



National Association of Teachers of Singing  
Founded and incorporated in 1944  
The Mid-Atlantic Region

**Jill Terhaar Lewis, Governor**  
**Brian Nedvin, Treasurer**  
**Jennifer Bryant Pedersen, Webmaster/Social Media**

**NATS Mid-Atlantic Region Board Meeting**  
**Voting Officers\* Summer Meeting**  
\*District Governors, Presidents, and Vice Presidents

**Tuesday, July 27, 2021 7 PM**

**ONLINE via Zoom**  
*(link information below)*  
**BYO dinner, computer, drinks**

## AGENDA

### Welcome and Call to Order

**Jill Terhaar Lewis**

Welcome new board members: Lisa Sain Odom and John Wright

Members present: Jill Terhaar Lewis, Amanda Castellone, Jennifer Seiger, Mark Greenawalt, Melissa Chavez, Ethan Watermeier, Serena LaRoche, John Wright, Jennifer Pederson, Lisa Sain Odom, Charles Higgins, Wendy Jones

Meeting called to order 7:05pm

Minutes from last meeting will be reviewed later in the agenda.

**Review of Minutes**      **Brian Nedvin, treas. (rec. sec.)/Amanda Castellone, SC DG (sub rec. sec.)**

- March 7 2021
- Discussion and Approval

### New Appointments

- District Governors
  - Thank you to Dr. Devonna B. Rowe (MD/DC) and Ms. Deidre Welborn (SC) for services as District Governors
  - Welcome to John Wesley Wright (MD/DC) and Amanda Castellone (SC) as new DGs
- District Governors/Presidents announce any additional changes in leadership in their chapters/districts
- Voting members of MAR NATS board: DGs, Presidents, VPs can vote. Anyone on state boards can come and participate in discussion, but only 3 votes from each district.
- Discussion:? None.

July 1 officer changes occur; be sure your website reflects new officers

## Old Business

- Handbook updates
  - Committee needed to update documents; looking for places where the handbook needs to be updated so what we have is clear and in alignment with strategic plan; and that it's actually how we function and do things. Any volunteers ready to tackle this project? **Jennifer Seiger** volunteers for committee; **Serena LaRoche** volunteers for committee; report prepared by Spring Meeting (Regionals). Want to make it widely available. **Brian Nedvin** has previously volunteered for this. **Jill Terhaar Lewis** will be on the committee. Would be ideal to involve people who are not officers to get them involved in a "lower-stakes" way.  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55dcbf78e4b06ca193486d16/t/602fb8825be0207aef58c43f/1613740162283/2018NATSHANDBOOK.pdf>
  - The 25-student limit per teacher. Jill asks: Is it still necessary to limit this?
  - Add section about online auditions.

## New Business

- Verbal Region Report Jill Terhaar Lewis
  - Report from National Board Meeting: Training in Diversity and Inclusion techniques for National Board officers; the training will then come to Region Board. Boards will be expected to look for ways to follow strategic plan and tangible ways to work on Diversity and Inclusion as a membership body.
  - NSA pandemic policies, hybrid auditions: There is a smaller committee looking into our official statement about that—it's in the works. NATS can't mandate a lot of things because it's impossible to enforce a lot of things between states and even within towns in states. There will not be a benchmark of what to do—up to individual districts. Encouraging districts to use CDC information to make decisions. Coordinate with host schools if having live auditions. Want to encourage us to have live auditions whenever possible. Jill anticipates a checkbox statement to say "We agree to abide by the rules" like masking if unvaccinated or not coming if they feel sick. Districts can tell everyone they have to be vaccinated, but it would be impossible to enforce. Do districts need to do a survey if people are ready or plan to come back? **Hybrid auditions:** some categories fully online (children and youth, for example, since they can't be vaccinated). Possibly excusing people from judging if they have to be in a small room with unvaccinated children/colleagues? **Make it all very clear to members, students, teachers, etc. what it will all look like so they know the risks they're taking before they get there.** Hybrid auditions: if you do choose to have some online, **it can't be the same category that's part online and part in person.** Possibly funnel sing-offs into a live round, etc. This is all under discussion with National Board.
- New Positions needed
  - Regional Development Liaison needed: In the documents sent out earlier, there is a description. **This is someone to help with fundraising.**
  - **Ethan Watermeier mentioned names: Pauly Baldrige, DeVonna Rowe, James Hampton, Carolyn Blackstier (has deep networks in this area and fundraised a lot)**
  - **Serena LaRoche mentioned names: DeVonna Rowe, Deedy Welborn**
  - **\*\*Short list: Deedy, Devonna, Carolyn. Jill will reach out to these people and gauge their interest.**
  - Would go well with a committee to help—perhaps one of these is the chair and the rest are committee leaders
  - District Governors: meeting with Torin Chiles (VP Membership) during August or September. Four District Governors and Jill need to take this meeting.

- DG Job description: Membership committees, regional and district/chapter
  - membership growth and retention
  - increasing member engagement
  - creating a sense of belonging for all members
  - promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion within the Region.
  - Jill asks for each chapter to create a Membership Committee to work on outreach: fundraising concerts, social events, etc. to help us achieve our goals of DEI within the Region. Perhaps reach out to an area or community group with lesser NATS members in population to do outreach workshop free and open to the public to be beneficial to that community.
  - **Charles Higgins** mentioned that Sharon Sosmansky and he talked about the voice teachers not currently at the college level: one of their big needs is “how do we best help them to get their kids prepared and qualified to go to the next level.” 80% of people going into professional music are going into music theater. How do we help them prepare? Can we initiate a program where we have NATS ambassadors willing to go into cities and hold free workshops on “What do you need to do to prepare your kids” – SATs, etc. Also NATS auditions preparation. A big area is from the people in independent studios or independent schools.
  - It would be great to have enough core money from donations to build up a grant program for workshops.
  - **Forming membership committee: interested names?** Charles Higgins, (Talk to new members and ask them why they joined, what appealed to them?). **District Goverors: give Jill 2-3 names of people to be on this committee.** From SC, Amanda suggests: Craig Allen, Amy Billings, Amber James. **The committee should be diverse- college, HS, children teachers.**
- New manuals and job descriptions District Governor has been revamped; defined the national office jobs,
- New positions filled: Bob in the Development office; someone working on Marketing and Branding; better ways for chapters to reach out to national officers for branding for socials; branding guidelines
- 2021-22 NSA Cycle
  - Paperless scoring, when possible, for live events
  - When we all go back to in person, let’s talk about paperless scoring.
  - Updates being made to AuditionWare Judges actually being scheduled for preference categories; schedule all judges before making someone judge 2 categories; confirmation of emails being sent; taking out duplicate memberships; improve number of people allowed to be online at one time.
  - Chapter/District audition plans (report DGs/Presidents) Update with regard to plans in the fall: which chapters plan to have a fall NSA event? Wendy Jones (NC) plans to do hybrid; round 1 online, bring the top people from each room to be judged in person. If it gets changed last minute, they already have the videos. Lisa Odom (SC): once having talked through all procedures, decided to move fall MT auditions to fully online.
  - MAR NATS Hybrid with in-person events on March 18-19, 2022 at UNC-Greensboro
    - Survey planned to assess attitudes and safety This was mentioned at the National Board meeting as something we might want to do; vaccination status; interested participation level for in person vs online events. Participating with vaccinated vs unvaccinated students and teachers. **Jennifer Seiger** says it would be nice to have the information; the reason they’re deciding on hybrid model is that they’ll then have the videos uploaded from the outset. **Serena LaRoche** virtual auditions in SC, in person workshop with in person honors recital. **Mark Greenawalt**

comment about the survey: “I would be comfortable if the students are vaccinated” : is this misleading since we won’t actually know if people are vaccinated? Instead: use comments about size of space and how much time you’re willing to be in there? **Jill** build in more time for rooms to air out between auditions in in person auditions. **Serena** That’s the key: “how long are you comfortable being in a space not knowing if people are vaccinated in there.” **Charles**: “Are you comfortable judging not knowing if people are vaccinated.” AKA “Are we going to have judges?”. Is NATS going to have a higher level of safety standards than public schools? **Melissa** inequity between singing in a mask vs. not? She will send us the link to the study by Colorado. **Mark** what about adding plexiglass barriers? **Serena** “is an in person audition more important than seeing the student’s face without a mask?”. At that point: just make it virtual so we can see the singer’s face. The Board seems to feel that we’d rather have it virtual so they can sing maskless. **Mark**: students still under financial burden and may not be able to afford to travel to auditions. **Jill**: we had 800 applicants at Region level last year and almost 100% of them completed the audition. AKA virtual seems to be more possible for the masses.

- **Statements:** <https://www.nfhs.org/articles/unprecedented-international-coalition-led-by-performing-arts-organizations-to-commission-covid-19-study/>
- Statement specifically about singing:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aesWEkmHYYc>
- <https://forms.gle/HYaVSmoLKYL9FDJ77>
- New categories at the Region Level
- **Wendy Jones (NC):** Youth and children use the same rubric given out by Nationals; remind judges that they’re judging 10 year olds not 25 year olds; go out of their way to make sure everyone gets lots of good comments, encouraging, high scores. Can do 2 or 3 songs; most do 3, a handful do only 2. No key restrictions.
  - Youth (online only) (2 categories: Music Theater and Classical categories)
  - Children (online only) (2: MT and CL)
  - CCM (online only) (2: 18+ singers, Treble and TBB) They use tracks; in person, allow piano and/or guitar accompaniment; bring in small system and let them sing with microphone; **Wendy** has created a rubric that she has sent out modeled after youth/children, but National is developing one. **Serena**: SC has not traditionally used amplification, but they have just voted to make it an option for CCM in the future; previously had only allowed piano backing tracks if recorded; in person, can accompany themselves on piano or guitar. Now: allow instrumental backing tracks for virtual auditions. **Wendy** part of rubric is microphone technique. Try to stay true to the genre. **Mark**: VA doesn’t yet have CCM categories but it’s in talks. **Ethan**: MD/DC did offer CCM last year but only had a few auditionees.
  - **Serena: motion to adopt the rubric put out by several districts to select CCM as a Region. Second: Jennifer Seiger. Title of category: “CCM Treble” and “CCM TBB”. Possibly: CCM is just 18+ to advance. CCM at high school levels don’t advance.**
  - **Vote: 12 in favor, 0 opposed, the motion carries and CCM rubric is adopted.**
  - Adult Categories (online?) (4: MT and CL each divided by Treble and TBB)
  - **Discussion: Children, Youth categories: Top 3 or 5 scorers (scores, not rank) in children/youth advance to Regionals.**

- **Wendy: motion to continue to score the children with grace and warmth and love and send the top 5 scorers from each state to the Regional event. Serena: Seconded.**
- **Vote: 12 in favor, 0 opposed, motion carries.**
- **Discussion: Adult and CCM categories to be added to Region: Melissa: motion to advance CCM 18+ Treble, CCM 18+ TBB to Regionals as well as Adult Categories to advance. Lisa: Seconded.**
- **Vote: 12 in favor, 0 opposed, motion carries.**
- **Negro Spirituals categories at the region auditions in the off years? (3 categories: HS, College Age, Graduate Age, mixed ranges) We're changing cycles now, so this year is "Music by African American Composers."**
- **Discussion about having these categories at the Region level every year? Conference years: Hall Johnson specifically; non-conference years: all negro spirituals. Do we want to have them every year at Region level regardless of whether it's advancing that year? Serena: SC offers both every year and the non-advancing years are less popular; they will likely water each other down. Wendy: NC has a lot of categories, it's hard to schedule so many categories at NC auditions. Jill: perhaps Hall Johnson every other year but negro spirituals every year? Melissa: could we convince people to pay for all of these categories? Jill: perhaps offer a spirituals award as a stand-alone.**
- **No motion for now; leave it as it is; just Hall Johnson offered this year.**
- **John: Fan of various composers; he supports American Negro Spirituals category.**
- **These categories will be online categories for at least this first year (Children, youth).**
- **May need to have preliminary rounds of larger categories that do advance to NSA in an online format with sing-off rounds in person depending upon space and feasibility of scheduling**
- **New Child, Youth, and CCM categories need to align between districts: report from Wendy Jones and the subcommittee on rubrics and details (see notes above)**
- **2021: NATSAA VA (Shenandoah University) Site Host: Byron Jones 15-17 of October; will do whatever it takes to clean the air, keep it clean**
- **Jill needs judge options. Last year used 6 judges. DGs and Presidents: send Jill diverse options, rank your list, be sure they're interested in available to judge; travel expenses would be paid half by regionals and half by host district. If the categories have to split, we will need 3 more. Jill needs big pool of judges. Vet the judges first, make sure they are qualified, make sure they are able and willing. Whole travel window: Fri 15 travel time, Mon 18<sup>th</sup> is overtime day. Possibility is 1 of 2 days of weekend as well. Send judge names to Jill by August 15. Likely will need to be masked while judging.**
  - Application deadline, September 13, 2021 <https://www.nats.org/nats-artist-awards.html>
  - Volunteers needed to help
  - Needed: List of potential judges needed
    - List of five from each district submitted in preferential order
    - Check that they are interested and available
    - Looking for a diverse panel
    - Will need 6-9 judges, depending upon applicant pool size and safety measures
    - Travel and food covered; split between the region and the districts (each district pays half of the costs for representative judges)

While at Shendandoah: anyone in close proximity to come help: check in, help with running backstage, 2 stage managers possibly, 2 time keepers; food runners, page turners, etc. There will not be students there to help due to their vacations.

**Motion to adjourn: Serena; seconded by Wendy; meeting adjourned at 8:56pm.**

**ZOOM LINK INFORMATION**

**Topic: MAR NATS Summer Board Meeting**

Time: Jul 27, 2021 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://csuniv.zoom.us/j/92405576267?pwd=Wm1wcmN4ZnZVNfVzVnBuQ25SS2xBUT09>

**Meeting ID: 924 0557 6267**

**Passcode: 771388**

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