

Chorus at South Forsyth Middle School

Chorus is one of two year-long connections classes offered to Sixth Graders at SFMS. The Chorus program is one of the largest organizations at the school, with a typical enrollment of around 250 students. We are joined by 80-100 rising sixth graders each year.



Our Chorus program has recently been in the spotlight as a featured performer at the Georgia Music Educators Association's 2020 Annual In-Service Conference, where only two middle schools are invited to perform each year. In 2019, SFMS Chorus was ranked #1 in the state among all other public middle schools for the number of students

selected to Georgia's All-State Chorus. We are anticipating being in contention for that honor in 2020 as well.

Chorus Class Overview

The main areas of study in my class can be broken down into two overarching components; music literacy and music performance. I consider both aspects of the curriculum to be equally important.

Learning to read music is much like learning a new language. It is a challenging, yet rewarding process that will give your child access to centuries of history through music, and the ability to speak a common language with millions across the world. That's an awesome power, and precisely why I put a big focus on teaching my students to read and read well.

The students will study over a dozen pieces of music during their sixth grade year, preparing each for public performance. Along the way, the students will learn about healthy vocal technique, expression through singing, and how to become detail-oriented in their preparation. They will also learn what it means to be part of a team; how to keep balance in an environment that is both collaborative and competitive; and how to contribute to a collective effort that is bigger than just themselves, while also striving for constant self-improvement.

The students will put on four concerts as a full choir; two in the Fall and two in the Spring. A fifth day-trip performance will have them singing in front of judges for an evaluation and potential honors.

Chorus Program Overview

Outside of class, the Chorus program also accounts for quite a few opportunities, including optional trips, performances, ensembles, and clubs. When I started this program seven years ago, I had a vision for what kind of opportunities I'd like to eventually offer. The program still evolves year-to-year, but I can say with confidence that it's fully-featured at this point.

Over the course of a three-year tenure in Chorus at SFMS, each chorus student will have the opportunity to put on over a dozen concerts and three showcases, sing at SFMS and professional sporting events, travel to compete in state and local chorus competitions, and the big one -- compete at Festival Disney in Walt Disney World, an annual Spring Trip just for Chorus students. It's a great balance of rewarding work and deserved fun!

The Chorus program also offers students quite a few ways to continue their music studies outside of the Chorus class. Our most popular extracurricular is Glee Club, a performance-oriented club that lets students perform songs of their choosing for an audience of their peers. We also offer several supplemental ensembles that give Chorus students an opportunity to study different or more advanced literature.

As members of the Georgia Music Educators Association, we also participate in GMEA-sanctioned events, including Performance Evaluations, Georgia's All-State Chorus, and Honor Chorus events at every level.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does my student need to audition for Chorus?

No! My sixth grade class is open to *all* students, from those with a lot of musical experience to those with none at all. This course assumes no prior knowledge and begins with the fundamentals of singing and reading music.

I've heard about Chamber Choir and Accelerated Chorus. Can my student join these groups?

Not yet! At the end of the sixth grade year, all Chorus Students take a placement test that will determine their class for the following year. As seventh (and eighth) graders, they will be placed in either the "on-level" Concert Chorus or the "accelerated" class, which includes our Chamber Choir and Women's Chorus.

What is the after-school time commitment for being a Chorus student?

Sixth Grade Chorus students have four (4) concerts that they are required to attend after school hours, typically one per quarter. These are most often hosted in the evenings around 7PM. They will also put on one Chorus Festival performance during school hours as a "field trip." All other opportunities are optional, and the vast majority of the work is given and completed during class time.

How much does Chorus cost?

Our fees are typically around \$150 for the year. This figure includes our uniform shirt, t-shirt, travel expenses, venue rentals, piano accompanist fees, event registrations, rehearsal/practice audio tracks, and sheet music, the first and last of which make up the biggest portions of the fee. This fee covers the cost of all required Chorus to-dos -- we won't ask for more money unless your student is pursuing an extracurricular opportunity.

Can my student drop Chorus in the middle of the year?

No. Joining Chorus (and/or Band) at SFMS is a year-long commitment. We want the students to see the commitment through to the end; a lot of the hard work and struggle comes during the first half of the year, whereas the self-improvement and rewarding experiences come at the end. Stick with it!

How do I register my student for Chorus?

We have an online form that you can use to select Year-Long classes at SFMS. Our aim is to have all students fill out the form as soon as possible. You can find the form at: tinyurl.com/sfms20

I hope to see your student singing at SFMS next year! Please get in touch with me if you have any questions about the program!

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