

GHSA ONE ACT PLAY COMPETITION HOST HANDBOOK

A Guide for use by Athletic Directors and Region One Act Play Coordinators who are responsible for organizing and hosting One Act Play competitions.

PART ONE: PLANNING THE COMPETITION

I. Date Selection

Region Secretaries are encouraged to allow One Act Play directors within their respective regions to meet, in person or electronically, to select a date for the Region One Act Play competition. This approach allows directors to plan their own local performance schedules, plan for possible field trips and other festivals or competitions such as the Georgia Theatre Conference, and – in many cases – plan around schedules where students are shared with other activities at the school. It is doubtful that they will be able to avoid all conflicts, but the collaborative approach to date selection offers the best chance of avoiding the greatest number of conflicts.

Effective in 2023, the Georgia High School Association adopted a staggered schedule for region One Act play completion dates that coincides with the staggered dates for State Championships. You can review dates for the current season at www.ghsa.net.

Again, Region Secretaries and One Act Play Coordinators are encouraged to keep OAP Directors in the communication loop. When directors are not involved in the selection of the competition date, school Athletic Directors are encouraged to consult with their One Act Play directors and represent their concerns.

II. Site Selection

It is always ideal to be able to meet at a neutral site. In Regions or Areas where the Region Secretary or Region One Act Play Coordinator has either the resources or the relationships to secure a neutral site for the competition, such a site should be used.

Since a neutral site is not a practical option for many Regions and Areas, Region Secretaries or One Act Play Coordinators should assess the facilities available at schools in the region and develop a list of which in-region sites have acceptable venues.

In regions or areas where multiple schools have acceptable venues, regions are encouraged to establish a multi-year projected rotation of the competition site, noting that adjustments may need to be made on a biennial basis due to region realignments.

While it is not recommended, in regions or areas where only one site has an adequate venue and there are inadequate resources or relationships to secure an alternate, neutral space, one act play competition may be hosted by the same school for multiple years.

In regions that have no adequate facility to host the competition, the Region secretary must secure an acceptable venue for the competition.

NOTE: There are several ways, beyond paying a rental fee, for a region or area to secure a neutral competition venue. Secretaries and coordinators might explore one region hosting for

another. Other possibilities include the support of local community theatres or college/technical school facilities.

III. Adjudicator Recruitment and Selection

Three judges are required for all GHSA One Act Play competitions.

Each region is encouraged to share how judges are selected with all competing schools.

All GHSA competition judges MUST have completed GHSA adjudicator training and the annual One Act Play Judges' Clinic You may request a list of certified adjudicators from the State One Act Play Coordinator at ghsaoneacts@gmail.com, or from the GHSA office by contacting tanyaanderson@ghsa.net. The GHSA office continues to look for more efficient ways to keep the list up-to-date and easily accessible.

Every GHSA-trained adjudicator has signed the following statement:

My signature below represents my commitment to review and uphold the rules for one-act play competition as published by the Georgia High School Association; to decline opportunities to adjudicate competitions involving other schools in my classification; to avoid adjudicating Region competitions that involve competing directors who judged or will judge in my Region, and in all circumstances to conduct myself in a professional manner, making every effort to avoid the appearance of impropriety.

Region Secretaries, or their designees (such as Region One Act Coordinators) are responsible for securing and paying adjudicators for region competitions. As with site selection, communication with one act play directors may help create a better environment for all competing schools.

There are several "required" guidelines for region and state one act play adjudicators, including:

- All region and state judges must be certified (trained) per GHSA adjudicator training requirements;
- All region and state judges must complete an annual online judges' clinic;
- **IMPORTANT:** This clinic is *NOT* the same as the Directors Clinic, which must be completed annually by directors who participate in GHSA One Act Play competitions). Details on when and how to access the judges' clinic will be posted on the GHSA website no later than August 15 of each year.
- An adjudicator may not judge for someone who will then turn around and judge his/her region;
- An adjudicator may not judge a classification at Region and then judge that same classification at State;
- An adjudicator may not judge a classification in which he/she competes;
- An adjudicator should not judge a competition involving plays that he/she has previously seen or critiqued.

In addition to the expectations listed above, there are other guidelines you may want to consider as they may create the perception of impropriety:

- When possible, it is best to avoid using the same judge in consecutive years;
- *Always* try to avoid using the same judge for more than two consecutive years;
- Try never to use the same full panel of judges two years in a row;

- If a judge is scheduled to adjudicate a festival, take steps to ensure that the plays seen in the festival setting are not participating in your competition;
- Try to avoid obvious personal and professional connections (e.g., recruiting a judge who mentored or was mentored by a competitor, recruiting a judge who teaches/directs in the same system as a competing director, etc.).

While you may make every effort to follow these guidelines, you may also discover issues or concerns of which you were not aware when you recruited your adjudicators. Such incidents tend to be somewhat more common in realignment years. Your goal is to make every effort to avoid the appearance of impropriety. Use that goal as your guide, and to evaluate the effectiveness of your work as host.

IV. Compensation for Adjudicators

The Georgia High School Association cannot mandate how adjudicators are compensated for their service. Each region is unique and faces its own challenges. That said, GHSA can share some history and offer basic guidelines to help Region Secretaries and One Act Play Coordinators know how to move forward.

For One Act Play State Championships, the GHSA pays each adjudicator a stipend of \$150, plus mileage (if more than 15 miles each way), plus lodging and meals when justified by travel time and distance. Each State Championship meet consists of up to eight competing schools.

Based on data available to the GHSA, and with the understanding that there is no formal collection effort in place to collect such data, the trend at the Region competition level over the last several years has been that...

- Region competitions may involve as few as two schools or as many as 10 or more schools;
- All Regions pay a stipend of at least \$100 per adjudicator;
- Some regions pay a stipend of as much as \$350 per adjudicator;
- Some (*very few*) regions offer mileage costs in addition to a stipend;
- Some (*very few*) regions, depending on distance traveled, may offer overnight lodging and meal reimbursement.

NOTE: Most regions do NOT pay mileage. Most regions do NOT offer lodging.

There appears to be a direct correlation between the size of the region (number of schools participating) and the amount of stipend paid. Anecdotally, it can also be stated that large regions with several schools participating have trouble filling their adjudicator positions when they offer just \$100 for adjudication.

The GHSA State One Act Play Committee respectfully suggests the following guidelines be used in determining how region adjudicators will be compensated. These guidelines are based on a minimum stipend of \$30 per show, with a minimum stipend per event of \$100.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS	PROPOSED MINIMUM STIPEND
1-3	\$100
4	\$120

5	\$150
6	\$180
7	\$210
8	\$240
9	\$270
10	\$300
11+	\$30 per additional performance

These stipend amounts are recommended minimums. Many regions already pay more, but each year we have several regions that have trouble securing adjudicators because they are paying \$100 for a competition that involves 6-8 schools – sometimes more.

Any decision to pay mileage lodging, additional meals, etc., should be made on an individual basis, taking into consideration the distance traveled and length of the competition.

The host of the One Act Play Competition is responsible for arranging adjudicator payments. When this individual is not the Region Secretary, the coordinator/host should collaborate with the Region Secretary to ensure stipends are delivered in a timely manner, preferably at the end of the competition day. It is an embarrassment to Regions and to the GHSA when adjudicators have to negotiate or seek the assistance of the GHSA office to receive their promised stipends.

V. Assistance in Securing Adjudicators

Region Secretaries and One Act Play Coordinators who would like assistance in recruiting and securing judges for one act play competitions may contact GHSA State One Act Play Coordinator Dean Slusser at ghsaoneacts@gmail.com.

When you send your email, please type REQUEST FOR ONE ACT JUDGES in the Subject Line. You will then receive a link to a database that GHSA now uses to organize and prepare links for judges. Since the link may change from season to season, we do not list it in this handbook, but the Coordinator will respond with the link.

Information you will need in order to complete the Region Judge Request appears below. Please be sure you have gathered all of the necessary information before making your request.

INFORMATION REQUESTED	EXAMPLES
Day and Date of Competition	Saturday, October 21, 2023
Number of Judges Needed	3 (or 2, or 1) judge needed
Region and Classification	Region 4-AAA; Region 1-A (Div. I), etc.
Location: Institution	McIntosh Academy; Irwin County High School, etc.
Report Time for Judges	7:30 AM
First Play Start Time	8:00 AM
Estimated Length of Day	4-5 hours
Number of Schools Performing	3
Stipend	\$100

Other	Any additional details that may be of help to adjudicators who are considering whether to volunteer for your event. (Lunch/Dinner provided, mileage paid, etc.)
Special Instructions	This item is especially useful if you want to avoid past judges, judges from a certain area, etc. This information is not shared with others, but will guide the coordinator in assigning your judges. (See details below)

The information listed above is for public consumption and will be sent to all adjudicators in the database.

In addition to the requested information, the Region Secretary/One Act Play Coordinator may also share any information to help the State One Act Play Coordinator in the selection process. For example, your region directors may agree that certain judges who have served in the past should not return, or the Region Secretary may have found a judge to be difficult. When making a request for assistance, as much of this kind of information as possible should be shared – in advance – with the State One Act Play Coordinator, who will work to meet the criteria provided by the region making the request. Any information of this nature that is shared while requesting help with securing adjudicators will be treated confidentially, subject only to discussion with GHSA staff and the State One Act Play Committee and only then if such discussion becomes necessary.

Since at least 2015, when the State One Act Play Coordinator receives a request for adjudicators, the information provided is shared with all trained adjudicators in the database, and the first three responses who meet the requirements listed are given the assignment. Contact information is sent to the Region Secretary or OAP Coordinator making the request, copied to the judges assigned, and the State OAP Coordinator steps back to allow the coordinator to take over communication with the assigned adjudicators.

VI. Communication with Adjudicators

It is important that the Region Secretary or OAP Coordinator maintain communication with assigned adjudicators. Possible best practices to consider include making contact:

- Upon scheduling, to confirm the assignment of the adjudicator to the event;
- About two weeks prior to the event to remind the adjudicator and re-confirm the commitment;
- A week before the event;
- A day or two before the event.

Each email should include a reminder of Region and Classification, date of event, location, report time, and estimated length of day. Each email should request a response from the adjudicator so that the coordinator knows the arrangements are still intact.

If an adjudicator does not respond to a reminder, the coordinator should try again, emphasizing that a response is needed to ensure that the assigned judges will appear as scheduled. Coordinators may seek the assistance of the State OAP Coordinator in confirming non-responsive adjudicators, regardless of who made the initial assignment.

VII. Communication with Competing Directors

The deadline for notification to the Region Secretary of intent to participate in One Act Play competition is October 1 of each year, but Directors from participating schools should receive information about the event as early as possible.

- Many schools have a required window of two weeks or more in advance of a trip to receive approval for a transportation request.
- Many schools also build their home production schedules around the one act play competition.

Whether the names of adjudicators are shared with directors prior to the competition is the decision of the Region. The GHSA does not currently share the names of State Championship adjudicators in advance.

Directors should NOT, under any circumstances, engage in communication about the competition, their competition play, or plays against which they will compete, with adjudicators assigned to their region competition before or during the competition event.

VIII. Preparing for Awards and Trophies

The Region Secretary or the Region Secretary's designated Region One Act Play Coordinator is responsible for planning, ordering and paying for awards and trophies for the Region One Act Competition. Per the GHSA Constitution & Bylaws each region is expected to announce the following awards, as appropriate:

- Region Champion
- Runner-up
- 3rd Place
- 4th Place
- Best Actress
- Best Actor
- Up to two All-Star Cast awards may be presented to each production, but required recognition for every production shall be at the discretion of the Region.
- Up to three Outstanding Technical Execution awards may be presented at each competition, but recognition for technical execution shall be at the discretion of the Region
- Other recognition as determined by the Region.

(ONE ACT PLAY, General Information, Item C, Paragraph 5, Item h. Found online <https://www.ghsa.net/constitution-section-2025-2026-one-act-play>)

In keeping with the practice at the GHSA State One Act Play Championships and a majority of region competitions, Regions are encouraged to provide trophies for the Region Champion and Runner-Up, and medals (or trophies or plaques) to the Best Actor and Actress.

Award recognition beyond the list above is allowed but is up to the individual region. When additional awards are determined, current practices range from the presentation of trophies or plaques to paper certificates or simple oral recognition as part of the awards ceremony.

PART TWO: Executing the Competition

Detailed instructions and rules for competition day are located in the ONE ACT PLAY section of the GHSA Constitution & Bylaws, found online at <https://www.ghsa.net/constitution-section-2025-2026-one-act-play>.

Region Secretaries, One Act Play Coordinators, and Hosts are expected to faithfully adhere to these rules. The purpose of this section of the GHSA One Act Play Handbook is solely to highlight certain areas of preparation where questions may arise or have arisen in the past.

IX. Preparing the Competition Venue

GO LINES

The competition venue should be prepared in advance with a total of four tape lines, clearly designating:

- the wing line on stage right;
- the wing line on stage left;
- the mid- stage traveler line (or mid-stage line if the venue has no traveler); and
- the upstage traveler line (or upstage line, allowing for a backstage pathway, if the venue has no upstage traveler.)

The Region Secretary, One Act Play Coordinator, and/or Host determine the location of the tape lines

All directors will respect and honor the Stage Left and Stage Right wing lines

Each director may choose whether to use the mid-stage or upstage line to designate what is “off stage.”

Schools MAY load in from the front of the stage. The designated “GO” line for front-loading is the apron of the stage. Anything on the apron is considered to be in the playing area. Anything in front of the apron is considered to be off stage. (IMPORTANT: This interpretation applies even when the apron of the stage, i.e., the area in front of the proscenium, extends beyond the designated Stage Left and Stage Right wing lines. In other words, if it is on the apron, in view of the audience, it is considered on stage.)

LOAD IN PROCEDURES

Every venue is different, and the load-in process may vary substantially from one region to the next. The same may also be true concerning state venues. The goal of the competition organizers in this regard is to treat all participating schools equally while enabling the competition to move as quickly as possible (with an obvious emphasis on safety at all times.)

The load-in and backstage areas should be organized to accommodate as many plays in the backstage area as possible. When the venue allows, multiple plays may be moved into designated positions in a backstage area prior to the start of a block of performances. At the end of such a block (during a lunch break, for example), this set of plays may be moved out and the next block of plays may be moved into position.

If the host venue cannot accommodate the approach suggested above, then whenever possible, one show should be on stage while the previous show is loading their truck and the

next show is unloading and preparing to move in. Again, safety should be a major concern throughout the event.

SOUND SYSTEMS

- Schools traveling with their own sound systems may assemble their systems at any time during the day in an area OUTSIDE the performance venue (a hallway, classroom, etc.) to be designated by the host of the competition. This assembly may include initial testing and setting of levels, provided it does not interfere with onstage performances.
- Assembled sound systems may be moved into backstage or house positions during the designated load in time for the school.
- Final testing and levels must be checked or set during the 15-minute walk-through.

LIGHTING

The site host shall establish a general illumination lighting plot that divides the stage into 9-15 lighted areas and provide a copy of said plot to all competitors at least two weeks prior to the date of the competition. This communication shall also include what, if any, support will be provided for competing schools in the operation of lighting equipment.

- The plot may include designated sliders covering designated areas of the stage, provided all schools are informed and able to use them.
- The plot MAY NOT include any pre-programmed light cues.
- NO SCHOOL (including the host school) shall implement the use of pre-programmed light cues during the competition.

DRESSING ROOMS

The site host shall establish and share dressing room designated locations and schedules with each competing school all competitors within two weeks of the competition. When developing the schedule, the host shall take the following items into consideration:

- Regular classrooms and other spaces may be used as “dressing rooms.”
- Public restrooms should NOT be used as dressing rooms
- Dressing rooms should be as close as possible to the performance space.
- Dressing rooms should not be outdoors.
- Dressing room access should be made available at least one hour before performance, during the performance, and at least 15-30 minutes after the performance.
- Ideally, spaces should be of roughly equal size, but assignments/adjustments may be made based on the size of individual casts.
- When possible, provide a dressing room that could double as a warm-up room.

X. Front of House on Competition Day

The GHSA recommends the following personnel be available on competition day. (As circumstances allow, one individual may fulfill more than one role.):

- Emcee – to announce each play (by Play Number and Show Title only) and make other necessary announcements
- House Manager – to determine when doors shall open and close for entry

- Time Keeper (must be an adult) – to run time (bare stage to bare stage) on each production, coordinating with the backstage time keeper.
- Adjudicator Escort – to attend the needs of the adjudicators, answer questions, and monitor conversations as appropriate, as well as to escort the adjudicators to and from the performance venue during breaks. (See more about the Adjudicator Escort in the Adjudicator Orientation section below.)
- Ushers – as appropriate, to police the lobby area and assist patrons looking for restrooms, refreshments, etc.
- Concessions – if interested, for lobby sales. Some host schools use the competition to raise funds for their program by selling refreshments and other merchandise

REMINDER: Region and State GHSA One Act Play Competitions are free and open to the public. No Region may charge admission to the competition.

XI. Back of House on Competition Day

Each competing production is to be executed by the team from the participating school. In order to facilitate the competition, the GHSA recommends the following personnel be considered:

- Resident Stage Manager – to oversee operations in the backstage area as well as the lighting and sound control booths.
- Traffic Manager(s) – as appropriate, to assist with load in and load out of performing schools.
- Time Keeper (must be an adult) – to run time (bare stage to bare stage) on each production, coordinating with the backstage time keeper.
- Stage Hands – as appropriate, to assist with backstage traffic issues, assistance to dressing rooms, etc.
- Booth personnel – as appropriate and required by the host institution, to assist with the operation of equipment or, if required by the host site, operate certain equipment as directed by the competing production team.

REMINDER: The resident technical staff listed in this section should NOT execute the performance. They are there to answer questions and assist as needed and appropriate. It is important that the venue treats all competitors equally, offering the same level of support for each school.

XII. Adjudicator Orientation (Score sheets, worksheets, rules, limits on conversation, awards considered, etc.)

Prior to the beginning of the event, the coordinator should host an orientation for the judges. The information covered should include:

- A copy of GHSA One Act rules for each adjudicator;
- A copy of the judge's worksheet, the tabulation sheet, and the appropriate number of scoring sheets for each adjudicator;
- The schedule for the day including plans for meals, breaks, etc.;
- The location of restrooms to be used by the adjudicators;
- Expectations concerning scoring and recording of comments for each play;
- Ranking of each play;
- Protocols for submission of scoresheets at the end of the day;
- Protocols concerning discussion of plays and potential acting awards during and after the competition;
- GHSA sanctioned awards to be determined by the adjudicators;

- Any additional region-sanctioned awards to be determined by the adjudicators;
- A request (if appropriate) for adjudicators to remain and speak with the winning school; and
- Any protocols concerning reimbursement for expenses, receipt of stipends, or other “business” of the region.

XIII. Timekeeping and Stage Management

While students may support many aspects of the operation of the competition, the position of Timekeeper must be filled by an adult. A common best practice includes the assignment of two adult timekeepers – one backstage (possibly the stage manager or another adult who will be working backstage throughout the day) and another in the audience – who can “compare notes” and confirm one another’s results. When two timekeepers are used, it is recommended that they not be affiliated with the same competing school. It is also recommended (though not required in GHSA rules) that an adult serve as stage manager or in another position in the backstage area. It is highly recommended that these individuals (timekeepers and stage managers) be the same individuals throughout the day.

XIV. Adjudicator Hospitality

The Region should provide a private room or area where adjudicators can wait, as appropriate, during load-ins, lunch, and other breaks in the competition day. Light refreshments are encouraged, and in most region settings, lunch is provided.

XV. Director Hospitality

While not required, some Regions provide a director’s lounge with refreshments for adjudicators, bus drivers and chaperones.

XVI. Building Community (Meals, Gift Bags, and other Best Practices)

Some host schools, and even competing schools, prepare gift bags or buckets of candy, snacks or other treats for the schools against which they compete. While neither of these practices are required, they do provide organizers and participants with an opportunity to build community and alleviate some of the tension that is natural in the competition setting.

XVII. Tabulation

Adjudicators should be asked to remain on site until after the results of the competition have been tabulated, reviewed, and confirmed.

Tabulation should be handled by the Region Secretary or One Act Play Coordinator, with the assistance of at least one other adult, preferably from a different competing school so that at least two different competing schools are represented in the tabulation process.

Tabulation procedures are provided under Online Tabulation Instructions:
<https://www.ghsa.net/one-act-play-scoring-forms>.

Results, including Judge Numbers and Names, are to be submitted electronically to GHSA MIS immediately following the competition.

REMINDER: *Per GHSA rules, a copy of the completed Tab Sheet is to be provided to each director in the competition.*

XVIII. Reporting the Results (Awards ceremony, Sharing Score Sheets and Tab Sheet, Submitting Results to GHSA)

The Region Secretary, Region One Act Coordinator, and/or competition host will make presentations at an awards ceremony at the end of the competition day. The sequence of awards presentations as listed below represents most common practices:

- Region-specific Awards
- All-Star Cast
- Outstanding Technical Execution
- Best Actor/Best Actress
- Fourth Place Play
- Third Place Play
- Runner-up Play
- Winning Play

At the end of the Awards program, competing directors should be invited to pick up their critique forms and a copy of the tabulation sheet.

The Region One Act Play Coordinator will complete the online tabulation form on GHSA MIS and submit these tabulation results to the Region Secretary.

The Region Secretary should submit official Region results on GHSA MIS.

XIX. Feedback Session for Winning School

Current best practices for many regions include requesting that the adjudicators remain on site to meet with the winning school to share an oral critique to help the production team prepare for the next level of competition. When this practice occurs, it is appropriate to return scoring forms and other notes to the adjudicators so they can use them on the oral presentation. When the critiques are finished, each adjudicator can give the scoring form and notes to the show's director.

XX. Questions?

All One Act Play Forms on the GHSA website: [One Act Play forms at ghsa.net](http://ghsa.net/OneActPlayForms)

If you have questions concerning the hosting of Region One Act Play Competitions or any specific item in this document, please contact the following:

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