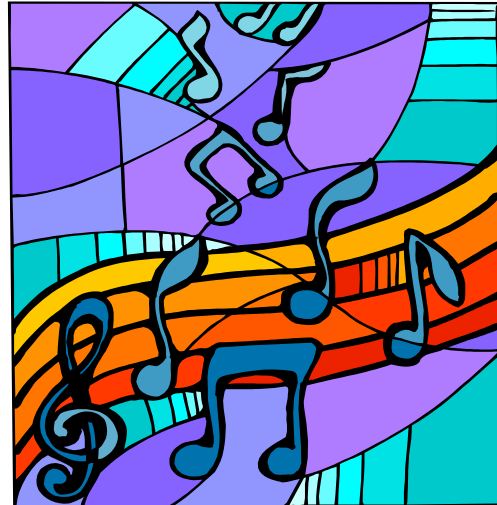


# GHHS VOCAL MUSIC

INFORMATION HANDBOOK



*Revised- August 2009*

## DEPARTMENT GOALS

To provide the necessary skills and opportunities for encouragement of lifelong learning and appreciation of choral and vocal music by:

- developing and enhancing musicianship and artistry through a variety of music literature.
- discovering and exploring the fundamentals of singing.
- developing proficiency in the reading and interpretation of music.
- emphasizing professional standards of rehearsal and performance practices.
- providing high quality performances for the community.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Students who have been in the GHHS Vocal Music Department should be able to make a smooth transition into a college choir, community choir or adult choir with the experience necessary to be a competent and educated member. They should be able to take part in and/or listen to choral performances with knowledge, appreciation for and enjoyment of the art form.

## **INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

Welcome to Vocal Music for the 2009-10 academic year! Please take a moment to familiarize yourself with some important details parents and students need to know. In an effort to save your time, some of the highlights that most pertain to you are indicated below. The other information is more for the students, which you are welcome and encouraged to read as well.

**1. Director Contact Information**

Andrew Grega, GHHS/MS Vocal Music Director  
485-4013 [agrega@grandviewschools.org](mailto:agrega@grandviewschools.org)

Please feel free to call for *serious* concerns. The best time to catch me is between 2:15-3:00 PM daily. Otherwise, you may leave a voice mail message. Please use email for quick answers to simple questions.

**2. Vocal Music Website (By far, the best way to stay informed for concert dates and special instructions concerning all our events!)**

✓ Go to [www.grandviewschools.org](http://www.grandviewschools.org), click “performing arts,” find the link at the bottom of the page.

✓ Bookmark this page and check frequently for information and updates.

**3. The sections of this booklet which will interest you most...**

✓ Vocal Music Boosters description below

✓ Page 5- Course Content/Grading

✓ Page 6- Event and Performance Attendance/Absence Policy

✓ Page 7- Performance Dress and Traveling

**4. Please sign and have your student return the parent permission and commitment form.**

## **VOCAL MUSIC BOOSTERS**

Any parent whose student is a member of Vocal Music is considered a member of Vocal Music Boosters. This active parent volunteer organization is dedicated to the support of the vocal music events and stage arts at GHHS. Meetings take place usually once per month, and any parents who are interested in donating time or resources are encouraged to attend. Any level of help or involvement is appreciated, as you may choose how involved you can be according to your schedule. The two events that require the most parental support per year are the Vocal Music Boosters “Coffee House” Show in the fall, and the musical production team in the winter. However, assistance is needed at random intervals and in a variety of ways all year. Please consider getting involved in the Vocal Music Boosters!

**For more information about the boosters, please visit the Boosters page on the Vocal Music Website.**

## **INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS**

Thank you for your interest in vocal music at GHHS. The benefits of being involved in a musical ensemble are endless, and hopefully this is just the beginning for you! The rest of the handbook contains the pertinent information needed to begin your musical learning.

## **GHHS VOCAL MUSIC**

Any student who a registered member of Concert Choir, The Grandview Singers or the musical cast during the current academic year is considered a member of the Vocal Music Department. Hopefully you will find yourself able to be both proud and supportive of our organization and our ensembles, and that you will represent us all with high class, dignity and respect! Expect to get out of the music program what you put into it. If you give very little, expect little in return. If you dedicate and give your best, expect the best in return!

### **CONCERT CHOIR**

Concert Choir is open without audition to all GHHS students who are interested in choral singing. Basic vocal training, music reading, and choral singing concepts are taught through a variety of choral literature. The music studied ranges from the Renaissance period through modern music, with difficulty ranging from basic to intermediate. Much attention is given to the fundamentals of singing, such as breathing, tone quality, vowel alignment, expression, blend, balance, and many other concepts that emphasize the correct use of the singing voice. The activities for this ensemble usually include the Fall Concert, the Vocal Music Boosters "Coffee House" Show, Holiday Concert (for the public and for the elementary/middle school students), OMEA Adjudicated Events Seminar, OMEA Adjudicated Events (District/State) and the Spring Concert/Awards Night. Successful performance participation in all of these events is mandatory in order to fulfill the course grades.

### **THE GRANDVIEW SINGERS**

The Grandview Singers is a select chamber choir which studies and performs several styles of music throughout the school year including art music from all style periods, madrigal music, vocal jazz, and popular music with occasional moderate choreography. Only students who can maintain the highest standards of musical excellence through choral performance and rehearsal are permitted to hold membership in this ensemble. Members are chosen by an audition process that takes place at the end of the previous school year. An above average level of commitment and cooperation during all rehearsals and performances is required. Emphasis is placed on a greater mastery of performance and vocal production skills within the repertoire of progressively challenging music. Membership in The Grandview Singers requires considerable responsibility both in and out of school time, which requires careful planning and time management from each student involved. The activities for this ensemble usually include the Fall Concert, the Vocal Music Boosters "Coffee House" Show, Holiday Concert (for the public and for the elementary/middle school students), OMEA Adjudicated Events Seminar, OMEA Adjudicated Events (District/State), Spring Cabaret, and Spring Concert/Awards Night. The Grandview Singers also perform a variety of "run-out" performances for the community during the December holiday season. Successful performance participation in all of these events is mandatory in order to fulfill the course grades.

Please refer to page 8 for all other vocal music opportunities, including Fall Play, Musical, Spring Cabaret and others.

## DAILY REHEARSAL GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS

1. All **book bags and outside class materials** must be placed off to the sides or towards the back of the room (and not in the doorway).
2. Students are expected to have their **music folder, sight-reading and/or theory books (when applicable) and a pencil** *before the warm-up begins*.
3. It is important that everyone be in their **assigned places when the warm-up begins**. Talking needs to cease as soon as warm-up is cued.
4. **Talking during rehearsals** creates distraction and prevents you and others from learning and performing at their best. This will not be tolerated. Please be respectful to others around you and to those leading the rehearsals.
5. It is not possible to learn to sing at your best ability with **food or gum** in your mouth. Therefore, neither can be permitted in any rehearsal; no exceptions.
6. **Water bottles are permitted, and encouraged!**
7. Students in the 5<sup>th</sup> period rehearsal are reminded that your lunch and beverages need to be completely consumed *during lunch*, not during the beginning of the period! Restroom breaks will not be granted at the beginning of 5<sup>th</sup> period unless there is an unusual circumstance. The lunch period allows you 47 minutes to take care of your needs, all of which can reasonably happen before the first bell if you are utilizing this time properly.
8. Rehearsals (and the school day) are not the appropriate times to be using a phone and/or texting. **Cellular phones** must be turned off and put away during rehearsal. Visible and/or audible phones will be confiscated.
9. **Respect property!** Keep the room neat, pick up after yourself, and do not touch what doesn't belong to you, especially electronic or expensive looking equipment.
10. **Proper attitude and respect** toward other students, staff, other organizations, guests, and anyone leading the class are necessary and expected at all times.

## RESULTS OF EXPECTATION FAILURE, OR ANY OTHER PERCEIVED DISRESPECTFUL OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR (in no particular order):

- ✓ Warning, which is usually "the look."
- ✓ Lowering of participation grade (for certain)
- ✓ Detention and/or trip to the bench
- ✓ Parent phone call, email or conference
- ✓ Conference with guidance department or principal
- ✓ Denial of privileges
- ✓ Probationary membership in the ensemble
- ✓ Removal from the ensemble with a failing grade (after reasonable efforts to help improve behavior have been exhausted)

## MUSIC AND FOLDERS

1. You (and a partner in some cases) are responsible for having your **assigned folder and materials** in each rehearsal.
2. It is permitted and HIGHLY encouraged to take your music out of rehearsal for study and reflection. You can retain a lot from simply looking over your music!
3. It will often be necessary and required to **mark the music** lightly *with a pencil*, but never with anything else.
4. Your music and folder are on loan to you, and are school property just like your textbooks. You will be responsible for replacement should anything end up lost or damaged.

## **COURSE CONTENT/GRADING**

**Course grades** will be determined by the following criteria:

- **Performance attendance** (approximately 50%)  
One of the major functions of the choir is to perform. The voice and morale of every student are important! Therefore, **performances are mandatory. Any un-excused absence from a scheduled performance will result in a zero for the performance grade, which usually ends up lowering the quarter grade by at least two letter grades.**

- **Development of basic choral music fundamentals** (approximately 30%)  
This grade will be determined by observing continuous improvement towards the fundamental **musical and non-musical** skills of rehearsing and performing in a choral ensemble.

Some examples of **musical** skills include:

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| ✓ singing posture            | ✓ style knowledge                        |
| ✓ breath support             | ✓ score reading and sight-reading skills |
| ✓ tone quality/vowel shaping | ✓ rhythmic and pitch accuracy            |
| ✓ intonation                 | ✓ articulation and diction               |
| ✓ blend and balance          | ✓ precision                              |
| ✓ phrasing                   | ✓ stage presence                         |
| ✓ musicality and expression  |  |
| ✓ dynamics                   |  |

Some examples of **non-musical** skills include:

- ✓ positive and energetic participation
- ✓ following procedures and rules
- ✓ listening to directions, which requires the absence of talking!
- ✓ having the appropriate materials (pencil, music, folder)
- ✓ audience etiquette

**Periodic written work, written tests, and performance tests are all possible methods that could be used to assess the fundamental skills, along with audible and visible effort/progress in daily rehearsals and during performances.**

- **Participation/effort grade** (approximately 20%)  
**Every student must prove to be relevant to the ensemble.** The best way to accomplish this is to remember that “just singing” will not be enough. A choir full of people who “just sing” at about a C grade level will never reach their potential. Positive contribution, visible effort and a positive attitude will be expected at all times. Continuous improvement and progress will be expected from all students, whether novice or advanced. Your desire or lack of desire to improve will be noticed and graded accordingly.

- **Extra Credit Opportunities**

Extra credit can be obtained by attending any type of music concert, both in and out of school! Proof of attendance (program, ticket stub, etc.) will earn you “storage points,” which will assist you in the event of a borderline grade. The concert you attend must be of your own free will, not as a requirement for another grade or course.

## **EVENT AND PERFORMANCE ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE POLICY**

- Each choir member is required to attend all scheduled rehearsals and performances, both in and out of normal school hours. **Performance/activity calendars are provided for you and your parents so that you may plan ahead accordingly. The most up-to-date calendar will always be online.** You are responsible for notifying parents early and arranging your personal and work schedules to accommodate your commitment to all vocal music activities.
- **Any un-excused absence from a scheduled performance will result in a zero for the performance grade, which usually ends up lowering the quarter grade by at least two letter grades.** Habitual absences from events or performances will cause probationary membership and/or removal from the ensemble with a failing grade.
- **If you feel that you have a legitimate reason to miss a performance or other special event, you must submit an absence request form in advance.** If this form is not completed and returned, the absence will be counted as un-excused, regardless of the reason. These forms are located in the folder cabinet.

### **Some examples of absences that would be excused without question:**

- ✓ Death or serious illness in the family
- ✓ Legitimate and verified personal illness making you incapable of performing

### **Some examples of absences that could be excused if properly communicated:**

- ✓ Required religious commitment (with parental verification)
- ✓ Extenuating circumstance (which the director must determine and approve)
- ✓ Irresolvable conflict with another school-sponsored activity (which the director must determine and approve)

### **Conflicts with other school-sponsored activities:**

Any conflicts between choir activities and other school activities should be brought to the attention of the director ASAP, and no later than two weeks before the event is to take place. Solutions can usually be worked out if enough time is given to do so. *Do not assume that the director is aware of all possible conflicts, and do not assume that a school conflict (such as a game on the day of a concert) will automatically excuse you from a required event. If fair communication is provided, a fair solution/compromise will be worked out between the students and staff members involved.*

### **Some examples of avoidable absences that would not be excused:**

- ✓ Work
- ✓ Lack of transportation
- ✓ Lack of communication, or not submitting an absence request form in time
- ✓ Conflicting event *practice or rehearsal* (*Games or performances* are negotiable.)
- ✓ Vacation (planned after dates have been posted)
- ✓ Negligence (“blowing off” the event)

- **GOLDEN RULE OF THE ABSENCE POLICY: When it comes to possible time conflicts, **TIMELY COMMUNICATION** with the director is the key! Fair communication will result in fair solutions.**

## PERFORMANCE DRESS

Although most of the uniforms are provided, each member is responsible for supplying a *portion* of his or her performance uniform.\*

### Concert Choir

- ✓ Provided: uniform dress shirt (funded by Vocal Music Boosters)
- ✓ Student must provide: black *dress pants*, black closed-toed *dress shoes* and black socks (flip-flops are not acceptable), black belt (men only)

### The Grandview Singers

- ✓ Provided: uniform and garment bag (funded by your course fee)
- ✓ Student must provide: black *dress shoes* and black socks (boys), black character shoes (girls).

### **Notes about uniforms**

1. It is important that you make arrangements early to obtain the indicated items. Do not wait until the last minute before performance time, as not having the right clothing is not an excuse for missing a performance, and ignoring the performance dress code will jeopardize both your obligation to perform and your performance grade.
2. When dressing for concerts, students need to keep in mind that the purpose of the uniform is to make the group look dignified, respectable and classy. **The word “uniform” implies an equal and balanced appearance.** Although the director generally supports student efforts to establish individuality through daily creative fashion choices, your appearance in an ensemble performance situation is not the appropriate time to do so.
3. The provided uniforms are school property and are on loan to you. You will be responsible for replacement should anything end up lost or damaged.

*\*Please notify the director immediately if there is a financial problem with obtaining the proper dress attire. Help is available, and requests will be kept confidential between director and parent and/or student.*

## TRAVELING

1. When we travel and/or appear in public, we are representing our own organization as well as Grandview Heights High School and the Grandview community. Demeanors of maturity, respect, friendliness, class, pride and humility are expected from all ensemble members at all times.
2. All standard school rules are in effect for the duration of each trip. It is expected that students will follow directions at all times.
3. Serious consequences await any student who is found to be in possession of or under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol while on a school trip, which would most likely include the calling of police/principal/parent, immediate dismissal from the trip at student/parent financial expense, and severe disciplinary action upon return to school.
4. When traveling to and from performances and school transportation is provided, all members will go and return on the provided transportation unless special arrangements are made IN ADVANCE BY PARENTAL REQUEST. At no time will students be permitted to drive or ride with other students.

## STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

- **“Coffee House” Show**- (Ideas by Sept. 30, approval by Oct. 20, performance Oct. 24.) Opportunities are available to *Vocal Music members* for vocal solo, duet, or small ensemble performances on a limited basis. Information and instructions will be posted on the bulletin board in the choir room by the first week of school.
- **Fall Play**- (Auditions Sept. 1-2, performances Nov. \_\_\_\_\_.) Open to *everyone grades 9-12* by audition. Audition packets and information will be posted on the vocal music bulletin board and on the website during the first week of school.
- **OMEA Solo & Ensemble Contest** (February)  
This event is available only to students who are taking private voice lessons and/or students interested in pursuing a music education or performance degree after high school. See director in early November to express an interest in registration.
- **Musical**- (Auditions Nov. 2-4, performances March 4-6)  
Open to *everyone grades 9-12* by audition. Audition packets and information will be posted on the vocal music bulletin board and on the website by mid-October.
- **Spring Cabaret**- (Present ideas by April 6, approval by May 7, performance May 15)  
Opportunities are available to *Vocal Music members* for vocal solo, duet, or small ensemble performances on a limited basis. Information and instructions will be posted on the bulletin board in the choir room by early March.
- **Instrumentalists/Accompanists**  
Any student with advanced instrumental or piano skills is encouraged to show interest in accompanying one of the choirs. Occasional opportunities are available in both ensembles, as well as middle school choirs. See the director if eligible and interested.
- **Section Leaders**  
Each section in each choir will be appointed a section leader. People interested in section leader should be confident in their musical skills and should have a genuine desire to help the ensemble, help individual students, and assist the director. Characteristics of the section leader should include:
  - ✓ Ability to learn parts quickly and efficiently
  - ✓ Sensitivity to students in need and a willingness to help
  - ✓ Ability to lead section in sight-reading exercises
  - ✓ Willingness to boost ensemble morale with a positive attitude and enthusiasm
  - ✓ Consultation with the director in regards to section progress and problems
  - ✓ Demonstration of confidence with musical and leadership skills
  - ✓ Ability to abide by rehearsal guidelines and expectations (set a good example)See the director if interested in section leader, as these positions will be *appointed* within the first nine weeks.
- **Individual help appointments**  
Available to *all students grades 9-12* interested in individual coaching with note learning, music reading, singing issues, audition advice or other musical issues. Please see the sign-up sheet on the choir room bulletin board for available times.

**GHHS  
VOCAL  
MUSIC**

