

# A Parent's Guide to Competition

Texas is fortunate to have a tremendously strong curricular music program in the public school systems. For whatever reasons, our music programs have survived every curricular innovation, every scheduling impediment, and every budgetary crisis in the last 25 years. A large part of this longevity may be attributed to the well-organized and maintained competition system in Texas that is the model for the rest of the country. Band competition in Texas is sponsored by two very different organizations: the University Interscholastic League (UIL) and the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA). The UIL is an organization of schools. Schools may elect to be a part of the UIL each year and nearly all of the Texas public school systems choose to do so, including Calallen Middle School. TMEA is an organization of music teachers, including band, choir, orchestra, and classroom music teachers at every level through college. Marching and Concert competitions are sponsored by the UIL, while TMEA sponsors the competition that chooses the All-State performers each year and, in biennial cycles, selects the Honor Bands in each class through recordings that may or may not be from UIL competitions.

## **UIL CONCERT/SIGHTREADING CONTEST**

This is the staple competition for UIL, occurring every year in the spring semester in all 28 regions of the state. Bands prepare a concert program of three pieces chosen from the Prescribed Music List and perform for a panel of three judges who rate the bands with one of five ratings. The comparison is only with a standard of excellence, not with other bands in the contest. Theoretically, every band could earn a First Division or a Fifth Division! Immediately following the concert, bands move to another room to sight read a piece of music chosen to be read by all the bands within a school classification statewide. The music for sight reading is composed specifically for the contest and addresses certain fundamentals that are aligned with the curriculum for each classification. This is the musical equivalent of a statewide mandated achievement test, such as the STARR test.

## UIL SOLO&ENSEMBLE CONTEST

The only “individual” competition that the UIL sponsors for instrumentalist is held in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester, usually at the end of February each year. Students choose a solo and/or an ensemble from the Prescribed Music List for their instrument and begin work in November/December. Judges are rating each performance compared to a statewide scale of excellence, not as a comparison of one student to another. Students earn medals for a First Division rating.

## ALL-REGION BAND

TMEA sponsors individual competitions every fall that culminate in the selection of the Region XIV All-Region Bands that will perform a concert in late January. The students will perform for a panel of 3 judges in a blind audition where judges are screened from sight and do not know which student is performing. Each judge ranks each student in comparison with each other and the lowest total of rank points is first chair. **Note:** Middle School Bands use the exact same procedure as the TMEA rules and procedures, but is not officially sponsored by TMEA because of using a 3 member panel. The only difference between a non-TMEA and TMEA sponsorship would have to have a 5 member panel judging.