South Dakota Music Teachers Association
founded in 1955

SDMTA

Reflecting on the past Celebrating in the present Creating for the future

HANDBOOK FOR

Student Competitions

2026

South Dakota Music Teachers Association

Available in PDF format at www.sdmta.org

Contents

Important Dates 1
About SDMTA Competitions 1
Competition Contacts 2
General Competition Information 3
Competition Divisions 5
Instrumental Division: Piano 6
Piano Duet Division 7
Instrumental Division: Non-Piano 8
Vocal Division 9
Composition Division 10
SDMTA Young Artist Brass and Voice Division 11
Distinguished Performance Award 12

Important Dates

MTNA REGISTRATION DEADLINE

Sept 9, 2026

3:00 p.m. Eastern Time

SDMTA REGISTRATION DEADLINE

Sept 25, 2026

11:55 p.m. Central Time

We strongly encourage early submissions.

About SDMTA Competitions

- SDMTA competitions provide opportunities for musical growth for member teachers and their students through recognition of high performance standards. They are held in November of each year.
- MTNA competitions at the state level are separate from SDMTA competitions but are held concurrently at the state conference. Rules for MTNA competitions are **NOT** printed here. Please consult the *American Music Teacher* and www.mtna.org for MTNA competition rules and applications.
- Questions concerning competitions should be submitted directly to the respective competition chairs.

Members who enter students in the state competitions are required to monitor or to secure a substitute.

Competition Contacts

2026 Competition Coordinators

Role	Name	Phone	Email
Overall Chair	Melanie Timmerman	605-690-7886	mltimmerman@swiftel.net
Site Chair	Bella Kumagai	701-885-2992	Bella.kumagai@augie.edu

2026 SDMTA Competition Chairs

Competition	Chair	Phone	Email
Elementary and Junior Piano	Marilyn Schempp	605-521-9636	mmschempp@sio.midco.net
Senior and Collegiate Piano	Susan Gray	605-670-0390	Susan.Gray@usd.edu
Piano Duet	Marilyn Schempp	605-521-9636	mmschempp@sio.midco.net
Senior and Collegiate Voice; Young Artist Voice	Emily Toronto	605-695-7643	emily.toronto@sdstate.edu
Elementary, Junior, Senior, and Collegiate Strings	Sonja Kraus	605-202-0192	sonja.kraus@usd.edu
Junior, Senior, and Collegiate Woodwind and Brass	Michael Walsh	516-819-3410	michael.walsh@sdstate.edu

2026 MTNA Competition Chairs

Competition	Chair	Phone	Email
MTNA Junior & Senior Performance	Melanie Timmerman	605-690-7886	mltimmerman@swiftel.net
MTNA Young Artist Strings	Sonja Kraus	605-202-0192	Sonja.Kraus@usd.edu
MTNA Young Artist Piano	Eun-Hee Park	850-212-2428	Eunhee.park@usd.edu
MTNA Young Artist Woodwind	Kay Fischer	605-228-4828	kay.fischer1@abe.midco.net
MTNA & SDMTA Composition	Paul Lombardi	605-929-9996	Paul.Lombardi@usd.edu

General Competition Information

The following rules apply to all entrants of SDMTA competitions.

Registration

The registration system is online at https://sdmta.tenutoweb.com.

STUDENT COMPETITION APPLICATION AND TEACHER REGISTRATION FORM

- The application deadline for SDMTA competitions is **September 25, 2026**.
- Each participating student must be studying with a current member of SDMTA/MTNA.
- Students compete in the category determined by their age on September 1. They may compete at a higher age level, but not a lower one. A student may compete in the same category two years in a row if their age matches that category, **UNLESS** the student wins first place in their age category the previous year, in which case the student must advance to the next age category.
- No contestant may enter both the SDMTA and MTNA performance competitions on the same instrument or voice in a given year. In the area of composition, a student may not enter both the SDMTA and MTNA competitions.
- All entry fees are non-refundable. Amounts are listed on the online application form.
- Teachers and students will find the appropriate competition application at https://sdmta.tenutoweb.com. There will be drop-down boxes for each instrument and each age group. **ALL** of the blanks must be filled in.
- The form must be submitted online **no later than September 25 at 11:55 p.m. Central Time**, after which the application form will be removed from the website.

Participating Teachers

- In order to enter students, teachers must pay current membership dues for both SDMTA and MTNA before registering students. This policy conforms to the MTNA competition guidelines. If the teacher's membership dues are not paid before entering students, a **$200 non-member fee** will be assessed at the time of registration.
- If a student has more than one teacher, all teachers must satisfy teacher eligibility and be listed on the application form.
- Teachers are responsible for checking the age and repertoire requirements for each of their student entrants.
- Teachers may accompany their own students.

Awards

- First place and second place awards are allowed in each of the SDMTA categories. The number of honorable mentions is at the discretion of the judge. However, judges are not required to declare a winner, regardless of the number of entrants.

- Unlike MTNA competitions, SDMTA competitions terminate at the state level rather than advancing to a Divisional level.
- Decisions of the judges are final.

Repertoire

- Repertoire requirements are listed below for each competition division.
- Anyone not meeting repertoire requirements will automatically be disqualified.
- Contestants may not make any repertoire changes after the entry deadline.
- The choice and quality of repertoire may influence the judge's decision.
- Style period classifications are determined by the MTNA *Composer Classification List* published in the *American Music Teacher* and online at https://www.mtna.org/Composer_Classifications.html.

Performance Time

- Performance Time Limits are indicated below for each competition division and age category. The stopwatch starts with the first note and ends at the allotted time, not stopping between pieces.
- The contestant's performance will be stopped at the Performance Time Limit for the respective category. If the contestant's program is longer than the time allowed, the judge is encouraged to hear at least a representative portion of each selection.
- Three (3) minutes will be scheduled between all contestants to allow for set-up and for the judge to write comments.

Scores and Copyrights

- SDMTA competitions will abide by the copyright rules handed down by the national MTNA organization. Those guidelines are included here: www.music-usa.org/vmta/documents/vmta_release_form.pdf.
- Please note that the use of photocopies is strongly discouraged. When it is not possible to use the originals, the Music Release Form found above **MUST** accompany the music. The correct use of photocopying will become the responsibility of the person making the copies, not holding MTNA or SDMTA legally responsible for infringements. CD Sheet Music is still acceptable as an original.
- Contestants must provide one complete score, **including accompaniment**, for the judge. The music must not have identifying marks. Measures must be numbered at the beginning of each system.

Recording, Photography, and Videorecording

- No flash photography is permitted in any of the competitions.

Warm-ups

Practice rooms will be available for warming up. Students will not be allowed to play in the performance space prior to their performance time.

Competition Divisions

This section lists the age categories, repertoire requirements, and performance time limits for each division. A quick comparison appears below; the division pages that follow are the full rules.

Divisions at a Glance

Division	Levels	Required selections	Memorized	Time limit
Piano	Elementary, Junior, Senior, Collegiate	2 (Elementary, Junior); 3 (Senior, Collegiate)	Required	5 / 8 / 12 / 17 min
Piano Duet	Elementary, Junior, Senior, Collegiate	2	Not required	5 / 8 / 12 / 17 min
Non-Piano	Elementary (strings), Junior, Senior, Collegiate	2 (Elementary, Junior); 3 (Senior, Collegiate)	Optional	5 / 8 / 12 / 17 min
Vocal	Senior; Collegiate I, II, III	Senior: 3+ of 6 styles; Collegiate: style 1 plus 4+ others	Required	9 / 12 / 15 min
Composition	Elementary, Junior, Senior, Collegiate	1 entry per student	n/a	Up to 10 min
Young Artist Brass & Voice	Ages 19–29	Brass: 2+ periods; Voice: 6+ selections	Brass: no; Voice: yes	Voice 25 / Brass 40 min

Instrumental Division: Piano

Age Categories

For Elementary, Junior and Senior Piano, each age category is a separate competition.

Level	Categories
Elementary	Age 10; Age 11
Junior	Age 12; Age 13
Senior	Age 14; Age 15; Age 16; Ages 17–18 (one category, non-collegiate)
Collegiate	One category — undergraduate students enrolled in South Dakota colleges and universities

> † **Previous first place winners** may not compete in the same category the following year but must advance regardless of age or length of study.

Repertoire

> **The required selections must be contrasting in period and style.** Students must choose selections from the five style categories: Baroque — Classical — Romantic — Impressionistic — Contemporary. Students may perform additional selection(s) from any of the listed style periods to fill but not exceed the Performance Time Limit.

- *Elementary and Junior:* two (2) required selections.
- *Senior and Collegiate:* three (3) required selections.
- All music must be originally composed for piano. No arrangements, transcriptions or popular music.
- All selections must be memorized.

Performance Time Limits

ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR	SENIOR	COLLEGIATE
5 minutes	**8** minutes	**12** minutes	**17** minutes

Piano Duet Division

Age Categories

Level	Categories
Elementary	Ages 10–11
Junior	Ages 12–13
Senior	Ages 14–15; Ages 16–18
Collegiate	One category — undergraduate students enrolled in South Dakota colleges and universities

- Groups may mix ages, but the entry must be listed with the **older** student.
- Two teachers may jointly enter a duet team, but both teachers must be listed on the entry form.
- Entry fees are per person, not per entry.

† **Previous first place winners** may not compete in the same category the following year but must advance regardless of age or length of study.

Repertoire

- *Elementary:* two selections contrasting in style to fill, but not exceed, the Performance Time Limit.
- *Junior, Senior, and Collegiate:* two selections which must be **contrasting in period and style** from any of the listed style periods. Students may perform additional selection(s) from any of the listed style periods to fill but not exceed the Performance Time Limit.
  - Style periods: Baroque — Classical — Romantic — Impressionistic — Contemporary.
- No arrangements of popular music may be used.
- Memorization is not required.
- Page turners are allowed as long as they are not the teacher(s) of the students.
- Due to the challenges of changing venues and limited pianos, two-piano duets are not allowed.

Performance Time Limits

ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR	SENIOR	COLLEGIATE
5 minutes	**8** minutes	**12** minutes	**17** minutes

Instrumental Division: Non-Piano

Age Categories

Level	Categories
Elementary	One category for strings only — ages 10–11
Junior	One category for each instrument group in brass, strings, and woodwinds — ages 12–13
Senior	One category for each instrument group in brass, strings, and woodwinds — ages 14–18 (non-collegiate)
Collegiate	One category for each instrument group in brass, strings, and woodwinds — undergraduate students enrolled in South Dakota colleges and universities

† **Previous first place winners** may not compete in the same category the following year but must advance regardless of age or length of study.

Repertoire

- Repertoire selections must be contrasting in style.
- Students may perform additional selection(s) to fill but not exceed the Performance Time Limit.
- *Elementary Strings:* two (2) required selections.
- *Junior:* two (2) required selections.
- *Senior and Collegiate:* three (3) required selections.
- Transcriptions are allowed.
- Memorization is optional.

Performance Time Limits

ELEMENTARY STRINGS	JUNIOR	SENIOR	COLLEGIATE
5 minutes	**8** minutes	**12** minutes	**17** minutes

Vocal Division

Age Categories

Level	Categories
Senior	One category — ages 14–18 (non-collegiate)
Collegiate †	Undergraduate students enrolled in South Dakota colleges and universities:
Category I	No more than 4 semesters of collegiate voice study; maximum age 20
Category II	Ages 20–23, regardless of length of study
Category III	Undergraduate students 24 years of age or older, regardless of length of study

† Previous first place winners may not compete in the same category the following year but must advance regardless of age or length of study.

Repertoire

- *Senior:* Students must perform selections from at least three of the six style classifications listed below. Students may perform additional selection(s) from any of the listed style periods to fill but not exceed the Performance Time Limit.
- *Collegiate:* **Style classification (1) is mandatory for all collegiate singers.** The remainder of the time requirement shall be filled and include at least five of the six style classifications listed below.
- Memorization is required.**Style classifications**

1. Aria from opera or oratorio in the original language and in the original key
2. Music before 1800, sung in the original language of composition, generally Italian or English
3. German Lied, sung in German
4. French mélodie, sung in French
5. American, Canadian or British art song of the 20th–21st century, sung in English
6. An art song in a language or performance style **not** represented by the contestant's other selections. This style classification is intended to showcase languages not represented in the traditional study of voice (e.g. Spanish, Russian, Czech, Norwegian)

Please check repertoire lists carefully — the application MUST match what is performed in the competition! If repertoire does not match, the student will perform for comments only.

Performance Time Limits

SENIOR	COLLEGIATE CATEGORY I	COLLEGIATE CATEGORIES II & III
9 minutes	**12** minutes	**15** minutes

Composition Division

Age Categories

Level	Categories
Elementary	Ages 10–11
Junior	Ages 12–13
Senior	Ages 14–18
Collegiate	One category — undergraduate students enrolled in South Dakota colleges and universities

Repertoire

- A student may submit only one entry.
- The composition must be in the composer's handwriting or engraved using software such as Finale or Sibelius. Measures of the composition must be numbered.
- No change may be made to the score once it is submitted.
- All materials must be labeled with the name of the composition, the name of the student, and the category (Elementary, Junior, Senior, Collegiate).
- A composition that makes use of a copyrighted text must be accompanied by a written statement from the copyright holder giving permission to use the text. If the text is in public domain, a statement signed by the student and teacher indicating this fact must accompany the entry. This statement may be sent via email to the Composition Chair.
- The composition must be submitted via PDF, uploaded at the time of registration.
- An audio recording (live or MIDI) may be submitted but is not required. Audio files (MP3 or MP4 only) may be uploaded at the time of registration.

Performance Time Limit

ALL CATEGORIES

10 minutes maximum

SDMTA Young Artist Brass and Voice Division

Eligibility Requirements

- Must be age 19–29 on January 1, 2027.
- Must study with a teacher who is (1) a member of SDMTA or (2) who pays the nonmember teacher fee of $200.
- Must reside in South Dakota during the competition year.
- Entry fee is **$75**.

Program Length

VOICE PROGRAM	BRASS PROGRAM
25 minutes	**40** minutes

- Programs may be over or under the performance time limit. Programs over the time limit will be cut at the judges' discretion.
- Competitor programs can be a maximum of 10 minutes over the total performance time listed above. Programs that exceed this requirement will be disqualified.

Brass Repertoire Requirements

- The program must contain compositions from at least two different periods of music (Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Impressionistic, Contemporary). Transcriptions and arrangements are allowed.
- Memorization is not required.
- Entrants are limited to one entry per category. Brass entrants may perform on any instrument(s) of their choice (e.g. Tenor Trombone/Bass Trombone and so on).
- No changes in repertoire are allowed following submission of the registration.

Voice Repertoire Requirements

- The program, a minimum of 6 selections, must contain repertoire in the original language from each of the following categories (include the name of any identifying work from which a song or aria is taken):
  - Two (2) arias from opera or oratorio repertoire, sung in the original key
  - Two (2) art songs (contrasting languages)
  - One (1) piece written in the 21st century (art song, opera or oratorio repertoire only; musical theater selections are not eligible)
  - One (1) piece of choice (chosen from art song, opera or operatic oratorio literature)
- Memorization is required for all repertoire.
- No changes in repertoire are allowed following submission of the registration.

Recording

Performers are welcome to audio and video record their competition performance. These videos may be used for the purpose of entering the MTNA Young Artist Competition if the performer chooses to do so. No additional time will be allotted for setup of recording equipment. Recording must not obstruct or distract the adjudicator or audience in any way.

Awards

The first place winner for each category will receive a **$100 award**. Entrants are also eligible for the SDMTA Distinguished Performance prize at the same level as SDMTA collegiate competitions.

Distinguished Performance Award

Each judge may award, at their discretion, a Distinguished Performance Award to one student in each category (Elementary, Junior, Senior, Collegiate) who performs a piece of music in the Distinguished Performance category for the year.

> **The category for 2026 is works by composers from the African Diaspora.**