



*Handbook*  
2018 - 2019



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## **Fiscal Matters**

Student-singers selected for membership to Concert Choir and/or Chamber Singers 2019 are required to pay a participation fee of \$575.00, which covers all activities (including retreats, performances, festivals, travel, tours, and recording sessions) throughout the year. An initial installment of \$200.00 will be required before enrollment in the course is finalized, paid to the Business Office before they close for the summer on June 28, 2018.

The remaining balance of \$375.00 will be due on February 1, 2019.

New members to the Mead High School choral program will also incur a one-time uniform expense.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact:

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Fundraising opportunities will be offered, and funds generated through fundraising efforts will be applied to your student account. **To be eligible for any financial assistance or scholarship, students must participate in fundraisers.**

Students in choir must also pay their ASB Membership. That fee is not reflected in the choral expenses.

### **Notice:**

Students who do not complete the yearlong commitment are still required to pay the full course fee.

## **About the Choral Program**

The choral ensembles at Mead High School exist as an outlet for students to participate in vocal music and performance art during the academic day. All students are welcome to join a vocal ensemble without prior musical knowledge or audition, but must meet with the director before choosing the ensemble in which to participate. Students in the choral ensembles are expected to attend all rehearsals, performances and other activities as outlined in the Schedule of Choral Events .

## **Expectations and Agreements**

### **ASB**

Every student must have a current ASB card in order to participate in choral activities off campus. ASB cards may be purchased through the MHS Business Office. This fee is NOT reflected in your choir account.

### **WIAA**

All students must have a signed WIAA Contract on file.

### **Student Responsibilities**

1. Always do your best. Your personal best will change from moment to moment, but under any circumstance do your best and find a way to add to the ensemble in some way.
2. Respect your peers. Teamwork is essential to the success of our class, and we all must take on the responsibility of creating and maintaining a healthy, safe environment for each person in our community. Remember, we are all doing our best!
3. Take pride in your efforts. Be aware of the entire process, and remember that every day is an opportunity to improve. Quality performances are the result of quality rehearsals.
4. Set personal goals for improvement. Work to develop your individual musical skills to the best of your ability, and to share your talents in a collective process.

## **Rules and Routines**

1. Please have your music and a pencil at each rehearsal.
2. Be in your assigned position when the tardy bell rings.
3. There will be no eating or drinking (other than water) during rehearsal.
4. So that we can utilize our time well, please refrain from side conversations or any talking during rehearsal when someone else has the floor.
5. Do your part to make each rehearsal musically satisfying for every member of our ensemble. Be engaged and positive. Give effort-filled attempts each time we sing a selection or passage.

## **Travel Policy**

Throughout the year, some ensembles may have the opportunity to travel away from school for festivals, competitions, performance tours, workshops, or recruiting trips. All students enrolled in any ensemble traveling are expected to participate. **Students will adhere to all district, school, and classroom rules, regulations, and expectations at all times.**

In order to travel with the choral ensemble, students must have a current ASB card; be in good standing with the business office (all dues paid in full); and have a complete signed contract on file in the music office. In addition, students must maintain a 2.0 grade point average (GPA) and not be earning a failing grade (69% or below) in any class.

Travel opportunities are an invaluable resource for student learning, promote ensemble growth and camaraderie, and widen the scope of Mead High School's role in the community. Students are to be aware and respectful of their responsibility as representatives of Mead High School at all times. Mr. Saccomanno reserves the right to not allow any student to travel with the program if he feels s/he would not meet this expectation.

## **Attire**

1. Every student is responsible for having a complete uniform at every performance.
2. Each student is required to purchase a MHS Choral Department t-shirt for informal concerts, festivals, and fundraising events. An order form is available from Mr. Saccomanno.
3. Students will follow the MHS Dress Code at all times.

## **Classroom Environment**

I take very seriously the role we all play in our classroom of creating and maintaining a safe and comfortable atmosphere for every member of the ensemble. If you don't support the other people in the ensemble, they won't feel safe enough to 'go for it,' to sing out, to risk making a mistake or being vulnerable. They won't trust that you want them to succeed to be their best. Because of this, they will always hold back, and never express themselves fully in the music. They won't let you or the audience see their souls, their humanity. In short, support is a big deal. Without it, your singing will be uninspired; your performances will never touch your audiences; and choir will never be as fun or engaging as it could be.

## **Score Expectations**

1. You are responsible for the music with your number on it. You are responsible to ensure that your number is on all your music. When music is collected and put in numerical order, you will be charged for all missing titles.
2. Be in your place with your music and a pencil in your hands ready to begin when the bell rings. Scores need to be marked properly with articulation, diction, phrase direction, translation, and other details as needed.
3. All music being learned this year will be returned to the school. Students who do not return their music will be charged for the cost of replacing the music.

Please return music in the same condition it was loaned to you. Be sure to erase marks and fix any damages (rips in the page, etc.). Badly damaged scores will require replacement at your expense.

# **Grading Policy**

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is my belief that although we learn and perform as an ensemble, students must be evaluated individually in order for grading to be authentic and meaningful for each member of the chorus.

Student learning will be assessed using several methods including (1) student self-evaluation; (2) individual recording; (3) teacher observation; (4) personal conferences; and (5) student work.

Grades are not given; they are earned based on a specific set of criteria. It is imperative that students be involved throughout the grading period in providing honest and accurate feedback about their individual learning in class.

## **ASSESSMENT METHODS**

**Individual Recording** - Throughout the learning process, landmark goals will be set for each student to master the music. Using smart phones or other digital recording devices, each student will record him or herself and submit it electronically to Mr. Saccomanno for scoring. Students may re-record as many times as necessary to achieve his or her desired mark.

**Student Self-Evaluation** - Throughout the rehearsal process students will complete several brief forms providing feedback on their individual learning and giving the opportunity for comments about the ensemble's learning as a whole. Forms are short, usually taking less than two minutes to complete. However, students should be specific about their learning and areas they need additional assistance. Self-Evaluation forms are distributed two to three times a week.

**Teacher Observation** - Every day, Mr. Saccomanno expects each member of the ensemble to be contributing to improving the group. Students who remain on task throughout the rehearsal will earn maximum points each day. Furthermore, students will improve their listening and observation skills by attending other high school choral performances as outlined in the course syllabus.

**Student Work** - Although there are very few assignments given, students are expected to keep pace with the learning and memorization of notes, rhythms, and lyrics for every song the ensemble undertakes. Student work also includes being fully prepared for each class with assigned music and a pencil; participation and attitude at rehearsals, workshops, retreats, and performances; arriving on time for all scheduled events (rehearsal, bus departure, concerts / performances, etc); having a complete uniform for all performances; and adhering to all district, school, and classroom rules, regulations, and expectations at all times.

## **STATEMENT ON ACHIEVEMENT**

As stated in the syllabus for this course, teamwork is essential to the success of our class. Every person can contribute something to the ensemble, and each person's individual best will vary. Your grade will be based on your individual growth over the course of the grading period. It is because of this commitment to the individual that the personal conferences are such an important aspect of the grading process.

## **NOTICE ON ATTENDANCE**

While I do not believe in docking student grades for schedule conflicts, students must be proactive in alerting Mr. Saccomanno to any conflicts that arise during the semester. I will deduct points if a student does not provide enough advance notice about his or her absence to allow the ensemble to adjust without their presence..

Students will receive a Schedule of Choral Events at the beginning of each semester, and are expected to make every possible effort to be in attendance at every event. I understand that students are very busy with other school-related activities, work, and family life, however the expectation for this academic course is for all students to be at every scheduled event.

### **Tardy Policy** [from Student Handbook]

It is expected that students will be to class on time. Habitual tardiness creates a disruption to the educational process in the classroom. Notes from home do not excuse tardies. Tardiness to class of more than ten minutes is treated as an absence as students miss essential instruction and objectives. Teachers will record tardies. Tardiness will be dealt with by teachers according to the following procedure:

Step One: Tardies 1 through 5 per semester. Teacher will handle the situation individually with the student. Teacher will initiate, no later than the third tardy, some disciplinary action, including scheduling a 15-minute time outside of class to serve the choral program in some way (cleaning, filing music, etc).

Step Two - 6th and following tardies each semester. Teacher will refer to the administration to follow the same procedures as trancies.

## **NOTE**

While sporting events are an important social opportunity for students, sports are extra-curricular and performance arts are co-curricular. Choral events should be a priority over sporting events. Please be aware of potential conflicts on your calendar and communicate early and often.

## **Varsity Letter**

All students enrolled in a choral ensemble are working toward a varsity letter. Letters will be awarded at the end of the academic year. If a student has already lettered in choir or other school activity, they will receive a pin to denote their achievement.

## **I Believe**

...that singing is one of the greatest opportunities for self expression available to humankind.

...that a singer's body alignment, breathing skills, inner rhythm, dynamic intensity, dramatic integrity, balance, unified vowel placement, correct intonation, vowel modification, open throat, loose tongue and jaw, consonant weight and pitch, poetic and historical intentions, and musicianship make singing a more complete experience.

...that the best sound comes when the best possible vocal habits are in place.

...that the discipline of thoughtful practice and positive attitude and integrity makes a difference.

...that our goal in every rehearsal is to grow in some meaningful manner.

...that any ensemble's potential is limited when any one person gives less than 100% in every rehearsal and performance.