

The Bettendorf High School Choral Department



Handbook

Fall, 2021

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTORS

Hello Choir Members and Parents,

Welcome! This will be a fantastic year. We have been working diligently this summer to ensure a program that is engaging, enjoyable, and educational! My philosophy of choral music education centers around community. While each of us have our own unique voice, the choral artform 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, I encourage every singer to take on responsibility for the success and welfare of their ensemble, as well as for the choral program as a whole.

I have been astounded by the support that I have already received from the Bettendorf community and am excited to see what we as a department can do for you as an individual, as well as a member of the Bettendorf 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. I encourage any parent who is interested in volunteering their time, talent, or treasure to contact me to discuss how you may be able to aid the program to provide the very best experience we can give for these remarkable and talented students.

I can't wait to begin working with the choirs of Bettendorf High School, to continue its valued traditions, and to create memories that the students will cherish for years to come. With that being said, I cannot express how excited I am to get this year started and look forward to meeting each one of you!

Mr. Chase Shoemaker

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Hello and thank you for being a part of all things choir this year at Bettendorf High School! Much like Mr. Shoemaker, my philosophy of music education centers around developing community and relationships through diverse musical experiences. Throughout this year we will share new approaches, challenges, vulnerability, and many laughable moments during our rehearsal process. One of my hopes is that you leave this year with a better understanding of perspectives, music, and cultures other than your own. Even though I am a teacher, I am looking forward to learning just as much from you and about the traditions you all have built thus far. With that being said, I ask that you approach this year with an open mind while continuing to share your own interests and past musical experiences with Mr. Shoemaker and me to ensure a strong and inclusive community within our vocal music program at BHS.

Although I am a new face to this community, I already feel so grateful and excited about the kind of students, parents, and other staff members at Bettendorf High School. I am certain that with the help of parent/guardian volunteers as well as the Fine Arts Boosters program, we will be able to continue the tradition of excellence that has been previously built and expand further into the potential of our vocal music program. With that in mind, if you are interested and able to donate your time, talents, or treasure, please get in touch with Mr. Shoemaker or me to discuss how you can best support the BHS Fine Arts program!

I can't wait to get this year started and continue to meet the incredible individuals who make up the Bettendorf High School Choral Program!

Ms. Amber Mraz

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COURSE OFFERINGS

Concert Choir: Grades 10 – 12 1.5 credits / 4 terms
Prerequisite: audition only
Uniform usage fee: \$15.00

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 among other musical activities. Concert choir students will be required to participate in a solo or ensemble at the state sponsored solo/ensemble festival in April.

Women's Chorale: Grades 10 - 12 1.5 credits / 4 terms
Prerequisite: audition only
Uniform usage fee: \$15.00

Women's choir is an intermediate women's ensemble consisting of sophomores, juniors and seniors. Placement is based on audition or by the consent of the director. Instruction in choral techniques and note reading is continued on an intermediate level. The Women's Chorale has a minimum of four major performances per year, participates in State Large Group Festival among other musical activities.

Chorale: Grades 9 – 12 1.5 credits / 4 terms
Prerequisite: audition only
Uniform usage fee \$15.00

Chorale is an ensemble open to students by audition to further work on their vocal technique and knowledge of music. At least four major concerts are given per year including Large Group Contest. Chorale may participate in Solo and Ensemble among other activities.

Bettendorf Singers: Grades 9 – 12 1.5 credits / 4 terms
Prerequisite: none
Uniform usage fee \$15.00

Bettendorf singers is an ensemble open to any students at BHS to participate in meaningful performance and further work on their vocal technique and knowledge of music. At least four major concerts are given per year potentially including State Large Group Contest.

CO-CURRICULAR CHOIRS

Chamber Choir: Grades 9 – 12
Prerequisite: Audition only
No fee required

Students in Chamber Choir will meet twice a week before school starting second quarter as well as periodic PRIDE rehearsals. The chamber choir will perform at concerts, school events, and many events around the holiday season. This is an opportunity to perform complex music in a small ensemble.

UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS

Men:
Concert Choir/Chorale - A black tuxedo is provided by Bettendorf High School. It is the responsibility of the student to provide a white tuxedo shirt, black dress shoes, and black socks. Absolutely no jewelry is allowed on stage. The student will be financially responsible for any damage that occurs to formal attire during the academic year due to neglect.

Women:
Concert Choir/Chorale/Women's Chorale - A formal concert dress is provided by Bettendorf High School. Shoes should be black closed-toe shoes (flats, no heels). Absolutely no jewelry is allowed on stage unless it is provided by the choir department. The student will be financially responsible for any damage that occurs to formal attire during the academic year due to neglect.

Bettendorf Singers - A concert robe and stole are provided by Bettendorf High School. It is the responsibility of the student to provide black dress pants, black socks, and black dress shoes. Absolutely no jewelry is allowed on stage. The student will be financially responsible for any damage that occurs to the robe during the academic year due to neglect.

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
- Instill 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

The Reason We Are Here:

We are all here because we love to sing, we love to make music, we love to perform, and we love to be a part of a community with our peers. By this point, many of us realize how lucky we are to have music in our lives. We know that a choir is capable of creating something that no individual can create on their own. We are here because we want the best musical experience possible from this year.

The Point We Sometimes Miss:

It is a privilege to have music in our lives, and to have a dedicated group of singers to share it with. Our job as directors is to guide you through engaging, enjoyable, and educational literature, providing an experience that demonstrates what a blessing it is to have choral music in our lives. Please treat our time together, the music we sing, and the people we sing it with the respect they deserve.

How to Make the Most of This Opportunity:

BE RESPONSIBLE: Be on time and work hard. Do not be discourteous to those who have the respect to be prompt and focused.

LISTEN: When the music has stopped, please be silent and listen to the next instructions, even if you think they are 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 lead, 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.

EXPECTATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

All members of the Vocal Music Department will be expected to do the following:

1. Follow all conduct and dress code policies of Bettendorf High School at all times, including all school related activities/events.
2. Be on time to every rehearsal and performance with the appropriate music and a useable pencil.
3. Listen to and follow all instructions of the director, collaborative pianist, and student-appointed section leader the first time they are given.
4. Respect the property of the department and the well-being of your fellow classmates. This includes storing materials in their appropriate place, throwing your trash away, and refraining from: offensive language, inappropriate conduct, and degrading another's performance.

The students will be subject to the following consequences if they do not observe the expectations:

1. Docked rehearsal skill points for the given day.
2. Private conference between the director and the student.
3. Detention at the student's expense and time.
4. Conference between the student, director, and the student's parents.
5. Referral to the office for appropriate consequences.
6. Loss of participation in the choir.

EXPECTATIONS OF YOUR DIRECTOR

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

GRADING POLICY

The students will be graded on the following:

1. **Rehearsal Skills (40%)** – 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 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. **Lessons (20%)** - Lessons allow each student to receive individual feedback on their healthy vocal production, musical skills, reading abilities, and any other skills the student is interested in learning. Students in Bett Singers and Chorale will be offered group lessons as they begin to work on healthy vocal technique and attaining sight-reading abilities. Students in Advanced Treble Chorus and Concert Choir will be offered individual lessons as they begin to work on refining their vocal technique. Each student is required to attend at least 1 lesson per quarter. Lessons last fifteen minutes and take place either during the school day or before/after school. Students will be given a pass if the lesson occurs during the school day within another class. Students will fill out an electronic form upon arriving to and leaving from their lessons in order to receive credit for the lesson.
3. **Performances (20%)** – As a performance-based class, concerts act as the summative assessments of student growth, and as such, are required by students enrolled in a BHS choir 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.
4. **Assignments (10%)** - Assignments are broken down into the following categories:
 - a. Literature Exploration (5%): Each quarter, the students will write a short paper (min. 300 words/max. 500 words) on one of the pieces they are currently working on. 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.
 - b. GWOMS - Great Wall of Musical Skills (5%): Each semester, students will have to complete 2 new skills from the GWOMS. This will demonstrate the students' continued growth in the study of music over a variety of musical subjects/topics throughout their years in the Bettendorf Vocal Music Program. GWOMS may be completed on their own time, although students may use part of their lesson times to work on or test out of their GWOMS skills.
5. **Music Literacy (10%)** – Through the use of Sight-Reading Factory (SRF), students will work on music literacy as a part of their daily rehearsal in choir. SRF allows each student to work at their own pace, enabling them to continuously grow in their sight-reading and aural skills abilities. At the end of each quarter, students will be tested individually to evaluate their current level of music literacy. Students are not graded based on their individual scores from the assessment, but by their continued growth from quarter to quarter.

Room and Equipment Policy

1. Students must respect the choir room at all times. This includes keeping the music lockers clean and organized, throwing away personal trash, and cleaning up any messes you create.
2. **Personal Items** – ChromeBooks, iPads, cellphones, and books for other classes will remain in your bags. You will be given a designated area to place your bags so that they do not create any distractions during the rehearsal. Students should not work on anything for another class during choir. You may keep your smartwatch on, but it will be asked to be removed if it becomes a distraction during class.
3. **Gum, Candy, and Beverages** – The student will refrain from chewing gum, eating, or drinking beverages (except water) during the rehearsal period. If the student has been warned, the director may ask the student to throw their food in the trash.
4. **Music/Folders/Pencils** – Students will be assigned a folder and music throughout the course of the year. Both the folder and music will be numbered so that any music found laying around can be placed with the corresponding folder. Students must have their choir folder and a *useable* pencil with them at every rehearsal. The students are responsible for the care and condition of their music and folder. 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 cost up to \$30 each.

ATTENDANCE

Concerts and Performances

Similar to what was previously stated, choir is a performance-based class; therefore, concerts are an integral element of the choral music curriculum. All activity times will count toward credit in the class. 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.

Rehearsals

The success of any group is directly related to the attitude, participation and quality of work accomplished during rehearsals. Since our rehearsal time is limited, it is important that we utilize the time we have as effectively as we can. In order to do so, it is imperative that all students follow the classroom expectations that were outlined on p. 4 of the handbook.

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.

ABSENCES

As with any group or team activity, every member is crucial to the success of the group. Choir is no exception. 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 is attending another school-sponsored activity/event and the student has approved the arrangement with BOTH sponsors
- The student has a personal or family problem that has been discussed/approved by the director with a parent or guardian before the practice or performance that will be missed
 - If the student has a personal or family problem 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. A short email or phone call before the performance would be appreciated if it is possible.

Unexcused Absences - Unexcused absences can NOT be made up and credit will be lost

- 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 another commitment scheduled after the choir performance was scheduled
- Missing a performance due to an athletic **practice** or other non-school sponsored event

Any other questionable 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.

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.

Final Thoughts:

The famous poet, Ben Johnson, once said, "All performances of human art, at which we look with praise and wonder, are instances of the resistless force of perseverance." I firmly believe that the great works of humankind come from tremendous work and effort more than raw talent. I often think that anyone whom we think of as talented is just someone who works hard. The point being, we have the potential to do great things here. We, as performers, are in the business of recreating great works of music. We have the privilege to work on some wonderful music. Let's cherish every moment of it and try and give it the time and energy it deserves.

2021-2022 BETTENDORF HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

September 11 th	District All State Camp at Muscatine High School	TBA (AM)
October 5 th	Metrofest @ Davenport North (All-State Students Only)	Performance: 7 PM
October 23 rd	All-State Auditions	All Day
November 18 th	OPUS (for selected freshman students)	All Day
November 18 th -20 th	75 th Iowa All-State Music Festival (for selected students)	All Day
November 22 nd	Festival of Trees (Concert Choir and Chamber Choir)	TBA
December 6th	Winter Choral Concert	7 PM
March 1 st	Masterworks Concert: Schubert Mass in G (Concert Choir and Chamber Orchestra)	7 PM
March 3 rd	Bettendorf Choral Extravaganza (Bett Singers, Chorale, and Advanced Treble Choir)	7 PM
April 15 th	IHSMA Solo/Small Ensemble (Adv Treble Choir, Concert Choir, optional for Chorale)	All Day
April 25th	Spring Choral Concert	7 PM
May 7th	IHSMA Large Group Contest	TBA
May 19th	Music Department Awards	6 PM
May 29 th	Graduation (Concert Choir and other ensemble Seniors only)	12 PM Call Time

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

Please read through the information in this handbook and then sign the form at the bottom of this page. Once the form is signed, please return it to school by **September 3rd, 2021**. Thank you for your support of the BHS Vocal Music Program!

As a student, I have read through and understand the procedures, policies, and expectations of the Bettendorf High School Vocal Music Program. By signing, I know what is expected of me as a member of the program and agree to follow the outlined procedures, policies, and expectations.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

As a parent/guardian, I have read through and understand the procedures, policies, and expectations of the Bettendorf High School Vocal Music Program. By signing, I know what is expected of my student as a member of the program and agree with the outlined procedure, policies, and expectations.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____