

AUSTIN MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL CHOIRS

Student Handbook & Syllabus 2022-2023

AUSTIN MS AND HS CHOIRS MISSION STATEMENT

“The mission of the SCSD1 Choral Program is to educate students, in cooperation with family and community, to have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to achieve their full potential as socially responsible, lifelong learners in a diverse and changing society. Music is an integral part of a comprehensive education. It enables all students to discover and develop their artistic potential through musical experiences in listening, performing, analyzing, moving, and creating. Musical experiences enhance the student’s quality of life through heightened aesthetic awareness and leads to an improved self-concept, a broader cultural awareness, and a development of life-long skills.”

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFO

Mrs. Kathy Sego – Director of Choirs **Office Phone:** 812-794-8730 x408

E-mail: Kathy.sego@scsd1.com

HOW TO RECIEVE TEXT AND EMAIL REMINDERS:

I will send out reminders to you about events and assignments. Here is how you can sign up:

- Advanced Choir Parents/Students: For text reminders, send a text to 81010 with the message @7b385 . For email reminders, send a BLANK email to 7b385@mail.remind.com
- Beginning Choir Parents/Students: For text reminders, send a text to 81010 with the message @ca080b . For email reminders, send a BLANK email to ca080b@mail.remind.com
- Applied Choir Members/Parents: Information was shared during parent meeting and previous correspondences.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Students will need the following materials for all Choir rehearsals:

1. **Folder with pockets**
2. **Music (provided)**
3. **Pencil**
4. **Sight Singing Packets (provided)**
5. **Rhythm Reading Packets (provided)**

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Students take choir for a lot of different reasons, but those students all have one thing in common: they like the challenge and reward that comes from singing and making music. Becoming a musician takes a lot of work, but in the end it is worth every bit of effort. The Choral Program here at SCSD1 is designed to give you all the necessary tools and opportunities to improve your skills, knowledge, and confidence as a singer.

The SCSD1 Choral Program has a place for everyone, regardless of grade level, previous music experience, or “natural talent.” The only requirement is that you show a sincere commitment to singing, a readiness to learn, and an attitude of tolerance, respect, and cooperation.

We know that the harder you work at becoming a musician, the more rewarding it gets and the more you achieve. Our foremost expectation is that you take charge of your own progress, that you always put forth your best effort and attitude, and that you become an expert at knowing how to learn. With these three skills in hand, you will achieve great things.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

In the SCSD1 Choral Program, the teaching and learning process is directed toward producing three primary outcomes. Like the three legs of a stool, your success as a choral musician rests equally on all three outcomes:

- 1. You will learn the language of music.*
- 2. You will learn to use your voice as an instrument.*
- 3. You will learn the skills needed to participate in an ensemble, or group.*

Acquiring the musical skills you can use throughout your life takes daily individual effort. In your choir class, you will learn the elements of musical language and will practice using that language independently through sight-singing with excellent phrasing, pitch, and rhythm. You will learn to sing with good breath support and create full, free and open vocal tone. You will practice the craft of ensemble singing through daily exercises and preparation for performance.

SCSD1 choirs will learn all styles of choral literature from the Renaissance to the Contemporary periods. The choirs perform publicly at concerts and other school events. There are also opportunities offered to you for small ensemble singing (solos, duets, trios, etc.) throughout the year.

STRATEGIES for MEETING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Singing will be our primary activity and will occur most every day as we learn about our voices, how they work, and how to use them expressively. Each member should **have all necessary materials**, and be **present, on time, appropriately dressed** for all rehearsals and performances. We will also be making a concentrated effort to improve our music reading skills, interpretive skills and our knowledge of how to be a whole musician. This includes knowing how to “speak the language” (vocabulary), knowing how to actively and perceptively listen to music (learning how music is composed and the basic concepts of harmony), and knowing something of music’s relationship to history and culture. To accomplish these goals, an appropriate amount of written work may be required. Students will be evaluated on their mastery of class objectives both through performances and written assessments.

SCSD1 CHOIR GOALS

1. To give students the experience of performing in an ensemble that requires the self-discipline & group discipline that will be beneficial in academic life and in the work force after formal education is completed.
2. To provide a progressive study of vocal and choral techniques.
3. To begin building sight singing skills and a basic understanding of music theory.
4. To develop an appreciation of many styles of music utilizing correct rehearsal and performance behavioral habits.
5. To provide opportunities for performance, musical and personal growth and creative self-expression.
6. To develop an understanding of the important role of music in the enrichment of the human spirit.

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

1. Vocal Development- tone quality, breath, care of the voice, pitch and intonation
2. Development of Musicality- expressing the written music through performance of varied styles and listening
3. Music Appreciation and History- understanding of periods, composers, styles, genres and instruments
4. Sight Reading- reading music through the use of the solfege system
5. Music Literacy- following a vocal score with all pertinent marking, symbols and directions
6. Music Theory- understanding all notes, rest values as well as all musical symbols
7. Movement- expressing music through choreography, if the music calls for it
8. Performance and Concert Etiquette- presenting oneself in a formal and informal concert setting as well as showing the kind of demeanor and courtesy one should have as an audience member.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
2. Performing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
4. Composing and arranging music within specific guidelines.
5. Reading and notating music.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.
8. Understanding relationships between music, other arts, & other disciplines.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.
10. Demonstrate proper singing posture.
11. Demonstrate expanded rib cage breathing.
12. Demonstrate breath support.
13. Sustain vocal phrases.
14. Demonstrate correct tone production.
15. Demonstrate vertical vowel formation.
16. Sing diphthongs correctly.
17. Demonstrate correct diction and articulation of consonants.
18. Sight Sing musical excerpts of beginning difficulty.
19. Dictate musical excerpts of beginning difficulty.
20. Sing degrees of the scale using solfege syllables.
21. Blend and balance with the choir when singing.
22. Demonstrate knowledge of musical terms and symbols
23. Listen analytically to yourself and critique your performance.

High standards result in high achievement. Musical growth requires significant effort. Each of the correlated objectives listed below will be addressed on a daily basis in rehearsal. By the completion of the term, all students will be expected to accomplish the following:

Vocal Skills

1. Demonstrate appropriate* music reading and aural skills in regular rehearsals, performances, and during singing evaluations.
2. Demonstrate appropriate vocal technique (including proper breath control and good tone quality) in regular rehearsals, performances, and during singing evaluations.
3. Demonstrate appropriate choral singing technique (including balance, blend, and intonation) in regular rehearsals, performances, and during singing evaluations.
4. Demonstrate musical performance of all the focus literature** (including note accuracy, memorization, and musicality) in regular rehearsals, performances, and during singing evaluations.

Musical Knowledge

1. Demonstrate knowledge of all musical terminology reflected in the focus literature. Demonstrate knowledge of the historical background of the focus literature as presented in rehearsals.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the basic form and structure of the focus literature as presented in rehearsals.
3. Demonstrate the ability to critically listen and evaluate the musical performance of the ensemble.

Because choir includes singers of a variety of ability levels and experience (e.g., first semester vs. many semesters in choir), appropriate is defined by a combination of student experience and relative growth. Pretest assessments for all first-time members at the beginning of the term establish a baseline; continuous growth is expected at each assessment. Focus literature refers to all literature rehearsed and performed during the term.

ATTENDANCE

It is vital to me that each choir always sings at their highest level, and that each choir gains valuable experience in learning to work as a group. Acquiring the ability to sing expressive, exciting, rewarding music demands the daily, combined group effort of the entire choir. Therefore, musicianship, good citizenship, and positive group interaction are expected of every member. Your attendance and full, on-time participation in class is essential for your success and for that of the entire class. Consequences of poor attendance habits will result in a loss of daily participation points (see the “Grading Policy” section for more specifics).

CLASS READINESS

Each class begins with essential voice-building exercises and other important activities. Therefore, you must be in your seat with your folder and a pencil, ready to work when the tardy bell rings. Being late or forgetting your folder or a pencil limits your ability to participate fully in class, and will result in a loss of daily participation points.

Many choir students are outgoing, fun, friendly, and conversational; most have personal friends in choir! Friendships and fun times are two of the greatest rewards of being in a choir! However, everyone must observe reasonable limits or else the group begins to break down. No student has the right to interrupt class or disrupt any member of the class with talking or off-task behavior. It is an infringement on other students’ learning, my ability to teach, and on the overall enjoyment of everyone in the room. Disruptions will not be tolerated. Readiness to learn starts with the right attitude, but it doesn’t happen automatically. Everyone must be mentally prepared to learn and work everyday.

AUSTIN EAGLES ARE

Empowered-I CHOOSE to make good choices to ensure my success.

Achiever-I ASPIRE to do great work all the time. I never cheat, plagiarize or copy work.

Goal-Oriented-I am GOAL ORIENTED. I arrive to class on time, prepared and ready to learn.

Leader-I LEAD by respecting others, myself and my resources.

Engaged-I am ENGAGED. My phone & computer are put away during instructional time.

Strong- I am STRONG. I am SAFE. I am SUPPORTED.

CLASSROOM RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

Besides being responsible for maintaining your “own” choir materials (binder, folder & music), you also share the responsibility for the choir room and all choir equipment, including the piano, chalk boards, chairs, walls, and floors. The choir room will be a very busy place this year from before school until late afternoon or evening, as well as many periods of the day. The choir room must be in TIP-TOP condition after every class. Therefore, the following classroom rules and expectations will be strictly enforced.

1. **NO GUM, CANDY, FOOD, OR BEVERAGES ARE PERMITTED IN THE CHOIR ROOM!** This is for two very IMPORTANT reasons: keeping trash under control, and ensuring free, safe singing technique. Food, candy, and gum interfere with good singing, and over the course of a day wrappers and empty beverage containers left behind create unwanted messes.
2. Check around your seat at the end of each class and pick up all papers and belongings (even if they are not yours!)
3. Put your choir binder/folder away in its proper location at the end of each class.
4. Treat the piano and chairs with extra special care; they are more vulnerable than they appear. Do not tip the chairs backward or play the pianos aggressively. When crossing to and from the back rows, always walk on the floor and not the chairs.
5. **CELL PHONES, HEADPHONES, AND PORTABLE MUSIC PLAYERS ARE NOT TO BE USED DURING CHOIR REHEARSAL UNLESS INSTRUCTED TO DO SO! PLACE PHONES IN STORAGE AREA UPON ARRIVAL IN THE CLASSROOM.**
6. Students are expected to show respect. We are working as a team and students are expected to show respect to each other, to the director, to school property and to property of others at all times.
7. Students are expected to be prompt and ready to begin rehearsal with music and a pencil at the tardy bell.
8. Warm-ups will be given to achieve proper posture, placement of the voice, articulation of vowels and consonants. Proper positioning of the body is critical in making best use of the vocal instrument. These activities will be helpful and relative to the music made later in rehearsal.
9. Students should listen and concentrate on the music being rehearsed at all times. During sectional work, all sections not singing will sing mentally (on their part or part rehearsed) and maintain concentration. The more intensely each member listens and responds to the music around them, the higher the performance level of the chorus.
10. Students are expected to restrict unnecessary conversation and movement to three times: before the tardy bell, between pieces of music being rehearsed and after the closing bell. Clear communication between the conductor and the ensemble is important.
11. Students are to use pencil to make markings on music to save valuable rehearsal time and contribute to the quality of the chorus. Expectations for singing and individual participation have been further outlined in the grading policy.
12. Students experiencing colds, sore throat, allergy problems as well as other medical problems, etc.: Although this student may not be singing, students are still expected to participate as outlined in other behaviors listed above. Failure to comply will affect the student’s participation grade.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to exhibit self-discipline and a sense of pride as a member of the Austin Choral Department. Each member represents the choral program, Austin Middle and High School, as well as yourself and parents and you should behave accordingly—IN SCHOOL AND OUT!

DISCIPLINE

Respect in the classroom is a must for the teacher as well as the students. The rules and responsibilities listed in this syllabus are not to be taken lightly. They exist to make our classroom an enjoyable learning environment. I **will not allow** a minority of students' behavior to hinder the desired learning of the rest of the class. Active participation in the class is extremely essential, therefore actions that are not participatory in what the class is doing will result in point deductions from the weekly participation grade. If the rules and responsibilities are not being met, the following actions will be taken in this order:

1. Verbal warning
2. Student / teacher conference
3. Phone call to parent – parent conference
4. Referral to office for administrative discipline

CONCERT ATTIRE

Each student will be responsible to purchase a choir t-shirt to wear for all choir performances throughout the school year. It is your responsibility to take great care of your choir t-shirt by ensuring that it is placed in a location where it can't get lost. Also, do not wear your choir t-shirt for any other purpose than concerts. Any damages to your choir t-shirt or losing your choir t-shirt, will result in the need to purchase another one.

Students are to wear blue jeans, without any holes, and their choir t-shirt. Students should wear closed toe shoes or tennis shoes. Limit jewelry to a watch, small earrings, and a favorite ring. Keep your hair simple-nothing which can block your fellow singer. No large hair bows.

GRADING POLICY

Each choir student has the opportunity to EARN an "A" grade in choir. This grade will be based on your daily class participation and performance attendance, not your talent or personality. The following is a breakdown of the grading structure:

- 100 – 91% A
- 90 – 81% B
- 80 – 71% C
- 70 – 61% D
- 60 – 0% F

CLASS PARTICIPATION (20%): This portion of your grade is directly tied to how YOU participate in the choral classroom. It is based strictly on the quantity and quality of your participation – your presence, cooperative attitude, and sincere effort to learn and grow. Please note that all these elements have nothing to do with your natural “talent” or ability level. All expectations regarding conduct, behavior, readiness, and treatment of equipment and materials (as stated previously) are taken into consideration. Completion of daily Bell Ringers and Exit Tickets are also included in this portion of your grade.

Tardiness to class without a signed pass from another teacher will result in an automatic loss of half of the daily points. Please make sure that you are in the classroom with all your necessary materials before the tardy bell rings.

If you are absent from class for any reason, you will receive ZERO points for the day. However, students with school-excused absences can still receive their points for the day if they see me (within two weeks of the absence) to make up the Bell Ringer exercises missed that day.

Listed below is a break down of the daily participation point system:

10 points = PRESENT, actively participated, has all needed materials
5 points = TARDY, or minimal participation, or missing materials
0 points = ABSENT, no participation (*daily points can be made up for excused absences)

CURRICULAR ASSESSMENT (30%): Assessment of student comprehension of the material in the choir curriculum is based upon five main areas: Part Tests, Sight-Singing Tests, Written Tests and Performance participation.

- **Part Tests:** Each semester, students in every choir will be tested on the choir songs being studied in class. In preparation for the test, students are encouraged to go to Google Classroom to practice their individual parts of each song being rehearsed. On Part Test days, the choir will be divided up into sections and part testing may be recorded to facilitate expedient testing. Students will receive a written evaluation of their test score. *Part tests are done in a group!* **Assessment will be based solely upon the objective areas of rhythmic, dynamic and pitch accuracy and will not be based in any part on the subjective area of voice quality.**
- **Sight Reading Tests:** One of the areas central to the choir curriculum is that of sight reading, or singing a new part at sight without having rehearsed it. Skills in this area are an integral part of the course content. Periodically, students will be tested on material they have never sung nor seen before. Students will be assessed according to the accuracy with which they sing the pitches and corresponding solfege syllables (do, re, mi, etc.) indicated at first sight. Like part tests, these tests are recorded individually to be expedient and provide an objective record. Also like part tests, **assessment will be based solely upon the accuracy with which students sing each pitch and syllable and will not be based in any part on the subjective area of voice quality.**

- **Written Tests and Quizzes:** Tests and quizzes are based upon material covered in rehearsal. These tests will include vocal fundamentals, choral techniques, ear training and the materials of music: music theory, Italian terms, and music history.

Concert Attendance (50%): Each individual choir has required performances throughout the entire year. When we perform, everyone is expected to be there at the stated time. For those students who have a medical or family emergency during a concert performance, a make-up assignment will be assigned at the discretion of Mrs. Segó. Absences due to work, sporting events, babysitting, family vacations, college visits, etc., will not be tolerated. If there is a transportation issue that suddenly arises on the day of a concert, it is your responsibility to ask a friend or another choir member to help give you a ride to the concert. You may have many fellow choir members to choose from to help you out! Missing a required performance due to a transportation issue is never a valid excuse and will result in an automatic zero.

Listed below are the required performances for the 2017-2018 school year. Please mark them on your personal calendar immediately! Please inform me of any conflicts within the first month of school so I can assign you an alternative assignment.

MANDATORY CONCERT DATES FOR 2022-2023

May 3Rd	High School Choirs	7pm Concert (Report at 6:30pm)
April 30th	Show Choir Extravaganza	2:30pm Concert (Report at 1:30pm)