

The Bettendorf High School Choral Department



Handbook

2023-2024

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTORS

Hello Choir Members and Parents,

Welcome back for the 2023-2024 school year! Our philosophy of choral music education centers around community. While each of us have our own unique voice, the choral art form requires us to work on blending into the cohesive sound of the ensemble. Throughout the year, we will be working on building up and uplifting the voices in our community through the study of music from various communities throughout the world and throughout previous eras, learning how these communities used vocal music to highlight social, economic, political, or spiritual norms within their culture. As a collective activity, we encourage every singer to take on the responsibility for the success and welfare of their ensemble, as well as for the choral program as a whole. Throughout this year we will share new approaches, challenges, vulnerability, and many laughable moments during our rehearsal process.

We are incredibly appreciative of the support and hard work that our students, parents, and administration have given to this program and are excited to continue to provide incredible opportunities for our BHS students to have throughout their high school years, not only individually but also as a member of our BHS Choir Community. Vocal programs rely heavily on support from volunteers to ensure that they can run as efficiently and effectively for the students as possible. We are blessed to have a Fine Arts Booster program that helps to raise the necessary funds for the Fine Arts program to continue to run each and every year. We encourage parents to contact Janel Cauwels (bettfineartsboosters@gmail.com), our BFAB president, to discuss how you may be able to aid the program to provide the very best experience we can give for our BHS students.

We can't wait to get back into rehearsals, to continue Bettendorf's valued traditions, and to create new traditions and memories that the students will cherish for years to come. With that being said, we cannot express how excited we are to get this year started and are looking forward to working with each of you!

Mr. Chase Shoemaker
Director of Choirs
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Mr. Trent Teske
Associate Director of Choirs
tteske@bettendorf.k12.ia.us

COURSE OFFERINGS

Concert Choir: Grades 10 – 12

1.5 credits / 4 terms

Prerequisite: audition only

Instructor: Mr. Chase Shoemaker

Concert Choir is an advanced mixed chorus consisting of sophomores, juniors and seniors. Students must audition to be a member of Concert Choir. Instruction in choral techniques and note reading is continued on an advanced level. The Concert Choir has a minimum of four major performances per year, participates in State Large Group Festival, and is given the opportunity to participate in the Solo and Small Ensemble event.

Advanced Treble Choir: Grades 10 - 12

1.5 credits / 4 terms

Prerequisite: audition only

Instructor: Mr. Trent Teske

Advanced Treble Choir is an advanced ensemble of sopranos and altos consisting of sophomores, juniors and seniors. Students must audition to be a member of Advanced Treble Choir. Instruction in choral techniques and note reading is continued on an advanced level. Advanced Treble Choir has a minimum of four major performances per year, participates in State Large Group Festival, and is given the opportunity to participate in the Solo and Small Ensemble event.

Bettendorf Singers: Grades 9 – 12

1.5 credits / 4 terms

Prerequisite: none

Instructors: Mr. Chase Shoemaker & Mr. Trent Teske

Bettendorf Singers is an ensemble open to any student at BHS. Instruction in choral techniques and note reading will be developed through meaningful performance. Bettendorf Singers has four major performances per year, participates in State Large Group Festival, and is given the opportunity to participate in the Solo and Small Ensemble event.

BHS VOCAL MISSION

The BHS Music Department seeks to:

- Guide students in their acquisition of independent musical skills
- Develop healthy vocal technique, both as a solo singer and as a choral musician
- Establish a love of singing, instilling confidence in the student's own unique talents and abilities
- Provide an environment in which each student can find success
- Establish a sense of belonging to a supportive, accepting ensemble of peers

Make the Most of This Opportunity

LISTEN: When the music has stopped, please be silent and listen to the next instruction, even if you think it is not for you.

MARK THE MUSIC: The score is nothing but a blueprint; it will come alive for you only if you understand it. Have your pencil ready in rehearsal at all times. Mark sections you know you need to work on. Mark changes made to the piece in rehearsal. Make any markings that will help you sing the piece better.

STUDY: Make sure you do not make the same mistakes repeatedly. After we have worked on a piece several times, you will know where your individual problems lie. Once you've found your trouble spots, come to your lesson with it in mind so that we can work through it together. You can also talk with your section leader, plunk out your part at the piano after rehearsal, or listen to a recording.

THINK: Choral singing can be one of the most exalting of human experiences, but it is also one of the most demanding and complex: instrumentalists can rely on the muscle memory of fingers and lips to find pitches; singers must pull their notes from the air around them. Use your brain to steal your pitch from another part, or find it on your own - thoughtful theft is often as good as invention, and more reliable than divine inspiration.

An important note: Please remember, this is an *ensemble*, not a *class*. The difference is that when you miss a class, only you lose. If you miss a rehearsal, everyone loses. You are responsible for yourself, but you are responsible to us all.

GRADING POLICY

The students will be graded on the following:

1. **Rehearsal Success Skills (50%)** – As a performance-based class, rehearsals act as the formative assessments of student growth. As such, students will be assessed on their ability and consistency to demonstrate rehearsal skills at a proficient level during class time. Rehearsal skills include applying vocal technique, musical skills, body alignment, and sight-reading abilities to the curricular literature within a collaborative group setting. Points will be deducted for tardiness, lack of participation, excessive disruption, or failing to follow instructions.
 - a. If you are vocally unwell, you are still required to actively participate in the rehearsal. We ask that you let your director know that you are vocally unwell. During the rehearsal, you will be expected to audiate (sing in your head) and mark your score as we rehearse each piece.
2. **Performances (25%)** – Concerts are an integral element of the choral music curriculum. All concerts will count toward credit in the class. Most concerts take place outside of the school day, typically in the evening. A student's grade for a performance is determined by their punctuality, appropriate attire and concert etiquette while they are performing and while they are watching the other choral ensembles. Students are required to attend performances in their entirety, even after their portion is complete. Absences will only be excused in extreme cases, please see the attached performance schedule and mark these dates on your calendar as soon as possible.
3. **Lessons (10%)** – Advanced Treble Choir and Concert Choir students will receive individualized 15-minute lessons, alternating between 1st and 2nd block every 2 weeks. Students in Bett Singers will receive either an individual or group lesson during their 4th Block choir time. Lessons will be used to provide individual feedback on student's development of vocal technique.
4. **Music Literacy (GWOMS) (10%)** – The Great Wall of Musical Skill (GWOMS) is a system that is comprised of musical skills that are separated into 9 categories (Scales, Key Signatures, Rhythm, Listening, Sight Singing, Aural Skills, Vocabulary, Note Names, and Solfege). Each category has Three Tiers (Competent, Exceptional, and College-Ready). Students are required to complete 2 skills per semester.

5. **Literature Exploration (5%)** - Each concert cycle, the students will write a short paper (min. 300 words/max. 500 words) on one of the pieces they are currently working on to better connect with the piece. Possible topics may include: a short biography on the composer or lyricist of the piece, the historical era in which the piece was written and the impact it may have had on the piece, a theoretical analysis of the piece, a textual analysis of the piece, or any relevant topic that is approved by the director.

ABSENCES

We understand that many students are involved in numerous activities both in and out of school and we encourage students to be as involved as they can be. Now is the time for students to take advantage of the many activities/athletics that they can be involved in. We will be as flexible as we can be to work with other schedules, however **communication** is crucial. Here are some examples of excused and unexcused absences from a practice or a performance:

Excused Absences – Excused absences can be made up for full credit

- The student has received an excused absence from school (illness, death in family, etc.)
- The student has a personal or family event that has been discussed/approved by the director with a parent or guardian before the performance that will be missed
 - If the student has a personal or family emergency that arises and cannot be discussed before the event, we ask that a parent or guardian reaches out to the director at their earliest convenience.

Unexcused Absences - Unexcused absences can be made up for partial credit

- Work is always unexcused, mark your calendar now
- Missing a scheduled practice or performance with no prior contact or explanation (other than emergency situations)
- A general excuse such as “I forgot,” “I had another event to attend,” etc.
- Missing a performance due to an athletic **practice** or other non-school sponsored event
- Other absences will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Do not hesitate to contact your director; it is better to be safe than sorry.

Concert Make-up Requirements

1. Students will be asked to sing a portion of their music with their director at a later time (i.e. PRIDE Time, after school, etc.)
2. Students will be asked to listen to another ensemble's performance and write a short reflection.
3. Students will be asked to write a short essay on the importance of concert etiquette and what that looks like in a performance, both as a performer and audience member.

DIRECTOR'S NON-NEGOTIABLES

1. RESPECT

- a. Respect the property of the department by storing materials in their appropriate place, throwing your trash away, and refraining from: offensive language, inappropriate conduct, and degrading another's performance. Please treat our time together, the music we sing, and the people we sing it with the respect they deserve.

2. FOCUS & ENGAGE

- a. Listen to and follow all instructions of the director, collaborative pianist, and student-appointed section leaders the first time they are given. Always give your best effort.

3. RESPONSIBILITY

- a. Be on time and bring necessary materials. Do not be discourteous to those who have the respect to be prompt and focused.

4. SAFETY

- a. Follow all conduct and dress code policies of Bettendorf High School at all times, including all school related activities/events. Be aware of your surroundings and other people's personal space.

UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to dress in 'Concert Black', which consists of:

- Black pants/slacks, or skirt below the knee while sitting down
- Black blouse or dress shirt
- Black dress shoes with dark socks/leggings/tights

Please click [here](#) to view our concert attire expectations in depth...and with pictures!

This dress code has been designed to ensure each student's comfortability on stage while maintaining a uniform look. We hope for each student to feel their best and look their best!

Room and Equipment Policy

1. **Personal Items** – When you enter the rehearsal space, your folder comes out and your phone goes into your folder slot. ChromeBooks, iPads, and books for other classes will remain in your bags, which will be placed in a designated area. You may keep your smartwatch on, but it will be asked to be removed if it becomes a distraction during class.
2. **Gum, Candy, Food and Beverages** – The student will refrain from chewing gum, eating, or drinking beverages (except water) during the rehearsal period.
3. **Music/Folders/Pencils** – Students will be assigned a folder and music throughout the course of the year. Students must have their choir folder and a *useable* pencil with them at every rehearsal. Both the folder and music will be numbered and all students will be held financially accountable for lost or damaged music. Reasonable wear-and-tear will occur throughout the year, but major damage to the music or folder will result in the student paying for the cost of the damaged items. Music costs anywhere from \$2-\$5 per piece, while choir folders may cost up to \$30 each.

Notice of Nondiscrimination:

The Bettendorf High School Vocal Music Program will not discriminate in a way inconsistent with the policies of the Bettendorf Community School District, the laws of the United States of America, and/or the State of Iowa on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status in its educational programs and its employment practices. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy please contact the Affirmative Action Coordinator, District Administration Center, P. O. Box 1150, Bettendorf, IA. 52722, 563-359-3681.

Anti-Bullying/Harassment:

Harassment and bullying of students and employees are against federal, state and local policy, and are not tolerated by the board. The board is committed to providing all students with a safe and civil school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect. To that end, the board has in place policies, procedures, and practices that are designed to reduce and eliminate bullying and harassment as well as processes and procedures to deal with incidents of bullying and harassment. Bullying and harassment of students by other students, by school employees, and by volunteers who have direct contact with students will not be tolerated in the school or school district.

Please read through the information in this handbook and then fill out the Google form at the bottom of this page.

Thank you for your support of the BHS Vocal Music Program!

[Parent AND Student Handbook Signature Form](#)

2023-2024 BETTENDORF HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR CALENDAR OF EVENTS

*****Bolded Events are Required for All Choir Students*****

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Time</u>
August 19th-20th	"Surround Sound" Show Choir Retreat - Bettendorf High School	4-8pm (each day)
September 9th-10th	"Surround Sound" Choreography Camp - Bettendorf High School	All Day
September 16th	Pre-All State Camp - Muscatine High School (All State Students Only)	9am-12pm
September 28th-29th	"Surround Sound" Choreography Camp - Bettendorf High School	3:45-9pm
October 4th	Metrofest - Davenport West High School (All State Students Only)	Afternoon Clinic 6pm Performance
October 17th	Fall Concert - Bettendorf High School Performing Arts Center	7pm Performance
October 21st	All State Auditions - Washington High School (All State Students Only)	All Day
November 16th	OPUS Honor Choir Festival - Ames, Iowa (OPUS Students Only)	All Day Clinic Evening Performance
November 16th-18th	All State Music Festival - Ames, Iowa (All State Students Only)	All Day Clinic Evening Performance
November 20th	Festival of Trees - Downtown Davenport (ATC & CC Students Only)	1pm Performance
December 4th	Winter Concert - Bettendorf High School Performing Arts Center	7pm Performance
December 9th	"Surround Sound" Show Choir Winter Preview - PAC	All Day Clinic 7pm Performance
January 13th	Muscatine "River City Showcase" Competition - Muscatine, Iowa	All Day
January 27th	Davenport North "The Big Dance" Competition - Davenport, Iowa	All Day
February 3rd	Bettendorf "Rhythm on the Riverbend" Competition - Bettendorf, Iowa	All Day
February 10th	Fort Atkinson Competition - Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin	All Day
February 24th	Western Dubuque "The Main Event" Competition - Dubuque, Iowa	All Day
February 29th	"Surround Sound" Spring Show Choir Showcase - PAC	7pm Performance
March 5th	Choral Extravaganza - Bettendorf High School Performing Arts Center	7pm Performance
TBD	Bettendorf Solo & Small Ensemble Recital - PAC	TBD
March 30th	Spring Concert - Bettendorf High School Performing Arts Center	7pm Performance
April 4th	Large Group Contest - Bettendorf High School	All Day
May 26th	Graduation Commencement - Bettendorf High School (Concert Choir Only)	TBD

**** Coming events and important information will be sent periodically via email (concert reminders, etc.). Additional concert dates will be added as needed.***