

# De Soto Choir

## CHORAL HANDBOOK



2024-2025

Mrs. Mindy Fry, Director of Choral Activities

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# Welcome

Dear Wildcat Choir Members and Parents,

I am excited to welcome you to the De Soto Choir Program. We are going to have a great year! While the art of learning music is rewarding, it is often the self-expression and joy of *performing* music that bring students into a program. That being said, we strive to offer ensembles that will fit the needs of every singer.

Covid hit our program hard and as we rebuild, we currently offer 3 different ensembles for students to take part in. As we grow, we will diversify our choir offerings to fit our needs. Currently we have one treble choir and two mixed choirs.

The music repertoire that we sing will cover many different time periods, cultural backgrounds and difficulty levels. Every song will provide new challenges and learning for all students. Perhaps most important are the life skills you are will develop and the friendships/memories you will take with you. In my time at DHS, I've been overwhelmed by the work ethic and enthusiasm in the choral program. It is an honor and privilege to be your teacher, I can't wait to see everything that you accomplish this year. Thank you for choosing to be a part of it, let's do this!

Sincerely,  
Mindy Fry

## Contact Information

Email is the format that I can most quickly respond to you! But please feel free to reach out at any time. Communication is the key to success and I look forward to working with everyone in the DHS choral program.

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# Choral Ensembles

*All choral ensembles are **co-curricular**. This means that we meet during the day as an academic course, but also have concerts and other performance obligations outside of school hours.*

***Concerts are REQUIRED as part of the academic grade for these courses.** Graduates from 2028 will also be required to have to Post-Secondary Achievements and choir counts as a PSA.*

**De Soto Voce** – This choir is an advanced, auditioned ensemble of up to 24 voices. This choir will perform various genres of music, including jazz, madrigals, multicultural and other styles as needed. Members will perform outside of class time in area concerts, KSHSAA Regional and State contests, Kansas Music Educators Association (KMEA) district auditions and will serve as ambassadors of the choir department for school sporting events and area functions.

**Wildcat Chorale** – This choir is an intermediate, unauditioned ensemble for SATB (Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass) voice parts who have prior high school singing experience. Primary focus will be on building on musicianship skills while developing the voice. In addition to 4 required evening performances, this ensemble will combine with De Soto Voce at KSHSAA Large Group Festival.

**Choir Foundations** – This choir is a beginner ensemble (no prior singing experience at the high school level) that will be divided into 2 separate classes that join together to perform at concerts. The primary focus of this choir will be developing music literacy skills, rehearsal skills and continuing to help the voice develop. In addition to 4 required evening performances, this group will perform at one of our KSHSAA choral festivals.

# Expectations and Grading

## EXPECTATIONS

- I. **Prompt** – students must be ON TIME to rehearsals, regardless of time. Early is on time, on time is late!
  - a. To be considered on time, you must...
    - i. Have belongings set aside
    - ii. NO cell phones out without permission
    - iii. Folder and pencil in hands
    - iv. Seated and ready for warm-ups at the bell
  - b. To be considered late...
    - i. Entering the room after the tardy bell
    - ii. Without proper rehearsal equipment in seat when bell rings
    - iii. Other materials cluttering the rehearsal space
- II. **Prepared** – have music learned BEFORE class so we can spend time rehearsing the ensemble.
  - a. Music tracks will be dropped online and students will be expected to be prepared with the assigned material. This can be done via any electronic device or in the practice rooms at school.
  - b. All musicians will be expected to be independent, able to sing their parts a capella with no help. Students who come to class unprepared will be given 1 free pass and will be expected to show knowledge of music at the following class period.
- III. **Productive** – be a contributing member of the ensemble.
  - a. Be ready to work...we are in choir to improve our musicianship.
  - b. Be a leader...if something is wrong, take steps to correct it. Don't be content with mediocrity. Our ensemble is only as strong as those who are working in it.
  - c. Anything that distracts Mrs. Fry (or classmates) from rehearsal is anti-productive and will result in loss of grades. Examples include:
    - i. Talking or chewing gum in class
    - ii. On cell phone without permission
    - iii. Rude or disrespectful behavior to any teacher, substitute or classmate
    - iv. Lack of effort in class (not singing, no facial expression, not marking music, etc.)
- IV. **Positive** – your attitude is like a price tag, it shows how valuable you are.
  - a. Avoid gossip and confrontation, it poisons our environment.
  - b. Use mature communication to solve any issues that arise.
  - c. Have integrity and be kind always!
  - d. You either contribute to or detract from the ensemble. Which do you choose?

## **GRADING –**

- I. **Daily Grades** – Students will receive a Rehearsal Etiquette grade each week for appropriate rehearsal behaviors.
  - a. Being present and on time – your attendance is crucial to our success
    - i. Absences – while you won't be penalized for an absence, you will be responsible for staying caught up. See Mrs. Fry or a classmate during Seminar.
    - ii. More than 4 missed rehearsals during a concert prep cycle might result in removal from the concert and an alternate assignment would be provided. The student will need to show Mrs. Fry mastery of music in order to secure the right to perform.
  - b. Musical behavior – actively marking music with solfege and stylistic notes, audiating, listening, etc.
- II. **Performances** – Students will receive 50-75 points for a concert, depending on the length and difficulty of the performance. ***Because you are receiving a calendar up front, all singers are expected to be at all required performances.*** Please make sure you notify your family and employers as well of all dates you will be unavailable due to this school obligation.
  - a. Excused Absences – illness, emergency, religious observances or other school conflicts are the only excused absences. Make-up work is required and will be worth full credit. Please notify Mrs. Fry as soon as possible if you know you will be missing a concert, no later than 24 hours following the performance in order to be excused.
  - b. Unexcused Absences – everything that ISN'T illness, emergency or religion. (Practice of any kind, games, birthdays, work, transportation issues, etc.) Make-up work is still required but will only count for a max of 70% of the concert grade.
  - c. Make-Up Work – there is no true way to make up a concert and assignments might vary based on type of concert, time left in semester, style of concert, etc. Students will need to turn in or perform quality make-up work to receive credit. It will be graded accordingly.
  - d. Consequences - Lack of attendance, notification of absence and/or missing make-up work will result in a 0 for the concert grade, just like a 0 for not completing work in any other class. This will be detrimental to your overall grade so please be responsible!
- III. **Assignments** – Students will receive a set number of points based on the difficulty, length and importance of assignment. These might include the following:
  - a. Sight-Reading Quiz – to gauge progress in reading music
  - b. Part Checks – to verify independent knowledge of vocal parts
  - c. Homework – any written assignments given in class, these will be few!
  - d. Performance Evaluations – to allow students the ability to critique other performances
  - e. Choir DOES qualify for Skip-A-Final

# Performance Events

\*\*Other performance opportunities may arise and notification will be given as soon as they are scheduled. These performances might include performing the National Anthem at sporting events, Crown Center, etc. If conflicts arise with the added performances, please see Mrs. Fry and decisions will be made regarding attendance on a case by case basis.\*\*

## De Soto Choir Performance Schedule - 2024/2025

Date	Day	Time	Event	Location	Participants
July 29-Aug 1	Mon-Thurs	9:00 am to Noon	District Audition Retreat	DHS	District Auditionees
July 29-July 30	Mon-Tues	1:00-4:00 pm	Leadership Retreat	DHS	Choir Council
Aug 30th	Friday	TBA (evening)	Fall Fest	DHS	De Soto Voce
September 11th	Wednesday	6:00-8:30 pm	Choir Kick-Off	DHS	Voluntary
September 6th	Friday	6:00 PM	Youth Night Nat Anthem	DHS	All Students
September 20th	Friday	6:30 PM	Fall Homecoming	Football Field	De Soto Voce
September 21st	Saturday	All Day	Fine Arts Mattress Sale	DHS	Voluntary
October 15th	TBA	All Day	State Choir Music Workshop	Kansas University	District Auditionees
October 11th	Friday	7:00-7:30 PM	Glo Wild Zoo Performance	KC Zoo	TBA
October 15th	Tuesday	6:00-8:00 PM	Pre-Concert Rehearsal	PAC	REQUIRED
October 16th	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Fall Choir Concert	PAC	REQUIRED
November 2nd	Saturday	All Day	ECKMEA Honor Choir Auditions	Gardner-Edgerton HS	District Auditionees
November 14-16	Wed, Thurs, Sat	7:00 PM	Mary Poppins Fall Musical	PAC	Voluntary
December 7th	Saturday	7:30 AM	ECKMEA District Honor Choir	Shawnee Mission Northwest HS	Select Students
December 7th	Saturday	TBA	DS Mayor's Tree Lighting	De Soto City Hall	De Soto Voce + voluntary
December 3rd	Tuesday	3:00-5:00 PM	Pre-Concert Rehearsal	PAC	REQUIRED
December 4th	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Winter Choir Concert	PAC	REQUIRED
Feb 8th	Saturday	All Day	KSHSAA Piano Reg. Festival	Baker University	Voluntary
Feb 7th	Friday	6:30 PM	Winter Homecoming	Main Gym	De Soto Voce
Feb 22nd	Saturday	All Day	KSHSAA Piano State Festival	Wichita State Uni	Selected Students
Feb 27th-Mar 1st	Thurs-Saturday	All Day	KMEA Honor Choir	Wichita, Century II	Selected Students
March 6-8	Thurs-Saturday	7:00 PM	Winter Musical	PAC	Selected Students
April 1st	Tuesday	6:00-8:00 PM	Pre-Concert Rehearsal	PAC	REQUIRED
April 2nd	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Festival Concert	PAC	REQUIRED
April 5th	Saturday	All Day	KSHSAA Reg. Solo/Ens Festival	MVHS	REQUIRED
April 8th	Tuesday	6:00-8:00 pm	Large Group Rehearsal	DHS	REQUIRED
April 9th	Wednesday	During School Hours	KSHSAA Large Group	Baker University	REQUIRED
April 9th	Wednesday	5:30-830 pm	Spotlight DHS	DHS	Small Ensembles
April 26th	Saturday	All Day	KSHSAA State Festival	Salina South HS	Solos and Small Ensembles
May 6th	Tuesday	6:00-8:00 PM	Pre-Concert Rehearsal	PAC	REQUIRED
May 7th	Wednesday	7:00 PM	A Final Chord	PAC	REQUIRED
May 12th	Monday	6:00-8:00 PM	Awards Banquet	Commons/PAC	Voluntary
May 18th	Sunday	TBA	Graduation	DHS	De Soto Voce

# Concert Dress

*Below are suggested guidelines for concert attire. If you need help finding or borrowing some items, please let me know. You can also just do the best you can with what you have!*

**\*\*All students will be required to purchase a choir t-shirt in the fall.**

**This shirt will be worn for all informal performances as well as at school on concert days.\*\***

## **Wildcat Chorale and Choir Foundations**

All Mixed and Concert choir members will wear the DHS choral robes for concerts. Students should wear their DHS choir t-shirt with black clothing on the bottom half.

1. Black pants OR black skirt (please no short skirts)
2. Black dress socks if wearing pants
3. Black dress shoes (no tennis shoes or flip flops). Avoid high heels or strappy/flashy shoes that attract attention. A good option for females would be character shoes...these are great for choir AND musical.

## **De Soto Voce**

All members of De Soto Voce will need to choose between 2 options:

GOWNS – you will be measured and need to purchase the required dress (if you don't already have it.)

You will need to provide:

1. Black character shoes (these can be ordered many places online or purchased from any dance shop in town)
  - a. BLACK
  - b. 1.5-2.0 inch heels (NOTHING OVER 2 INCHES)
  - c. No t-strap...just a regular ankle strap
2. Jewelry – if added, it will need to be identical. We will discuss and vote in class on this option.

VEST/BOW-TIE – you will be measured and need to purchase the required vest/bow-tie if you don't already have it.) You will need to provide:

1. Nice black dress pants and a long sleeved white dress shirt
2. Black dress socks (only black) and black shoes (in decent condition)

## **EVERYONE:**

1. Hair must be pulled back or away from face
2. DO wear lots of deodorant
3. Do NOT wear perfume or cologne. The strong smells mixing together can be overwhelming on stage under the bright lights.
4. Take pride in your appearance!



# Musical Opportunities

A number of additional musical opportunities for our students are available in connection with local and state-wide music organizations. These opportunities require additional rehearsal time outside of regular class time and may carry additional expenses that are not covered by the school. These types of activities often demand that a student be organized and motivated to work and practice independently. Information on specific events and opportunities will be distributed throughout the school year. Many are included in the calendar I've provided as they also can include travel and require some planning ahead.

1. KMEA District and All State Choir – Mrs. Fry would encourage any sophomore, junior or senior who is interested in auditioning for District and All-State Honor Choir to do so! It is a wonderfully challenging and rewarding experience that pushes you to sing at a higher level. Because the music is often collegiate level repertoire, rehearsal tracks will be made available to students who are interested and Mrs. Fry will set up after school rehearsal times so that students can be successful. District Choir takes place in December. Students who make the State Choir get to travel to Wichita in late February for our state music convention.
2. KSHSAA Regional and State Solo/Small Ensemble Festival – all high school students have the chance to participate in solo and small ensemble competitions which occur in April. It is strongly encouraged that students work with a private voice teacher to prepare for their vocal solos. However, Mrs. Fry is willing to help students with their selections for contest and is happy to be a second set of ears for any other student already taking voice lessons.
3. Musical – auditions will happen in August and we'll get started on rehearsals right away! See Mrs. Fry or Ms. Bryant for audition information. Our official audition meeting is Thursday, Aug 24th in the theater.
4. National Anthem – students may sign up to sing the National Anthem as a solo or small group at sporting events for DHS. This is a wonderful way for students to earn extra credit and lettering points.

# Leadership Positions

One of the goals of the DHS Choir Program is to help students develop leadership skills that will benefit them throughout their lifetime. Each position has unique responsibilities and aids the overall success of the choir. Each spring, students may take on one of the following leadership positions for the following year. Some positions will be filled per class and others will be filled for the program.

## **Board of Directors:**

The BoE oversees all choir events, acts as a liaison between choirs and director, assists and fills in other committees as needed. This group is comprised of a President, Secretary and Social Media managers.

## **Event Planners:**

The Event Planners are in charge of planning our September Choir Kick-Off and May End of Year Banquet as well as a winter holiday party and another spring event.

## **Section Leaders:**

Section Leaders are strong singers AND leaders who are willing to work ahead and guide their peers in learning music in class.

## **Outreach Committee:**

The Outreach Committee primarily works on recruitment through updating our bulletin board, attending activity nights for incoming freshman, interviews for yearbook, etc.

# Choral Awards

**Director's Award** – this award will be given to a senior boy and girl. This award will be based on commitment to the choral program, extra musical activities, school spirit and other similar factors. These winners will be announced at our spring pops concert and recognized at the Senior Breakfast before graduation.

**Shooting Star** – this award is for the Johnson County Arts Council and Mrs. Fry will nominate an outstanding choir member. This award does not have to be for a senior. It involves an audition and application and is an honor to be nominated. There is a banquet that all nominees get to attend and winners are chosen in each category.

**Singers Choice** – This award will be given to one singer from each class. All students who fulfill the criteria will be on the voting ballot and the award is chosen by a class vote. Required criteria include musicianship, participation, leadership and commitment.

**Legacy Award** – This award will be given to all seniors who have committed 4 years to the choral program. Your dedication to the DHS Choirs is amazing!

# Varsity Letter

Every DHS Choir Member is eligible to receive a varsity letter. Students lettering for the first time will receive a DHS Music Patch and a gold service bar. For each consecutive year lettering in choir, students will receive an additional bar. These recognitions are earned for participation and effort in the choral program. In order to earn a letter, students must meet the following criteria:

1. Have no **unexcused** absences from any performance.
2. Have had no major discipline problems in choir.
3. Have a **B** average or higher in choir.
4. Earn 50 points in any category listed or 70 points total on the table below

## Lettering Criteria

Category	Quantity	Points	Points Earned	Category	Quantity	Points	Points Earned
<b>COMMITMENT</b>				<b>ACHIEVEMENT</b>			
Number of years in HS Choir		10 - 1st 5 - cons.		Solo & Ensemble Festival Participant		10 pts	
Other music class		5 pts per semester		II Rating - Regionals		5 pts per event	
Participation in a Summer Honor Choir		5 points		I Rating - Regional		10 pts per event	
Private Voice Lessons		5 pts per semester		II Rating - State		5 pts per event	
<b>Sub-Total Commitment</b>				I Rating - State		10 pts per event	
<b>LEADERSHIP</b>				Regional Piano Participant		5 points	
Student Leadership Position		10 points		II Rating - Regional Piano		5 points	
Concert Set Up/Tear Down		5 points		I Rating - Regional Piano		10 points	
<b>Sub-Total Leadership</b>				II Rating - State Piano		5 points	
<b>SERVICE</b>				I Rating - State Piano		10 points	
Fundraiser		5 per event		KMEA Freshman Honor Choir (KMEA or ACDA)		10 points	
Volunteer Project		5 per event		Audition for KMEA District Honor Choir		10 points	
<b>Sub-Total Service</b>				KMEA District Honor Choir		20 points	
<b>PERFORMANCE</b>				KMEA State Honor Choir		30 points	
Optional DHS Choir Performance		5 pts per event		Major Choral Award		5 points	
Other Choir Concert Performance		5 pts per event		<b>Sub-Total Achievement</b>			
Musical (Cast or Pit)		10 points		<b>Sub-Total Commitment</b>			
HS or Collegiate Choir Concert Attendance		3 pts per event		<b>Sub-Total Leadership</b>			
Any other musical concert		2 pts per event		<b>Sub-Total Service</b>			
<b>Sub-Total Performance</b>				<b>Sub-Total Performance</b>			
				<b>Sub-Total Achievement</b>			
				<b>TOTAL POINTS EARNED</b>			

# Signature Page

We have gone over the DHS Choir Handbook extensively in class. It contains pertinent information such as Grading, Performance Schedule (a digital copy is also on the Choir Website) Concert Dress, etc. The handbook is posted on our choir website, please feel free to reference it as needed as questions arise. If you would like a hard copy or a translation, please let me know and I am happy to provide one for you! ☺

- ☐ I allow pictures and videos to be taken of my child (in choir) throughout the year to be used for school purposes (flyers or brochures for recruitment, yearbook, website, etc.)
- ☐ I allow my child to be transported by the school (bus or district van) to choral functions that occur during the day.
- ☐ I know where to find access to the full contents of the 2024-2025 DHS Choir Handbook. For questions, please contact Mrs. Fry.  
[mfry@usd232.org](mailto:mfry@usd232.org) or 913-667-6250.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this signature no later than Friday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> ...thank you!