

Jenison High School Choirs



“Building Life Skills Through Choral Excellence”

2011-12 Handbook

**Information
Policies and Procedures
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Introduction

Welcome to the Jenison Vocal Music Program! You are a part of a widely respected team of students, parents, accompanists, directors, and administrators who seek to help you “build life skills through choral excellence” in the following ways:

- a) Develop your vocal talents to their fullest
- b) Learn skills so you can independently prepare and correctly perform a wide variety of music
- c) Advance your music theory analysis and sight-singing skills
- d) Learn self-confidence and poise in many situations
- e) Develop your leadership and team-building skills
- f) Influence others with your positive attitude
- g) Work hard and experience its value
- h) Better understand and empathize with others
- i) Explore your potential for a career in music or related field
- j) Attain your MHSI Fine Arts Credit AND, perhaps most of all...
- k) Enjoy making music for a lifetime!

To achieve these goals, we have scheduled a busy, ambitious slate of concerts and experiences that we hope you find fun, challenging, enjoyable and ultimately, rewarding. You will develop character as you learn discipline, perseverance and use your abilities serve others. You will be challenged to think creatively, singing with understanding and passion. Your growth as a musician--and more importantly, the best person you can be--will earn you respect and recognition. You will experience satisfaction in a job well-done.

You are part of a very proud tradition of musical excellence. Work hard, have “Serious Fun”, develop your talent, and experience the joy of making memories that will last a lifetime. Best wishes for a great year!

Mr. Les Rowsey, Director Office/Voice Mail: (616) 667-3397

e-mail: lrowsey@jpsonline.org

Please feel free to call me or e-mail me anytime with questions or concerns, or make an appointment to see me at school.

Grading

All students are supplied with a folder, sheet music, and a pencil. Students must bring these materials with them each day when they come to class and appropriately use them during rehearsal. Failure to do so will result in a reduction of the student's grade, typically 25 points. Students are responsible for everything issued to them and will be billed accordingly for any loss or damage that occurs. Once again, if it is issued to you, be mature and take good care of it!

Students must also arrive in class on time or have a pass with them upon arrival. Under normal circumstances, if a student is late to class without a pass, he or she will be marked "tardy-unexcused" and receive a 25 point deduction for each tardy. After the third tardy the student will be referred to the office. Promptness and dependability are important traits of a good attitude. Attitudes are contagious; make sure yours is worth catching!

Daily Rehearsals: All students are reminded that attaining group excellence depends upon the focused, diligent efforts of each member each day in each rehearsal. There is no secret to the sound Jenison Choirs make--it is due to the caring and commitment of everyone concerned to help develop the best character and musicianship possible! For this reason, the Daily Participation component of the marking period grade is typically worth 50 or more points per week during each marking period. Daily participation credit is determined by the *quality* of participation: appropriate body position and posture, eye contact, intelligent use and care of the voice, score marking, aggressive sight-singing and focused concentration. It is no coincidence that students who give their all are among the most accomplished and most respected musicians in their respective choirs.

Quizzes: Music theory and sight-singing skills are essential to the development of good musicians and fine choirs. There will be daily emphasis and periodic evaluations to check students' growth in these areas. Material covered on theory quizzes and during sight-reading will be used to develop the 1st semester Final Exam.

Performances: All students are expected to attend regularly scheduled concerts that are held each nine weeks during the school year. Students who cannot attend these concerts should not enroll in choir. Very occasionally, there may be another school-related event or conflict that keeps you from attending a concert. Immediately contact all parties involved in the conflict--never provide less than two weeks notice, except in case of emergency (see below)--in order that we may assist you in resolving a conflict. Other than illness, a death in the family, or the occasional rescheduling of an athletic contest, there should be no reason to suddenly find yourself with a conflict. You have been given the Calendar of Events, and you are responsible to carefully check this schedule and inform us of all conflicts you know about by this Friday. Use the form in the back of this Handbook. **WORK IS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE EXCUSE FOR MISSING A MAJOR CONCERT.** Please see Mr. Rowsey if you have any questions.

Major Performances are worth 250 points per event. These are the Fall, Christmas, and Spring Concerts, as well as MSVMA Festival and Convention performances. They may also be events such as trips, competitions and recording sessions. A student who is excused from a major performance has, under normal circumstances, one week (five school days) to make up the missed work. This make-up work may include--but is not limited to--singing the student's voice part a cappella, or with a recording of the missed performance, and writing a performance critique. Unexcused absences result in a loss of credit, with no opportunity to make up the work missed. *It is solely the student's responsibility to contact the director to schedule make-up work.*

Trips/Extended Major Performances: Credit varies, but often is in excess of 250 points. All choirs, but especially Chorale, ChamberSingers and Advanced Women's Chorus periodically go on trips that may include overnights, performing, competing, sight-seeing, clinics and/or a combination of these activities. These trips are great fun and educational experiences and often include interaction with choir students from other parts of the country. The goal is to experience things that challenge and motivate our students to reach higher! Past trips have been to Knoxville, TN; Myrtle Beach,

SC; Virginia Beach, VA; Toronto, Ontario, Canada; Nashville, TN; Washington DC, and New York City, as well as more local events in Detroit, Kalamazoo, Ann Arbor and Chicago.

It is important for Jenison Choir students to recognize their importance and fulfill their commitment to the group at all times, but especially during these special events. No athletic or other teams such as Theatre, Forensics, Marching Band, or Science Olympiad would be as successful without all teammates present, and the same relates to choirs. Every eligible choir member should make every reasonable effort to participate in these special events, as well as all regularly scheduled concerts.

Minor Performances are typically 50-150 points each, examples being Homecoming, Commencement, Festival of Voices, or performances for civic and community groups. A student who is excused from a minor performance has, under normal circumstances, one week (five school days) to make up the missed work, and will consist of singing the student's voice part a cappella or with a recording of the music of the missed performance. Unexcused absences result in a loss of credit, with no opportunity to make up the work missed. It is solely the student's responsibility to contact the director to schedule make-up work.

Special Performances: From time to time, one or more Jenison Choirs may be invited to perform for conventions (such as the Michigan Music Conference or American Choral Directors Association) or other special events. When these opportunities present themselves, involved students and their parents will be kept fully informed of all details including cost, chaperone needs, itinerary, etc. This is one of the many events supported and assisted by the Jenison Choir Boosters.

Adjustments to Grade

"Ticks": There is to be NO gum, food, or candy in rehearsal. Proper behavior (i.e. punctuality, materials, deportment) is expected at all times. Under normal circumstances, there will be a 25 point penalty assessed ("tick") for each infraction. Rehearsals close to concerts may merit a "Magic Tick" for each infraction, a 100 point

penalty. Students may bring an appropriate clear plastic or metal water bottle (no glass) and drink non-sugared water only from it. Violators of this rule stand to lose the privilege, and will surely receive point deductions.

Extra Credit: Students may bring in one box of Kleenex and/or one package of cough drops every nine weeks to offset ticks (50 points total may be allowed). Running sound for concerts or helping a director in other ways may also result in extra credit. Students attending or participating in approved outside vocal concerts or other programs may receive extra credit (please check ahead of time to see if the event qualifies). If approved, a parent-signed copy of the the program will serve as attendance/participation documentation.

Voice Lessons

For students with particularly strong interest in developing their talents, one-on-one voice lessons are available. There is an additional cost for these services. Students receive additional, personalized attention and feedback to help them improve their vocal technique, musicianship and performing skills. Lessons instructors tailor a program to each individual student's strengths interests and needs. Students are expected to practice regularly and be prepared for each lesson, arriving on time. Interested students should consult one of our voice teachers or Mr. Rowsey for further information or to enroll. Currently approved voice teachers include Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Rowsey, any of our Elementary General/Vocal staff, Mr. Waters and Mr. Rowsey.

Fundraising

Raising money is an essential part of maintaining an excellent choral program. Funds raised by Jenison Choir students have been used to provide uniforms, solo and choral sheet music, audio and video equipment and services, equipment repairs, computer hardware and software, guest clinicians, trips, risers and scholarships. It is important to note that all money is spent to help students in the program and directly benefit the choirs. A very active program such as ours needs considerable funding each year to meet growing needs, as budgets are ever increasingly strained.

It is understood, however, that a student's primary purpose is to sing and not to fund-raise. Therefore, fund raisers will be kept to a minimum, helping the choirs as a whole while at the same time benefitting individual students according to their own efforts (more about this below). The following fundraisers are scheduled for this year:

***Entertainment Books Sale**-Immediately at the beginning of the school year, this sale allows students to "jumpstart" their accounts to pay for early expenses such as uniform fees and one-day trips.

***Nut Sale** - Orders are taken mid November through early December; delivery mid-December.

***To Be Announced** - Last year, this was a soup and sub sale in February.

Jenison Choir Boosters raises funds through various other projects.

Individual student accounts are maintained to help offset costs of trips and other choir activities. For each item sold, a percentage of the profit (often 50% and sometimes more) will be credited to a student's account, the remainder going to the Choir Boosters. Accounts are managed by the Treasurer of Jenison Choir Boosters, under authority of the Jenison Public Schools. A full yearly accounting is forwarded to JPS, ensuring lawful and ethical handling of all funds collected.

Individual account credits are to be used by students for program expenses incurred during his/her involvement with Jenison Choirs. Examples of these expenses are solo fees for S/E Festival; day, overnight and extended trips; sheet music and/or accompaniment tracks; voice lessons; music camps, "choir gear" (shirts, sweats and other apparel items), and uniform cleaning/maintenance costs. Within one year of graduation or transfer from JPS, credits may be transferred to a sibling or relative currently in a JPS choir. After one year, unused/non-transferred credits go into the Choir Boosters General Fund. Transfers are made through a written request submitted to the Boosters Treasurer. The appropriate form is available from Mrs. Kok, our current Choir Boosters Treasurer, Mr. Rowsey or Mrs. Mahaney.

Year-End-Solos/Exams

*****EVERY STUDENT IS REQUIRED TO TAKE AN EXAM EACH SEMESTER*****

1ST SEMESTER EXAM: A WRITTEN OR PERFORMANCE SKILLS TEST

2ND SEMESTER EXAM:

SENIORS will fulfill their choir exam requirement by rehearsing and singing with the graduation choir at Commencement. There will be a set schedule of three rehearsals determined before the Seniors' Last Day, and Seniors will attend these to ensure proper preparation, fulfilling their Exam Requirement. There will be alternate rehearsals announced that seniors may substitute for any of the three above, if necessary. In any event, however, Seniors **MUST attend three rehearsals to satisfy the requirement and qualify to sing at Graduation.**

NON-SENIORS must perform a solo for their choir, or equivalent, as described below:

Non-seniors who perform as a featured performer at a concert, or who perform at District Solo & Ensemble Festival and receive a "I" or "II" rating fulfill the Year-End-Solo requirement, earning the full 100 points/letter grade of A.

All other non-seniors will perform a vocal solo for an audience of their peers to fulfill their 2nd semester Final Exam requirement. Students will submit their Year-End-Solo title and accompaniment proof (CD/mp3/tape or note from their accompanist) on Friday after Spring Break. This is a 100 point assignment. Any key change, tempo change and vocal reduction requests must be in to Mr. Rowsey before Spring Break. Under normal circumstances, students will forfeit the 100 points if title changes, key/tempo alterations, vocal reductions or other accompaniment changes are made after set deadlines. If a student does not complete the Year-End-Solo requirement, an Incomplete will be assessed for both the Exam grade AND the Semester grade. As per school policy, all Incompletes become "E" grades after the allotted make-up period. Please avoid this **SEMESTER E!**

Other Details: There is no alternate written assignment or presentation, as there was in Junior High. Voice reductions are not permitted if there is an appropriate accompaniment track available. Students may not repeat solos performed from previous years. Students will be graded on a 100 point scale using the following criteria: Tone Quality, Vocal Technique, intonation, Diction, Memorization/Prep, Style/ Stage Presence, and Choice of Selection. The Exam Grade will count 20% of the student's Semester Grade; Each 9-weeks Grade counts 40%.

Please Note: **STUDENTS WHO ARE IN CHOIR ONLY 1st SEMESTER** will take the First Semester Exam but it will count as part of the Quarter 2 grade. They will sing their "Year-End-Solo" during the Exam Period at the end of first semester for their Exam grade.

Solo Procedural Requirements for students in choir only Semester 1: **All requirements will be the same as those for second semester students. Students will submit their solo title and proof of accompaniment one week before Christmas vacation. All key and tempo changes must be completed by this time. As in the second semester, this is a 100 point assignment, with students losing the 100 points if the solo title or key/tempo alterations are made after set deadlines. If a student does not perform their Year-End-Solo requirement, the 100 points Title Assignment will be forfeited, an Incomplete will be assessed for both the Exam grade AND the Semester grade. As per school policy, all Incompletes become "E" grades after the allotted make-up period. Please avoid this SEMESTER E!**

Students will sign up for their performance day, and under normal circumstances be assessed a 10% reduction for each day their performance is delayed. Stay healthy, get rest and remember--You are vocal athletes in-training!

PLEASE NOTE: All students must be prepared to follow through with this assignment. Students not prepared to sing a Year-End-Solo should not enroll in Choir.

Concert Behavior & Deportment

Mature behavior both on and off the risers is an important part of choral performance, and it is expected that students will conduct themselves appropriately for the duration of the concerts. Some of the more important expectations are as follows: no talking on or off the risers, stay in assigned seats when not singing, exhibit mature behavior and appropriate respect to all at all times, no gum chewing; In general, behave with class as a proud representative of this outstanding department. Students who violate these expectations will receive the "Magic Tick," a 100 point concert grade deduction. Persistent violations will result in more serious consequence, possibly including a zero for the concert grade and a conference with parents and administration to determine one's future in Choir.

Students are expected to be on-time and in complete uniform for all performances. They must check in for attendance and uniform inspection with their Booster Parent before each concert. Failure to check in with the Booster Parent will result in a "Magic Tick." Late arrival without prior permission or extremely extenuating circumstances will also receive the "Magic tick." Students not in complete uniform will not perform and will receive a "Magic Tick," but will be allowed to sing a concert make-up for partial credit. Generally, any student who approaches a director or any Boosters Uniform Committee person with a uniform issue less than one week prior to a concert will receive a "Magic Tick."

A Word Regarding Commitment...

Commitment to this choral program and its activities cannot be "Selective Commitment" meaning you commit to choir only until you think something better comes along! The concerts and activities are an integral part of the curriculum for all choirs, and students' *best* effort is essential and expected. Mr. Rowsey will work with students, parents, and coaches to resolve conflicts. Choir students must, however, take first responsibility by communicating conflicts with *all* parties well in advance, not just with the director or coach. It is *unacceptable* for any student to ask other choir members, team-

mates, directors, coordinators, or coaches to make last minute concessions and special accommodations just before a game, concert or other event because they failed to plan ahead. Except in emergency or other *extremely* extenuating circumstances, a student who informs Mr. Rowsey of a conflict less than two weeks (ten school days) prior to an established, published date will receive no credit (zero points) if he or she misses that event or concert. Late arrivals will also be assessed partial loss of credit. When all parties have open communication and work together, fair resolutions to conflicts can be reached. This avoids putting students (YOU!) in the middle, shows proper respect for teams and teammates, and reduces everyone's stress. For details on how we resolve conflicts, please refer to the Jenison High School Activities Conflict Guide, found online at <www.jenisonchoirs.org> The Jenison High School Choirs willingly embrace these Guidelines, demonstrating our respect for other individuals and organizations!

Respect yourself and do the right things!

To the Parents or Guardians of Jenison HS Choir Students

We appreciate encouraging your son or daughter to participate in choir. We pledge to continue to do all we can to give them a fun, challenging and worthwhile experience! To help us accomplish students' individual and group goals, please keep in mind the following:

- 1. If at all possible, do not schedule doctor, dentist, orthodontist or other appointments during choir hour the week of Performances, Festivals, Clinics or Exams. Check the Choir Calendar of Events for details, and check our website <www.jenisonchoirs.org> frequently for additional information.*
- 2. If you ever have a concern regarding solos, auditions or any other matter, please contact us. The same goes for your son or daughter-please have them see us. Don't talk negatively with others. If we don't know there's a problem, we can't address it.*
- 3. Take time to encourage your kids in choir. They want your support, and they want to know you care about what's important to them. Ask them if there's something you can do to help them and if so, follow through. You'll put actions to your words, they will appreciate it-- and so will we!*

4. PLEASE attend their concerts and Festival Performances! We have witnessed the sadness of kids whose parents routinely did not come. It hurts, and it sends a message. You may be busy, but remember they are with you only a short time. Besides, you may enjoy yourself --a lot! :-)

5. When first arriving at concerts, turn off all pagers and cell phones. During the concert, ensure the appropriate behavior of your small children. This shows respect for the singers and others in attendance, and allows us to use concert recordings as auditions for conferences or festivals. A cellphone or unruly child will render useless an otherwise excellent recording, perhaps denying our kids an amazing opportunity!

6. Don't approach a director the night of a concert with an issue that can wait. We have a lot on our minds, and we need to focus our efforts on helping our kids present themselves at their absolute best. Please call or see us afterwards for an appointment; we will be happy to discuss whatever is on your mind at a more appropriate time.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Michigan High School Initiative

Beginning with the 2007-08 school year, all freshmen are required to pass all aspects of the Michigan High School Initiative curriculum in order to receive a Michigan high school diploma. In Jenison, the music portion of the initiative (for all band, choir, and orchestra students) has three required components: (1) an “end of the year” playing or singing evaluation, (2) a concert evaluation, and (3) a music theory test. Students must receive an overall 70% in order to receive their Fine Arts Credit in Music. The requirements specific to Choir are:

PART 1: End of the Year Solo (50% of the MHSI Music Dept. Fine Arts Requirement): Please see “Year End Solo Guidelines” online at <www.jenisonchoirs.org> for details.

PART 2: Concert Evaluation (20% of the Requirement):

There is a debriefing with the various choirs during their respective classes following every major performance. This evaluation may be oral or written, or a combination of the two. For those who wish to “comp out” of the MHSI requirement, a written concert evaluation is required. Please see Mr. Rowsey for details.

PART 3: Music Theory Test (30% of the Requirement): A 50-question multiple choice music theory test that tests basic knowledge of the structure and function of musical concepts will be administered the Thursday after Spring Break in all entry level performance ensembles, as well as those groups that contain Freshmen. Students who double in music will take the test in their first music class of the day.

Jenison High School Activities Conflict Guide

Forward

It is our belief that students can become well-rounded individuals through their participation in a variety of activities and events. It is understandable that students who participate in more than one activity or event may encounter conflicts. Administrators, teachers, coaches and activity sponsors will work together to help avoid conflicts when possible and resolve conflicts when and if they do occur. These guidelines are intended to address school related conflicts and are not intended to be applied to family or personal related conflicts. These guidelines have been formulated to:

- * Reduce the possibility of these types of conflicts through calendar planning and scheduling;
- * Increase communication between students, parents, teachers, coaches, and administrators so that conflicts can be avoided or resolved in amicable fashion;
- * Employ common sense resolution strategies if unavoidable conflicts occur.

Guidelines:

In order to reduce the potential for conflicts to occur, and resolve conflicts as they occur, the following expectations and guidelines have been established:

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Calendar: A comprehensive activities/athletics calendar will be created in the spring for the following school year and distributed to all staff and students

involved in student activities / athletics. Teachers, coaches and activities sponsors will avoid scheduling events to the extent possible during other activities and events.

Communication: Coaches, teachers and activity sponsors will review the dates involving students for their activity so that conflicts will be identified at the earliest possible date. Coaches, teachers and activity sponsors are responsible for reviewing their schedules and dates with their students. Students are responsible for making their coaches, sponsors or teachers aware that a conflict exists.

Notification & Resolution: When conflicts are identified, students will make the involved coaches, sponsors or teachers aware of each conflict at the earliest possible date, no later than two weeks (ten school days) prior the date in conflict. Coaches, sponsors and teachers will first attempt to assist the student in resolving the conflict without consequence to the student by employing one of the following solutions:

1. **Performance/Athletic Contest vs. Practice/Rehearsal/Optional Activity:** A performance or athletic contest always takes precedence over a practice, rehearsal or optional activity. The student will attend the performance / athletic contest. When possible, students will be allowed to leave the performance/athletic contest to attend the practice / rehearsal / optional activity once their responsibility to the performance / athletic contest has been completed.

2. **Practice / Rehearsal / Optional Activity vs. Practice / Rehearsal / Optional Activity:** Every attempt will be made the by staff member involved to devise a schedule where the student can participate in both events if realistically possible. Practice / Rehearsal / Optional Activities may also be restructured to permit dual participation.

3. **Scheduled Activity vs. Rescheduled / New Activity:** An activity that has been entered on the activities calendar in the spring takes precedence over activities that have been rescheduled or added at a later date except in the case where an activity has been rescheduled (due to a conflict) to a date where no conflicts exist and another activity causing a conflict is added to that date. In this case, the first rescheduled activity takes precedence.

4. **Performance/Athletic Contest vs. Performance/Athletic Contest:** In the event that a performance or athletic contest conflicts with another performance or athletic contest and the conflict was unavoidable due to calendar, league schedules, tournament scheduling or "draws" or other restrictions out of

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our control, the teachers, coaches and/or sponsors will work with parent involvement to amicably resolve the conflict. If an amicable resolution cannot be

found, the conflict will be mediated and resolved by the high school principal or his/her designee.

5. District/Regional/State/National Activity vs. "Regular" Activity:

A district, regional, state or national performance/athletic activity takes precedence over a regular school practice, rehearsal, performance or athletic contest. These types of conflicts are sometimes unavoidable due to tournament scheduling, draws and/or continued success (winning) by a team or activity. To insure the best chances for continued success by a team or activity, the district, regional, state or national performance/ athletic activity shall take precedence over other school related activities even though the other activity may have been scheduled first.

PLEASE NOTE: In the event that a student fails to make the involved coach, sponsor or teacher aware of a conflict at the earliest possible date, no later than two weeks (ten school days) prior to the date in conflict, the student will be subject to consequences as deemed appropriate by the involved coach, sponsor or teacher for the event that is missed.