

**CHOIR
ENRICHMENT - GRADE 6, 7, 8**

THE EWING PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2099 Pennington Road
Ewing, NJ 08618

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In accordance with The Ewing Public Schools' Policy 2230, Course Guides, this curriculum has been reviewed and found to be in compliance with all policies and all affirmative action criteria.

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Preface

This curriculum guide is intended to provide a vertical and horizontal framework for the music program of the Ewing Public Schools. It is designed to identify the essential components needed by teachers when they prepare instruction in music which will best meet the needs of their students. The teacher's knowledge of their students' level of development, learning styles, and general readiness to learn should be the guiding factors in selecting the most appropriate ways to reach the goals and objectives defined by the guide.

The choral literature studied in Concert Choir is the 'textbook'. Teachers should feel free to integrate other resources where appropriate as long as they are consistent with the goals and philosophy as outlined. Integration of concepts and skill developed in Concert Choir into other content areas is encouraged to stimulate real-life experiences and Meaning.

All students are not the same. They have different needs, learning styles, and levels of readiness. Therefore, teachers will need to make choices in planning instruction so that the need of each student is addressed and the scope of the curriculum is accomplished.

Course Description and Rationale

Concert Choir is an elective course designed to expose students to varied styles of choral literature while teaching students to perform skillfully with expression, as well as with technical accuracy. The goal of the course is to provide students with the musical and technical skills necessary to foster a lifelong commitment to healthy and engaged music making.

Through the study of music, students will experience personal, intellectual, social, economic and human growth by fostering creativity and providing opportunities for expression beyond the limits of language. Students will define and solve artistic problems with reason and technical proficiency in addition to developing and presenting basic analysis of works of arts from various perspectives. Students will study exemplary choral works from a variety of cultures and historical periods with the ultimate goal of relating various types of musical knowledge and skills within and across all disciplines. In addition to rehearsal and study during scheduled classes, the concert choir performs several seasonal concerts, as well as at events in the Ewing Township community. Students also receive a group lesson held on a rotating basis.

Concert Choir is a year-long class with several performances throughout the year. While the class may only study certain repertoire up until it is performed, vocal production skills, musicianship and music theory, and student responsibility, are learned and reinforced during every rehearsal. All of the units of study are emphasized almost every rehearsal and cannot be broken down into a number of days or weeks of study. Each unit must be given its own time of study every day, often in conjunction with other areas of study.

Through the collaborative environment of the choral setting, students demonstrate teamwork and display leadership skills. In addition, students develop an understanding of responsible concert attire and performance etiquette.

Unit 1: Vocal Production (ongoing throughout the year)

Why is this unit important?

Singers must learn how to produce vocal sounds in a healthy manner, in order to maintain a lifelong ability to sing. Proper use of the entire vocal mechanism (breath, phonation, placement) is essential to becoming a learned vocalist.

Enduring understandings:

- The vocal mechanism is made up of many parts of the body working together in tandem to produce sound.
- Control of and understanding of the breath is essential for proper vocal production.
- Sound can be internally placed to reverberate in different spots to create different vocal colors and timbres.
- Posture/placement of the tongue and lips helps to create phonated vowel sounds that are healthy and resonant.

Essential Questions:

- How does the body make vocal sounds?
- How does one breathe properly and maintain breath support?
- How does one learn to sing high and low pitches with good tone?
- How do you create appropriate vowel and consonant sounds?

Acquired Knowledge:

- The larynx consists of folds, muscles, ligaments and cartilages that coordinate air flow, resulting in vibrating vocal folds and a fundamental 'buzz tone'.
- The trachea, lungs, bronchi, diaphragm, ribs, abdominal muscles and back muscles act in coordination to control the inhalation and emission of air.
- The coordination of the soft and hard palates stretch the vocal folds to produce lower or higher frequencies.
- The shape of the oral cavity, primarily influenced by the shape of the tongue, and the placement of the tongue to the teeth determine the production of vowels and consonants.

Acquired Skills:

- Breathing technique
- Knowledge of vocal sound production and placement of the voice
- Ability to sing in registers that are healthy and optimal for one's unique instrument
- Correct diction and articulation

Assessments

Formative Assessments:

- Visual and aural observations during class and during weekly lesson time
- In class discussion and frequent checks for knowledge through teacher's vocal modeling

Summative Assessments:

- Written quiz, including assessment of vocal modeling
- Concerts and performances

Benchmark Assessment:

- Midterm singing test

Alternative Assessment:

- Modified testing

Interdisciplinary Connections:

- Learning about the human anatomy and its ability to produce sounds, biologically intended for communication and survival (health/science)
- Learning about the science of sound and how sound waves are created and how they travel (science)

Technological Integration:

- Use of audio examples through platforms such as YouTube and other forms of digital/audio media.
- Demonstrated use of an oscilloscope to show the visual representation of a sound wave.

Suggested Learning Experience and Instructional Activities:

- Daily anticipatory set includes warm-ups that help students to regulate and control breath and placement of the voice before rehearsing repertoire. Activities include:
 1. Breath exercises: inhale for 8, hiss for 12. Adjusting counts to shorter inhale, longer exhale.
 2. Major third warmup - Mah-mah-mah ascending and descending - intended to help students solidify vocal placements within various ranges.
 3. Triad warmup- Mee - Mah: Ascending 1-3-5 and descending 5-4-3-2-1 - intended to help students navigate through alternating tones and properly place their voice within different vowel sounds.
 4. Octave warmup- 1, 3, 5, 8, 5, 3, 1 on zee-ahh, starting on A major - intended to help students navigate an even broader spectrum of tones with vocal placement, moving from one placement to another seamlessly.
 5. Iddle Ka Bitten Otten Botten Bobo and Do - tongue twister intended to implement the additional challenge of shaping the lips and mouth around various vowel and consonant sounds, while maintaining healthy placement.

2020 NJSL:

1.3A.5.Cr3a
1.3A.5.Pr5b
1.3A.5.Pr6a
1.3A.5.Cn11a

Instructional Resources:

Core:

- Selected ensemble music

Supplemental:

- Warm up activities and music
- Google Classroom
- Chrome books
- Youtube.com
- Diagrams of vocal anatomy

Unit 2: Music Theory (ongoing throughout the year)

Why is this unit important?

Musicianship is the essence of music making. It involves using all parts of the mind and body to produce a beautiful sound. This unit emphasizes the technical skills needed to sing adult choral literature, by making connections between the theory of the music and the message of the music as a creative piece. Students who can accurately read and sing rhythms, intervals, scales and harmonies will have a solid foundation for singing in a variety of musical ensembles after high school. The ability to evaluate and critique a performance will lead to a deeper understanding and appreciation of musical issues as well as improve current performance.

Enduring Understandings:

- Tones are organized into octaves, which helps us to recognize the relationship between tones.
- Intervals should be recognized both aurally and visually as notated on the staff.
- Understanding of basic intervals is essential to understanding one's harmonic placement within a musical ensemble.
- Western musical notation follows a series of visual symbols designed to help us define the relationship between beats.
- Reading rhythmic patterns on the staff is an integral part of becoming an efficient sight-reader and ensemble musician.

Essential Questions:

- How are tones represented in musical notation?
- How are beats represented in musical notation?
- What is a time signature and how does it inform the music?
- What are flats and sharps?
- What key am I singing in and what part of that key is my specific voice part?
- How is my specific voice part important to the overall harmonic effect of the piece?
- How do I decipher the teacher's conducting?
- What are common dynamics in music and what effect do they have?

Acquired Knowledge:

- Understanding of written musical notation, including time signatures, key signatures, staves, rhythmic markings, dynamics, and performance notes.
- Aural understanding of tones as they exist within a major or minor scale.
- The combination of whole and half tones used to create both major and minor scales.
- Aural understanding of beats and rhythmic patterns as they exist in both simple and compound meter.
- Understanding of the harmonic role of one's voice part within a piece.

Acquired Skills:

- Ability to understand basic rhythmic patterns in simple and compound meters.
- Ability to read and recognize more advanced rhythmic features such as ties, dotted notes, and triplets.
- Using solfege and the number system to recognize intervals and tones within a scale.
- Ability to understand and follow teacher's conducting patterns.
- A list of musical vocabulary pertaining to notated music.
- Using proper vocal technique to execute vocal dynamics as notated.

Assessments

Formative Assessments:

- Visual and aural observations during class rehearsals
- Discussion pertaining to examples given by teacher and peers
- Observation during rehearsal and lessons

Summative Assessments:

- Written midterm theory quiz
- Concert Performances

Benchmark Assessment:

- Singing tests alone and with others

Alternative Assessment:

- Quizzes and assessments designed to meet students at their individual level of vocal ability and musical understanding.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

- The breakdown of rhythmic values in music is based on the concept of fractions: mathematics.
- The breakdown of tonal intervals in music is based on the concept of fractions and sequence: mathematics.
- Manipulation of the vocal mechanism to create intervals and tones is a biologically-evolved human ability: science.

Technological Integration:

- Use of musictheory.net and/or sightreadingfactory.com for daily sight reading and theory practice.

Suggested Learning Experiences and Instructional Activities:

Interval warmups-

- Major third warmup - Mah-mah-mah ascending and descending - intended to solidify the aural knowledge and recognition of the major or minor third, which is a commonly used harmonic interval in choral repertoire.
- Triad warmup- Mee - Mah: Ascending 1-3-5 and descending 5-4-3-2-1 - intended to solidify the aural knowledge and recognition of the major or minor triad and the perfect 5th, which are commonly used harmonic intervals in choral repertoire.
- Octave warmup- 1, 3, 5, 8, 5, 3, 1 on zee-ahh, - intended to solidify an aural knowledge and recognition of the octave, which is a commonly used interval in choral repertoire, particularly between bass and treble voices.

Takadimi-

- Introduction to and frequent reference to the *Takadimi* method, which assigns a different syllable to each rhythmic value to better illustrate not only the relationships between beats, but also how they fit into the meter.
- Written dictation on dry-erase board/Promethean.
- Group and individual reading of rhythmic examples, as found in teacher's assignments and examples found in choral repertoire.

NJSLS:

General Music

1.3A.8.Cr2b
1.3A.8.Cr1a
1.3A.8.Pr4b
1.3A.8.Pr4c
1.3A.8.Pr4e
1.3A.8.Pr6a

Music Theory

1.3B.12prof.Cr1a
1.3B.12prof.Pr4b

Instructional Resources:

Core:

- Selected ensemble music

Supplemental:

- Warm up activities and music
- Google Classroom
- Chrome books
- Youtube.com, Musictheory.net, Sightreadingfactory.com

Unit 3: Choral Repertoire (ongoing throughout the year)

Why is this unit important?

The study of repertoire enables students not only to apply musicianship and theory, but to develop an aesthetic response to pieces being performed. The study of choral repertoire enables students to learn about musical styles and trends throughout history and their relationship to historical and cultural events. The study of contemporary music involves issues of globalization and technology, allowing students to explore their roles in today's society. Additionally, this course will broaden the students' musical spectrum in terms of genre, helping to create an accomplished and versatile ensemble member.

Enduring Understandings:

- The history of music can be segmented into several eras.
- Each era of music has been influenced by not only the composers who were prolific during those times, but also by historical and societal events.
- A successful choir employs a diverse repertoire that represents different time periods, genres, and cultures.
- Knowledge of and experience in performing different genres and eras of music helps to build a more musically knowledgeable and successful ensemble member.

Essential Questions:

- What are the periods of music? Who were the most famous composers of those periods?
- What were the musical trends within those periods?
- How do those musical trends inform my vocal production and musicianship?
- How were trends in music informed by societal and historical events?

Acquired Knowledge:

- Western choral art music has evolved from medieval chant to 20th century techniques.
- All cultures have a form of folk music.
- Contemporary music has its roots in minstrelsy and jazz.
- The arts and politics have always influenced each other.
- Technology allows new ways to create and share music.

Acquired Skills:

- Identification of various styles of music.
- Ability to use learned knowledge of vocal health and production to best suit varying genres of music.

Assessments

Formative Assessments:

- Visual and aural observations during class rehearsals
- Class discussion with frequent checks for understanding

Summative Assessments:

- Written midterm quiz
- Concert performances

Benchmark Assessment:

- Virtual quizzes (ungraded)

Alternative Assessment:

- One-on-one assessments

Interdisciplinary Connections

- Students will examine the way historical and social events have shaped the arts: history/social studies
- Students will learn how literary works of the time and other artistic trends have informed music composition: language arts
- Students will examine how the career path of a musician has changed over the eras of music: social studies

Technological Integration:

- Youtube
- Audio recordings

Suggested Learning Experiences and Instruction Activities:

- Weekly anticipatory set listening activity in which students critique various choral works from different historical eras of music. Students will work in groups to record their thoughts, then engage in class discussion to compare with peers.
- Integration of choral repertoire into concert performances that reflects the eras of music we have learned.
- Plan-Your-Own-Concert assignment that asks students to assemble their own repertoire set, using pieces of music they have researched.

2020 NJSL

1.3A.8.Pr4a
1.3A.8.Re7a
1.3A.8.Re7c

1.3A.8.Pr4b
1.3A.8.Re7b
1.3A.8.Cn10a

Instructional Resources

Core:

- Selected ensemble music

Supplemental:

- Google Classroom
- Chromebooks
- Youtube
- Recordings and other multi-media materials

Unit 4: Performance Technique (ongoing throughout the year)

Why is this unit important?

Students who are members of choir take on the additional responsibility of performance. The end product of their practice and knowledge is a public performance. It is important that students demonstrate appropriate behavior and clothing at these events. In order to prepare for these events, students need to demonstrate high levels of punctuality and responsibility. These are lifelong skills that will serve them in future jobs and activities, in the arts and beyond.

Enduring Understandings:

- Students will employ high levels of preparedness for all rehearsals and performances.
- Students will be punctual for all rehearsals and performances.
- Students will demonstrate high levels of self-discipline for proper group rehearsals and performances.
- Students will dress appropriately for performances.

Essential Questions:

- What are the behavioral expectations of a musician?
- What is proper performance and audience etiquette?
- What are skills needed for a successful rehearsal?

Acquired Knowledge

- Musicians are ready to rehearse or perform on time with all materials and instruments and with a pencil.
- Performers do not talk on stage during a professional performance. They stand with appropriate posture and do not wave at audience members.
- Clean, conservative clothing is appropriate for concert performances.

Acquired Skills

- Punctuality
- Responsibility to group
- Good attendance skills
- Ability to keep track of schedule

Assessments

Formative Assessments:

- Visual and aural observations during class rehearsals
- Discussion
- Observation during rehearsal and lessons

Summative Assessments:

- Singing tests alone and with others
- Concert Performances

Benchmark Assessments:

- Frequent checks for good posture, behavior, and maintenance of a clean, focused rehearsal area.

Alternative Assessments:

- Differentiated assessments

Interdisciplinary Connections:

- Punctuality and organization is crucial to being a part of a team to create a successful product: business/life skills
- Proper use of the stage (lighting, sound design, et al) is essential to the production of a concert performance: theatre/art
- Collaborating with peers helps to create a more successful ensemble experience, resulting in a cleaner end product: interpersonal skills

Technological Integration:

- Use of auditorium stage, including sound board, microphones, lights
- Email reminders, virtual calendars used for rehearsal schedules

Suggested Learning Experiences and Instructional Activities:

- Daily use of etiquette and decorum within the classroom, during rehearsal time
- Dress rehearsals onstage prior to concert performances
- Breath and relaxation exercises as part of anticipatory sets that help to focus the mind and body

2020 NJSL

1.3C.12prof.Pr5a

1.3A.8.Cr3b

1.3A.8.Pr4e

1.3A.8.Pr6a

1.3A.8.Pr6b

Instructional Resources

Core:

- Selected ensemble music

Supplemental:

- Google Classroom
- Chromebooks
- Youtube
- Recordings and other multi-media materials
- Auditorium stage/risers
- Auditorium sound and light system

Appendix

Sample Standard Integration

21st Century Skills and Career Readiness Practices

- CRP1. Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.
- CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
- CRP6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
- CRP8. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
- CRP11. Use technology to enhance productivity.

Example: The entire course of the year encourages students to employ the above criteria for skills and career readiness practices by asking them to work collaboratively as a cooperative member of an ensemble. Within the ensemble group, they are expected to communicate their thoughts, as well as present creative ideas alongside peers. Additionally, they are asked to feel a sense of responsibility for the group as a whole by contributing effective work skills and support for their peers.

Technology Integration

8.1.8.DA.1: Organize and transform data collected using computational tools to make it usable for a specific purpose.

8.2.8.ITH.2: Compare how technologies have influenced society over time.

Examples:

- Standard 8.1.8.DA.1 is integrated into Unit 2 by use of interactive online programs that are designed to help students sharpen their skills in music theory. These programs include *musictheory.net* and *sightreadingfactory.com*
- Standard 8.2.8.ITH.2 is integrated into Unit 3 by asking students to research and examine choral pieces that reflect the effects of technology on music through different historical eras.

Interdisciplinary Connections

2.1.8.PGD.1: Explain how appropriate health care can promote personal health.

2.1.8.PGD.4: Analyze the relationship between healthy behaviors and personal health.

7.1.NH.IPRET.1: Identify familiar words and phrases in culturally authentic materials related to targeted themes.

6.1.5.HistoryUP.2: Compare and contrast forms of governance, belief systems, and family structures among African, European, and Native American groups

6.1.5.HistoryUP.6: Evaluate the impact of different interpretations of experiences and events by people with different cultural or individual perspectives.

6.1.5.HistoryUP.7: Describe why it is important to understand the perspectives of other cultures in an interconnected world.

Examples:

- Health and physical education standards are integrated from Unit 1 through exploration of human anatomy, specifically the vocal mechanism. Students will learn how the respiratory and muscular systems work in tandem to create the human voice, as well as how to establish healthy habits in caring for the voice.
- Foreign Language standards are integrated through learning of choral repertoire in non-English languages, including their meanings, pronunciations, and intended portrayals.
- History standards are integrated into the curriculum particularly through Unit 3, as students examine how historical and societal shifts helped to shape trends in music and the arts.

Amistad Mandate

- Mandate requires the teaching of the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in this country and the contributions of African Americans to our society

Example: Throughout the course of the semester, repertoire is learned that is representative of the African American Spiritual, as well as the birth of American jazz. These genres of music are explored vocally and technically, as well as historically through the intents, meanings, and stories behind their composition.

LGBTQ+ /Disabilities Resources

The following resources will be covered throughout the school year. They explore the works and lives of musicians, singers, and choral composers who are members of the LGBTQ+ community, or have sustained successful careers in performance, despite physical disability.

- <https://www.singers.com/composers/Benjamin-Britten/>
- <https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/great-classical-composers-who-were-gay/>
- <http://www.nycgmc.org/>
- <https://www.thomas-quasthoff.com/en/100-perzent-tq/>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali_Stroker