

WEST AURORA HIGH SCHOOL
FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT

Vocal Music Handbook

2018 – 2019



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West Aurora High School

West Aurora School District 129
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Introduction

Welcome to the choir! Vocal music at West Aurora High School has a rich tradition of performing amazing music while developing fine musicians and wonderful young adults. This tradition took shape under the direction of Sten Halfverson who taught at West High from 1938 to 1979. He strongly believed in each and every student's potential and that the "school schedule needed to provide a place for every student who wants to sing without regard to ability." Subsequent choral directors at West High have continued to support these beliefs and have grown the vocal music program this year to almost 300 students participating in six curricular choirs and three extracurricular ensembles. You are now part of this strong tradition of singers and music making. Welcome!

This handbook outlines the guidelines and expectations of the vocal music program at West Aurora High School. Here you will find the standards that guide our learning, the processes for enabling success, and the expectations that will lead us to excellence.

Vocal Ensembles

There are six curricular ensembles at West High. Students enrolled in these courses receive a grade and that grade is included when calculating GPA. These are classes that strive to meet state and national standards as well as provide an opportunity for public performance.

A Cappella Choir is an advanced mixed-voice choral group with a strong emphasis on major choral literature. Students in A Cappella Choir receive honors credit.

Bel Canto Choir is an entry-level chorus for treble voices which offers instruction and practice in the fundamental techniques of singing.

Dorian Choir is an entry-level chorus for treble voices which offers instruction and practice in the fundamental techniques of singing.

Lyric Chorus is an intermediate treble chorus which develops music reading, theory, vocal techniques, and both ensemble and solo singing. Lyric Chorus participates in the Madrigal Dinner.

Mixed Ensemble is an intermediate mixed-voice chorus which develops music reading, theory, vocal techniques, and both ensemble and solo singing.

Varsity Singers is an entry-level tenor-bass choir which offers instruction and practice in the fundamental techniques of singing.

Students may also have the opportunity to participate in one of three extracurricular ensembles:

Acabelles – An ensemble for sophomore through senior girls that performs a wide range of musical styles ranging from classical to contemporary.

Madrigal Singers – An advanced chamber ensemble that performs at the annual Madrigal Dinner and at various school and community events.

STUDYhall – An ensemble for boys in any grade that performs a wide range of musical styles including barbershop and a cappella arrangements of popular songs

Required Materials and Supplies

Students are expected to bring the following to class everyday:

1. Choral Binder (**BLACK**, durable 1" binder)
NOTE: Students are responsible for supplying this and replacing it if it becomes unusable.
2. Pencil with eraser (NO pens)
3. Music as assigned
4. Water-bottle (optional)

Note: Students who do not bring required materials to class will lose participation points. Similarly, those who fail to treat class materials with respect will find their actions reflected in their class grade. For further details, please see the section below on Classroom Guidelines and Conduct.

Concert Attire: Students are required to perform in specified concert attire. Please see the section of this handbook labeled "**Concerts**" for pertinent information.

Classroom Guidelines and Conduct

Students are expected to act appropriately and professionally at all times. By exhibiting **Blackhawk Pride**, students will enable themselves to be more successful in and out of the choral classroom.

Be Respectful

- Be kind to peers and teachers
- Be careful with classroom equipment and materials
- Value opinions and feelings of others
- Be a model audience member during performances
- Leave food out of the classroom
- Take personal items with you when you leave

Be Responsible

- Bring your choral binder, music, and pencil to class everyday
- Attend all required rehearsals and concerts
- Be free of distractions such as gum, cell phones, and other devices
- Follow guidelines for concert attire

Be Purposeful

- Be on time for class and for all rehearsals and concerts
- Listen to and follow directions carefully
- Be personally invested in the goals of the ensemble
- Always do your best and encourage those around you

Grading

The West Aurora Choir Program will be continuing our transition to Standards Based Grading for the 2018-2019 school year. Each “Essential Learning Outcome” (ELO) will be assessed and student progress will be reported under “Mastery” in Schoology. Please read the ELOs for your choir and listen in class for the expectations for each assessment.

Beginning ELOs (Dorian Choir, Bel Canto Choir, and Varsity Singers)

1. I can produce an appropriate tone, characteristic of my instrument or voice part.
2. I can consistently demonstrate the attitudes and behaviors of a professional musician.
3. I can define and perform various dynamic markings, as indicated in the music.
4. I can identify all note names in the range of my instrument or voice in the applicable clef.
5. I can aurally identify elements of a musical recording.
6. I can count and perform unsyncopated rhythms in simple and compound meters.
7. I can assign solfege syllables to my part using the key signature.
8. I can sight read diatonic melodies on solfege with intervals up to a fifth.
9. I can sing common solfege patterns, including major and minor scales and triads.
10. I can identify the message of a text, describe how it is reflected in the music and convey the meaning in my overall performance.

Intermediate ELOs (Lyric Chorus, Mixed Ensemble)

1. I can produce an appropriate tone, characteristic of my instrument or voice part.
2. I can consistently demonstrate the attitudes and behaviors of a professional musician.
3. I can define and perform various dynamic, tempo, and articulation markings, as indicated in the music.
4. I can describe or critique elements of a musical recording using musical vocabulary.
5. I can count and perform syncopated and unsyncopated rhythms in simple and compound meters.
6. I can sight read melodies with some altered tones on solfege with intervals up to a sixth.
7. I can interpret the message of a text, and convey the overall meaning in my performance.

Advanced ELOs (A Cappella Choir)

1. I can produce an appropriate tone, characteristic of my instrument or voice part.
2. I can consistently demonstrate the attitudes and behaviors of a professional musician.
3. I can define and perform all expressive markings in the appropriate style.
4. I can sight read melodies with altered tones on solfege with intervals up to an octave.
5. I can connect my interpretation of the text to performance of musical elements including form, contour, dynamics, style, text-stress, etc.

Attendance Policy: As our classes are performance-based, attendance at all concerts and dress rehearsals is required. Absence from concerts or rehearsals will result in a lowered course grade. However, the student may be given the opportunity to make up these missed points at the director's discretion. **Conflicts must be addressed in writing to your teacher no later than three weeks in advance of the event.** Dress-rehearsals and concerts are academic commitments - absences will only be excused for extenuating circumstances.

Pass/Fail Credit: Students may opt to receive a pass/fail grade instead of a letter grade. Throughout the semester, grade reports will show the actual grade. It is at the end of the semester when the grade is recorded as Pass or Fail. If a student wishes to use this option, please ask your choir teacher for the Pass/Fail Credit Form. This form must be discussed and signed by: the student, parents, teacher, and counselor. *Forms are to be turned in to the teacher within 7 school days from starting the class.*

A Cappella Honors Credit: A Cappella Choir is now an Honors course for all enrolled students. All A Cappella Choir students must complete the required extra work to earn an Honors A. Please see additional information given in class.

This grading policy is subject to change throughout this school year as we work together to find the best way to assess your learning.

Seniors in Choir

Seniors in choir have additional opportunities and obligations:

- 1) All graduating seniors will sing the Alma Mater and senior song (to be determined later) at graduation in DeKalb on May 19th. Seniors will need to arrive to the main floor of the NIU Convocation Center by for an early morning sound check-- time is TBA.
- 2) Seniors have the opportunity to sing a solo at a special senior night event occurring in March. Please stay tuned for the final date and requirements for participation in this event.

Concerts

Concerts are an important part of the performance-based choral classroom. They serve as an opportunity to share what you have learned, and exhibit professionalism.

To participate in a concert, students must:

1. Purposefully attend the dress rehearsal
2. Arrive on time wearing appropriate concert attire (see below)

Concert Attire

Students are responsible for acquiring the assigned attire for their ensemble. A concert attire check will be conducted prior to the first concert. Please see the calendar for this date. Please notify the director if there are any questions or concerns regarding this.

A Cappella Choir	Boys – White dress shirt with dark-colored necktie Black dress pants, black socks, and black dress shoes A Cappella robe and stole Girls – Dress top covering the shoulders Black dress pants, black socks, black dress shoes (flat / closed-toe) A Cappella robe and stole
Bel Canto and Dorian Choir	Nice white top that covers the shoulders Black dress pants or black skirt w/ black hose (knee-length or longer) Flat, black, closed-toe dress shoes (with black socks)
Lyric Chorus	Nice black dress that covers the shoulders and is at least knee-length OR Black dress slacks with a black dress top. Black hose (with dress) Flat, black, closed-toe dress shoes
Mixed Ensemble	Boys – Black dress shirt with provided white necktie Black dress pants, black socks, and black dress shoes Girls – Nice black dress that covers the shoulders and is at least knee-length OR Black dress slacks with a black dress top, Black hose (with dress), Flat, black, closed-toe dress shoes
Varsity Singers	White dress shirt with provided bow-tie Black dress pants, black socks, and black dress shoes

Parent and Student Updates

We will be using a mass-text messaging system this year to keep parents and students updated with announcements. If you have a cell phone, please text the codes below to subscribe. It is not necessary to have a smartphone to receive updates, however, if you DO have a smartphone, these messages will be coming through the "Remind" app.

Parents text "@waparent" to 81010

Students text "@wachoir" to 81010

Social Media

For pictures and updates of WA Choir events, please follow us on social media.

Like us on Facebook: West Aurora Choir

Follow us on Twitter: @wachoir

Follow us on Twitter: @wa_choir

Website: www.wachoir.org

We encourage students, family, and friends to tweet and post about our happenings, making sure to tag us in the post! *Students should always remember to exhibit Blackhawk Pride while representing themselves and this program on social media.*

Parents: Get involved with POPA!

Get involved with your student's fine arts education with POPA!

POPA - Patrons of the Performing arts is our parent and community support organization. POPA supports the West High choir and drama programs with parent volunteers and fundraising efforts. To find out how you can help, please contact Mr. Smith or Ms. Henderson.

2018-2019 WA Choir Calendar

Date	Event	Time
First Semester		
Fri, Aug. 24	1st Toronto Payment (Auto-pays)	
Tue, Oct. 2	ILMEA Auditions – Addison Trail High School <i>Selected Students from A Cappella</i>	3-10p
Sat, Oct. 6	WA Choir Chipotle Night <i>All Choirs (Optional)</i>	4-8p
Tues, Oct. 16	Fall Choral Concert Evening Rehearsal <i>All Choirs</i>	6-9p
Wed, Oct. 17	Middle School Choral Festival <i>A Cappella Choir</i>	12p-3p
Thurs, Oct. 18	Fall Choral Concert <i>All Choirs</i>	6:00p Call 7:00p Concert
Sat, Oct. 20	WA Choir Night Out	TBA
Fri, Oct. 26	2nd Toronto Payment (Auto-pays)	
Sat, Nov. 3	IMEA District IX Festival – Elgin High School <i>Selected Students from A Cappella Choir</i>	ALL DAY
Fri., Nov. 9	Veterans’ Day Ceremonies <i>A Cappella Choir</i>	7a-9a
Tue, Dec. 4	Winter Concert Evening Rehearsal <i>All Choirs</i>	6-9p
Thur, Dec. 6	Winter Concert <i>All Choirs</i>	6:00p Call 7:00p Concert
Fri, Dec. 7	Winter Concert Assemblies <i>All Choirs</i>	During School
Fri, Dec. 14	Madrigal Dinner Set-up / Rehearsal <i>Lyric Chorus and Madrigal Singers</i>	3-10p
Sat, Dec. 15	32 nd Annual Madrigal Dinner <i>Lyric Chorus and Madrigal Singers</i>	4:30p Call 6p Dinner

Second Semester

Fri, Jan. 11	Final Toronto Payment (Auto-pays)	
Jan. 23-26, 2019	IMEA All-State Convention <i>Selected Students</i>	3p Wed – 10p Sat
Fri, Mar. 1	Fine Arts Festival Setup <i>Selected Students</i>	3-6p
Sat, Mar. 2	Fine Arts Festival <i>Selected Students</i>	8a-4p
Tue, Mar. 12	March Concert Evening Rehearsal <i>All Choirs</i>	6-9p
Thur, Mar. 14	March Concert <i>All Choirs</i>	6:00 Call 7:00 Concert
Mon, Mar. 18	2018-2019 Choir Auditions <i>9-11th Grade Students</i>	4-10p
Thur, Mar. 21	Senior Solo Night <i>Seniors</i>	TBA
Mar. 25-29	WA Choir Toronto Tour!	
Mon, Apr. 8	A Cappella Concert Rehearsal <i>A Cappella Choir - WA Choir Room</i>	6-9p
Thur, Apr. 11	A Cappella Concert at Wentz Hall, Naperville <i>A Cappella Choir</i>	3:30p Call 7:00 Concert
Wed, May 8	Spring Concert Rehearsal <i>All Choirs</i>	6-9p
Thurs, May 9	Spring Choral Concert <i>All Choirs</i>	6:00p Call 7:00p Concert
Sun, May 19	Graduation – NIU (DeKalb) <i>All Seniors</i>	Call TBA 2:00p

WA Choir Contract

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 jhenderson@sd129.org
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West Aurora High School
 West Aurora School District 129
 1201 West New York Street
 Aurora, Illinois 60506

STUDENT'S NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

GRADE

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STUDENT'S EMAIL

"I have read and understand the policies and guidelines in the 2018-2019 West High Vocal Music Handbook. I have reviewed the calendar and am responsible for my attendance at all required events."

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE

DATE

PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME(S) (PLEASE PRINT)

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PARENT/GUARDIAN'S EMAIL

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PARENT/GUARDIAN'S EMAIL (IF NEEDED)

"I have read and understand the policies and guidelines in the 2017-2018 West High Vocal Music Handbook. I have reviewed the calendar and will help my student be responsible for their attendance at all required events."

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

DATE