

Richland High School Choir Handbook 2016-17



Directors

Andrew Steffen, Teresa Hughes

Voice Instructor - Elizabeth Maddox

Accompanist - Elaine Lindsey

Fine Arts Director - Danny Detrick

Principal - Carla Rix

Website - www.richlandhschoir.weebly.com

Can be accessed through the BISD Fine Arts page
by clicking on either Director

Greetings to Students and Parents

Welcome to the 2016-17 Richland HS Choral program! As a Choir member you will be involved in exciting concerts, competitions, and other extra-curricular performances throughout the year. You will have the opportunity to improve your skills to the level you are willing and able to achieve, whether your goal is to have a singing career, a music teaching career or simply life-long enjoyment of the talent you have developed. You will have the opportunity to perfect performance skills through challenging vocal literature and build a firm skill and knowledge foundation for future musical growth.

We will continue to find ways in which to improve our organization through commitment and responsibility in our respective choirs, vocal sections and as individuals. We want this year to be one of continued growth as we work together in the RHS choirs to promote an even greater sense of ownership in the RHS choral program, its legacy and its achievements!

“Walk with the dreamers, the believers, the courageous, the cheerful, the planners, the doers, the successful people with their heads in the clouds and their feet on the ground. Let their spirit ignite a fire within you to leave this world better than when you found it.”

From the Varsity Choir Officers - *We want everyone to know that we are committed to maintain a choral program that will both sustain our legacy and look to future growth. We are working to continue to be effective leaders so that both the choral program and you as an individual will be provided the **structure** and the **support** needed for growth. We are looking forward to working side by side with you to make decisions that will continue to impact all of us for years to come.*

This Handbook is designed to help answer as many questions as possible. You will also need to access charmsoffice.com and enter **RichlandHSChoir** to download the calendar, handbook, uniform and payment information, etc. In addition please check the RHS Choir website and teacher websites for Mr. Steffen and Mrs. Hughes on the Richland campus website. We urge parents and students to regularly take advantage of this information.

The support and ongoing involvement of every parent is an invaluable asset to both students and directors. Please consider joining the RHS Choir Booster Club. Information about the Booster Club will be available at Parent Information Meetings and all concerts.

The outstanding reputation of the Richland HS Choirs owes much to the dedication of its students and parents. With determination, commitment and passion we can look forward to many years of continued excellence!

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Choir Officers

Choir Officers are appointed on the basis of leadership, service and participation in the choir program. This appointment is based on an application/interview with the director and a polling of the choir. Officers plan social events and are deeply involved to serve the needs of our choirs.

Varsity:

Choir President – Gwenola Carroll Vice-President - Brad Symank

Spirit Leader – Kyleigh Whitsell Social Chairman – Caleb Dollarhide

Historians – Alex Brown and Christina Soto Equipment Manager – Levi Richey

Chorale Section Leaders – Ashely Dickerson, Ruth Andrews, Moriah Khalil, Braden Kelley, and Steven Brown

JV Choir Officers (Class President, Secretary and Section Leaders) are selected in the first six weeks of school.

Performing Choirs and Ensembles

Bel Canto: (JV Treble) - 2nd period

Rebel Men's Choir: (JV Tenor-Bass) - 3rd period

Chorale: (Auditioned Varsity Mixed) - 4th period

Cantare: (Auditioned JV Treble) - 5th period

Rebellaires: (Auditioned Varsity Show Choir) - 6th period

Southern Harmony: (Auditioned Women's Ensemble) - Wednesday afternoons 3-4:30pm

Varsity Women's and Men's Choirs: As scheduled on Commitment Sheets

Grading Policy

Your grade in Choir will be a direct reflection of the time, effort, and preparation you give to Choir. Emphasis will be on rehearsal preparedness, participation, and organization; punctual and consistent attendance at all rehearsals and concerts; development of vocal skills; development of sight reading skills and knowledge of basic music theory; and maintaining a great attitude in class. *BISD policy requires a minimum of 8 daily grades and 2 test grades per 6 weeks.*

Grading Scale:

Daily Work:

Class Participation and Preparation, Organizational Grades, Written Homework, Theory, Folder (if required), Rehearsals, etc.

Tests:

Singing tests, Theory tests, Sightreading tests, Six Week test (if given), Major projects, Concerts and other required events, etc.

Extra Credit:

Optional Competitions and Performance opportunities, Concert Critiques, Extra Written Work

***Very Important:** The following policies will be used for two distinct types of choir assignments:

1) "**Regular**" homework assignments such as theory worksheets, marking music for certain elements, research on a composer, etc: These will be counted off 10 points the first day and 30 points the next date that they are late or to reflect any changes to BISD grading policy changes.

2) "**Deadline**" assignments such as contest entries, parent signatures on needed forms, applications, activity permission forms, fund raiser forms and/or money, etc. - These will not be graded but there may be penalties for failure to act by the due date, such as loss of privileges or awards, non-issuance of Choir-provided uniforms and/or inability to participate in the activity in question. E-mail reminders will be utilized by the Directors throughout the year.

*In the case of money that is due, if there is a specific difficulty involved then it needs to be discussed with one of the Directors in private **before** the deadline in question.

However, no student will be allowed to participate in any choir fundraiser, take a uniform or pay for a future event until all **initial choir paperwork and first invoice payment are turned in.

Class, Rehearsal and Performance Attendance

Class:

Students are expected to be in class every day. Unlike other academic classes, it is impossible to "make up" activities that occur in a choir rehearsal. Excessive absences, even if "excused," may affect current or future membership in a choir or specific performance.

Students are expected to report to class on time and to be in position on the risers with all the necessary materials when the bell rings. The policy for tardies will follow the school-wide tardy policy.

Rehearsals and Concerts:

Attendance at sectionals, rehearsals and concerts scheduled outside of the regular school day is required for all choirs. Students are expected to be on time and have all required materials. Directors or Officers will take attendance at the beginning of every rehearsal. Tardy or absent students must see the director to get it excused if possible. **No prior communication = no excuse.**

All tardy or excused absence requests must be turned in ahead of time **on a specific choir form and signed by a parent, coach, teacher, sponsor or employer if applicable.** The choir director will review the request in a timely manner and discuss it with the student if needed.

Any missed concert event that is not pre-excused will necessitate getting a signed note from a **parent, coach or sponsor** which will then be considered. Make-up work/tests will be rigorous. Call someone if you do not have a ride!!

Concert participation is counted as at least one test grade. An unexcused absence will lower the student's grade as notated in the grading policy. Students are responsible for keeping up with the dates and times of activities scheduled on the choir calendar.

Students are required to attend the entire concert as part of a concert etiquette grade. No one is permitted to arrive late or leave early without prior permission of the director.

Excused and Unexcused Absences:

Failure to appear at a major function will greatly affect your grade unless you are excused by a director, and unexcused rehearsal absences may lead to exclusion from performances and other activities. Choir is a serious commitment and a privilege, not a right. Make the decision now to be committed and to doing your part to make it successful for everyone!

Students will receive a General Calendar and Commitment Sheet each semester as well as very detailed monthly calendars and weekly checklists that will list all rehearsals and performances. Unexcused absences will be graded accordingly.

Excused absences include medical emergency or personal injury or death in the family.

Unexcused absences include but are not limited to work conflicts, transportation, babysitting siblings and Driver's Ed (avoid March and April). In the event of an unexcused work absence one of the directors may call a student's place of employment to seek a future resolution.

Communicate early and often about scheduling conflicts. In case of a conflict with another school activity, it is the responsibility of the student to notify the sponsors of the activities **as soon as you realize they exist!** At that point, it becomes the responsibility of the sponsors to determine the student's obligation. (There is a specific choir form that will be available for requesting an excused absence from another extracurricular activity.)

In addition, please refer to specific forms and paperwork throughout the year which will outline policies and attendance requirements for various Choir activities and competitions.

Eligibility

We will adhere to UIL policy concerning eligibility. Eligibility must be checked for anyone performing in competition or for any event where admission is charged. Members of ensembles singing off campus must also be eligible. Directors are well-versed in the timelines and specific requirements for maintaining or regaining academic eligibility.

Choir Policies and Expectations

Choir members are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful manner, including using appropriate language and actions and keeping hands, feet and objects to themselves.

Choir members are to respect the property of others. This includes all student belongings and all choir materials, furnishings, instruments, directors' office, equipment, the auditorium and stage, etc. Anything borrowed must be immediately returned to its original location.

No students are to be in the Choir office without permission.

Choir members are expected to communicate with the directors at all times when there is or will be a deviance from established Choir policies. Failure to communicate is not an option.

Failure to read, listen and respond appropriately on the student's part does not necessitate an emergency on the teacher's part! Anything stated, written on the board, written on paper, sent in an e-mail, text or distributed in class is the student's responsibility.

In all that we do or say, choir members should show respect to each other and to our organization, whether you are in the choir room or anywhere else. Negative comments, dissension, lack of pride, fighting, gossip, etc. have no place in an excellent choral program such as yours. Deal with choir problems **in the choir room** and only with the person it concerns. **This policy extends to the use of electronic media.**

Rehearsal Procedures

1. Upon entering the room all personal items and backpacks, etc should be placed on the floor to the side of the risers out of the line of sight and you should be seated on the risers with all Choir supplies (black and colored folder, music and pencil) when the bell rings.
2. Cell phones and other electronic items may be kept on your person but must be kept out of sight unless you are specifically directed to use them. Problems with cell phone will result in loss of privileges.
3. Refer to the board at the front of the room or listen to your director for the initial assignment or activity for the class period.
4. As scheduled, Choir Officers will help check for homework and needed supplies. If a student is absent on a certain day, any paperwork that was given in class that day will be on the assigned shelf for that class. It is the **student's** responsibility to locate or request the information/ assignment and to turn it in at the next available opportunity. (Be aware that some extracurricular deadlines do not change even if you are absent! If in doubt, ask the director or an Officer.)
5. During rehearsal, Choir members are to be fully engaged - not to talk or make other distracting sounds while a director is rehearsing. Students may raise hands to ask questions, offer suggestions, clarify something, etc. If a student is not directly engaged with a director or another leader he/she should study his/her music. Full focus and effort is expected throughout the rehearsal.
6. There is to be no more than one student off of the risers at any given time unless directed to do so by a director. Students should leave risers or an assigned rehearsal area only if there is an immediate necessity.
7. Water is allowed in the choir room during rehearsal. No gum or any kind of food or candy are allowed during rehearsals. Not only do you not sing well with gum in your mouth, but it also poses a choking hazard.
8. According to school policy, restroom passes are not allowed in the first or last 15 minutes of classes. There are no restrooms that are close to the choir room and students are highly encouraged to use a more convenient restroom during passing periods. Students who drop off items in the choir room, go to the restroom or any other location and return late to the choir room will be counted tardy.

Supplemental Information

Needed Supplies:

Black 1" 3-ring binder containing all rehearsal music (due by Sept 4)

2-pocket folder with brads for all Choir information and paperwork, calendars, written work, music theory worksheets, etc (supplied)

Sharpened pencils

Red lead pencils (Chorale)

Box of tissues (please bring ASAP)

Music Memorization:

All music is performed by memory unless otherwise noted. Learning curve sheets, and memorization deadlines and tests may/will be given during some six weeks periods.

Calendars:

Each choir member will receive a year-long General Calendar. This is rather "general" and directors may add, change and/or delete from this calendar as the school year proceeds. Students will also be given monthly calendars and events may be added to these calendars or changed in a timely manner. Students will also receive weekly or bi-weekly class-specific checklists. It is **extremely important** that students communicate at home so that parents are aware of the choirs' many activities.

Commitment Sheets:

Each student will receive two (2) Commitment Sheets per ensemble. One copy will be for the student (Student Copy) to keep at home/in their folder/any place that is useful for keeping track of dates, and the other copy will be brought home, signed and returned (Office Copy) to verify that the dates of performances, rehearsals, and extra performances have been discussed, added to the calendar, and returned to their respective director. These Commitment Sheets are designed to provide as much advanced notes pertaining to the semester's activities.

School Property and Finances:

If students are issued "real" music it must be returned by the due date with the student's name on it to avoid a \$2.50 fee per octavo. Students who owe money to the Choir will not receive Choir letters or jackets while they are in debt; the awards will be held until debts are paid. Students may not order or pay for "new" items such as upcoming field trips or add extra optional expenses when money is owed for "old" debt. This includes voice lesson debt and/or unreturned items from the previous school year.

Fundraising:

All Choir members are expected to participate in planned Choir fundraisers. On years that a major trip is planned students will be allowed to apply a portion of funds raised in student fundraisers to an "individual" account.

Uniform Requirements

Students are supplied with a district-purchased uniform, which they will borrow and maintain during the year and return after the final concert in May.

Women will be issued a black choir formal. You must provide your own black closed-toe shoes and black hose or knee-highs.

Men will be issued a tux jacket, tux pants and a black vest. You must provide your own black dress shoes and black dress socks. You must purchase a white wing-tipped tux shirt (\$15) and black bowtie (\$5) if you do not already own these.

Choir T-Shirts are included in the Choir Participation fee (see below). There will be designated days and events during which they will be worn throughout the year. Shirts will also be available for parents and/or siblings who would like to purchase one.

Rebellaires and Southern Belles will receive specific written information outlining their unique uniform requirements.

Uniform Policies

Students are responsible for the provided uniform that is issued to them at the beginning of the school year. Students must pay for the uniform if it is misplaced, damaged or if it “disappears.” All provided uniforms are to be taken home immediately upon release and no issued uniforms are to be stored in the uniform closet at school except for on the day of a concert or pictures. You are liable for any uniform that disappears if it is left at school at any other time. Students are highly encouraged to have uniforms cleaned or washed regularly throughout the school year.

When you bring your uniform to school keep it all in one hanging bag with your name on it. Shoes, formals and parts of tuxedos have a way of disappearing at school.

Be certain that the entire uniform is neat and clean and that it is completely ready to go well in advance of all choir performances.

Repairs and alterations need to be done properly i.e. tape, staples or safety pins are not long-term solutions for uniform problems.

No unauthorized jewelry, hair ornaments, etc. are permitted in performance. Hair must be worn out of the face.

Students without proper uniform, shoes, accessories or needed alterations may not be allowed to perform.

Financial Obligations

In order to distribute the yearly expenses required for Choir members, a Choir Invoice will be due at the beginning of the year. The Invoice may be paid all at once or half in August/September and half in October. Any parent who needs to divide payments further must speak with one of the directors. Refer to Invoice for more details.

August Invoice:

1. \$50 - Required Choir Participation Fee (This helps cover student T-shirt, uniform rental/needed alterations/final cleaning, choir CD's, paper and other supplies, concert and program expenses, hospitality, treats and food for students, etc.)
2. \$25 - All-State Audition Track - 1st Round Audition fee
3. \$25 - 9th-10th Grade Honor Choir audition fee (covers total expenses for participation)
4. \$15/\$5 or \$20 for both Men's Tux shirts and/or bowties
5. \$7 - Contest Fee for Solo (mandatory for Voice students)
6. \$25/\$50/\$100 - Booster Club Membership requested from all Choir families (See Booster Membership form) -
7. \$15 - Optional Parent T-shirt(s) if not included in Century/Silver Level Booster Membership -

***Rebellaires** have a separate Invoice that may be paid half now/half in October.

***Southern Belles** will be given a separate Invoice after auditions.

*Voice Teachers are paid directly for all lessons (\$72 initial payment for 4 lessons due at the time of sign-up).

*Choir Trip payments will be handled separately.

October Invoice: Filled out by Director and distributed to specific students

1. Any overdue funds or balances due from August Invoice
2. \$25 - Advancing All-State Track Auditioners - balance for remainder of auditions
3. \$15 - Non-Advancing All-State Track Auditioners (Freshmen and Sophomores) - Mandatory audition for the 9th-10th Grade Honor Choir
4. Audition Fees for last-minute 9/10 Honor Choir participants
5. Rebellaires and Southern Belles - any balance due for fees and uniforms

Spring Expenses:

1. \$30 (9th-11th Graders)/\$40 (12th Graders) - Accompanist Fee for Voice Students - payable directly to accompanist. (All Voice Students will participate in 3 public performances a year.)
2. \$15 (paid to accompanist) - Accompanist fee for Solo contest if not taking Voice Lessons
3. \$7 - Ensemble fees for competition on Feb 23 -
4. Fees from new students/Fees for any added items/Fees for anything left off or not paid in the fall
5. Choir Banquet (TBA)

Extracurricular/Enrichment Opportunities

Private Voice Lessons:

Voice Lessons are billed and paid monthly and are payable directly to the individual Voice Instructor. Voice Lessons are \$18 per week. Voice Lessons are optional but highly encouraged. Contracts and Preference forms are due **August 26** or earlier (preferred). A limited number of Booster Club Voice Lesson scholarships are available. Scholarship Applications are due by **August 26**.

It is the goal of the BISD Fine Arts Department to provide the very best learning experiences for each Choir student and one of these is the opportunity for a student to study privately with a professional vocal coach. This enrichment opportunity is available district-wide to all Choir students in grades 6-12.

The Voice Lesson program serves a two-fold purpose. It allows interested singers to receive additional help in their musical training. Secondly, this individual attention generally improves the performance level of the student and also has a positive effect on the choir in which the student participates. Some credit for the successes that our Choir students have individually and collectively achieved is attributed to the Voice Lesson program.

Detailed Voice Lesson information and forms will be available on-line at the Choir website by Monday, August 15 and in the Choir room any time afterward. Our Voice Instructor at RHS is Elizabeth Maddox.

TMEA All-State and Region 31 9th-10th Grade Honor Choir Auditions:

Preparation for the TMEA All-State audition process begins in the summer and ultimately extends through January as certain students advance to the All-State Choir audition. The audition process requires home and school practice and a high level of commitment. Involvement may entail a student's participation in as little as one audition (if he/she does not advance) or as many as four auditions and possible subsequent membership in the All-State Choir in February. There are policies, materials and guidelines too numerous to include in this Handbook that have been distributed to students separately.

9th and 10th grade students may alternately choose to audition for the Region 31 9th-10th grade Honor Choir. This audition rehearsal process begins after school starts in preparation for a one-time October audition. Additional information is distributed separately.

Students who earn a place in a Region, District or 9th/10th Honor Choir will perform in a Region 31 Concert on **November 12, 2016**.

Musical:

RHS Choir students may perform in an annual musical in conjunction with the Band and Drama departments. The musical requires greater time commitment than almost anything else in which we are involved. Before you commit, inspect your grades, inspect your attitude and inspect your work ethic. Many more details will be given as auditions approach and throughout the musical rehearsal season. A signed contract will be required at some point and a \$100 participation fee will be required. This year's musical will be performed **late January (2 weekends still being considered)**. Auditions will be held **Oct 31-Nov.3, 2016**.

Birdville ISD Solo/Ensemble Competition:

Solo/Ensemble competition will be held **Thursday, Feb 23, 2017** at RHS. Private Voice students are required to enter Solo competition and other students may also choose to compete in Solo. In addition, some students may choose to enter Ensemble competition.

UIL Concert and Sightreading Competition:

All academically eligible Choir students are expected to compete in one or more of the various UIL ensembles from RHS (**April 18-20, 2017**). This is the most important group competition of the year and involves some extracurricular rehearsals and clinics and a Pre-UIL Concert in April. Exact rehearsal schedules and more details will follow as we approach the spring semester. Weekend and evening rehearsals will be utilized as needed.

Texas Music Scholars:

Texas Music Scholars is a state-wide recognition program sponsored by TMEA for students who excel in academics and musical achievements. Students must:

- *Be a viable member of the school's parent musical organization for the entire school year
- *Maintain an overall "A" average as defined by the local school district for the entire school year (90 average)
- *Maintain academic eligibility for the entire school year
- *Participate in all scheduled events of the parent organization (*mandatory* activities)
- *Attend, as an audience member, two director-approved concert events of high school, collegiate or professional level during a school year
- *Have auditioned, been selected, and participated as required in a TMEA organization (Region Band, Region Orchestra, or Region Choir)
- *Perform a UIL Prescribed Music List Class 1 solo for a BISD Solo competition or public performance
- *Consistently exhibit behavior which brings honor to the parent organization, school and community

These criteria may be met through participation singularly or in any combination of band or vocal organizations and may be achieved each school year. Grade averages are calculated through the 5th six weeks reporting period for the purposes determining eligibility.

Letter Jackets:

To qualify for a letter jacket, students must meet the following BISD requirements:

- *Participate with a high level of commitment in the All-State process AND earn a first division on a Class I solo at BISD Solo and Ensemble Contest
- or*
- *Earn membership in the TMEA All-District or All-Region choir. This does not include 9-10 grade Honor Choir.
- or*
- *Participate with commitment and excellence in choir four consecutive years in a Birdville ISD high school. Consistent participation in UIL Concert and Sightreading Contest is required. Completion of the 4th year is required to keep the jacket.

BISD awards the letter jacket or individual letter at no charge to the student. Students may choose to purchase additional patches and embellishments from the letter jacket company. These must be paid for at the time the jacket is ordered. NOTE: No Student will be issued a letter jacket who is not currently enrolled in choir.

Requirements for Choir Letters are the same as for a letter jacket. If a student has already earned a jacket in another activity, only a Choir Letter will be awarded. This policy is set by UIL.

Booster Club Senior Scholarships

The Choir Booster Club awards several scholarships to graduating seniors. Students submit applications in the spring. RHS Booster Club membership is required for application and recipients are selected by the Booster Club Scholarship Committee and other outside evaluators based solely on the quality of the application and essay.

Choir Awards:

There are many opportunities for students to achieve and be recognized for their talent, hard work and service. These awards are generally awarded near the end of the school year.

Choir Auditions:

The RHS Choral program consistently provides excellent opportunities for all singers. **Each RHS Choir member is afforded an equal opportunity to excel and achieve regardless of placement.** Students audition in May and then are placed in appropriately-paced choirs according to educational needs, not necessarily grade level. Placement is based upon **vocal maturity/tone quality, sight reading/aural skills, maintaining eligibility, commitment/contribution, conduct and attendance.**