

Report of the ad hoc committee on FSMTA Competitive Events rules

Nov. 3, 2011

Background: A California music teacher, who is an MTNA member, also recently became a member of FSMTA because she is still teaching two of her former California students, who moved to Florida, via Skype. The reason for her joining FSMTA is so that these students may participate in FSMTA student activities, including competitions. FSMTA's rules regarding competitions were written a long time before technology such as Skype, which allows students to study with a teacher long-distance, existed. It is being used now, and calls some of our rules into question, primarily regarding teacher residence.

In order to focus attention on the issues raised, it may be useful to point out that there are three layers of competitive events within our FSMTA system— local, district/state, and national (MTNA):

- Local association activities and competitions, which vary widely within the state, are designed and administered by each local association, each one creating its own rules.
- MTNA sets the rules for the MTNA Competitive Events.
- Our concern is primarily with the FSMTA district and state events, whose regulations are set by the FSMTA executive board.

Some of the issues raised are:

- 1) How will local FSMTA teachers, who provide the organizational work which enables student activities to take place, feel about students of an out-of-state teacher participating in district and state events? Out-of-state teachers will not be making contributions in terms of helping to run an event.
- 2) Would charging a higher fee to the out of state member (as MTNA does for non-member teachers entering students into its competitions) be a possible solution?
- 3) If we decided to let these students of the California teacher enter FSMTA competitions now, then would we immediately have to change all the wording in the rules and bylaws or could we do this on a "trial" basis?
- 4) What about reciprocity for FSMTA teachers who want to teach via Skype? Could our FL teachers who teach by Skype have their students be accepted into another state's competitions? Or be eligible to enter that state's version of Student Day? This would have to be explored.
- 5) Is the best interest of the student being served, especially the younger student, entering events where his or her teacher cannot be present?

Conclusion: The committee feels that FSMTA should address this issue carefully, and should try to find ways of adapting to new teaching technologies as they develop, while not alienating the majority of its members who do live and work here in Florida. Discussion needs to take place at the EB, and more research is required concerning other states' positions.

Respectfully submitted: Mary Griffin Seal, committee chairman
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