concludes with the performing school calling “scene”. The clearing of the designated playing area on the stage may take place as part of the performance time or transition time. Continuation of a production (without calling “clear” or “scene”) will extend the official timing parameters. In this circumstance, timing violations will result in a five point per adjudicator penalty for every minute or fraction thereof that the production goes over time. Thus, the forty-five (45) minute time limit includes all production elements (e.g., music, lighting elements). The site director will immediately notify the play director of any time irregularities.”
- G. The designated playing area, a three-dimensional space using the stage area specified by the host for a production, will be the same for all shows. The host will mark the outline of the playing area with tape prior to the start of the festival. When a site has leg curtains, the playing area should be inside of the curtains. A director may choose to modify the designated playing area through devices, such as a cyc or a scrim. Each school has, at the discretion of the host school, access to the playing area except during spike time and production time for a show. Each school, however, must allow the prior production the opportunity to remove safely the elements of its production prior to beginning access to the performance area. Each school will have 10-15 minutes to move their show to a designated post-production storage area
- H. Spiking is allowable. Each school has exclusive access to the stage for 15 minutes prior to its show. Spiking may be done during this time period, but spikes must be removed following the show. A school that exceeds its allotted spike time will receive a five point per adjudicator penalty. Spiking and the removal of the spikes are excluded from the official timing of the production. Following verification that the stage is clear from a prior production, for the next production a verbal announcement of the start of the spike period (e.g., “Spike time begins now”) will be given. There also will be a verbal indication of the cessation of the spike period (e.g., “Spike time ends now”).
- I. The timekeeper is to inform the director of the play and the festival host of the actual timing of each play.
- J. The combined time for the oral critiques of the judges will be 15 minutes per production.
- K. Studio productions should be blocked to accommodate an audience sitting on three sides of the playing area. At the District and Regional levels, one judge should view the production from each side of the playing area. At the State level where five judges are present,

the judges should be seated in such a way that there is at least one judge on each side of the playing area. Judges should watch all shows in a given competition event from the same chair/perspective.

SCENERY AND PROPERTIES - STUDIO PRODUCTIONS

Hosts at the Regional level and MIFA at the State Festival will provide the following set pieces as the Common Set: Six blox (BLOX with an X is defined as: An object with a flat base, top and sides, typically square or rectangular minimum 16"x16"x16"), One standard folding table (6-8 feet), Four folding chairs for sitting only (no standing) and a 4'x8'x8"h platform/riser. A school may choose to bring its own Common Set to use instead of what is provided.

Items that are carried on by a single actor are considered to be props. Non-theatrical lights that can be carried on by a single actor, such as a flashlight, fall into the category of props and are thus permissible.

Any additional props or sound equipment will be stored in the designated storage area and will not exceed 125 cubic feet. If a school chooses to use its own Common Set, it may be stored outside of the designated storage area (such as in the homeroom until just prior to transition time).

Host sites should specify within two weeks of posting District / Regional assignments if a curtain will be provided for crossover space behind the designated playing area.

COSTUMES - STUDIO PRODUCTIONS

A. There are no limitations as to costumes for a show, except that all costuming is to be done within the realms of decency in exposing the human body.

B. Costume changes should be done in such a way to protect student privacy and safety. At no times should costume changes take place in the hallway or other areas to which the general public has access during the competition. A temporary barrier, such as a curtain, is not sufficient for protecting student privacy and safety when changing in a public area. A permanent barrier, such as a restroom stall, is sufficient to guard student privacy and safety during a costume change.

LIGHTING -STUDIO PRODUCTIONS

A. General overhead lighting will be provided. Dimmable lighting is not guaranteed. Hosts will inform participants within two weeks of posting District/Regional assignments if dimmer controls will be available to all participating schools. It is preferred that the audience be in the dark as much as possible.

B. No specialized lighting equipment is allowed. All participants must utilize only what is provided by the host school. Only general lighting is allowed, and only on and off lighting cues are allowed; however, if all schools have access to dimming technology, dimming the lights is allowable. A non-theatrical light that can be carried in by a single actor fits the definition of a prop (flashlight, cell phone, etc.) and is perfectly acceptable. However, theatrical lighting such as a spotlight or Fresnel is not allowed, even if brought in by a single actor.

SOUND - STUDIO PRODUCTIONS

A. There is no limitation to the use of sound, but each production should make arrangements to use its own sound equipment and not rely upon the host to provide such equipment. The use of the house sound system by participating schools is at the discretion of the host; however, if the host, as a participant, will use the house sound system, it must be available to all participants.

V. MAIN STAGE RULES

LOAD IN/LOAD OUT - MAIN STAGE

A. The unloading and re-loading of scenery for a production will follow a predetermined schedule to allow all participants equal time to move appropriate materials. The loading and unloading of scenery will occur prior to the start of the festival in single school increments during the spike time of another production or during meal breaks to facilitate viewing the productions. In addition, some schools may load post festival with permission of the host director. A school is responsible for providing sufficient personnel to accomplish the process of loading and unloading to ensure reasonable compliance with the time schedule of the host.

B. Each site is responsible for the establishment of common standardized storage areas for all productions, although there may be limits to the time of access because of the size of the facility. Each school is responsible for the placement of its performance materials, such as set pieces and properties, within the standard storage area during the load-in time. If a school is unable to place all its materials in the appropriate storage space, it may use a designated home room with the approval of the host site coordinator. A typical storage space is 10 feet x 15 feet and is located in a backstage area or the scene shop of a site. A participating school is responsible for providing sufficient personnel to accomplish the process of loading and unloading all relevant set pieces and other performance materials into its standard storage area to ensure reasonable compliance with the time schedule of the host.

C. Timing procedures for the load-in or load-out and the type of signal to be given to begin should be determined by each director and the festival host before the festival starts or prior to the process. A representative of the festival host should announce the start of timing for the load-in, which begins with the removal of the first item from the school's vehicle. Load-out begins with the removal of the first item from the storage area. The official timers must provide

verbal notice, indicating the progress of the move in increments of five (5) minutes, including an announcement when the official timing of the move is complete.

PERFORMANCE - MAIN STAGE

A. Timing Sequence for Mainstage Productions

Transition (move from storage to wings/backstage)	10 minutes
Spike	25 minutes
Performance (includes all production elements)	45 minutes
Transition (move off stage back to storage or loading)	<u>10 minutes</u>
	90-minute cycle

- B. Participants may not start setting up until the official timekeepers give them a signal to begin. The location of all technical and performance personnel is at the discretion of the director; however, all actors, all sound, properties, scenery, special effects, and special lighting must be located in a nonperformance area before *spike time* begins. The nonperformance area will be designated in writing by the festival director one week in advance of the festival.
- C. The festival hosts are to arrange for two (2) official timekeepers unaffiliated with the performing school. The festival host is responsible for ensuring that all judges for the festival are in the auditorium before the timing process begins. Directors will provide the host with directions on the most appropriate place for the official timers to be stationed to ensure an accurate recording of the timing of a production. At least one of the timers must be backstage during the setting up, playing, and striking of each production.
- D. Timing procedures and the type of signal to be given to begin should be determined by each director and the festival host before the festival starts or prior to announcements. The festival host should announce, prior to each production, the name of the school and the title of the show. The process for announcing the start of timing, which **MUST** include the statement, “(School Name), your timing begins now”, should be decided by the host and director. The determining factor for ending the timing of the production is by audible verification. The school must call “clear” or “scene” and receive a response (“time stopped”) from the official timer that at which time the official timers are stopped. In conjunction, there will also be a visual verification by the timer that all production elements have concluded.
- E. Timing is to start from the moment the timer announces “your timing begins now” and concludes the moment the performing school calls “clear” or “scene”. This may include setting up the set, properties, lighting, and all technical matters. It may also include the striking of the same and an optional curtain call. The performance and timing normally concludes with the clearing of the designated playing area on the stage. Continuation of a production (without calling “clear” or “scene”) will extend the official timing parameters. In this

circumstance, timing violations will result in a five point per adjudicator penalty for every minute or fraction thereof that the production goes over time. Thus, the forty-five (45) minute time limit concludes all production elements (e.g., music, lighting elements). The site director will immediately notify the play director of any time irregularities.

- F. The designated playing area, a three-dimensional space (approximately 750 square feet, 20'-26' deep by 30-36' wide) using the stage area specified by the host for a production, will be the same for all shows. District and Regional hosts should meet guidelines and should, when possible, match the State Festival performance space requirements. The host will mark the outline of the playing area with tape prior to the start of the festival. When a site has leg curtains, the playing area should be inside of the curtains. A director may choose to modify the designated playing area through devices, such as a cyc or a scrim. Each school has, at the discretion of the host school, access to the playing area except during spike time and production time for a show. Each school, however, must allow the prior production the opportunity to remove safely the elements of its production prior to beginning access to the performance area. Each school will have 10-15 minutes to move their show to a designated post-production storage area
- G. The dressing of the stage for the timing of the production is at the option of the director of a particular production. A curtain or curtains may be open or closed to start or conclude the timing of a production at the discretion of the director of the show. If the curtain is to be flown at any time, the technicians of the host school may fly the curtain without a penalty or a timing deduction to the participant. In addition, legs on tracks may be adjusted or flown prior to the initiation of the timing period by the host school technicians at the discretion of the director of the production. No students are permitted to use the counterweight system of a host school. All adjustments must be made by host technical personnel using the counterweight rail.
- H. Spiking is allowable. Each school has exclusive access to the stage for 25 minutes prior to its show. Spiking may be done during this time period, but spikes must be removed following the show. A school that exceeds its allotted spike time will receive a five point per adjudicator penalty. Spiking and the removal of the spikes are excluded from the official timing of the production. Following verification that the stage is clear from a prior production, for the next production a verbal announcement of the start of the spike period (e.g., "Spike time begins now") will be given. There also will be a verbal indication of the cessation of the spike period (e.g., "Spike time ends now").
- I. The timekeeper is to inform the director of the play and the festival host of the actual timing of each play.

J. The combined time for the oral critiques of the judges will be 15 minutes per production.

K. Judges should watch all shows in a given competition event from the same chair/perspective.

SCENERY - MAIN STAGE

A. Any scenery used will be judged according to the limitations of a traveling show.

COSTUMES - MAIN STAGE

A. There are no limitations as to costumes for a show, except that all costuming is to be done within the realms of decency in exposing the human body.

B. Costume changes should be done in such a way to protect student privacy and safety. At no times should costume changes take place in the hallway or other areas to which the general public has access during the competition. A temporary barrier, such as a curtain, is not sufficient for protecting student privacy and safety when changing in a public area. A permanent barrier, such as a restroom stall, is sufficient to guard student privacy and safety during a costume change.

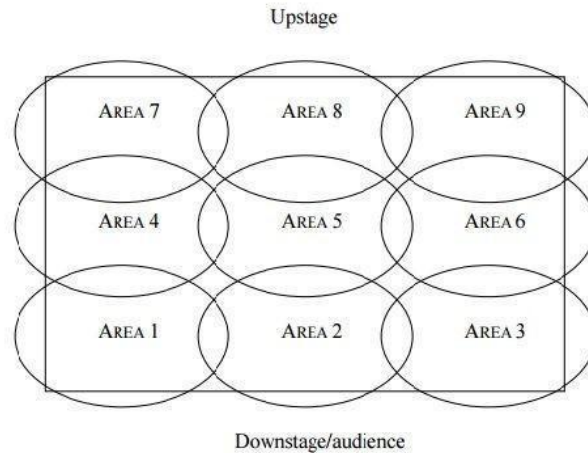
LIGHTING - MAIN STAGE

A. Dependent on the facilities of the host, there are to be a minimum of six (6) and a maximum of nine (9) evenly sized areas of light that overlap within the playing area. No lighting instruments in the required lighting plot are to be gelled. Please refer to the Lighting Area Diagram for positioning.

Required Light Plot for all MIFA Main Stage Theatre Festivals

(not to scale, empty spaces between areas not intended)

Areas 7-9 dependent on facilities



B. The lighting areas indicated on the statewide light plot as implemented by the host are never to be changed within a single festival once the festival is in process. In the host's console all participants may use only the nine (9) lighting areas in the MIFA required lighting plot. If additional lighting is provided by the host school, those dimmer controls will be available to all participating schools.

C. Specialized lighting effects and equipment are welcome. Participating schools bringing specialized equipment are responsible for:

1. Set-up and strike following "Clear Stage Rules"
2. Set up outside performance area
3. Knowledge of necessary power usage for equipment

SOUND - MAIN STAGE

A. There is no limitation to the use of sound, but each production should make arrangements to use its own sound equipment and not rely upon the host to provide such equipment. The use of the house sound system by participating schools is at the discretion of the host; however, if the host, as a participant, will use the house sound system, it must be available to all participants.

VI. SITE SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS - MAIN STAGE AND STUDIO PRODUCTIONS

A. The use of fire, whether an open or enclosed flame, or a smoldering ash (like a lit cigarette), or the firing of a blank cartridge, or any other type of explosive (such as flash boxes, etc.) is permitted only with the written approval secured from the faculty festival host. Failure to secure such written permission is a festival violation.

B. The audience must receive notification of any action or instrument in a production (e.g., the use of a fog machine or a strobe light) that is a health or safety concern.

VII. FESTIVAL ORDER - MAIN STAGE AND STUDIO PRODUCTIONS

- A. The festival host will provide a time schedule for the order of presentation of the entire day including: Load-in, Load-out, all meetings, spike, festival order and awards ceremony.
- B. The state office will conduct a random draw to determine the order of performance a minimum of five (5) days in advance of the specific district, regional, or state festival. A school that desires to alter a published position must secure an agreement with another school to change times and inform the festival director a minimum of forty-eight (48) hours prior to the festival.
- C. The first show at all MIFA festivals should begin early enough to allow for a reasonable time for dismissal. Registration, the technical review meeting, the judges and directors meeting, and the opening assembly will be held prior to the spike of the first show.

VIII. JUDGES AND JUDGING - MAIN STAGE AND STUDIO PRODUCTIONS

- A. Two (2) judges will be used to evaluate plays at the District level, three (3) judges will be used to evaluate plays at the Regional level, five (5) judges will be used at the State Festival. A judge may accept one (1) or more judging assignments at a MIFA theatre festival each year, as long as the individual will not adjudicate a school more than one time in a year.
- B. Judges must have the following requirements to judge all levels of the festival:
1. Be a College or University instructor or graduate assistant in the area of Theatre or Drama; or
 2. Be a qualified secondary school teacher who has had experience in directing and also has a major or minor in theatre. A judge who is a secondary school instructor may not come from any school involved in that particular festival; or
 3. Have a speech, theatre, or performing arts degree and academic background (secondary school or higher educational). Current college students studying theatre may judge at the District level; or
 4. Have community theatre directing, professional theatre directing, or professional acting experience.
- C. Each school has the option to decline an oral critique, which the director should indicate to the host at registration. A critique sheet without points (white copy of ballot) is to be given to the director of the show by each judge at the beginning of the critique session. All judges should, at some time, participate in the oral critique for each show.

- D. Judges must assess points in whole integers only (yellow and pink copies of the ballot) before meeting with other judges and/or casts, crews, and directors of the shows in private critique. Attendance in the critique is subject solely to approval by the director of the show being evaluated. In the determination of points for a particular show, there is to be no collaboration among judges. Judges may revisit their ballots at the end of the festival to amend their scores.
- E. Judges at the District and Regional Level: The MIFA office in conjunction with district or regional hosts, and with guidance from directors at participating schools, is responsible for securing the services of qualified judges for the festival that their school will be hosting.
- F. Judges at the Regional Level: A majority of the Regional Festival judging panel must have prior experience as an adjudicator at a MIFA festival in a prior year or receive special permission to judge a Regional Festival from the Theatre Committee. The Regional hosts will send names and contact information of the secured judges by January 15 to the MIFA office to have judging experience verified.
- G. Judges at the State Level:
 - 1. Before the beginning of any of the district festivals within the state, the MIFA Executive Director will contact one (1) qualified College or University instructor in Theatre or Drama with a known empathy for high school theatre programs to judge the final festival. In addition, one (1) judge at the State Final Festival must be a secondary school teacher. All judges must meet the requirements for State Judging.
 - 2. Each year, the State Theatre Festival Committee will provide the Director with a list of recommended adjudicators for the final festival. Members of the Theatre Committee should be available to adjudicate the State Final Theatre Festival.
 - 3. Judges may not adjudicate two (2) consecutive years at the State Finals.

IX. FEES - MAIN STAGE AND STUDIO PRODUCTIONS

See current fee structure at <http://www.themifa.org> and additional specifics on fees in General Policies.

- A. Any school withdrawing from any level of the festival series after the MIFA office has published the schedules for the District and Regional festivals will be assessed a drop fee. The festival schedule for the season will be published no later than 2 weeks prior to the date that MIFA-organized District festivals will be held.

Any school who drops after the schedule has been published and prior to the District festival date established by MIFA will be charged a drop fee of \$100 per show.

Any school who drops after the District window has closed and has failed to participate in either a MIFA-organized District event or an Independent District will be charged a drop fee of \$150.

Any school who participates in Districts but drops prior to Regionals or States will be assessed a drop fee equal to the entry fee for that level of the competition.

Schools who participate at any level of competition and declare in advance of the awards ceremony that they do not intend to participate in higher levels of competition will not be assessed a drop fee.

- B. Dependent on the number of entries in the festival, an additional fee may be assessed to each district participant. Notification of additional fees, if any, will be included with the appropriate mailings to participants.
- C. As schools advance from the district to the regional and state levels, additional nonrefundable registration fees will be assessed per the additional fees chart on the website.

X. FESTIVAL ADMINISTRATION - MAIN STAGE AND STUDIO PRODUCTIONS

- A. Any school may host its own District Festival between the dates of January 1 through January 31 of the calendar year. If a school chooses, it may be assigned to a traditional MIFA District to occur in January. Each Theatre District Festival will include a minimum of one (1) school and a maximum of seven (7) schools.
- B. A regional festival must include at least two (2) theatre districts. Representatives from four (4) district theatre festivals may feed a particular regional theatre festival.
- C. The MIFA Executive Director is responsible for the determination of the composition of theatre districts. Additionally, the Executive Director with the advice of the theatre committee will be responsible for the selection of the particular qualifying districts that will feed each regional festival. In general, district assignments reflect geographic considerations, although a school may indicate that it is willing to travel to any specific location for a district or regional festival. Unless unusual circumstances exist, schools are to remain in the assigned theatre district and/or regional following the publication of the structure for the festival. All alterations in district and/or regional assignments require the written approval of the executive director.
- D. Participation in the district festivals creates eligibility to advance to the Regional festival. Once all schools advancing to State Finals are determined, the MIFA office will create a Division Structure for each event (Main Stage and Studio Productions) by placing all qualifying schools' enrollments in descending order, and then dividing the participants into two (2) equal divisions (or relatively equal if an odd number of participating schools) assuming 8-14 entries, one (1) division if 7 or fewer entries ; those schools with the larger

enrollments will become Division I and those schools with the smaller enrollments will be Division II.

- E. All district and regional festivals must be one (1) day events. The MIFA State Finals will be two (2) days.
- F. No individual festival may have more than seven (7) plays in an event (Main Stage or Studio Production) in a single day. At the MIFA State Final Festival, all schools must have the same amount of preparation time, including spike time, use of an appropriate rehearsal or warm-up room, and a minimum of forty-five (45) minutes for costuming and/or make-up. Thus, it may be necessary to adjust the Saturday performance schedule to allow the initial production adequate preparation time.
- G. Participating schools should receive a schedule for the plays, maps to the festival site, pertinent telephone contact numbers, a visual representation of the theatre facility with appropriate dimensions, other pertinent data, and, where feasible, the size of the light areas and angle of the light areas in the MIFA standardized light plot. Each District and Regional school host should send this information to all schools assigned to their festival no later than 1 week prior to the festival. The States host site information should be made available on the MIFA website (www.themifa.org) as early in the season as possible
- H. The Judge Information Form will be made available as an editable digital document for directors to complete and keep updated throughout the season. Four copies of the Judge Information Form should be printed by each District and Regional host at the start of the festival for distribution to the respective judges for the festival. Six copies of each Judge Information Form should be printed by the State Festival host at the start of the festival for distribution to the respective judges for the festival.
- I. Any activity that the host school may use to occupy the time between the final show and the awards ceremony (e.g., jazz bands, choirs, supervised improvisation, guest performance) should reflect the educational tenor of the entire festival and be classroom appropriate.
- J. Any school or director wishing to host either a district or regional festival must notify MIFA Office by December 1st.
- K. Anyone wishing to serve as a regional festival host must have had prior district hosting experience.

XI. FESTIVAL ADVANCEMENT - MAIN STAGE AND STUDIO PRODUCTIONS

- A. The ballots of all judges (3 at Districts/Regionals, 5 at States) will be used to determine advancement. Each judge will complete a MIFA ballot. No two (2) schools are to receive the same point score from a particular judge at the District and Regional Festivals. At the State Finals, no two (2) schools within the same Division are to receive the same point score from a particular judge.
- B. All member schools that participate at a district festival (or LoveFest, WMTF or hold an in-house “independent” district) are eligible to advance to the next level of participation. District & Regional assignments will be determined by comparative geography, placing schools at sites to minimize distance traveled while still creating some mix between festival levels. The Executive Director may consider trades between assignments with good cause and if presented within 48 hours of announcement subject to mutual agreement of both parties.
- C. The regional festivals will determine the twelve (12) shows to participate in each event (Main Stage & Studio Productions) at the MIFA State Final Festival. The top two (2) productions at each regional festival in each event will qualify to advance to the State Final Festival. The “Wild Card” process will be used to determine the remaining shows to advance by comparing scores across all Regional sites to determine which ones qualify. In the case of an unequal number of shows per regional, an equalization process must be used.
- E. The scoring formula is consistent for all levels of the festival. Shows will be ranked sequentially according to the points judges assign on their ballots. The first tie breaker is total ranks, the sum of ranks assigned to a show by each judge with the lower total rank being preferred. The second tie breaker, judge preference, compares tied shows head-to-head to determine which show is preferred by the majority of judges. If ties still exist after the application of the first two (2) criteria, total points will be used to determine advancement. Ties in total points at the regional level will be broken by assessing points to the three (3) word value classifications categories — Superior, Excellent, Acceptable — on the MIFA Adjudicator’s Form as follows: Superior, 3; Excellent, 2; Acceptable, 1. In the case of a tie in ranking, judge preference, total points, and word value classification points, all shows that remain tied will advance to the State Final Festival.

School/ Show	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Total Ranks	Judge Prefs	Total Points	Place
A	1/98	2/95	3/93	6	3	290	1st

B	2/96	3/93	1/99	6	3	288	2nd
C	4/92	5/90	5/93	14		281	4th
D	5/88	4/92	6/91	15		271	5th
E	3/94	1/97	2/96	6	3	287	3rd
F	7/84	7/84	7/89	21		257	7th
G	6/85	6/86	4/95	16		264	6th

I. A production that violates a MIFA theatre guideline or regulation could experience an alteration in its rating placement. A reduction of points per irregularity on the total point score of each judge can affect the rating of a production. A point reduction may also create a tie in total score between two (2) schools. Because the tie in points is a result of an external standard, the two (2) schools should remain in a total point tie. Each school would receive a ranking that would reflect one-half of the sum of the two (2) possible ranks (3.5 is one-half of the sum of the ranks of 3 and 4). The festival director, not a judge, is responsible for the application of point sanctions.

J. At all levels of the festival series, the festival director, or their official designate, is to compile a tabulation sheet using the MIFA ballot. Following the announcement of individual awards, the ballot should be returned to the appropriate school with a master tabulation sheet.

XII. AWARDS - MAIN STAGE AND STUDIO PRODUCTIONS

A. Schools may order plaques, which recognize the rating level of a production at any of the three levels of the festival, from the MIFA. Order forms for the plaques are available on the MIFA website (www.themifa.org). All orders must be completed and returned to the MIFA office by March 1 of each year.

B. At the state final level, all schools will receive plaques. In addition, at the state finals, the outstanding production in each division as determined by the judges shall be awarded a school classification traveling trophy. At the state finals, the adjudicators will select from productions receiving a I rating the recipients of the school classification traveling award. If a particular school classification lacked a show with a I rating, the next category or II would be the basis for the selection of a school classification recipient. The name of the school and the Director of Theatre is engraved on the traveling trophy on an annual basis. A permanent school award will also be given to each of the three school classification recipients.

C. At all levels of the festival (district, regional, and state) the judges may award as many individual awards of "Excellent" and "Superior" to as many individual performers or students involved in non-performing aspects of the production as the judges see fit. The judges will determine individual awards for each production following the oral critique for the particular show and prior to the next production or at the end of the complete festival. The agreement of two (2) of the three (3) judges to present a "Superior" award is sufficient justification to grant the honor; if the majority of judges concur, an award should be given. Also, if a school receives maximum points in a category on the ballot from all three (3) judges, the individual(s) responsible for the performance or technical achievement must receive a superior award(s). A written list of awards for a particular production must be given to the festival director immediately following the deliberation of the judges and prior to the start of the next production. Certificate Template and Medal order forms are available on the website (www.themifa.org). Recipients of awards may purchase a medal, which recognizes the superior or excellent performance or technical contribution of the individual, from the MIFA.

D. For the State Final Festival, the technical personnel of the host school will determine recipients of a daily award to recognize the most efficient loading process by a school. Consideration of the final production may require alterations in the schedule or a judgment that involves a post festival presentation of the award for the second day to allow all schools to complete both phases (load-in and load-out) of the move.

E. For the State Final Festival, one (1) school will receive a "Student Choice Award" to be given to the production that receives the most ballots from participants as the best show. Following the final production of the State Final Theatre Festival, each school will submit an envelope containing a ballot from its participants selecting one production as the best show. The "Student Choice Award" will be given to the school with the greatest number of votes.

F. Following the determination of awards for the last show, judges will be given an additional fifteen (15) minutes to review all individual awards. No previous awards may be withdrawn at this time; however, judges may decide to award additional excellent or superior awards.

XIII. GENERAL MEETINGS/SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES - MAIN STAGE AND STUDIO PRODUCTIONS

A. All schools participating in the district, regional, or state theatre festival must have a faculty representative or an adult with written school authorization at the opening assembly to officially register his or her school, receive festival instructions, and hear any announcements. A school that fails to provide an official representative at the opening assembly will be subject to sanctions at the discretion of the festival committee. The faculty representative or the individual

with written school authorization is to remain at the site for the duration of the festival and is to exercise appropriate supervisory responsibilities. It is the responsibility of the school representative to complete the registration process during the time scheduled by the festival host for registration.

B. Prior to the opening assembly, there should be a meeting of technical personnel with at least one (1) representative per school in attendance. The meeting of technical personnel should provide hands-on technical experience for the operation of light boards, usable curtains or drapes, and other unique technical options of the host school.

C. A meeting with directors and judges will occur prior to the start of the festival. The purpose of the meeting is to review procedures for the conduct of the festival, including the scoring system for productions, and to discuss the facilities for the festival.

D. Any school fifteen (15) minutes late for the published concluding time for registration may be withdrawn from the festival. If the school notifies the festival director prior to the expiration of the fifteen (15) minute period and there are extenuating circumstances in the situation, the school may continue to participate in the festival at the discretion of the festival director. Failure to provide notification to the festival director within the fifteen (15) minute time period will cause the school to be withdrawn from further participation in the festival. Where possible in this circumstance, the festival director should draw a new time schedule for the festival. The nonparticipating school(s), which fails to notify the festival director of the alteration in its commitment to participate, is liable for full financial costs of the festival and ineligible for subsequent participation in other levels of the festival series. An exception to this rule would be the failure of the festival director to provide a working and manned telephone contact. In matters of interpretation of the foregoing, the decision of the festival director is final. Compliance with the notification procedures may enable a school to be placed in another district and/or regional festival at the discretion of the Executive Director of the Michigan Interscholastic Forensic Association. Appeals of this or any other procedure at the MIFA State Finals will be decided by the MIFA Forensic Council.

E. Each festival coordinator is to hold the assemblage of schools before the presentation of the first play in the festival. The festival host is to call roll at this assembly. The festival host or a representative will read the code of conduct at the opening assembly. Since a primary purpose of the festival is to explore diverse theatre experiences, students should see as many plays as possible in each festival.

CODE OF CONDUCT

“Audience members must understand that their behavior is a reflection of the entire festival and can have a strong effect on performances. Audiences are encouraged to be alert, to be responsive, and to participate genuinely in the performances. Audiences must refrain from inappropriate and rude behavior that can affect the on-stage performance. This includes talking, exiting and entering the auditorium, and making distracting noise.

Due to variances in community standards, material and/or interpretation of concepts in some of the productions may be offensive or objectionable to some audience members. In such cases, if an individual feels compelled to leave, he/she should do so quietly and with no disruption to the performance.

For the safety of the actors and the comfort of all other audience members, the use of flash photography, cell phones and pagers is strictly prohibited. Copyright laws may prohibit any form of recording as well.

Audience members not conducting themselves in an acceptable manner may be asked to leave, which could result in the elimination of a school from the current festival and/or future festivals.”

In addition, the festival host or a representative will read the following statement prior to each production: “The use of cell phones, pagers, and, according to copyright law, cameras and video recording equipment, are strictly prohibited. Audience members not conducting themselves in an acceptable manner may be asked to leave, which could result in the elimination of a school from the current and/or future festivals.”

XIV. SANCTIONS - MAIN STAGE AND STUDIO PRODUCTIONS

A. At each level, the festival director should appoint a three-person (3) Festival Committee to rule on interpretations of MIFA regulations during the conduct of the festival pursuant to guidelines for protests set out in the General Policies portion of Speech Activities. The Festival Committee should be composed of directors of theatre at schools participating in the particular festival, excluding the festival director. In a situation where a district festival director has less than four (4) participating schools, or the festival director is unable to appoint a three-person (3) committee, the Festival Committee will be comprised of all participating directors, excluding the festival director, or timers and/or festival support staff provided with copies of the Theatre Festival Rules. In the circumstance that an allegation of a rule violation involves the school of a member of the Festival Committee, the festival director should replace the member on the Festival Committee for the deliberation of the particular issue(s). The member of the Festival Committee whose school is subject to the particular allegation would remain on the Festival Committee as a non-voting member during the consideration of the particular allegation(s).

- B. To be considered by the Festival Committee, a protest must be filed only by the directors of participating schools. In the case of a potential violation of the type of production that is required for the current year, however, a judge may seek to disqualify the production with the festival director. At the state finals, technical personnel representing the host school or the MIFA may also file a protest with the Festival Director.
- C. At each level, a protest regarding the violation of the type of production (for example, a humorous production in a serious year) that receives the approval of the Festival Committee will result in the immediate disqualification of the particular school. A school that is disqualified because it is in violation of the rule regarding the appropriate type of production for the current year is ineligible for any individual awards. As a general guideline, a production will be considered to be in violation of the regulation regarding the type of production for the current year if the overall impact of the show is inconsistent with the type of production that is required for the current year (for example, the overall impact of a production is humorous in a year in which the type of production is to be serious).
- D. At each level, if the Festival Director, in consultation with the Festival Committee, reviews a protest and determines a production is in violation of any of the other regulations that govern the festival, the school that has committed the violation will receive up to a per-adjudicator five (5) point deduction. The Festival Director, in conjunction with the Festival Committee, will decide the severity of the infraction and assign a point deduction between one (1) and five (5) points per adjudicator accordingly. The Festival Director will then report the Festival Committee's decision to the Executive Director for review (except at the State Festival, where the Executive Director is the Festival Director). The Executive Director may adjust the point deduction decided on by the Festival Committee at their discretion.

In the case of a timing violation, a production that is over time would receive an automatic over time deduction for its total score on the ballot of each judge.

- 1 point = 1-15 seconds over time
- 2 points = 16-30 seconds over time
- 3 points = 31-45 seconds over time
- 4 points = 46-60 seconds over time
- 5 points = 61+ seconds over time

- E. The review of all protests and their appeals, if any, shall be conducted according to the rules in General Policies of the current academic year.
- F. The Theatre Committee will be present at the state finals

NOTE: Middle Level specific festival rules and as well as ballots for various HS and ML events

are incorporated as part of Speech Activities

MIFA THEATRE ADJUDICATOR'S FORM

School _____ Order of Performance _____ Date _____ Festival Level _____ Festival Site _____
Playwright _____ Publisher _____

ADJUDICATOR'S INSTRUCTIONS: The WHITE COPY of the ballot should be given to the director of the production prior to the beginning of the oral critique of the specific production. The YELLOW COPY of the ballot, with ranks and points indicated, should be given to the festival coordinator prior to the private critique. The judge should keep the PINK COPY of the tabulated ballot for personal reference at the private critique. Judges should collaborate on the awards for individual performance. *Number and word rankings are to be given to each area below.* Point scores are correlated with word value judgments (A = Acceptable, E = Excellent, S = Superior). Enter an appropriate score to represent your word value judgment in each category. Do not exceed the set limit of points in each area. The judge must write a justification for the score in each category.

ACTING

PHYSICAL: Do the performers effectively use movement, facial expressions, stage business, etc. to communicate the physical requirements of the characters on stage? physical choices consistent throughout the production, throughout an individual actor's complete performance?

SCORE: 6 1 7 8 1 9 10 _____
A E S
COMMENTS:

VOCAL: Are the performers projecting and enunciating clearly to communicate the meaning of the script? If dialects are used, are they consistent? If a musical, are the voices in tune with the music? Are vocal choices consistent with physical characterization?

SCORE: 6 1 7 8 1 9 10 _____
A E S
COMMENTS:

CHARACTERIZATION: In addition to physical presentation and vocal interpretations, does the cast create believable characters, fully realized, and developed within the style of the piece?

SCORE: 6 1 7 8 1 9 10 _____
A E S
COMMENTS:

TECHNICAL

SET AND LIGHTS: MIFA productions are intended to be traveling shows which must adapt to a standard host light plot. Do the scenery and props work within the needs and style of the production? Does the production effectively use the scenery, light, and props within its presentation?

SCORE: 6 1 7 8 1 9 10 _____
A E S
COMMENTS:

COSTUMES AND MAKE-UP: Do the costumes and make-up for the production effectively communicate character, period, style, etc.?

SCORE: 6 1 7 8 1 9 10 _____
A E S
COMMENTS:

OVERALL TECHNICAL PRODUCTION: Do all the technical elements of the production help serve the script and performance?

SCORE: 6 1 7 8 1 9 10 _____
A E S
COMMENTS:

STAGE MECHANICS

Does the production make effective use of the stage? Is movement throughout motivated, functional, and artistic? If a musical, does he staging and choreography work within the context of the production?

SCORE: 6 1 7 8 1 9 10 _____
A E S
COMMENTS:

TEMPO AND PACING

Does the production move/flow well from scene to scene? Does the pace contribute to the dramatic effect of the play?

SCORE: 6 1 7 8 1 9 10 _____
A E S
COMMENTS:

SCRIPT/MATERIAL/CUTTING

The script is the foundation for the entire production. Standards on appropriateness will vary by community. Does the material provide an effective foundation for the production? If adapted from a longer script, is the cutting cohesive to communicate a complete story?

SCORE: 2 1 3 4 1 5 _____
A E S
COMMENTS:

OVERALL PRESENTATION

Does the entire production effectively communicate the ideas, attitudes, and emotions of the script to the audience? What is the overall lasting impression of the production?

SCORE: 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 _____
A E S
COMMENTS:

Adjudicator's Name _____ School/Affiliation _____ Total Points _____
Adjudicator's Signature _____ Rating _____