



Hampden
Academy
Music
Department

Choral Handbook

2017-2018



Welcome to the Hampden Academy choral program!

Research has shown music to be the only discipline that makes connections between the brain hemispheres. Students who participate in music often score higher on standardized tests, have strong self-discipline, and live happier lives.

At Hampden Academy, we enjoy a reputation of having a strong choral performance program. As in a section from our mission statement, we strive for individual and group excellence in each of our choral groups.

In order for you to be successful in that endeavor, I have created this handbook as a guide to which you may refer.

Please contact me at anytime at the HA music office 862-4962 or through e-mail hcorliss@rsu22.us.

It is great to have you with us! Make it a great year!
--Mrs. Corliss

Hampden Academy Choral Groups

Concert Choir - anyone who would like to sing is welcome to sign up for this group. There is no audition for any student and all 9th grade singers participate in this group. The focus will be on vocal technique, music literacy as it pertains to singing, critical thinking in music, music sightreading, group interaction, and performance skills. It is expected that students taking this class will meet the standards required for fine arts.

Treble Choir - this is open to any female who auditions and shows growing skills in vocal technique, music literacy and critical thinking. The focus will be on gaining confidence in both music reading and performance skills.

Chamber Singers - this is an auditioned group of the most advanced singers at Hampden Academy. Students in this group are expected to have all of the above skills at an advanced level. The focus will be on impeccable intonation, fine musicianship, critical and creative thinking, interpersonal skills, and leadership as well as high level performance.

Voices Unlimited - this is an auditioned group of advanced singer/dancer/performers singing more popular, jazz, and Broadway music. This group meets before school on Mondays and Wednesdays and some after school and weekends as festivals arise. Students must be members of one of the other three in-school choruses as that is where vocal technique and musicianship are taught.

Honors and Auditions - There are opportunities during the year to audition for honors choirs such as All-State Chorus, Jazz All-State Chorus, or regional honors choirs. There is also a district festival in which the most talented and hardworking students are nominated by their teachers.

Uniforms - Males will be issued white with black banded collar tuxedo shirt, vest, and pants. Girls wear long black dresses which are issued to them. All singers must wear black socks or nylons and black dress shoes. Sneakers or flip-flops are not appropriate for this level of performance. **You must be in this uniform in its entirety in order to perform.** When wearing your uniform it should be neat and wrinkle-free. Please do not machine wash pants, vests, or dresses. They must be dry-cleaned only. If they need to be ironed, please use a damp cloth between the iron and the material.

Awards

- 1 or 2 years in HS choir - certificate
- 3 years in HS choir - choir pin
- 4 years in HS choir - plaque
- 120 points - varsity letter (attendance - possible 30 pts/yr, voice lessons - poss. 10 pts/yr, setup/teardown - poss. 15 pts/yr, attending other high school, college, professional concert choral performances - poss. 5 pts/yr, choral library work - poss. 5 pts/yr, honor group participation - poss. 5 pts/yr, effort/attitude - poss. 10 pts/yr)

Expectations - The premise for this class is to learn about music through choral performance. You will learn about music theory, music literacy, composers, some historical aspects of music, vocal technique, and how to perform successfully in a group.

1. **Be On Time!** - When the bell rings to begin class, please be in your assigned seat prepared with music, and pencil. There will be times we use your computers so please have them available in the classroom.
2. Please **DO NOT TALK** during rehearsal. This is important so that we can work for quality performance.
3. Once you are in your seat, please **do not leave** except in the case of an emergency. If you must go to the bathroom, please sign out and take the pass provided.
4. **Performances are required.** In a performance based class, the only way to learn is to perform and keep performing. Your performances are your tests. If something drastic has happened, an accident, vomiting, etc. that will prevent you from performing, please call the music office or e-mail me as soon as possible. Though not as valuable as performance, in these emergencies, I will create an alternate performance assessment. Performance dates are on the school website chorus page.
5. Communication with others is very important in life. With a large number of us in each class, communication is the key. When appropriate, please feel free to share positive comments, suggestions, and problems with me and with those around you after class.

Grading

Singing Skills - this carries the most weight when determining your quarter grade. The following standards of healthy singing will be taken into consideration:

1. Posture - sit up straight with chest high
2. Open Mouth
3. Breathing - low and from the diaphragm
4. Tone - round and naturally produced
5. Intonation - in tune
6. Diction - pronounce all words clearly
7. Expression - should accurately reflect the mood of each piece
8. Notes, rhythms - should know them after a few rehearsals
9. Dynamics - quiet, loud, etc.

Preparedness - Always be prepared with music, sharpened pencil, and water at rehearsals and performances. We will be moving quickly and you are expected to work on your music on your own outside of class or ask for help if necessary to keep up.

Concert Attendance, Performance Skills and Etiquette - our concerts are our tests. Students must be at the assigned performance space no later than the assigned time, dressed in uniform and must demonstrate appropriate concert etiquette both on stage and as part of the audience. Performances are worth 20% of the total quarter grade and if missed frequently could lead to dismissal from the class.

Sectionals - Each student will be required to attend 2 sectionals per quarter. These will be scheduled by the teacher during a study hall or after school. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of their scheduled date and time. Because we have large classes of students who sing different voice parts, these allow the student and teacher to focus more individually on specific vocal and musical skills and assessment. Performance standards will often be assessed in these smaller meetings as well.

Sightreading - we will be sightreading or working on music literacy every rehearsal. Students should be able to demonstrate improvement each quarter.

Technology - we will be exploring some music software on computers which will deepen our musical knowledge and/or assess that knowledge. Google classroom is used for announcements and assignments.

Written Quiz or Report - at least 2 per year

Standards Based/Proficiency - as we move toward a standards based/proficiency level grading system at Hampden Academy, students in chorus will be doing more formalized assessment both individually and in the group. Expectations for these assessments will be clear and will be attainable through the rehearsal/sectional/performance process.