

**Michigan Arts Education Instruction and Assessment  
Program**

**Arts Education Assessment Specifications**

**Music**

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## Chapter 1 Introduction to the MAEIA Assessment Specifications Document

Assessment specifications communicate the standards and content to be measured in an assessment, as well as how that content will be assessed, to a wide variety of audiences. These audiences include the individuals who help to build the assessments, as well as those who will use the assessments and the assessment results. Therefore, this Arts Education Assessment Specifications Document (ASD) is intended to serve as a supporting document to help the full array of potential users understand the purposes and uses of the planned assessment, as well as provide more specific information as to how to accurately read and interpret the MAEIA arts education assessments.

### 1.1 Purpose of the Arts Education Assessment Specifications

The purpose of the MAEIA Arts Education ASD is to provide information on the assessment specifications that guided the development and use of the Michigan arts education measures. To this end, this MAEIA ASD will describe the following:

- What are assessment specifications?
- How will the MAEIA assessment specifications be used?
- How were the MAEIA assessment specifications developed?
- How are the MAEIA Assessment Specifications structured?
- What are the next steps for use of the MAEIA assessment specifications?

### 1.2 What Are Assessment Specifications?

All valid and valued assessments are content driven. Successful completion of the assessment development process requires deep understanding of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are measured on an assessment, and how these are derived from the content standards upon which the assessment is based. Not only is understanding of the specific content important, developers and users must also know the range and depth of content eligible to be assessed, the relative weighting among the various content strands to be included on the assessment, the item types used to measure each strand, and other key factors such as depth of knowledge spread within and across strands/standards/indicators.

Specifically, a set of assessment specifications is a formal document that guides the development and assembly of an assessment by explaining the following essential information:

- Content (standards, indicators, and validity claims) that is or is not to be included for each assessed arts area and grade, across various levels of the system (student, classroom);
- Emphasis and balance of content, generally indicated as number of items or percentage of points per standard or indicator;
- Item types, sending a clear message to item developers how to measure each standard or indicator, and to arts educators and students about learning expectations; and
- Depth of Knowledge (DOK)<sup>1</sup>, indicating the complexity of item types for each standard or indicator.

Assessment specifications are essential for both assessment developers and for those

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<sup>1</sup> Depth of Knowledge is a procedure developed by Norm Webb, University of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Center for Education Research to evaluate the alignment of assessments to standards. It is also used to judge the cognitive complexity of standards and assessments. The MAEIA project will use Webb cognitive complexity processes in assessment development.

responsible for curriculum and instruction. For assessment developers, the assessment specifications declare how the assessments will be developed to ensure full coverage of content and maintain fidelity to the intent of the content standards on which the assessment is based. Full alignment to content standards is necessary if educational stakeholders are to make valid, reliable, and unbiased inferences about student achievement at the student, classroom, school, and state levels.

For those responsible for curriculum and instruction, the ASD provides a guide to the competing demands of arts content and suggests how the content is intended to be demonstrated, as indicated by item type and Depth of Knowledge.

In summary, assessment specifications provide clear development guidance to test developers and signals to the broader education community both the full complexity of the pertinent content standards and how performance on these standards will be measured.

### 1.3 How was the MAEIA Assessment Specifications Used?

As described above, the MAEIA ASD was used to:

- Describe in general terms what the MAEIA assessments in dance, music, theatre and visual arts would cover.
- Provide more detailed information about the types of assessment exercises that were used and what knowledge and skills they addressed.
- Provide prototype assessment exercises to show readers the types of assessments to be selected or developed.
- Describe how the assessments may be administered and scored.
- Provide illustrative information about the manner in which assessment results may be reported.
- Discuss how the assessment information may be used by school districts.

### 1.4 How were the MAEIA Assessment Specifications Developed?

MAEIA assessment specifications were developed by arts educators and others under the guidance of a MAEIA Project Management Team (PMT) from the Michigan Assessment Consortium (MAC). Once drafted by the assessment specifications writers, the MAEIA ASD underwent editorial review by the PMT. This was paired with a field review by Michigan and national arts educators to assure that the ASD presented a challenging yet attainable level of expectations for students and schools. Since the ASD was used first in the development of the arts education assessments, this development process also yielded refinements that needed to be made to the document itself.

As plans for providing the assessments to schools were made, and such use occurred, additional refinements to the document were necessary. In this sense, because the ASD remains a “living document,” its development and refinement was a more or less continual process over several years.

### 1.5 How are the MAEIA Assessment Specifications Structured?

The assessment specifications writers used the outline provided by the PMT to fill in the information needed. A draft outline for the MAEIA ASD was first created and was used at the initial meeting of the assessment specifications writers to suggest the topics to be included in the MAEIA ASD. Subsequently, this outline was refined and used by the team in each discipline to describe the assessment to be developed in each discipline.

The examples and recommendations in the ASD are not exhaustive; they describe some of the more important examples of arts education assessments that will guide the development and use of the MAEIA assessments. The MAEIA ASD contain several chapters, including:

- Chapter 2 – An overview of the arts education assessment design
  - Chapter 3 – Content Standards for the Music Assessment
  - Chapter 4 – Music Assessment Specifications
  - Chapter 5 – Summary of Available Assessments
- 
- A discussion of the purposes for the arts education assessment program,
  - An overview of the arts education standards to be assessed,
  - A description of the proposed arts education assessment design and instruments,
  - Illustrations of this assessment in each of the arts disciplines for which assessments will be created (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts),
  - An overview of the assessment development steps and how the assessments will be administered, and,
  - An overview of the manner in which the results of the assessments may be reported at different educational levels to different groups and audiences.

## Chapter 2 Overview of the Arts Education Assessment Design

This chapter provides an overview of the arts education assessments, the depth of knowledge and difficulty levels intended for the items, a description of the different types of assessments to be created, and other assessment design and development issues considered in the development of the MAEIA assessments.

### 2.1 Discipline Areas Assessed

Since the first edition of the Michigan Arts Education Content Standards in 1998, Michigan has provided recommended learning expectations for students in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts. This is consistent with the 1994 National Arts Education Standards. The MAEIA assessments are anchored in the grade-level and high school content expectations in the arts disciplines of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts.

The MAEIA project was aware that NCCAS was developing standards for media arts. The development of media arts standards as part of the Michigan Arts Education Content Standards may be work that the Michigan Department of Education will embark on since national leadership in the form of NCCAS Media Arts Standards became available in 2014.

### 2.2 Cognitive Complexity and Difficulty of the Items

One of the essential characteristics of the assessments that were created is their cognitive complexity. This is an important ingredient in well-crafted assessment measures because there is at least a modest correlation between complexity of the task and the depth at which the performance standards in arts education will be measured.

The National Standards of the Arts encourage the organization of learning processes into three categories: Create, Perform, and Respond. Through this method of organization, assessment opportunities become a natural part of the process of learning. The process of measuring growth can include assessments used for summative and formative purposes, authentic performances, and the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. The assessments cover several levels of cognitive complexity, and use a variety of tools including portfolios, pre- and post-tests, performance tasks and events, constructed-response, and selected-response items.

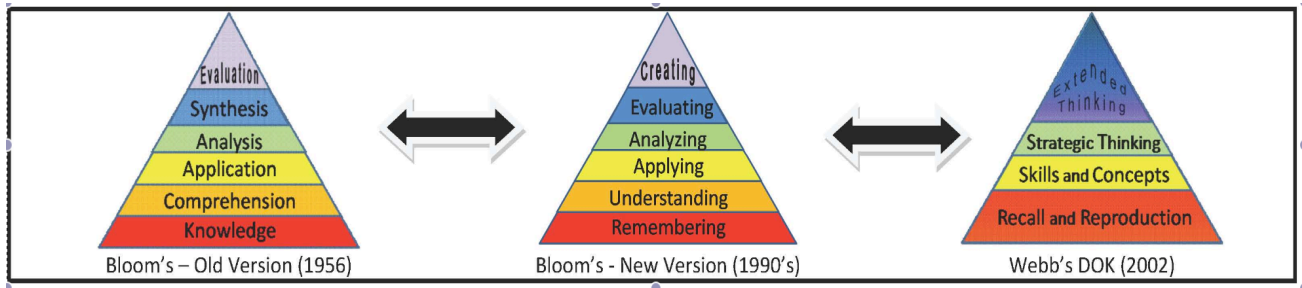
Historically, there have been several methods for judging the cognitive complexity of a set of content standards as well as the assessments that measure them. Schema such as Bloom's Taxonomy have been used in the past by educators. When states were required to demonstrate the complexity of their content standards and the alignment of their state assessments to these standards, though, two new methods were developed. The first, developed by Achieve, judged the standards and the assessments holistically. The other was a tool developed by Norman Webb, called the Webb Alignment Tool. Because of the nature of this tool, most states (including the Michigan Department of Education) used the Webb tool for their NCLB-required alignment studies to show alignment between the content standards and assessments. The Webb Alignment Tool is used to ensure assessments measure the content standards at the same level of rigor dictated by the standard.

Levels of Thinking in Bloom's Taxonomy<sup>2</sup> and Webb's Depth of Knowledge are related to one another, as shown in Figure 2.1.

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<sup>2</sup> *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives.* Anderson, L.W., Krathwohl, D.R., et al. (2001).

**Figure 2.1**  
**Comparison of Bloom's Taxonomy and Webb's Depth of Knowledge**



2.2.1 *Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK)* – Depth of Knowledge is a procedure developed by Norm Webb, University of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, to evaluate the alignment of assessments to standards. It is also used to judge the cognitive complexity of standards and assessments. The Webb Alignment Tool is used to judge the depth of knowledge of each standard, followed by the depth of knowledge, range of knowledge, categorical concurrence, and balance of representation of both a set of standards and the assessments that measure them. Depth of Knowledge is the most important of these criteria for judging cognitive complexity. Webb defined four levels of DOK:

- *Level 1 (Recall)* includes the recall of information such as a fact, a definition, a term, or a simple procedure, as well as performing a simple algorithm or applying a formula. Key words that signify a Level 1 include “identify,” “recall,” “recognize,” “use,” and “measure.”
- *Level 2 (Skill/Concept)* includes the engagement of some mental processing beyond a habitual response. A Level 2 assessment item requires students to make some decisions as to how to approach the problem or activity, whereas Level 1 requires students to demonstrate a rote response, perform a well-known algorithm, follow a set procedure (like a recipe), or perform a clearly defined series of steps. Keywords that generally distinguish a Level 2 item include “classify,” “organize,” “estimate,” “make observations,” “collect and display data,” and “compare data.”
- *Level 3 (Strategic Thinking)* requires reasoning, planning, using evidence, and a higher level of thinking than the previous two levels. In most instances, requiring students to explain their thinking is a Level 3 activity. Activities that require students to make conjectures are also at this level. The cognitive demands at Level 3 are complex and abstract. The complexity does not result from the fact that there are multiple answers, a possibility for both Levels 1 and 2, but because the task requires more demanding reasoning. An activity, however, that has more than one possible answer and requires students to justify the response they give would most likely be a Level 3.
- *Level 4 (Extended Thinking)* requires complex reasoning, planning, developing, and thinking most likely over an extended period of time. The extended time period is not a distinguishing factor if the required work is only repetitive and does not require applying significant conceptual understanding and higher-order thinking. At Level 4, the cognitive demands of the task should be high and the work should be very complex. Students should



be required to make several connections - relate ideas *within* the content area or *among* content areas - and have to select one approach among many alternatives on how the situation should be solved, in order to be at this highest level. Level 4 activities include developing and proving conjectures; designing and conducting experiments; making connections between a finding and related concepts and phenomena; combining and synthesizing ideas into new concepts; and critiquing experimental designs.

Where possible, assessment writers strive to write most of their assessment items at DOK levels 3 and 4, although items written at DOK levels 1 and 2 are also necessary in developing a well-rounded assessment.

## 2.3 Nature of the Assessment Items

The MAEIA arts education assessments are comprised of a number of different types of assessment items. Each of these is described below. The item types are listed here in descending order of importance to the overall assessment effort, since one goal of this arts education effort was to create assessments that mirror and encourage authentic instruction at deep levels of cognitive complexity.

*2.3.1 Performance Tasks* – As used in this assessment design, performance tasks are prompts that require students to spend multiple class periods, weeks, or months in preparing a response. These typically are multi-part items and may require students research a topic, prepare a response, develop a paper, a presentation, and/or a performance, and reflect on what they learned during the process of responding to the prompts. Many of these items are constructed to measure performance standards at DOK levels 3 and 4.

Performance tasks should be comprised of multiple components that culminate in a final product. For these assessment items, educators and students should be provided with a rubric as well as examples that have reached the array of scores (Jackson & Davis, 2000). The rubric should provide sufficient detail to guide students' efforts in the task and samples of student work to provide more in depth examples for how to proceed. For example, students might create an original work of art through the design process of

1. Identifying a problem
2. Planning possible solutions
3. Testing solutions to determine best
4. Refining design through the use of a prototype
5. Completing a work that results in the solution of the design problem
6. Exhibiting the finished product for feedback.

The performance task may consist of multiple steps along the way. Thus, a checklist might be used to help guide students in completing all aspects of the task and/or to convey the manner in which these different parts of the task may be scored. Both types of checklists are useful in helping students to do their best on these types of assessments.

*2.3.2 Performance Events* – These are on-demand performance assessment items that require students to construct a response in a very brief period of time, with little or no advance preparation or rehearsal. Sometimes, this is viewed as “first draft” work on the part of the student. After their initial performance, students are also given little or no subsequent opportunities to improve their performance. These assessments may require a class period or less to implement. Students may work alone or with a small group of other students (e.g., the performance of a scene from a play) in preparing and implementing their responses. When small groups are assessed, individual students still receive their own scores. These assessments are also at DOK levels 3 and 4.

2.3.3 *Constructed-Response Items* – This item type requires the individual to create their own answer(s) rather than select from prewritten options. These items are open-ended, that is, there are usually several ways in which they can be answered correctly. Responses are often written, although they need not be, and even in the case when they are, these may be essays, charts, graphs, drawings, or other types of written responses. Such items are typically at DOK levels 2 or 3. These items are included in conjunction with the other item types (e.g., performance tasks or performance events).

2.3.4 *Selected-Response Items* – This item type includes multiple-choice, true-false, matching, and other types of items in which students are provided with a variety of responses and students select the answers to the questions, rather than constructing their own responses.

Many assessments are comprised of a significant number of selected-response items. In the MAEIA arts education assessment, this item type will be used only in conjunction with the other item types (e.g., performance tasks or performance events). These items measure content at DOK 1 and 2 and cover content required to respond correctly to the other types of items.

See Chapter 4 for examples of each type of assessment in each discipline.

#### 2.4 Assessment at the High School Level

At the high school level, the MAEIA assessments have been created to address different levels of past and current participation in instruction in an arts discipline. Students participate in the arts for different reasons and durations, ranging from students who take a year of instruction to fulfill the one-credit Michigan high school graduation requirement to students who intend to study the arts in college and enter arts careers afterwards. Tasks and events were developed for this range of high school arts students.

- Level 1 – Students who fulfill their one credit visual, performing, or applied arts (VPAA) high school graduation requirement only, or who are in their first year of a multi-year VPAA program.
- Level 2 – Students who have already completed their first year in an arts discipline and are now in their second year of instruction in the *same* arts discipline.
- Level 3 – Students who have already completed their first and second year courses in a single arts discipline and are now in their third year or fourth year of instruction in the *same* arts discipline.

Note: If a student takes one year of instruction in one discipline (e.g., music) and then one year of instruction in another discipline (e.g., theatre), this student would participate in the Level 1 assessments in each discipline. While many assessments are written for two or more of these levels, teachers also have the flexibility to adjust the assessments to match the instructional levels of the students being assessed.

#### 2.5 Use of Graphics, Audio and Video in the Assessments

Because the arts are so media-rich, it is natural that the assessments will use a variety of media in the assessments. The potential media to be used include:

- Video and Photography – This medium is used to present content in the arts education assessments. For example, clips of dance or music performance, a scene from a theatrical or a visual arts production are used. In these cases, the clips are short (a couple of minutes or less) and are available to the test administrator to use in a common medium, such as a DVD or available for download from a web site.
- Audio – This medium is used particularly in the music assessment, although audio might be part of a theatre assessment as well. Again, these audio clips might be provided on DVD or CD-ROM, or downloaded from a web site.
- Print media – Particularly in the visual arts assessment, high quality reproductions are necessary. Some of these are used with individually administered assessment items, while others are used with group-administered items. The nature of the reproduction is carefully considered. For example, some prints are reproduced in test booklets, while others might be prints that educators administering the assessments need to download or purchase. Some assessments use digital projections of prompt material. In all cases, the quality of the reproductions is an issue – whether reproduced in black-and-white or in color.
- Digital materials – Digital materials such as jpegs, mp3, mp4 or video files may be easily assessible and may require the use of screens, LCD projectors, and MP3 players.
- Capturing student responses – Student responses to dance, music, and theatre items might be video recorded or audio-taped. Digital student portfolios are available to preserve and maintain digital evidence and sampling of student work and performance. Maintaining it in digital format will permit later scoring and if necessary, re-scoring.
- Use of Copyrighted Materials – One of the issues with the use of graphics, audio and video is that some of the best examples may be copyrighted and permission to use this material is required unless the materials are located in the public domain. This project sought to obtain permissions to use copyrighted materials, but where this was not possible, alternative prompts were used in their place.

## 2.6 Accessibility and Accommodations – Universal Design (UD) and Evidence-Centered Design (ECD)

The principles of universal design were taught to item writers so as to minimize the need for assessment accommodations by increasing the accessibility of the items for all students, including students with disabilities and English learners. While it was impossible to avoid all accessibility issues, many were eliminated by careful attention to the manner in which the assessment items were written and provided to students. This said, it is almost certain that some students, those with Section 504 plans, IEPs, or English learners, will still require certain accommodations.

The principles of evidence-centered design (ECD) were used in creating the items. ECD is a technique used to assure that the items meet the purposes for which they are designed. Validity claims for the items are established, the characteristics of the items to be developed are described, and then the items are created to address these claims. This is an item technique useful for creating items for the full range of students and all content areas.

## 2.7 Issues of Bias and Sensitivity in Arts Education Assessments

Careful consideration in any assessment needs to be given to avoiding using sensitive topics or material as the basis of the assessment, as well as to assure that the items are not biased against any sub-group of students. Each of these requires some study and review during the assessment development, review, and field testing process. In order to avoid sensitive topics for assessment development, the MAEIA Project Management Team developed a list of topics and material that the assessment developers would avoid or would be sure to treat with sensitivity.

## 2.8 Assessment Time and Structures

The assessments that were created can take several class periods to administer. Some of the assessments are designed to be carried out outside of the classroom, with support from the certified arts educators throughout the assessment process. For example, outside the classroom might be through adjudication at festivals or through co-curriculum activities.

In some of the arts disciplines, individually administered assessments or small-group assessments are used. While the length of each of these assessments may be only a few minutes, this time may need to be multiplied times the number of individual students or groups of students that need to be assessed.

## 2.9 Potential Assessment Administration Processes

It should be possible for the group-administered assessments to be given to students in one or two class periods as an entire class group. The regular certified arts educator will give these assessments to their classes when they meet. There may be test booklets/answer documents needed, or the assessments might be administered online (at the district choice). In addition, ancillary materials may be needed to administer these assessments, including visual arts models or reproductions, special tools (e.g., drawing pencils), and so forth. Digital and print media might be needed for these assessments.

Individually-administered assessments will be more challenging to administer to students, since the time for assessment is multiplied by as many students as there are in the group being assessed. It is suggested that in such cases, the certified arts educator conduct the individual assessments. If done during regular class time, an additional educator might be asked to take over the class. Or, the individual assessments might be scheduled at times outside of regular classroom instruction. There is no method that will work in all circumstances. It is an issue that each school administering the MAEIA assessments will need to consider and determine.

## Chapter 3

### Content Standards for the Music Assessment

This chapter describes in some detail the content assessed in the MAEIA Music Assessments. This includes the Michigan arts education content standards and benchmarks at the grades 3-8 and high school level, the MAEIA performance standards, and the National Core Arts Standards.

#### 3.1 Michigan Arts Education Content Standards

The *Michigan Arts Education Content Standards and Benchmarks for Dance, Music, Theatre and the Visual Arts* (1998) were first approved by the State Board of Education in 1998. They were aligned to the 1994 National Arts Education Standards, part of the series of voluntary standards developed by each of the content areas under Goals 2000. These established the expectations that all students should achieve in all core curricular subjects, including the arts.

In 2011, the Michigan State Board of Education approved a revised set of Michigan Arts Education Content Standards and Benchmarks and Grade Level Content Expectations. In addition to providing learning expectations at the K-8 grade levels, the 2011 revision aligned the Michigan Standards to two new sets of guidelines: the artistic-creative process as described in the [Michigan Credit Guidelines for the Visual, Performing and Applied Arts](#) (2006) and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills of critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity; information, media and technology skills; life and career skills.

A partnership of organizations and states worked together as the [National Coalition for Core Arts Standards \(NCCAS\)](#) to lead the revision of the 1994 National Core Arts Standards (NCAS). NCAS goals are consistent with the core alignments that drove the 2011 Michigan arts education standards revision. Therefore, while based on Michigan's 2011 Arts Education Content Standards, the MAEIA Blueprint and Assessment Specifications reflects current thinking in the field of education and the arts.

The NCAS was released in 2014. The standards describe what students should know and be able to do as a result of a quality curricular arts education program. NCCAS has committed to developing the next generation of voluntary arts education standards, building on the foundation created by the 1994 document. In addition, NCCAS is committed to supporting the 21<sup>st</sup>-century needs of students and educators, helping ensure that all students are college and career ready, and affirm the place of arts education in a balanced core curriculum.

In both the 1998 and 2011 editions of the Michigan Arts Education Content Standards, student learning has been organized around these five standards which are consistent for dance, music, theatre, and visual arts at all grade levels:

1. Students apply arts education skills and knowledge to perform in the arts.
2. Students apply arts education skills and knowledge to create in the arts.
3. Students apply arts education skills and knowledge to analyze, describe, and evaluate works of art.
4. Students apply arts education skills and knowledge to understand, analyze and describe the arts in their historical, social, and cultural contexts.
5. Students apply arts education skills and knowledge to recognize, analyze, and describe connections among the arts; between the arts and other disciplines; and between the arts and everyday life.

Responding to national efforts to streamline standards for educators, the [Michigan Credit](#)

[Guidelines for the Visual, Performing and Applied Arts](#) (2006) organized the artistic-creative process around three strands: Perform, Create, and Respond. The first two strands align directly to Michigan Arts Education Content Standards 1 and 2. The Respond Strand encompasses Michigan Arts Education Content Standards 3-5. It is noteworthy that the artistic-creative process is described as iterative and non-linear. Students at the 9-12 level are expected to identify the components of the process and to be given sufficient opportunities to engage in the process multiple times.

Students learn through the steps of Create, Perform, and Respond to synthesize information so that it becomes part of their embodied knowledge, hence creating “enduring understandings” and connected learning across disciplines.

### 3.2 Performance Standards Assessed in the MAEIA Project

For the purposes of identifying important arts learning for the MAEIA Assessment Specifications development process, two sets of writing teams comprised of K-16 dance, music, theatre, and visual arts educators studied the Michigan Standards, Benchmarks, and Grade Level Content Expectations in Dance, Music, Theatre, and the Visual Arts. They identified commonalities and overarching ideas. They discussed what was fundamental to the learning processes and what tied some of the standards together in terms of students’ abilities to be able to demonstrate knowledge and skills. They discussed which over-arching ideas were fundamental to demonstrating learning in their respective arts disciplines and to really functioning as an artist in the world. They found the frame of Perform, Create, and Respond helpful in terms of organizing these ideas. They worked within those to identify what are referred to in MAEIA documents as performance standards.

Performance standards are discipline-specific and condense the Michigan Merit Curriculum’s five content standards into the three overarching performance standards of Create, Perform, and Respond. These performance standards were developed to serve as the basis for MAEIA model assessments that measure student proficiency in each arts discipline at each grade span - K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. Considerations in the identification of performance standards included:

- Scope and sequence and dedicated instructional time
- Vertical and horizontal alignment at the grade spans focused on the artistic process
- Differentiation of the curriculum for varying developmental, social, cognitive levels as well as for students with disabilities and English language learners.

There are certain nuances to the performance standards that are important in each arts discipline along with discipline specific considerations to remember when developing assessments. They are presented below.

#### 3.2.1 Music Performance Standards

The music performance standards can guide music educators’ efforts to assess student knowledge and understanding in both the music classroom and rehearsal settings efficiently and effectively. These performance standards are rooted in both best practices and the most current research in music education, and reflect the consensus of the music education profession regarding what students should know and be able to do in school music classes.

It is important to remember that the number of bullet points within a standard should not be interpreted as a measure of that standard’s importance.

Special challenges in developing music assessments include:

- Effectively, appropriately and accurately assessing large numbers of individual students at grades K-2 and grades 3-5 (especially when the certified arts education instructor has limited time per week with each student), and;
- Conducting individual student assessments within ensemble-based music programs in grades 6-8 and High School Levels.

## **MUSIC PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

### **Grades K-2 and 3-5**

#### **Create**

1. Create a melodic line (e.g., a consequent phrase to an antecedent phrase, melodic line within a harmonic structure, extending a melodic idea) using their understanding of the elements of music to inform their creative decision-making.

#### **Perform**

1. Sing and play alone and with others a diverse repertoire of songs in both one and two parts with expression and accuracy.
2. Students can perform multiple levels of beat in several meters.

#### **Respond**

1. Listen to their own performances as well as those of others and critically analyze and reflect on those performances using developmentally appropriate musical terminology.
2. Critically analyze a musical work and reflect on its cultural context using developmentally appropriate terminology.
3. Make connections between musical concepts and similar concepts in other ways of thinking (disciplines).

### **Grades 6-8**

#### **Create**

1. Create a melody that has tonal and rhythmic coherence.

#### **Perform**

1. Perform a diverse repertoire of music at an appropriate level of difficulty with expression and technical accuracy.

#### **Respond**

1. Listen to their own performances as well as those of others and critically analyze and reflect on those performances using developmentally appropriate musical terminology.
2. Critically analyze a musical work and reflect on its cultural context using developmentally appropriate terminology.
3. Make connections between musical concepts and similar concepts in other ways of thinking (disciplines).

### **High School**

#### **Create**

1. Demonstrate an appropriate level of musical understanding through their interpretive decisions made when composing, improvising, or arranging music.

#### **Perform**

1. Perform a diverse repertoire of music at an appropriate level of difficulty with expression and technical accuracy.

#### **Respond**

1. Listen to their own performances as well as those of others and critically analyze and reflect on those performances using developmentally appropriate musical terminology.

2. Critically analyze a musical work and reflect on its cultural context using developmentally appropriate terminology.
3. Make connections between musical concepts and similar concepts in other ways of thinking (disciplines).



## Chapter 4

### Music Assessment Specifications

This chapter provides an overview of the music assessments that were created. It begins with information on the design of the Music assessments, then provides additional information about each type of assessment item to be created, describing the range of content for each type of assessment for each type of MAEIA performance standard, and concludes by providing samples of rubrics to be used to score student work.

#### 4.1 Design of the Music Assessment

While music educators know a great deal about the achievement of their students, what they may not do well is *document* what they know. Certified music educators have an obligation to make sure that what we are assessing is actually musical in nature, and not simply terminology or low-level information recall items, such as note names, key signatures and the like. For music assessment to be effective, it must first be authentic; as the saying goes, “Talking about music is like dancing about architecture,” or for our purposes, “Testing about music is like singing about drawing.”

Designing “good” assessment programs in music also means that the ways in which we assess music learning need to be authentically musical in nature. Musical knowledge and ability is best assessed using musical tasks and behaviors, such as playing exams, improvisation checks, aural skills tests, and arranging and composing music. These assessments must also reflect the contexts of this instruction, which include a broad diversity of musical offerings.

Due to the nature of school music programs, there are unique challenges and opportunities with respect to assessment at each level of instruction. For instance, music educators at grades K-5 often work with “case loads” in excess of 600-800 students per educator. The sheer scope of this reality means that assessment in K-5 music classroom must be organized, efficient and reasonable. These assessments must also be age- and developmentally-appropriate, and should be embedded in the educator’s instructional approach so as not to be onerous, or detract from the limited amount of instructional time that music educators are provided in the school schedule.

Music educators should use performance assessments for assessing music knowledge, skills and dispositions, rather than forcing music assessment into just paper-and-pencil tests. As in all things, balance is the key. The bottom line is that good assessment should look like good teaching, should accompany and be part of the good instruction, and should not represent a departure from the “best practices” and research-based teaching strategies that form the foundations of excellent classroom instruction.

For Music, students should be assessed on their ability to Create, Perform, and Respond in a variety of settings and contexts. Students should be asked to demonstrate their achievement through an appropriate combination of performance tasks, performance events, and constructed-response items. It is expected that there will be an emphasis on performance tasks and events over selected-response items in order to maintain authenticity within the discipline.

- Performance Task – On this assessment, students have days or weeks to compose a response. Thus, these assessments may involve multiple responses of different types to multiple prompts. The resultant work may be lengthy and comprise multiple parts. We might think of this sort of assessment activity as a project or exhibition, such as a composition or song writing assignment that unfolds over a longer period of time.
- Performance Event – This is an on-demand performance assessment for which students are given little or no time to rehearse their performance and limited opportunities to improve their

initial performance. A playing check or solo festival adjudication performance might be a good representation of this sort of activity

- Constructed-Response Item – This item type requires the individual to create their own answer(s) rather than select from pre-written options. These items allow students the opportunity for open-ended responses and encourage divergent thinking skills, an important prerequisite for critical thinking.
- Selected-response Items - Includes items such as multiple-choice, short answer questions, and sentence completion items. These types of assessments are useful for gathering a small amount of assessment information from large numbers of students, and can be helpful for educators interested in gauging student understanding of covered material to inform the course revision and planning process.

Typical settings and contexts for these forms of music assessment might include general music classes (i.e., K-5 general music classes, secondary-level music theory, music history and song writing electives, music technology classes, world music classes), AP and IB Music Theory courses, large ensemble (i.e., band, orchestra, chorus) rehearsals, instrumental and choral sectionals, private and small group lessons, and chamber ensemble coaching. Care must be taken to provide assessment activities that music educators can use in the classes and rehearsals for which they are presently assigned (more on this issue below in section 4.3). The tasks used for measurement should involve the students actually engaging in creating, performing, or responding. The educator should have a rating scale or rubric to use in evaluating students’ performances on the tasks, as is illustrated in section 4.4.

#### 4.2 Description of the Music Assessments

As described above, music assessments should employ a variety of assessment strategies, including performance tasks, performance events, constructed-response items and selected-response items such as multiple-choice items. It is expected that the music assessment should be based on the performance assessments (tasks and events) with constructed-response items used to probe student understanding and reflection, and selected-response items to measure key concepts embedded in all of the other items. The use of selected-response items in this manner will mean that these are not stand-alone items but used to better understand students’ responses to performance tasks, performance events, constructed-response, items especially if students’ responses on those items is less than acceptable.

The materials required for performance task and event based assessments are consistent with the description of materials needed by a “gold standard” program, as outlined in Research and Recommendations in Support of the MAEIA Blueprint. These materials include but are not limited to: a dedicated space with relating physical attributes, quality sound equipment, video recording, editing, and presentation capabilities, and traditional and/or non-traditional performance spaces with relating physical attributes.

*Performance tasks* are assignments and projects that take place over time and ask students to solve musical problems by applying creative strategies and solutions. An example of a performance task for instrumental students in grades 9-12 is shown in Figure 4.2.1.

**Figure 4.2.1**  
**Example of a Music Performance Task**

**Assessment Sequence**

Task: Sight read a musical excerpt. Then identify practice strategies for improving performances and practice the excerpt using those strategies. Finally re-record the excerpt and reflect on the improvement and practice strategies.

1. Students will receive a teacher-selected excerpt from an unfamiliar piece of music that is 16-32 bars in length of appropriate difficulty for a first-year (Level 1), second-year (Level 2), or third- and fourth-year (Level 3) students. They will sight read that excerpt and record their performance.
2. Immediately following the recording session, the students will fill out a worksheet where they will identify three practice strategies for improving their performances. Then they will be given time to practice the excerpt using their strategies and will record their practice session.
3. Then, students will record themselves practicing using the three strategies they had devised and record a second take that demonstrates their improvement.
4. Finally, students will reflect on their performance and how it improved as a result of their practice. They also will identify which practice strategies proved to be the most effective.

Evaluation: The evaluation of this task will be in the form of a rubric as follows:

### Teacher Scoring Rubric–Practice Strategies

| Dimension                        | 1  | 2   | 3   | 4   |
|----------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| <b>Practice Strategies</b>       | Student does not choose or demonstrate effective practice strategies.  | Student chooses and demonstrates 1 thoughtful practice strategy.                                  | Student chooses and demonstrates 2 thoughtful practice strategies.  | Student chooses and demonstrates 3 or more thoughtful practice strategies; strategies are well considered, varied, and effective for the musical excerpt. |
| <b>Growth in Performance</b>     | No growth is evident between first and second takes.   | Student demonstrates a little aurally discernable improvement between first take and second take. | Student demonstrates moderate aurally discernable improvement growth between first take and second take.  | Student demonstrates significant, clear, aurally discernable improvement between first take and second take.  |
| <b>Pitch and Rhythm Accuracy</b> | Student performs none or almost none of the pitches and rhythms correctly and in tune.   | Student performs some pitches and rhythms correctly and in tune.                                  | Student performs most pitches and rhythms correctly and in tune.  | Student performs all or almost all pitches and rhythms correctly and in tune.   |
| <b>Fluency</b>                   | Student performance is not fluid. There are frequent tempo fluctuations and/or hesitations.  | Student performance is somewhat fluid, with many tempo fluctuations and/or hesitations.           | Student performance is mostly fluid, but there are a few tempo inconsistencies or occasional hesitations. | Student maintains a steady tempo and has no or almost no hesitations.   |
| <b>Musical Elements</b>          | <i>1 point per element displayed</i><br>___ Student attends to indicated dynamics<br>___ Student attends to indicated tempo<br>___ Student attends to indicated articulation |   |   |   |

Performance events are on-demand assessments that ask students to engage actively with music authentically as performers. An example of a performance for students in grades 3-5 is shown in Figure 4.2.2.

**Figure 4.2.2**  
**Example of a Music Performance Event**

#### Assessment Sequence:

Task: Compose a melody and then perform it. Reflect on compositional experiences.

1. First students will compose their own 16-beat (four measure) or 32-beat (eight measure) melodies. Third-grade students will be asked to compose a four-measure melody, while fourth-grade students will be asked to compose an eight-measure melody. This assessment can be done using tone-bar instruments, voice, or recorder. Students will notate those melodies using music notation.

2. Students will practice their melodies and, after substantial time to practice, will perform them for the class.

3. Students will reflect in writing on their compositional experiences in their Student Booklets.

Evaluation: The evaluation of this event will be in the form of two rubrics: one to evaluate the composition and another to evaluate the performance of the composition. The rubrics are below.

### Teacher Scoring Rubric—Melodic Composition

| Dimension                                   | 1   | 2  | 3   | 4  |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| <b>Music Notation</b>                       | Notes are written in a sloppy and illegible manner. Barline placement is not correct. Line and space notes are indistinguishable from each other. | Notes are written clearly, but barline placement is often incorrect. The difference between line and space notes is not easily seen. | Most notes are written clearly using the proper barline placement. The difference between line and spaces notes is usually clear. | All notes are written neatly using proper barline placement. The difference between line and space notes is easily seen. |
| <b>Meter and Rhythm</b>                     | Less than 50% of the measures have the correct number of beats.   | Between 50% and 70% of the measures have the correct number of beats. Rhythms are very basic and do not expand beyond quarter notes. | Between 70% and 85% of the measures have the correct number of beats, and a variety of rhythms are used.                          | More than 85% of the measures have the correct number of beats, and a variety of rhythms are used.                       |
| <b>Overall Creativity and Craftsmanship</b> | The composition was not complete and very difficult to read. Less than half of the required elements were included.                               | The composition was very basic and somewhat legible. At least half of the required elements were included.                           | The composition was somewhat creative and legible. Most of the required elements were included.                                   | The composition was creative, clean, easy to read, and included all required elements.                                   |

### Teacher Scoring Rubric—Performance

| Dimension              | 1  | 2  | 3   | 4  |
|------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| <b>Pitch Accuracy</b>  | Student seldom plays correct pitches.<br><br>Approximately 0–20%   | Student plays some correct pitches.<br><br>Approximately 20–50%  | Student usually plays correct pitches.<br><br>Approximately 50–90%                                      | Student consistently plays correct pitches with precision and accuracy.<br><br>Approximately 90–100%                                     |
| <b>Rhythm Accuracy</b> | Student seldom plays correct rhythms and may alter the tempo to accommodate difficult parts.<br><br>Approximately 0– | Student plays some correct rhythms and may alter the tempo to accommodate difficult parts.<br><br>Approximately 20–50% | Student usually plays correct rhythms. Student does not alter the tempo to accommodate difficult parts. | Student consistently plays correct rhythms with precision and accuracy. Student does not alter the tempo to accommodate difficult parts. |

| Dimension | 1   | 2 | 3                    | 4                     |
|-----------|-----|---|----------------------|-----------------------|
|           | 20% |   | Approximately 50-90% | Approximately 90-100% |

Constructed-response items ask students to create their own answers rather than select from pre-written options, as in a multiple-choice exam. An example of a constructed-response item for grades 9-12 is shown in Figure 4.2.3.

**Figure 4.2.3**  
**Example of a Music Constructed-Response Item**

|  |
|--|
| <p><b>Assessment Sequence:</b></p> <p>Watch or listen to a recording of students' own ensemble performance of a single piece of music and analyze the performance using a rubric.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students will watch or listen to a recording of their own ensemble performance of a single piece of music and will analyze their performance using a rubric to guide the analysis. The recording may be played up to five times.</li> <li>2. After scoring the performance using the Student Scoring Rubric, students will provide specific examples of why they gave the ratings that they did on a separate sheet in their Student Booklets. Then they will provide three specific examples of things that went well in their performance and three specific examples of things that they can improve upon.</li> </ol> <p>Evaluation: The evaluation of this event will use a Teacher Scoring Rubric. The teacher will use the rubric to evaluate how well the student evaluates and describes the performance. The scoring rubric is below.</p> |
|--|

**Teacher Scoring Rubric**

| Dimension                      | 1   | 2   | 3  | 4   |
|--------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| <b>Scoring Rubric Examples</b> | Student identifies only a few musical elements.                         | Student identifies only a few musical elements.   | Student deconstructs the performance and identifies musical elements and accurate terminology. | Student identifies the musical elements and uses musical language.                    |
| <b>Performance Analysis</b>    | Student draws upon a few examples to comment on a few musical elements. | Student draws upon some examples to comment on some musical elements using musical terminology. | Student draws upon many examples to insightfully analyze and evaluate the performance.         | Student draws upon extensive examples and comments on them using musical terminology. |

A selected-response item for students in grades 6-8 is shown in Figure 4.2.4. This is only a part of a larger performance task.

**Figure 4.2.4**  
**Example of a Music Selected-Response Item**

|  |
|--|
| <p><b>Assessment task:</b></p> <p>Listen to a musical excerpt. Record observations about each excerpt on a worksheet in their Student Booklet.</p> <p>Evaluation: Students answer questions by choosing from among the possible options provided to the question. The following are some of the selected response questions that students complete when listening to a jazz excerpt. As a part of this task, they also complete constructed responses.</p> |
|--|

## JAZZ

| Category  | Observation    |                   |                |
|---|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Do the rhythms swing, or are they straight?           | Swing          | Straight          |                |
| Is the melody vocal or is it played by an instrument? | Vocal          |                   | Instrument     |
| What is the tempo?                                    | Andante (Slow) | Moderato (Medium) | Allegro (Fast) |
| Is there a chorus that repeats?                       | Yes            |                   | No             |
| Do the lyrics of the song seem to tell a story?       | Yes            |                   | No             |

Note: Music educators across all settings have difficulty agreeing upon a specific set of terminology and content that all children should know, especially given the variety of course offerings within a music program. Some students might take courses in rock band whereas others may be engaged in madrigal choir or a mariachi. The vocabulary and concepts may not be shared across contexts. Most would agree that the ability to apply a context-specific vocabulary within the act of music performing, listening, or creating is central to music learning and should be assessed. Therefore, in the MAEIA assessments, students are asked to engage in authentic musical processes and to apply their content knowledge and vocabulary to these authentic music processes. No independent selected response questions are used in the MAEIA assessments. Selected response items are context specific and are used in conjunction with a performance task or performance event with which they are associated.

### 4.3 Range of Content for Assessing Music

Different children have different instructional needs, and assessment in music must tie directly to the needs of those children. Therefore the items offer a variety of repertoire for use in the assessment or leave repertoire choice to the discretion of the teacher. The teacher should choose repertoire for use with the assessment depending upon the context of instruction and the needs of the individual students in the classroom. Assessment items were developed so that they support the unique contexts and characteristics of the learners in their settings.

Many skills in music are subject to scaffolding in that there is an expectation that students grow in depth of understanding and in performance from year to year and experience to experience. Moving through a progression of applying, developing, and innovating, students will demonstrate depth of knowledge in a variety of areas.

For some performance standards, there will be more than one type of assessment listed. This is because different types of assessments may address different aspects of a specific standard. In some places, assessments may be linked across standards. For instance, it is possible that a “Performance Event” that assesses “Perform” or “Create” may be used as the basis for “Constructed-Response” in the “Respond.”

Content and Resources by Level: Selection of materials for use in all grades included consideration of issues of quality and community standards while maintaining a diversity of artistic and cultural heritage. Classic or historically significant texts as well as contemporary works of comparable literary merit, cultural significance, and rich content were preferred. Educators should pay particular attention to age appropriateness, accuracy of information and excellence of presentation in recognition of a school audience.

The exemplified level of complexity and quality required of all students in a given grade level. Additionally, they are suggestive of the breadth of material that students should encounter throughout their education in music. The guideposts helped educators select resources of similar complexity, quality, and range for the assessment items.

#### 4.3.1 Grades K-2 and 3-5 Range of Content

At the K-2 and 3-5 levels, children are building their musical vocabularies and their understandings of the syntactical systems and stylistic elements underpinning different musical styles and repertoire. As a result, they should have wide exposure to a rich variety of music as well as depth in specific types of music. In this context, the assessments should represent both western music that is based in western tonal and rhythmic systems, particularly for creating and performing, as well as music that uses other tonal, rhythmic, and stylistic systems and characteristics.

**Create** – In order to compose and improvise successfully, children need to have developed an understanding of the syntax underlying their compositions/improvisations as well as a vocabulary with which to compose and improvise. As a result, at grades K-2 and 3-5, educators must structure creation tasks carefully.

Because students have the most experience with duple and triple meters and with major and minor tonalities, these should be the meters and tonalities in which they should be asked to improvise and compose. If students are being asked to improvise consequent phrases to an educator's antecedent phrase, the educator's phrase should be in folk song style and follow traditional harmonic conventions. If students are given musical parameters for their compositions, they should have experienced those parameters through past performance as well as through listening.

**Perform** – In choosing repertoire for performance, folk songs of the United States and other countries provide a rich starting place. These folk songs can be in tonalities like Dorian and Mixolydian in addition to major and minor, as by fifth grade, students will have had experiences that allow them to be successful in other tonalities that are relatively closely related to major and minor. Also, they can be asked to perform repertoire that is in duple and triple meters, as well as repertoire that is multi-metric (combines both duple and triple meters). Songs should not extend vocally below the A below middle C, nor should they extend above the E that is an octave and a half above middle C. For the purposes of assessment of performance skill, choosing performance repertoire in unusual meters or based upon non-western tonal systems is not recommended. Students do not have a rich enough base of experience performing in those tonal and rhythmic systems, nor do they have a rich enough listening vocabulary. That is not to say that students should not be asked to perform such repertoire in the classroom. Rather, it should not be the repertoire upon which assessment tasks are based.

**Respond** – These tasks allow for greater diversity of repertoire in terms of assessment than do creating and performing. Again, the folk repertoire of the United States and other countries serves as a rich base with which to work. However, popular music, jazz, short ensemble (orchestra, choral, band, chamber) works (no more than 5 minutes in length), solo instrumental music, and music from other cultures that is less familiar syntactically and stylistically all can serve as repertoire to which

the students can respond, given that they have had some previous experience with that type of music.

#### 4.3.2 Grades 6-8 Range of Content

In grades 6-8, children are developing their musical vocabularies and their understandings of the syntactical systems and stylistic elements underpinning different musical styles and repertoire. It is critical to maintain a broad and diverse exposure to a variety of music at this developmental stage, especially in light of the increasing interest that children of this age express for vernacular musical styles not often found in school music programs. In this context, the assessments employ literature that attempts to bridge the gap between music and school music. That is, between the musical styles and genres to which 6-8 grade students listen on their own time, outside of school, and the sorts of musical repertoire typically programmed by school ensembles.

Care must also be taken not to follow a “bait & switch” approach, in which the educator permits students to bring in to class examples of their favorite popular music and then uses this music to demonstrate how much more “sophisticated” or “well constructed” classical music is in comparison. First, this is disingenuous and not respectful of the students’ preferences. More importantly, it misses a wonderful opportunity to expand the “canon” of music we use for study and performance, much of which is interesting and valuable in its own right as well as for the different meters, tonalities and musical elements that vernacular styles offer in terms of instructional material.

**Create** – Ideally, students in grades 6-8 have developed a working music vocabulary and a basic understanding of musical structures and forms. This gives them a foundation for more advanced activities in composing and improvising.

Students in grades 6-8 may now move beyond duple and triple meters and major and minor tonalities to explore new musical tonal and rhythmic possibilities. Fortunately, much of the music they listen to on their smart phones and iPods uses modes such as Dorian and Mixolydian, and mixed and unusual meters much more frequently than the music studied in school ensembles and classes. Still, if students are given musical parameters for their compositions, they should have been familiar with these parameters through listening and performing experiences.

**Perform** – Performance repertoire for 6-8 grade level musicians may begin to move toward more sophisticated and complex musical forms and styles, and may contain more complicated and difficult technical passages. Vocalists and instrumentalists in grades 6-8 may be asked to perform music in unusual, mixed and multi-metric meters (i.e., 5/8, 3/8 + 2/8 + 3/8, 3/4 + 2/4 + 6/8), modes and non-triadic (i.e., whole tone, twelve tone, aleatoric or chance) harmonic systems. For vocalists, range considerations are as follows: Sopranos, c1-d2, possible, bb-f2; Altos, bb-c2; Boys’ changing voices, g-f1; Baritones, e-d1.

**Respond** – These tasks allow for a greater diversity of repertoire in terms of assessment than do creating and performing. At grades 6-8 we build on the folk repertoire of the United States and other countries, and also begin introducing art songs, solo and chamber ensemble repertoire and other large ensemble repertoire. In addition, popular/vernacular music, jazz, music theatre, opera, and music from other cultures should all be included in the students’ listening and responding activities and assessments.

#### 4.3.3 High School Range of Content

In high school, students are refining their musical vocabularies and abilities as performers, creators and responders of music, and broadening their understandings of different musical styles, genres and traditions. The diversity of skills, interests and abilities among the population of music learners



in high school is simply astounding. Some students will have acquired impressive technical and expressive abilities by this point in their musical development, and be accomplished soloists, composers and arrangers. Other students will be more satisfied performing as ensemble members and may seek further musical fulfillment as music consumers. Still other students choose not to participate in school music programs or ensembles after 6<sup>th</sup> grade, but have active musical lives outside of school and are engaged in numerous musical activities with their families and friends in other settings (e.g., church choirs and praise bands; instruction and performance on voice, piano, guitar or other “social instruments” typically not offered in school; “garage,” “jam,” or rock bands; producing “beats;” music technology applications, etc.).

Because of this diversity, the range of content that should be considered when designing assessment tasks for high school is particularly problematic. Students with prolonged engagement in their school music programs may be well versed in the music repertoire of their chosen ensemble type (i.e., band, chorus, orchestra), and this can be reflected in the sorts of music chosen for these assessments. There is, however, a danger in limiting our repertoire choices so as not to include a wider array of musical styles, genres and traditions.

All high school music students should have broad exposure to a variety of musical styles and genres as well as the opportunity to study in depth a particular music style of interest to them. In this context, our assessments should represent both western music that is based in standard practice tonal and rhythmic systems, particularly for creating and performing, as well as music that uses other tonal, rhythmic, and stylistic systems and characteristics.

In a school with a “gold standard” program, students who complete all the coursework in high school should be able to demonstrate competence in all strands, but may excel in one or another.

**Create** – In order to compose and improvise successfully, students need a well-developed sense of tonality (in multiple tonalities – major, minor, modes) and of tempo (in multiple meters – duple, triple, mixed meters, unusual meters). While instrumental skills are desirable, a student’s “personal musicianship” (the ability to sight-sing, the ability to take aural dictation) is critical to the compositional and improvisational processes.

In high school, students should be expected to be familiar with duple and triple meters and with major and minor tonalities, and should be gaining confidence in different modes and unusual and mixed meters. Stylistically, students with prolonged experience in performing ensembles should be familiar with standard musical forms and structures such as 12 bar blues, antecedent-consequent phrase structures, march form, theme and variations, and AABA/32 bar song form.

**Perform** – In choosing repertoire for performance, the standard solo and ensemble literature for instrumentalists and vocalists provides a broad and diverse array of choices. At the same time, more vernacular music (i.e., folk, rock, pop) should be included in the curriculum to provide culturally relevant and appropriate repertoire for study and performance.

In terms of range and tessitura high school musicians encompass a very wide diversity of ability and maturity levels. For instrumentalists, extremes in range should be approached with care, and students should not be expected to perform in these ranges for extended periods of time. Range guidelines for each instrument are beyond the scope of this discussion, but further information may be found by consulting an orchestration text such as Kent Kennan’s “The Technique of Orchestration,” published by Pearson/Prentice Hall. For vocalists, range considerations are as follows: Sopranos, c1-e2 (occasionally up to g2--a2); Altos, a-c2 (avoid staying in the low register for extended periods); Tenors, d-f1; Basses, G-c1. Advanced singers may exceed these ranges.

Care must be taken not to confuse “executive skills” (i.e., instrumental or vocal skill and technique) with musical understanding, as one’s technique may exceed one’s musicianship. For the purposes of assessment of performance skill, repertoire should be that which is familiar to the students, and the students should have had adequate time for study and practice.

**Respond** – As at the K-5 grade and the 6-8 grade levels, responding tasks in grades 9-12 allow for the greatest diversity of repertoire in terms of assessment than do creating and performing. Again, the standard instrumental and vocal/choral solo and ensemble repertoire serves as a rich base with which to work. However, popular music, jazz, chamber ensemble, solo instrumental music, and music from other cultures that is less familiar syntactically and stylistically all can serve as repertoire to which the students can respond, given that they have had some previous experience in earlier grades with these styles of music.

#### 4.4 Nature of the Scoring Rubrics for Assessing Music

Rubrics are useful tools for organizing the data generated by student assessment tasks. There are several reasons that educators should be encouraged to use these tools in their assessment efforts. First, rubrics can be used to help plan activities. Beginning an instructional plan with the end in mind can aid educators in thinking through their teaching strategies logically and sequentially. This approach to planning often is referred to as “assessment embedded instruction” (Darling-Hammond, 1995).

Second, good rubrics are helpful in terms of focusing one’s objectives. Rubrics can be used as a sort of planning template, and when overlaid on an emerging lesson plan can highlight important short-term and long-term learning goals for the specific lesson or lessons.

Perhaps most obviously, rubrics are useful aids in evaluating and grading student work. As mentioned above, while music educators are experts at knowing what their students know and are able to do, we are not always effective at documenting what we know. Rubrics, checklists and rating scales are helpful tools for documenting the results of teaching and assessment activities in the music classroom, and help educators in their efforts at accountability.

Most important, as with all forms of assessment, the primary purpose of using rubrics is to improve instruction. Educators who do not use assessment tools in their practice may be teaching well but are “flying blind” when it comes to being reflective practitioners.

In order for rubrics to be effective and capture useful assessment data accurately, they must include:

- Points that are equidistant,
- Four or more rating points
- Descriptors that are valid and reliable (Dirth, 1997)

Rubrics also should be constructed with the following guidelines in mind:

- Rubric types include holistic (overall performance) and analytic (specific dimensions of performance); both are necessary for student assessment
- Highest point represents exemplary performance
- Descriptors are provided for each level of student performance
- Descriptors are valid (meaningful) and scores are reliable (consistent)
- Scores are related to actual levels of students learning
- They can be used by students for both self-assessment and to assess the performance of other students

The rubric shown in Figure 4.4.1 is focused on one of the embedded objectives in the assignment--the appropriate use of music notation. Note that the rubric includes four achievement levels, and that these levels are equidistant in respect to the standard established in the assignment specifications. The rubric is also characterized by the use of criterion-reference descriptors; clear explanations of performance standards at all four levels of achievement. Using this kind of clear, descriptive language helps educators to arrive at reliable results, and increases the accuracy of assessment findings. Finally, the highest point on the rubric (i.e., “4”) represents exemplary achievement, but is still attainable, and all four points represent actual levels of expected student learning.

**Figure 4.4.1**  
**Example Music Notation Rubric – Grades 3-4**

|   |
|---|
| <p><b>Instruction for the Assessment:</b></p> <p>Students compose their own melodies using tone-bar instruments, voice, or recorder. They also notate those melodies using music notation. After practicing their compositions, they perform them for the class. Finally, they reflect in writing on their compositional experiences.</p> <p>Evaluation: The rubric below is for evaluating the notational aspects of the assessment. Students also are evaluated on the quality of their compositions and their performances using different dimensions of the rubric.</p> |
|---|

**Teacher Scoring Rubric–Melodic Composition**

| <b>Dimension</b>      | <b>1</b>  | <b>2</b>   | <b>3</b>  | <b>4</b>   |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|--|
| <b>Music Notation</b> | Notes are written in a sloppy and illegible manner. Barline placement is not correct. Line and space notes are indistinguishable from each other. | Notes are written clearly, but barline placement is often incorrect. The difference between line and space notes is not easily seen. | Most notes are written clearly using the proper barline placement. The difference between line and spaces notes is usually clear. | All notes are written neatly using proper barline placement. The difference between line and space notes is easily seen. |

4.4.1 Sample Rubrics for Grades K-2 and 3-5 Assessments

At the K-2 and 3-5 levels, music educators work with large numbers of students, and the number of times per week or month that they see their students varies widely from school setting to school setting. Some educators have as many as ten classes per day with no transition time between classes. As a result, the activities used for assessment must be a normal part of the instructional process, and record keeping must take place during class as much as possible. Without integrating assessment into instruction, the record keeping tasks can become overwhelming. Assessment as a naturalistic part of classroom activities is possible for performance tasks and events, which can be assessed as the students perform in the classroom, and is less possible for constructed-responses, which require the educators to read and rate student responses outside of class time.

The quality of responses to performance tasks, performance events, and constructed-responses all can be measured using developmentally appropriate rating scales. Most creations, performances, and responses are multidimensional, meaning that they present opportunities to assess students’ understanding of several musical constructs at once. Following are possible dimensions and specific examples of rating scales that are used to rate creating, performing, and responding tasks at grades K-2 and 3-5.

**Create** – For one Create event, educators perform an antecedent phrase and individual students improvise consequent phrases. This task can be used to measure students’ understanding of and ability to work within a tonal context, understanding of and ability to work within a rhythmic context, ability to use tonal and rhythmic vocabulary, and ability to “converse” musically. Each of these could be an individual dimension of a rating scale for this task. However, listening for five different dimensions in a single performance limits the reliability and therefore validity of the rating scale. As a result, we limited the number of dimensions when scoring a single, brief performance to no more than three if scoring students’ responses “live.” Ideally, student performances would be recorded and played one time to rate each dimension. However, the time required to do this may be prohibitive in many teaching settings.

Figure 4.4.2 shows a rubric that is used to evaluate students’ creative work (improvising a consequent phrase) in Grades K-2. It has three dimensions: Tonal Cohesion, Rhythmic Cohesion, and Creativity along with language describing each level of performance within each dimension

**Figure 4.4.2  
Create – Grades K-2  
Teacher Scoring Rubric**

| <b>Dimension</b>         | <b>1</b>  | <b>2</b>   | <b>3</b>   | <b>4</b>   |
|--------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Tonal Cohesion</b>    | The student did not use singing voice or did not sing in the tonal center of the antecedent phrase. | The student used singing voice. At least part of the consequent phrase was in the tonal center of the antecedent phrase.         | The student used singing voice. The consequent phrase was mostly in the same key center and tonality as the antecedent phrase.                         | The student used singing voice. The consequent phrase was solidly and consistently in the same key center and tonality as the antecedent phrase.                                   |
| <b>Rhythmic Cohesion</b> | The student did not perform in the tempo or meter of the antecedent phrase.                         | At least part of the consequent phrase was in the tempo and meter of the antecedent phrase.                                      | The consequent phrase was mostly in the same tempo and meter as the antecedent phrase.   | The consequent phrase was solidly and consistently in the same tempo and meter as the antecedent phrase.   |
| <b>Creativity</b>        | The student does not attempt to sing a phrase that was different from that of the teacher.          | The student attempts to sing a phrase that is different from that of the teacher, but the performance does not “work” musically. | The student sings a phrase that is different from that of the teacher that works musically, but the musical vocabulary used by the student is limited. | The student sings a phrase that is different from that of the teacher that works musically, and the musical vocabulary used by the student is rich and varied for the grade level. |

Figure 4.34.3 is a rubric used to evaluate grade 3-5 students’ composing for a harmony part and a rhythmic ostinato phrase. The dimensions for use in evaluating the harmonic line are “Written Work–Harmonic Line Notation” and “Harmonic Line Creation” and the dimensions for use in evaluating the rhythmic ostinato are “Written Work–Rhythmic Ostinato Notation” and “Creation of Rhythmic Ostinato.” Students receive a score of 1-4 for each of the dimensions.

**Figure 4.4.3  
Create – Grades 3-5  
Teacher Scoring Rubric**

| Dimension   | 1  | 2  | 3   | 4  |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| <b>Written Work—<br/>Harmonic Line<br/>Notation</b>     | Student does not notate harmonic pitches and rhythms accurately.                                   | Student occasionally notates harmonic pitches and rhythms accurately.                                    | Student often notates harmonic pitches and rhythms accurately.                                    | Student consistently notates harmonic pitches and rhythms accurately.                                    |
| <b>Harmonic Line<br/>Creation</b>                       | Student's harmonic line does not match the harmonic and rhythmic structure of the original melody. | Student's harmonic line occasionally matches the harmonic and rhythmic structure of the original melody. | Student's harmonic line often matches the harmonic and rhythmic structure of the original melody. | Student's harmonic line consistently matches the harmonic and rhythmic structure of the original melody. |
| <b>Written Work—<br/>Rhythmic Ostinato<br/>Notation</b> | Student does not notate the ostinato and movement accurately.                                      | Student occasionally notates the ostinato and movement accurately.                                       | Student often notates the ostinato and movement accurately.                                       | Student consistently notates the ostinato and movement accurately.                                       |
| <b>Creation of<br/>Rhythmic Ostinato</b>                | Student's ostinato does not complement the composition and displays no rhythmic variety.           | Student's ostinato occasionally complements the composition and displays some rhythmic variety.          | Student's ostinato often complements the composition and displays rhythmic variety.               | Student's ostinato consistently complements the composition with rhythmic complexity.                    |

**Perform** – For these assessment tasks, students are rated as they perform. Again, ideally from a measurement perspective, student performances would be recorded and played one time to rate each dimension. However, the time required to do this would be prohibitive in most music teaching settings. Therefore, we limited the number of dimensions to those that could be rated by listening to a single performance.

In one performance event for use in grades K-2, students sing a verse of a familiar song and reflect on their performances. Figure 4.4.4 is a rubric for use in evaluating their singing performances. It has two dimensions: Pitch Accuracy/Use of Singing Voice and Rhythmic Accuracy.

**Figure 4.4.4  
Perform – Grades K-2  
Teacher Scoring Rubric**

| Dimension                                       | 1  | 2   | 3   | 4  |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Pitch Accuracy/ Use<br/>of Singing Voice</b> | Student sings or chants consistently with a melodic contour that is different from that of the song.       | Student sings with some tonal accuracy but starts or ends in a key that is different from the key established by the teacher. | Student sings with some tonal accuracy and begins and ends in the key established by the teacher.               | Student sings all of the song with tonal accuracy in the key established by the teacher.                       |
| <b>Rhythmic<br/>Accuracy</b>                    | Student performs consistently with rhythms, tempo, and/or meter that are different from those in the song. | Student performs some of the song with rhythmic accuracy and in the tempo and meter established by the teacher.               | Student performs most of the song with rhythmic accuracy and in the tempo and meter established by the teacher. | Student performs all of the song with rhythmic accuracy and in the tempo and meter established by the teacher. |

**Respond** – Constructed-responses need to be completed by students in class and evaluated outside of class time. In one assessment, students listen to a recording and identify strengths and weaknesses of that performance. They are evaluated on several dimensions: (1) Accuracy of Response, (2) Use of Musical Vocabulary, and (3) Mechanics and Quality of Writing, as shown in the

rubric in Figure 4.4.5. Similar types of dimensions are used to critically analyze a musical work and reflect on its context.

**Figure 4.4.5**  
**Respond – Grades 3-5**  
**Teacher Scoring Rubric**

| Dimension                               | 1  | 2  | 3   | 4  |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| <b>Accuracy of Response</b>             | Student describes little or none of the musical excerpt accurately.                      | Student describes some of the musical excerpt accurately.                                      | Student describes most of the musical excerpt accurately.                               | Student accurately describes the musical excerpt.  |
| <b>Use of Musical Vocabulary</b>        | Student rarely uses musical vocabulary learned in class in his or her written responses. | Student occasionally uses musical vocabulary learned in class in his or her written responses. | Student often uses musical vocabulary learned in class in his or her written responses. | Student consistently uses musical vocabulary learned in class in his or her written responses. |
| <b>Mechanics and Quality of Writing</b> | Student rarely demonstrates a clear writing style. A number of grammatical mistakes      | Student occasionally demonstrates a clear writing style. Some grammatical mistakes.            | Student often demonstrates a clear writing style. A few grammatical mistakes.           | Student consistently demonstrates a clear writing style. Very few or no grammatical mistakes.  |

4.4.2 Sample Rubrics for Grades 6-8 Assessments

Assessment at grades 6-8 also can be accomplished through the use of rubrics. Following are rubrics used to assess Create, Perform, and Respond in grades 6-8

**Create** – In a create task for students in grades 6-8, students are asked to improve on one pitch and a second time using multiple pitches. Figure 4.4.6 is a rubric that can be used do evaluate each of those performances.

**Figure 4.4.6**  
**Create – Grades 6-8**  
**Teacher Scoring Rubric**

| Dimension                       | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| <b>One-Note Improvisation</b>   | Student makes no attempt to vary the rhythm during the one-note improvisation. | Student attempts rhythmic improvisation and demonstrates limited variety in rhythm, dynamics, and articulation.  | Student attempts rhythmic improvisation and demonstrates some variety in rhythm, dynamics, and articulation. | Student attempts rhythmic improvisation and demonstrates significant variety in rhythm, dynamics, and articulation.  |
| <b>Multi-Note Improvisation</b> | Student makes no attempt at a multi-note improvisation.                        | Student attempts improvisation and demonstrates limited variety in pitches, rhythm, dynamics, and articulations. | Student attempts improvisation and demonstrates some variety in pitches, rhythm, dynamics, and articulation. | Student attempts improvisation and demonstrates significant variety in pitches, rhythm, dynamics,, and articulation. |

**Perform** - Students perform in solo and in a group. Figure 4.4.7 shows a rubric used to evaluate chamber music performances of students in grades 6-8. The rubric has five dimensions (Technical Accuracy: Pitch/Rhythm, Technical Accuracy: Ensemble Cohesion, Technical Accuracy: Intonation,

Expression: Dynamics, and Expression: Style), each of which have accompanying descriptors of each level of performance. The performance may be rated during a live performance or may be audio or video recorded so that it can be evaluated at a later time.

**Figure 4.4.7**  
**Perform – Grades 6-8**

**Teacher Scoring Rubric**

| <b>Dimension</b>                               | <b>1</b>  | <b>2</b>   | <b>3</b>   | <b>4</b>  |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| <b>Technical Accuracy</b><br>Pitch/Rhythm      | Group plays or sings with limited accuracy.                             | Group plays or sings some notes and rhythms correctly.   | Group plays or sings most notes and rhythms correctly.   | Group plays or sings all or nearly all notes and rhythms correctly.                                 |
| <b>Technical Accuracy</b><br>Ensemble Cohesion | Group is unable to stay together rhythmically or maintain steady tempo. | There are frequent and/or significant problems with staying together rhythmically and/or maintaining steady tempo. | Some problems occur with staying together rhythmically and/or maintaining steady tempo.                                    | Group is able to stay together rhythmically and maintain steady tempo.                              |
| <b>Technical Accuracy</b><br>Intonation        | Group is unable to play or sing in tune.                                | There are frequent and/or significant problems with playing or singing in tune.                                    | Some problems occur with playing or singing in tune.   | Group is able to play or sing in tune with very few or no errors.                                   |
| <b>Expression</b><br>Dynamics                  | Group ignores expressive markings or performs them incorrectly.         | Group attends to most expressive markings in the score.  | Group's performance goes beyond technical accuracy in that most expressive markings in the score are performed accurately. | Group attends to all or nearly all expressive markings in the score (dynamics, articulation, etc.). |
| <b>Expression</b><br>Style                     | Notes and rhythms may be accurate but lack expressive detail.           | Group shows little effort to make its own interpretation of the piece.   | Group makes some interpretative choices.   | Group's performance reflects an effort to make interpretive choices that convey musical meaning.    |

**Respond** – Constructed responses need to be completed by students in class and evaluated outside of class time. For example, in one Respond task for use in grades 6-8, students are asked to use a rubric to evaluate a musical work performed by their own ensemble, provide a rationale for their scoring choices, and give suggestions to improve future performances of the piece. Figure 4.4.8 is the rubric used to evaluate those constructed responses.

**Figure 4.4.8**  
**Respond – Grades 6-8**

**Teacher Scoring Rubric**

| <b>Dimension</b>                        | <b>1</b>  | <b>2</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>4</b>                                       |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| <b>My Rubric-2</b><br><b>Completion</b> | Student rated none of the performance criteria. | Student rated some of the performance criteria. | Student rated many of the performance criteria. | Student rated all of the performance criteria. |

| <b>Dimension</b>                                      | <b>1</b>   | <b>2</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>4</b>   |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Student Rationale</b>                              | Student does not draw upon examples from the performance. Rationale is not fully formed, and musical terminology is absent or misrepresented within the response. The writing lacks a clear description of the presence and quality of musical dimensions. | Student draws upon some examples from the performance. Rationale contains some music terminology that describes the presence and quality of some of the musical dimensions. | Student draws upon many examples from the performance. Rationale uses correct musical terminology to describe the presence and quality of musical dimensions. | Student uses extensive examples from the performance. Rationale is insightful and uses correct musical terminology to assess the presence and quality of musical dimensions. |
| <b>Performance Praise and Performance Suggestions</b> | Student feedback does not draw upon examples from the performance. Feedback is either absent or not adequate to improve ensemble performance.  | Student feedback draws upon some examples from the performance. Feedback will provide some insight for some improved ensemble performance.                                  | Student feedback draws upon many examples from the performance. Feedback will provide insight for improved ensemble performance.                              | Student feedback uses extensive examples from the performance. Feedback is insightful and will aid in greatly improved ensemble performance.                                 |

#### 4.4.3 Sample Rubrics for High School Assessments

In grades 9-12, music instruction becomes more diverse in terms of instructional groupings and settings. In addition to class instruction, such as music theory, ensembles become a major focus of music programming. Music educators work with larger numbers of students than most of their colleagues in other disciplines, and the number of times that they see their students varies somewhat from school to school. While some educators are able to focus on one type of music learning setting (i.e., band, strings, chorus) or at one level, many high school educators serve in dual or multiple teaching assignments, and are responsible for teaching at multiple levels (i.e., grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12.)

With this kind of varied, fragmented teaching schedule, the activities used for assessment must be embedded in the regular instructional process and documentation must be “built in” to class activities in order to be successful. As at the K-2 and 3-5 levels, assessment as a naturalistic part of classroom activities is possible for performance tasks and events, which can be assessed as the students perform in the classroom, and is less possible for constructed-responses, which require the educator to read and rate student responses outside of class time.

The quality of performance tasks, performance events, and constructed-responses all can be measured using criterion reference rating scales. Following are examples of rubrics that are used to rate Create, Perform, and Respond tasks at the grade 9-12 level.

Figure 4.4.9 is a rubric used to evaluate high school students’ abilities to compose a consequent phrase. The dimensions are Correct Notation and Compositional quality. Although this has a slightly different scoring format than the previous rubrics, it functions in much the same way. Students receive a score of 1-4 from each of the dimensions.

**Figure 4.4.9**  
**Create - Grades 9-12**  
**Teacher Scoring Rubric**

| <b>Dimension</b>        | <b>1</b>         | <b>2</b>        | <b>3</b>          | <b>4</b>             |
|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Correct Notation</b> | Fulfills none of | Fulfills one or | Fulfills three or | Fulfills five or six |



|   |                                    |                                   |  |  |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> All measures contain the correct number of beats.<br><input type="checkbox"/> All stems point in the correct direction.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Each staff contains the correct clef and key signature.<br><input type="checkbox"/> All measures are separated by barlines.<br><input type="checkbox"/> The end is designated with a double barline.<br><input type="checkbox"/> All parts of notes or rests (noteheads, stems, flags, beams, extension dots, etc.) are placed correctly.  | these statements.                  | two of these statements.          | four of these statements.                  | of these statements.                       |
| <b>Compositional Quality</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> The consequent phrase ends in the same key as the antecedent phrase.<br><input type="checkbox"/> The consequent phrase is roughly the same length as the antecedent phrase.<br><input type="checkbox"/> The end of the consequent phrase implies a sense of harmonic closure.<br><input type="checkbox"/> The consequent phrase uses at least one rhythmic feature of the antecedent phrase.<br><input type="checkbox"/> The consequent phrase uses at least one melodic/tonal feature of the antecedent phrase. | Fulfills none of these statements. | Fulfills one of these statements. | Fulfills two or three of these statements. | Fulfills four or five of these statements. |

**Perform** – For these assessment tasks, students are rated as they perform. Again, ideally from a measurement perspective, student performances would be recorded and played one time to rate each dimension. However, the time required to do this for the large ensembles common in many school music programs at high school is prohibitive. Therefore, the number of dimensions is limited to those that can be rated by listening once to a single performance. Following are some dimensions that are used to rate a student’s performance

In this assessment, students sight read a musical excerpt. They then identify practice strategies for improving performances and practice the excerpt using those strategies. Finally, they re-record the excerpt and reflect on the improvement and practice strategies. As part of this assessment, they are asked to evaluate their growth in performance, their pitch and rhythmic accuracy, their fluency, and their ability to attend to other musical elements. Figure 4.4.10 is a rubric that is used to evaluate their performance.

**Figure 4.4.10**  
**Perform- Grades 9-12**  
**Teacher Scoring Rubric**

| <b>Dimension</b>             | <b>1</b>   | <b>2</b>  | <b>3</b>   | <b>4</b>   |
|------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| <b>Growth in Performance</b> | No growth is evident between first and second takes. | Student demonstrates a little aurally discernable improvement between first take and second take. | Student demonstrates moderate aurally discernable improvement growth between first take and second take. | Student demonstrates significant, clear, aurally discernable improvement between first take and second take. |

|                                  |  |   |   |   |
|----------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| <b>Pitch and Rhythm Accuracy</b> | Student performs none or almost none of the pitches and rhythms correctly and in tune.   | Student performs some pitches and rhythms correctly and in tune.                        | Student performs most pitches and rhythms correctly and in tune.  | Student performs all or almost all pitches and rhythms correctly and in tune. |
| <b>Fluency</b>                   | Student performance is not fluid. There are frequent tempo fluctuations and/or hesitations.  | Student performance is somewhat fluid, with many tempo fluctuations and/or hesitations. | Student performance is mostly fluid, but there are a few tempo inconsistencies or occasional hesitations. | Student maintains a steady tempo and has no or almost no hesitations.         |
| <b>Musical Elements</b>          | <i>1 point per element displayed</i><br>___ Student attends to indicated dynamics<br>___ Student attends to indicated tempo<br>___ Student attends to indicated articulation |   |   |   |

**Respond** – An important readiness skill for music response is the ability to critically analyze a piece of music along multiple dimensions.

In one Respond task, students compare and contrast the representations of peacefulness in *Impression, Sunrise* by Claude Monet and “Venus” from *The Planets* by Gustav Holst. Students listen to the musical excerpt, study the painting, take preliminary and refined notes comparing and contrasting the two pieces, and write an analysis and summary of their findings. Figure 4.4.11 is the rubric used to evaluate their performances. They are assessed on their work in three dimensions: their ability to demonstrate and understanding of the similarities and differences between the works in two different art forms, their ability to use discipline-specific vocabulary, and their ability to make connections between the visual art and musical contexts.

**Figure 4.4.11**  
**Respond- Grades 9-12**  
**Teacher Scoring Rubric**

| <b>Dimension</b>   | <b>1</b>  | <b>2</b>  | <b>3</b>   | <b>4</b>  |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| <b>Comparing artistic works</b>                                | Student does not demonstrate any understanding of the similarities and differences between the works. | Student demonstrates a basic Understanding of the similarities and differences between the works. | Student demonstrates a somewhat nuanced understanding of the similarities and differences between the works. | Student demonstrates a rich, nuanced understanding of the similarities and differences between the works. |
| <b>Use of visual art and music vocabulary</b>                  | Student does not use any visual art or music vocabulary to support the analysis.                      | Student rarely uses visual art or music vocabulary to support the analysis.                       | Student often uses visual art and music vocabulary to support the analysis.                                  | Student consistently uses visual art and music vocabulary to support the analysis.                        |
| <b>Connections between visual and performance art contexts</b> | Student does not make any connections between visual and performance art contexts.                    | Student makes weak connections between visual and performance art contexts.                       | Student makes adequate connections between visual and performance art contexts.                              | Student makes strong connections between visual and performance art contexts.                             |

## Chapter 5 Summary of Available Assessments

This chapter provides summary information of the number of assessments in the MAEIA assessment pool for each grade range (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and high school) for each MAEIA performance standard. At the high school level, additional information provided on the number of performance tasks and performance events designed for students in Levels 1, 2, and/or 3.

### 5.1 Overview

The range of content used for assessment items in music emphasizes the use of music examples (e.g., scores, recordings, etc.) that represent a broad diversity of musical styles, genres and cultures.

How much of the grade level expectations between K-2/3-5/6-8/9-12 in the discipline will be assessed using performance tasks, events, etc. and why is that the prescribed ratio? Because music represents multiple ways of knowing, and does so in extremely sophisticated and complicated ways, the range of content used reflects this unique aspect of musical meaning making. To this end, we place an emphasis on higher order thinking types of assessment items, such as performance tasks and events, with relatively fewer selected-response types of items.

The types of assessment activities most appropriate for gauging the nature and extent of learning in music classes range from expansive, creative projects that unfold over time that allow for collaborative work among small groups of students, to large group assessment activities to “snapshots” of student understanding at a given moment in time. Each of these assessments provides a window into students’ creative and critical thinking in music, and allows educators to use the assessment data to improve their teaching while providing critical feedback to the learners as they work towards improving various aspects of their musicianship.

The range of activities encompasses an appropriate balance of all three of the learning modalities in the Create, Perform, Respond model. One criticism of American school music over the years has been an over-reliance on performance as a distinguishing characteristic of the offerings in school programs. We took care to include assessment activities that ask students to engage with music not only as performers, but also as creators (composers, improvisers, arrangers) and as responders (making critical judgments, making evaluative decisions regarding music and music performances, making critical observations and judgments based on knowledge of music history, music theory and relationships with other disciplines).

When considering the range and balance of assessment activities we paid close attention to the teaching settings and structures that are currently most common in school music programs in our state. For example, while selected-response items have the advantage of being easy to administer and quickly generating clear data from learners, interrupting a 6-8 grade orchestra rehearsal or a first grade music class to administer a multiple-choice exam on note names or rhythm values is not generally considered to be developmentally-appropriate practice in music teaching. A more authentic assessment choice in these types of settings would be to conduct a brief Performance Event in which the orchestra educator asks 6-8 grade string players to demonstrate a series of specific fingerings in a passage drawn from their orchestra repertoire, or in which the K-5 certified music educators asks her students to sight sing a given rhythm pattern with the appropriate solfege syllables. These activities have the advantage of being authentic, better connected to actual music teaching practice, and providing more accurate information on student learning than a paper-and-pencil measure is apt to do.

Because of the subjective nature of art, when students are asked to complete performance tasks or events and constructed or selected-response items and reflect on their work, the emphasis should be

on the “rigorous investigation and informed personal choices” of the student creating the art or the artwork being responded to by the student (Vatsky, 2008, p.14).

5.2 Number of Performance Events and Performance Tasks Available in Grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and High School

Table 5.1.1 indicates the number of K-8 MAEIA performance events that were completed. These are now available in the final pool of model assessments.

**Table 5.2.1  
Number of Music Performance Events  
Grades K-8**

| Level        | Create    | Perform   | Respond   | Total     |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Grades K-2   | 5         | 6         | 4         | 15        |
| Grades 3-5   | 2         | 6         | 6         | 14        |
| Grades 6-8   | 5         | 4         | 4         | 13        |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>42</b> |

5.1.2 indicates the number of K-8 MAEIA performance events that were completed. These are now available in the final pool of model assessments.

**Table 5.2.2  
Number of Music Performance Tasks  
Grades K-8**

| Level        | Create   | Perform  | Respond  | Total     |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Grades K-2   | 1        | 1        | 2        | 4         |
| Grades 3-5   | 5        | 3        | 4        | 12        |
| Grades 6-8   | 2        | 3        | 3        | 8         |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>8</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>9</b> | <b>24</b> |

Table 5.1.3 indicates the number of High School MAEIA performance events that were written for each Level for each performance standard.

**Table 5.2.3  
Number of High School Music Performance Events  
Levels 1-3**

| Performance Standard | Level 1   | Level 2   | Level 3  | Total     |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Create               | 3         | 4         | 3        | 10        |
| Perform              | 4         | 3         | 2        | 9         |
| Respond              | 5         | 4         | 3        | 12        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>         | <b>12</b> | <b>11</b> | <b>8</b> | <b>31</b> |

Table 5.1.4 indicates the number of High School MAEIA performance tasks that were written for each Level for each performance standard.

**Table 5.2.4  
Number of High School Music Performance Tasks  
Levels 1-3**

| Performance Standard | Level 1  | Level 2  | Level 3  | Total     |
|----------------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Create               | 2        | 3        | 3        | 8         |
| Perform              | 4        | 3        | 3        | 10        |
| Respond              | 3        | 2        | 3        | 8         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>         | <b>9</b> | <b>8</b> | <b>9</b> | <b>26</b> |

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