

# Westside High School Vocal Music Department

## Course Information and Guidelines

### 2019-2020

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#### **Vocal Music Mission Statement:**

The Westside High School Vocal Music Program exists to give all students the opportunity to gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes associated with the preparation and presentation of musical performances and to give them the opportunity to experience the fulfillment of involvement in the choral art.

#### **Nebraska Fine Arts Stands: Music**

Students will develop and apply knowledge and skills to create, perform, and respond to music, making connections to human experiences.

\*Students will compose, arrange, improvise, read and perform music with an analytical understanding of the language of music. (Create)

\*Students will sing and/or play, independently and/or with others, a variety of music genres and style using technical accuracy and expression, and synthesize feedback from various sources to evaluate performance. (Perform)

\*Students will analyze and evaluate how music elicits intended responses. (Respond)

#### **Warrior Choir**

#### **Course Description and Outcomes**

By participating in at least two choral music performances per semester and daily rehearsals focusing on a variety of choral literature, students will make progress toward using musical symbols and terminology to interpret choral literature, making critical evaluations of their own and other's performances and demonstrating the ability to become a productive ensemble member. These will be met through attainment and/or assessment of progress toward fulfilling the following course outcomes:

Each student will:

1. Refine skill in basic techniques of proper vocal production.
2. Refine skill in sight-singing and interpreting the choral score.
3. Refine skill in maintaining an individual part within the ensemble.
4. Develop skill in performing acappella literature.
5. Rehearse, perform, and understand the historical significance of choral music from representative cultures, styles and periods.
6. Demonstrate the skills necessary to become a productive ensemble member and display appropriate concert etiquette.
7. Demonstrate a commitment to the ensemble by attending all performances when given at least two weeks notice.
8. Be responsible for independent practice and preparation of performance literature.
9. Critically evaluate their own and other's performance using the language of the discipline.

#### **Grading and Performance Assessments**

Your grade in chorus is an earned one. It will not be based solely on one's ability to sing. Rather it will be based upon the contribution you make to the success of the ensemble. Because you will not be tested regularly as you are in other academic classes, your grade will be based on observable rehearsal skills. Your quarter grades will be a combination of your achievement in the following categories: Ensemble Skills (50%), Performance Participation (30%), Vocal Technique & Musical Knowledge (20%).

#### **\*25 points per week for Ensemble Skills**

Actual points awarded will depend on the level of engagement during rehearsals and execution of targeted rehearsal objectives.

\*50 points for participating in each required **Performance**:

**The following are required performances for the 2019-2020 school year:**

**Semester 1:**

**September 24 (Tues) – Fall Choral Concert (7:00 PM--WHS Auditorium)**

**October 4-5 (Fri/Sat) – All State Auditions (Time TBA—required for Jrs only)**

**November 3 (Sun) – Cabaret Night (3 and 7 PM--WHS Auditorium)**

**December 10 (Tue) – Winter Choral Concert (7:00 PM--WHS Auditorium)**

**Semester 2:**

**February 5 (Wed) -- Concert with Gustavus Adolphus College Choir (7:00 PM—Location TBA)**

**February 18 (Tues) – Choral Clinic (Concert: 7:00 PM--WHS Auditorium)**

**March 31 (Tues) – District 6-12 Choral Festival (7:00 PM—WHS Main Gym)**

**April 21 (Tues) – Pre-Contest Concert (7:00 PM – WHS Main Gym)**

**April 24 (Fri) – District Music Contest (TBA @ Papio South HS)**

**May 6 (Wed) – Spring Choral Concert (7:00 PM--WHS Auditorium)**

**\*Various points for Vocal Technique and Musical Knowledge**

ex: singing performance assessments/ concert quizzes, writing prompts, proficiencies.

Points will be totaled and categories will be averaged to determine a final percentage. Grades will be awarded according to the school's standard grading scale.

Grade	%		
A+	97-100	A	93-96
B+	89-92	B	85-88
C+	81-84	C	77-80
D+	74-76	D	70-73
F	72 and below		

**Performance Projects:**

**Juniors:**

**Semester One: All State Audition**

The All State Audition process is probably the most challenging and yet the most rewarding experience a high school musician may have. The student will complete the All State Audition process and complete a checklist of pre-audition and audition categories. They will immediately assess their performance.

**Seniors:**

**Semester One: College Choir Audition CD**

One of the goals of the vocal music program is to promote singing as a life long pursuit. This project will prepare students to enter the college level of singing. The student will prepare a mock audition CD for a college choir. It will involve using Garage Band to record themselves singing the Italian art song "Caro Mio Ben".

**Semester Assessment:**

A semester assessment will be given and will count 15% toward the final semester grade. This assessment will normally involve singing a portion of a choral piece alone or in a group as determined by the director. A writing component will also be required.

## Additional Information

**REGARDING REQUIRED PERFORMANCES:** Absence from performances adversely affects a student's grade in this class. Students are expected to be in attendance at all required performances. Unexcused absences are any absences not notified within two weeks prior to a concert. If a student is absent from school on the day of the concert, he/she will be allowed to make up the concert by singing the music for the director or completing a written assignment. Having to work or babysitting is an **unexcused** absence. Family commitments are negotiable if the instructor is notified in advance of the concert and an alternate solution cannot be reached. If you have any questions regarding these performances, please contact me.

**TRANSPORTATION TO CONCERTS:** If transportation is an issue preventing you from attending concerts, please inform Mr. Johnson and he will work on finding a ride to/from the concert.

### **PERFORMANCE ATTIRE:**

Warrior Choir members wear robes for their performances. The following is required to be worn under the robes:

Men: black dress pants, shirt, black dress shoes, dress socks

Women: dress or skirt/blouse (be certain the length does not exceed the robe length) and closed toe black dress shoes with a conservative heel.

## **CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS**

General Expectations:

Be here. Be on time. Be prepared. Be teachable. Be responsible and respectful.

Specific Rules and Procedures:

1. Enter the room, grab your assigned folder and go directly to your assigned seat.
2. When warm-ups begin, talking must cease.
3. Keep a pencil in your folder at all times and use it when appropriate.
4. Treat the folders and music with care.
5. Put cell phones out of sight during class.
6. Respect the rights of others to learn and participate.
7. Remain in your seats until you are dismissed. Do not leave your seat without permission during the rehearsal.
8. Absolutely, positively and most definitely **NO GUM CHEWING** or candy during rehearsal. Your singing is hindered by foreign objects in your mouth.

## **ATTENDANCE AND TARDIES**

Unexcused absences will be verified by an automated phone call to the parents from the Dean's Office. It is the student's responsibility to discuss incorrect attendance with the director in a timely manner. (Refer to the district's policy on unexcused absences and other attendance issues in the current Warrior Bulletin.) **A student with an unexcused absence will receive an "F" for their rehearsal grade that day.** Tardiness is a major distraction to the choral rehearsal. Students will be given ample passing time. Anyone arriving after warm-ups have begun will be considered tardy. Points may be deducted from the daily grade. The student and parents will be notified when tardies have become excessive and consequences will be determined.

## **REPERTOIRE SELECTION**

Vocal music students will experience a wide range of choral music. Music to be performed is selected solely for its educational value. We strive to balance the students' musical experience by exposing them to music of varying cultures, languages and time periods. Music with sacred texts will be a part of this experience. Please refer to the music selection guidelines attached to this document. You are welcome to look at the student's choir folder at any time. If you ever have any concerns with the repertoire, please contact the director of the ensemble.

## **TWO ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS FOR SUCCESS**

**PRIDE:** Pride is a personal commitment. It is an attitude which separates excellence from mediocrity.

**TEAMWORK:** Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.

Our success or failure as a group depends on these two crucial components. It is my fundamental belief that all we do musically will be a reflection of these two components. I thank you in advance for believing in the importance of music in your high school education and for demonstrating a commitment to excellence. I promise as your director to use your time and talent wisely.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Students involved with vocal music fall under the official Westside Code of Conduct. Students found to have violated these policies will be excluded from musical performances for the time period specified. The student's grade will not be impacted. Please read the separate policy and initial the corresponding form on the signature page.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Doran Johnson Office: 343-2793

E-mail: johnson.doran@westside66.net

### **All State Audition Information:**

**All Juniors** are required to complete the All State Audition as their junior performance project. The fee for this state-wide audition will be paid by the District. Students will record and upload an audio audition on Friday, October 4 or Saturday, October 5. Students will have the opportunity to sign up for a time that works for them. If there is a conflict with this date, please notify Mr. Johnson immediately.

**Interested Seniors** are also eligible to audition for All State and must pay the \$20 audition fee if they intend to do so. (This is not a requirement for Seniors.) Please send a check made payable to Westside High School ASAP if your student is planning on auditioning. The registration deadline is September 6. Students who back out of their audition once they are scheduled will still be responsible for the audition fee. Students failing to meet the registration deadline will not be allowed to audition.

# WESTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT GUIDELINES FOR THE SELECTION OF MUSIC

## Criteria for the Selection of Music

All repertoire studied and performed by student ensembles is selected solely on the basis of musical and artistic merits and includes literature spanning a wide variety of eras and genres. A quality composition, no matter what the level of difficulty, has qualities that are lasting. When selecting music for study or performance, the following criteria are considered:

- Overall musical quality of the composition
- Aesthetic and musical effect created
- Potential for musical development
- Characteristics of musical elements for study: rhythm, melody, harmony, form, style, texture, timbre, expressive elements
- Appropriate difficulty for the ensemble: sophistication of composition, technical requirements, rehearsal time required
- Individual strengths of personnel, voicing, instrumentation of ensemble
- Variety and balance in programming: length, audience appeal, balance of styles and genres, musical effect, uniqueness
- Significance of composer or arranger
- Text: literary value of text, poet/lyricist, language, tone painting, sounds for their own sake, musical setting of text

*(Adapted from Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance Project, 1977)*

Pieces chosen for study at Westside High School are significant examples of musical literature and are selected solely on the basis of their musical and educational value, not on their context. In addition, sacred music selections are presented objectively as part of a secular curriculum. We also understand that it is important that the school music curriculum be more inclusive, not exclusive, and that it be comprised of music from all styles, forms, periods and cultures. We continue to strive for a balance in the music student's experience. However, since music with a sacred text or of a religious origin, particularly choral music, comprises such a substantial portion of music literature and has such an important place in the history of music, it should and does have an important place in music education.

It also needs to be understood that there are times and occasions where the selection of music lies outside of the control of the director. Examples of these situations include the NMEA All State repertoire and performances with the Omaha Symphony.

## Rationale for the Study of Sacred Music

The Music Educators National Conference, the nation's leading association of music educators, has adopted the position that "the study of religious music is a vital and appropriate part of the total music experience in both performance and listening. To omit sacred music from the repertoire or study of music would present an incorrect and incomplete concept of the comprehensive nature of art." (adapted from *Religious Music in the Schools*, Music Educators National Conference, Reston, VA 1996)

Although the First Amendment does not forbid all mention of religion in public schools, it does prohibit the advancement or inhibition of religion by the state. Taking a neutral approach concerning music with a sacred text, neither promoting nor inhibiting religious practices, the music program at Westside High School exercises caution, sensitivity, and good judgment when selecting sacred music for study and performance.

## Alternatives

The Music Department acknowledges religious and moral differences. Therefore, students and parents who express a significant concern about a piece of music presented for study may request an alternative musical experience. An alternative activity will be assigned and accepted only after private discussions in which the student brings his or her concerns to the teacher's attention. It is the student's responsibility to come forward early in the rehearsal process and express their concerns. Alternative musical experiences could include: musical analysis of similar literature, research paper about a composer, recorded performance of solo literature, concert or rehearsal critiques.

## Vocal Music Department Acknowledgement Signature Form

We have received, read and understand the following (please initial):

Documents can be found on Google Classroom or on the Vocal Music home page: [www.westsidechoirs.com](http://www.westsidechoirs.com)

Student

Parent

\_\_\_\_\_ The Westside Vocal Music Department Course Information.

\_\_\_\_\_ The Guidelines for the Selection of Music.

\_\_\_\_\_ The 2019-2020 performance calendar.

\_\_\_\_\_ The Westside Code of Conduct.

Parent or Guardian's Name \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please print)*

Parent or Guardian's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please print)*

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this signature page to Mr. Johnson no later than August 26.

### CABARET T-SHIRT: \$5

Each year all of the choirs purchase a t-shirt to be worn at our Cabaret Night performances. We are able to get a great deal from Lawlor's to keep the cost as low as possible. We would like to collect the money now rather than waiting for Cabaret. Please send \$5 (cash or check made payable to VMPA) along with this form. If payment is a hardship, please let us know.

Size \_\_\_\_\_

Paid \_\_\_\_\_ Check \_\_\_\_\_ Cash \_\_\_\_\_