

EMTA EXCELLENCE IN MUSIC AWARDS PROGRAM 2026

Event Date: Saturday, May 16, 2026

Application Deadline: Tuesday, April 14, 2026

Mission

The EMTA Excellence in Music Awards Program encourages students in grades 7–12 to engage in the EMTA community and recognizes exceptional talent, dedication, and achievement through financial awards.

Message to Teachers, Students, and Parents

Please read this document carefully to ensure a thorough understanding of the requirements and eligibility for student participation.

Awards are structured to recognize many deserving students while also allowing continued participation. Please note:

- The maximum award is generally 30% of the total available in each category, so that financial awards can be distributed to as many deserving students as possible.
- Students may participate again in their age group if they received no more than 20% of the total award in that category the previous year.
- *Example:* A 7th grader who won \$100 in the 7/8 category in 2025 may participate again in 8th grade.
- In some cases, award amounts are rounded for ease of application by judges.

2026 Award Money (total: \$4,000)

Category	2026 Total Amount	Maximum Awards	20% Eligibility for next year
7/8 th grade	\$400	\$120	\$80
9/10 th grade	\$900	\$300	\$200
11 th /12 th grade	\$2,700	\$1200	\$600

Reference: 2025 Award Breakdown

Category	2025 Total Amount	Maximum Awards	20% eligibility for next year
7/8 th grade	\$500	\$150	\$100
9/10 th grade	\$1,000	\$300	\$200
11 th /12 th grade	\$3,000	\$1200	\$600

Teachers can use this table to determine if a student is eligible to participate in 2026 based on the awards received in 2025.

General Requirements (All Students)

1. Volunteerism

- Students must volunteer at the Musicianship Festival on May 9, 2026.
- Full-day availability is expected; schedules will be assigned by the volunteer coordinator.
- Please do not submit schedule requests. Students should keep this date open, though fewer hours may be required.

2. EMTA Event Participation

- Students must perform in **two EMTA events**.
- **Eligible events:**
 - Jazz, Rags & Blues Festival
 - Time Era Festival
 - Community Recital
 - Music Artistry Program (*new this year: map is an option, not required*)
 - Composition Recital
 - Musicianship Festival (*if used as the second event, students must fully enter*)
- Note: WSMTA or MTNA contests do not count.

3. Performance Guidelines

- Students must prepare memorized pieces from three different time periods, or compositions in three distinct styles.
- Time Limits vary by age category.

4. **Student Photo:** A current photo must be included in the application for use on the EMTA website (opt-out available).

Additional Age Group Information

7th–8th Grades

- **Total Awards:** \$400
- **Maximum Award:** \$120 per student
- **Eligibility for re-entry (20% rule):** \$100 or less from 2025
- **Performance Time:** 7 minutes (cut allowed)
- **Notes:**
 - Winners are not ranked.
 - Judges decide the number of winners and award amounts, aiming to recognize multiple students.
 - Judges choose one student to perform in EMTA Awards Gala on May 30th

9th–10th Grade

- **Total Awards:** \$900
- **Maximum Award:** \$300 per student
- **Eligibility for re-entry (20% rule):** \$200 or less from 2025
- **Performance Time:** 9 minutes total (cuts allowed)
- **Notes:**
 - Winners are not ranked.
 - Judges decide the number of winners and award amounts, aiming to recognize multiple students.
 - Judges choose one student to perform in EMTA Awards Gala on May 30th.

11th–12th Grade

- **Total Award:** \$2,700
- **Maximum Award:** \$1,200.
- **Eligibility for re-entry (20% rule):** \$600 or less from 2025
- **Performance & Interview:** 15 minutes total (10 min performance, 5 min interview)
- **Essay Requirement:**
"Describe your musical goals in 500 words or less, detailing how music has impacted your life and what role it will play in your future." You may include significant musical events, collaborations, teachers, or other meaningful experiences.
- **Notes:**
 - Winners are ranked, and ties are allowed.
 - First place receives the **Joan Brown Excellence in Music Award**.
 - The Joan Brown Winner(s) are invited to perform in the EMTA Awards Gala on May 30th.

Teacher Requirements

- **Membership Requirement:**

Teachers must be EMTA members by October 15, 2025, to enter students in the competition.
- **Student Eligibility:**

Teachers must instruct students in the performance category in which they are entered.
- **Volunteer Commitment:**

Teachers entering students are required to volunteer at both the Musicianship Festival and the Excellence in Music Awards Program.
- **Judging Availability:**

Teachers must be available to judge on May 16, 2026, unless excused due to significant life events (e.g., weddings, graduations). Event chairs should be informed as early as possible if an exception is needed.
- **Event Support:**

For maximum flexibility, all teachers should be available to judge. Those not assigned to judging will assist with event-related tasks, such as scheduling, paperwork, certificates, and checks.
- **Student Compliance:**

Teachers are responsible for ensuring that their students meet all EMTA participation and volunteer requirements.
- **Entry Limit:**

Teachers may enter up to two students per age category, with a maximum of four students across all categories.

Judging Information and Requirements

- **Judging Panel**
 - 7th–8th grade: 2–3 EMTA teachers
 - 9th–10th grade: 2–3 EMTA teachers
 - 11th–12th grade: 3 EMTA teachers
- **Categories**

Judges will assess all categories together, including instrumental, voice, and composition.
- **Conflict of Interest**

The goal is to avoid assigning teachers to judge categories in which their own Students are participating. If this cannot be avoided:

- In the 7/8 and 9/10 categories, teachers will step outside during their student's performance.
 - In the 11/12 category, students will only be judged by teachers who are not their instructors.
 - **Evaluation Criteria (7th–8th and 9th–10th Grades)**
Judges will assess each student **individually**, determining whether the performance merits an award rather than making direct comparisons between students.
 - **Evaluation Criteria (11th–12th Grade)**
Judges will assess **performance, essay, and interview**
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Locations

- 7th–10th Grades: Hartley Mansion, Everett
- 11th–12th Grades: Bonnie Thomas' home, Edmonds