**Virginia Choral Director Association**

**Group Sight Reading Assessment:**

**Guidelines, Procedures and Scoring**

**2012-2013 Committee:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Judi Belzer  jabelzer@fcps.edu  Alicia Brodt  BRODTAR@pwcs.edu  Jeremy Craft, Chair jcraft@bedford.k12.va.us  Joe Evler  Joeevler@gmail.com | Luke Frels  luke.frels@fcps.edu  Melvin Goodwyn  mmgoodwyn@gmail.com  Ryan Keebaugh  keebaughr@clarke.k12.va.us | Lisa Mast  lisamast@hotmail.com  Debbie Proctor  debmproctor@yahoo.com  Raejean Harman  rharman@bristolvaschools.org  Thom Sauber  tsauber@iwcs.k12.va.us |

**VCDA District Performance Assessment Sight-Reading Committee**

On Saturday January 15, 2011 the VCDA District Assessment Sight-reading Committee met to develop an initial plan for common state-wide criteria. On Saturday, August 18, 2012 the expanded committee met to revise the standards, procedures, and scoring. The following is what this committee submits:

The plan developed for school years from 2011 to 2014 -

* For school year 2011-2012: These guidelines would apply ONLY to groups attempting to obtain Blue Ribbon status.
* For school year 2012-2013: all performing ensembles would be required to sight-read, regardless of Blue-Ribbon attainment, following the same guidelines.
* For school year 2013-2014: all schools would be required to sight-read and the standards for each of the four levels would be more rigorous, including, but not limited to, additional length, more difficult rhythms and skips, more voicings, etc.

For school years from 2014 to 2018, the Sight-Reading Committee will meet once a year to continue to evaluate and revise the standards, procedures, and scoring.

* The committee will meet at All Virginia Chorus to go over revision suggestions submitted by the directors in the state.
* District representatives must submit comments and questions to the committee after Choral Assessment to a week before All Virginia Chorus.
* Any changes from the committee will be submitted to the VCDA board before the September executive meeting.

To remain consistent throughout the state, a composer will be commissioned to produce all sight-reading work and, once created, will be distributed to the VCDA President then to all District Representatives. The commissioned composer will be given the same guidelines as directors in order to create equitable sight-reading samples. The composer will also be asked to provide one example per level for directors to view via [www.vcda.net](http://www.vcda.net) .

**Sight-Reading Levels**

There will be four levels of sight-reading available for groups to perform, with a different example per key. At check-in, directors will have the opportunity to quickly preview various examples and choose the sight-reading example for their ensemble(s). Directors may not choose the same sight-reading sample for multiple groups. HS and MS groups wishing to apply for Blue Ribbon Status must sight- read level two or above. HS and MS groups not applying for Blue Ribbon status may choose any sight reading level at the discretion of the director.

**Length**

For 2013- 8 measures for all ensembles (HS and MS).

Sight Reading Procedure with Script

After the ensemble has received the sight-reading exercise from the assistant, the adjudicator will state the following:

*“Welcome to the sight-reading portion of your District performance assessment. Please keep your sight-reading exercise face-down until I tell you to turn it over to begin. You will have two minutes to study the sight-reading after your director establishes the tonality. During the study period, you may sing alone, with one another, or in sections per your director’s instructions. However, you may not sing TO one another.”*

The judge will then ask the director if they have questions about the procedures. Barring none, the judge will instruct the director and students to turn over the exercise and establish tonality.

**Two Minutes Pass**

*“Time. Your director may establish the tonality again before you begin your sight-reading.”*

Upon completion of the exercise, the judge will ask the director if they would like to use the initial performance for judging. If they do not, continue the script.

*“You will have two additional minutes to study the sight-reading after your director establishes the tonality.”*

**Two Minutes Pass**

*“Time. Your director may establish the tonality again before you begin your sight-reading.”*

Following the judged performance, the judge will thank the ensemble and collect the exercise.

“*Thank you. Please wait until we have collected all the sight reading forms before you exit the room.”*

**Procedure as a Chart**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Event/Time Elapse** | **The Director May: (in any order)** | **Students may: (in any order)** | **The Director May Not:** |
| First Study Period/  120 seconds | * Establish tonality using piano and voice * Establish tonality by having ensemble sing scale patterns, progression, etc. * Provide students with starting pitch(es) * Allow students to sing individually, in groups, or in sections (hum, sing, solfege, #s, etc.) Students may sing **with**one another, but not **to** one another. * Keep time * Verbally coach without specific pitch, intervallic, or rhythmic information | * Sing individually, in groups, or in sections (hum, sing, solfege, #s, etc.) Students may sing **with**one another, but not **to** one another. * Speak to other members of the ensemble to answer questions or clarify uncertainties * Use solfege, numbers, neutral syllables, etc. * Use Curwen/Kodaly hand signs | * Actualize rhythms or pitches (tap, clap, hum, sing, etc.) except to establish tonality * Mouth along with solfege syllables, numbers, etc. * Use Curwen/Kodaly hand signs, except during the establishment of tonality and giving beginning pitches. (Students may use hand signs). * Rehearse areas of difficulty * Allow students to sing, hum, etc. **to** one another (i.e., individual students cannot teach the entire ensemble) |
| Run-Through/  Time elapsed  (Minimum tempo  quarter note = 60bpm) | * Establish tonality using the piano and voice * Establish tonality by having ensemble sing scale patterns, progression, etc. * Provide students with starting pitch(es) * Have the ensemble sing the exercise without stopping * Keep the ensemble together by conducting, clapping, snapping, etc. | * Sing scale patterns, progress, etc. as an ensemble to establish tonality * Sing the exercise without stopping | * Sing along with the ensemble * Mouth along with solfege syllables, numbers, etc. * Use Curwen/Kodaly hand signs * (Students may use hand signs) |
| Second Study Period/ 120 seconds (all groups) | Same as First Study Period | Same as First Study Period | Same as First Study Period |
| Final Performance  (Minimum tempo quarter note = 60bpm) | Same as Run-Through Period | Same as Run-Through Period | Same as Run-Through Period |

**Middle School Sight Reading Levels**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level** | **Tonality** | **Voicing** | **Melody/Intervals\*** | **Meter/Rhythm\*\*** |
| MS Level 1  8 measures | C, E-flat, F  begins and ends on low “do” | Unison | Stepwise motion  Utilizes Do-Sol  diatonic | 4/4  Whole notes  Half notes/rests  Quarter notes/rests |
| MS Level 2  8 measures | C, E-flat, F  begins and ends on low “do” | Unison | Stepwise motion  Utilizes Ti-La  diatonic | 4/4  Whole notes  Dotted half notes/rest  Half notes/rests  Quarter notes/rests  Paired Eighth Notes |
| MS Level 3  8 measures | C, E-flat, F  begins and ends on low “do” | 2-part  SA and TB will be provided on the same page/slide, with ST being the same and AB being the same | Stepwise motion  Ti-La range  diatonic | 4/4  Whole notes  Dotted half notes/rest  Half notes/rests  Quarter notes/rests  Paired Eighth notes  No syncopation |
| MS Level 4  8 measures | C, F, E-Flat, D  begins and ends on low “do” | 2-part  SA and TB will be provided on the same page/slide, with ST being the same and AB being the same | Ti-La range  May include skips involving the tonic triad  diatonic | 4/4, 3/4  Whole notes  Dotted half notes/rest  Half notes/rests  Quarter notes/rests  Paired Eighth notes  No syncopation |

\*\*Rhythmic possibilities are only indicative of what could potentially be seen in an example

**High School Sight Reading Levels**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level** | **Key/Tonality\*** | **Voicing** | **Melody/Intervals\*** | **Meter/Rhythm\*\*** |
| HS Level 1  8 measures | C, E-flat, F  starts and ends on low “do” | Unison  The example will be written in treble and bass clef on the same page/slide | Stepwise  Ti-La  diatonic | 4/4  Whole notes  Dotted half notes/rest  Half notes/rests  Quarter notes/rests  Paired Eighth Notes |
| HS Level 2  8 measures | C, F, E-Flat, D  starts and ends on low “do” or “mi”  (One voice should begin/ end on “do”) | 2-part  SA and TB will be provided on the same page/slide, with ST being the same and AB being the same | Stepwise  Ti-La  diatonic | 4/4, 3/4  Whole notes  Dotted half notes/rest  Half notes/rests  Quarter notes/rests  Paired Eighth notes |
| HS Level 3  8 measures | C, F, E-Flat, D starts on Do or Sol, ends on Do or Mi. (One voice should begin/end on Do) | SSA, SAB, & TTB | Tonic triad skips  Ti-La  diatonic | 4/4, 3/4  Whole notes  Dotted half notes/rest  Half notes/rests  Dotted quarter notes  Quarter notes/rests  Eighth notes  No syncopation |
| HS Level 4  8 measures | C, F, E-Flat, D  starts on Do-Mi-Sol, ends Do  (One voice should begin/end on Do) | 3-part or 4-part  SSA, TTB, SAB, or SSAA, TTBB, SATB | Skips of a 3rd, 4th, or 5th  Low Ti- High Do  Diatonic  (See\* below for ranges) | 4/4, 3/4  Whole notes  Dotted half notes/rest  Half notes/rests  Dotted quarter notes  Quarter notes/rests  Eighth notes  Syncopation is possible |

\*\*Rhythmic possibilities are only indicative of what could *potentially* be seen in an example

**\***Ranges: 4 Part – Sop: B flat 3 – E5 , Alto: A flat 3 – C5, Ten: D3 – E4, Bass: A2 – C4

3 Part – Sop and Alto: same as above, Baritone: D3 – D4

**Appendix A**

**Alternate Script for LCD Projection of Sight Reading**

## Sight Reading Procedure with Script

After the ensemble has entered the room, the adjudicator will state the following:

*“Welcome to the sight-reading portion of your District performance assessment. You will have two minutes to study the sight-reading after your director establishes the tonality. During the study period, you may sing alone, with one another, or in sections per your director’s instructions. However, you may not sing TO one another.”*

The judge will then ask the director if they have questions about the procedures. Barring none, the judge will instruct the director to establish tonality and begin the study period.

**Two Minutes Pass**

*“Time. Your director may establish the tonality again before you begin your sight-reading.”*

Upon completion of the exercise, the judge will ask the director if they would like to use the initial performance for judging. If they do not, continue the script.

*“You will have two additional minutes to study the sight-reading after your director establishes the tonality.”*

**Two Minutes Pass**

*“Time. Your director may establish the tonality again before you begin your sight-reading.”*

Following the judged performance, the judge will thank the ensemble and collect the exercise.

“*Thank you. Please wait until we have collected all the sight reading forms before you exit the room.”*

**Appendix B**

**Clarification on Verbal Coaching**

The director may:

* Identify measures with difficult material, either pitch or rhythmic, in it without providing the solution to the problem -
  + “Students, please notice the tricky rhythms in the second measure.”
  + “Students, there is a problem with a skip in the fourth measure.”
* Indicate in which voice part the problem is-
  + “The altos need to be careful of one specific pitch in measure three.”
* Have students chant through rhythms in the example in its entirety before the run-through or second study period, but only once. There is to be no stopping during the chanting nor is there to be group chanting of only select measures.

The director may not:

* Provide pitch, interval or rhythmic solutions to any part of the sight-reading example.
  + “In the first measure, there is a skip from *do* to *fa*, please make that correction. You are singing *do* to *mi.*”
  + “Be careful of the eighth note rhythms in measure seven. Remember, to count eighth notes like one-and, two-and, three-and, four-and”
  + “The third note in the last measure is *mi* not *re.”*
* Practice with the students areas that are difficult or incorrect
  + “The pitches in measure three were incorrect, lets sing through it together.”

**When judging**: The rule for verbal coaching is that teachers may not intentionally provide any answers for students during the entire process.

To: Possible composers for District Assessments Sight Singing

From: District Assessments Sight Singing Committee

Date: Aug. 25, 2012

Your name has been recommended to the Virginia Choral Director’s Association committee on sight singing for District Assessments, as a possible composer for sight singing examples for the entire state in mid-March, 2013. The samples need to follow standard 18th century harmonic progressions, be singable using accepted choral practices and follow the parameters listed on the enclosed page. We also need these to be produced using a computer program such as Sibelius, Finale, or other easily readable music formats.

We are asking you to write 3 samples, 8 measures each, for high-school Levels 2, 3, and 4 which could be used as samples to send to all choral directors in Virginia in January if you are chosen. We need these examples of your work by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. If your work is selected you will be asked to write an example of your work for middle school, Levels 1- 4 and high school Levels 1- 4 which will be sent to all choral directors in January

The due date for the final Virginia Choral Director’s Association Assessment 8 measure compositions in required voicing is the first week in March. The parameter for each level is enclosed in this letter. If you are chosen as composer for the 2013 District Assessments you will be compensated.

Thank you for being willing to help Virginia Choral Directors establish state-wide standards for sight-singing.

VCDA Sight Singing Committee

**Time-line**

Sept. \_\_\_\_ Three samples of High School Level 2, 3, 4 sent to \_\_\_\_\_\_

Jan. \_\_\_\_ One example for each level of middle school and high school sight singing to be sent to every choral director in the state by our committee.

March \_\_\_\_\_Three examples for each middle school and high school levels 1, 2, 3, 4 in each voicing listed. The same example may be used for different voicing by transposing the example.