

liberty Middle School

Chorus

2009-2010

Handbook

General Information

Chorus is open to all students at Liberty Middle School. Students who register for Chorus attend class once a day the entire year. There are three choruses offered throughout the day, Eighth Grade Chorus, Seventh Grade Chorus and Sixth Grade Chorus. Honor Chorus is an extra-curricular activity, which meets on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 7:50 – 8:40. This is an auditioned group and is open to 6th, 7th and 8th graders.

Students who take Chorus are given instruction in music reading skills and vocal development (see Course Content on the next page). Additionally, much time is spent preparing for performances at school and throughout the community. Seventh and eighth graders who are enrolled in the chorus class will have the opportunity to audition for the all-state chorus, which meets in Savannah in late February. All students will also have the opportunity to audition for the Forsyth County Honors Chorus which will meet in February. In the spring, each choir will compete in the Large Choral Festival which will be held at Reinhardt College.

Dr. Karen Graffius, Instructor

Dr. Graffius is a native of Louisiana and received her Bachelor of Music Degree from Louisiana College and Master's and Doctor of Philosophy Degrees from Louisiana State University. After teaching in Louisiana for 8 years, she moved to Tennessee and taught an additional 8 years. This is her eighth year to teach in Forsyth County and her eighth year at Liberty Middle. Dr. Graffius has received numerous awards for her teaching including being named *Choral Director of the Year* while teaching in Baton Rouge, LA and *Teacher of the Year* while in LaVergne, TN.

Chorus Course Content
Liberty Middle School
Dr. Karen Graffius, Instructor

Goals

1. To help students develop their sense of self-esteem and social growth.
2. To provide performance opportunities for students both at school and throughout the school community.
3. To develop music literacy through instruction in music fundamentals, sight-singing and rhythm.
4. To provide instruction in voice development, which is healthy, and age appropriate.
5. To increase students' cultural awareness by performing literature of various cultures.

Curriculum

Vocal Development

1. The singer will exhibit correct posture.
2. The singer will work toward a free tone devoid of nasality. Care will be taken to avoid a "chesty" sound in the lower range (unchanged voices).
3. The singer will have a relaxed jaw, rounded lips and an open throat (raised soft pallet).
4. Good diction will be stressed including emphasis on the five pure vowels, clear consonants and an understanding of diphthongs.
5. The head voice (unchanged voices) will be developed and the range extended.
6. Emphasis will be placed on good intonation.

Sight-Singing

1. Students will sight-sing in the keys of F, C, G, D and E major using solfege and the following note values: (quarter note and rest, half note and rest, whole note and rest, dotted half note and two eighth notes)
2. Students will experience sight singing in the natural minor scale (tonic is "la").

Rhythm

1. Students will chant, count and/or clap rhythm patterns incorporating the following note values: (quarter note and rest, half note and rest, whole note and rest, eighth note and rest and dotted half note)
2. Students will identify the names of the notes, their rests and their values.
3. Students will explain the function of the two numbers in 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4 time signatures and will identify and explain measures and bar lines.
4. Students will experience reading rhythms in 6/8 time.

Music Fundamentals

1. Students will identify and explain the following musical terms and signs:
Measure, bar line, bass clef, treble clef, fermata, repeat sign, 1st and 2nd endings, D.C. al fine, D. S. al fine, letter names of the notes in the bass and treble clefs, Tempo, dynamics, piano, forte, mezzo-piano, mezzo-forte, crescendo, decrescendo, ritardando, accelerando, allegro, andante and lento

Georgia State Curriculum Standards for Middle School Chorus

The Liberty Chorus curriculum is based on the standards for Middle School Chorus as set by the Georgia Department of Education.

Artistic Skills and Knowledge

1. Demonstrates correct posture for singing.
2. Demonstrates correct breathing techniques for vocal production.
3. Sings accurate pitches and rhythms.
4. Sings scales, arpeggios and vocalizes from memory.
5. Sings with clear vowel sounds, proper diction and appropriate tone quality.
6. Sings the assigned part in an ensemble, with and without accompaniment.
7. Demonstrates proficiency in sight-reading at the expected competency level.
8. Performs selected music repertoire at the expected competency level.
9. Demonstrates ability to perform individually, in small groups and as a member of the total ensemble.
10. Participates effectively as a member of performing ensembles.
11. Recognizes key signatures of music performed.
12. Identifies differences in scales and harmonies from aural and visual examples.
13. Identifies various types of voices heard in choral performances.
14. Demonstrates knowledge of music vocabulary necessary for study, rehearsal and performance of music.
15. Uses print and nonprint media to locate definitions of musical terms and to translate foreign language texts.
16. Sings from memory selected music for public performance.
17. Responds appropriately to conducting techniques used by the director.
18. Describes how technology is used to transcribe, edit, compose and perform music on a computer station.

Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding

1. Interprets meaning of texts in repertoire.
2. Recognizes relationship of text to music elements in repertoire (e.g., rhythm, melody, harmony, form, tempo, dynamics, phrase, and tonality).
3. Demonstrates appropriate understanding of form in literature performed.
4. Identifies the characteristics of performance styles of music being rehearsed and performed.

Historical Context

1. Demonstrates knowledge of composers of selected repertoire and the historical/cultural context of works being performed.
2. Explains the importance of contributions of various ethnic cultures to selected repertoire.

How to Make an A in Chorus

Your grade in chorus is an earned one. It will not be based on your ability to sing. It will be based on the contribution you make to the group. Your grade will also be based on six summative assessments for each semester. An example of the six assessments is listed below:

1. Rhythm Reading Skill Test
2. Fall Concert
3. Music Vocabulary Test
4. Winter Concert
5. Sight-Reading Skill Test
6. Scales Skill Test

Some of your semester grade will come from your attendance at concerts. A schedule of events for the entire year is included on the last page. All concerts marked “mandatory” are required. Only students who are sick (music be an excused absence from school that day or the next) or who have a death in the family will be excused from the performance. All performances are scheduled so as not to conflict with school activities. If a chorus member will be absent from a performance for any reason, contact Mrs. Graffius as soon as possible before the concert. Please mark all concert dates on your calendars at home!

Grading Distribution

Summative Assessments (5 per semester) – 100 points each (100% of grade)

Formative Assessments (10 per semester – are related to summative assessments) – 0 % of final grade

Report Cards will also include assessment in the areas of work completion, participation, responsibility and interpersonal skills. These areas will be marked as follows:

1 – needs improvement

2 – meets expectations

3 – exceeds expectations

Discipline Policy

Liberty chorus students are asked to abide by the following chorus room rules and guidelines.:

- 1. FOLLOW DIRECTIONS.**
- 2. BE IN YOUR SEAT WITH YOUR MUSIC BY THE END OF ROLL CALL.**
- 3. DO NOT CHEW GUM.**
- 4. KEEP HANDS AND FEET TO YOURSELF.**
- 5. SPEAK POSITIVELY TO THE TEACHER AND OTHERS.**
- 6. TAKE RESTROOM AND WATER BREAKS BEFORE CLASS.**
- 7. NO EATING OR DRINKING (EXCEPT WATER) DURING CLASS.**

Upon violation of the above rules, the following consequences will be enforced.

- 1. WARNING.**
- 2. LAST TO PUT UP MUSIC AND BE DISMISSED.**
- 3. MOVE SEAT FOR ONE CLASS PERIOD AND WRITE IN THE BEHAVIOR JOURNAL.**
- 4. PHONE CALL OR E-MAIL HOME.**
- 5. OFFICE REFERRAL.**
- 6. SEVERE PROBLEMS WILL RESULT IN AN IMMEDIATE OFFICE REFERRAL.**

Liberty Middle School Chorus Uniform Requirements

All 6th grade chorus members are required to purchase a chorus shirt for all performances. It will be a red t-shirt with “Liberty Middle School Chorus” on the front along with the Liberty star logo. Additionally, students will be asked to wear black slacks with the shirt. No jeans or capris will be allowed. Shoes should be closed-toe brown or black. No tennis shoes please! Shirts should be tucked into the slacks. Belts should be worn with slacks that have belt loops. Students who arrive at performances improperly dressed will not be allowed to perform and will be required to complete make-up work for missing the concert. If these uniform requirements will be a financial difficulty for anyone, please contact Dr. Graffius as soon as possible. Assistance is available.

Seventh and eighth grade chorus students will wear formal chorus uniforms. These uniforms are owned by Liberty and chorus students “borrow” them for the year. A fitting will take place in late August and any additional uniforms that need to be ordered will be ordered then. Any student who would like to may purchase their own uniform. The cost of the uniform is \$75. The girls’ uniform is a long black gown and the boys wear a tuxedo shirt, black bow tie, tuxedo pants and vest. Boys and girls should wear black dress shoes.

2009-2010 Liberty Middle School Chorus Schedule of Events



September 1	All- State Fees Due 7 th and 8 th grade only Optional
September 8 – September 11	Chorus Fund-raiser – Optional
October 8	Fall Concert – All Grades 6:15 p.m. – 6 th ; 7:00p.m. – 7 th & 8 th LMS Cafeteria, Mandatory
October 10	All-State Auditions Gwinnett County Optional
November 17	Broadway Show Honor Chorus – LMS 7:00 p.m.
November ?	District 9 Honor Chorus, 7 th & 8 th Location TBA (by audition, Optional)
December 7	Winter Concert – All Grades 6:15 p.m. – 6 th Grade 7:00 p.m. 7 th & 8 th WFHS Auditorium, Mandatory
January 9	Second Round All-State Auditions Vickery Creek Middle School
February 11 Optional	Forsyth County Middle School Honor Chorus Cumming First United Methodist Church,
February 25-27	All-State Chorus, Savannah GA
March 11	Pre-Festival Concert - All Grades During the school day – parents invited
March 18 & 19 the	Choral Festival – All Grades, Time TBA (during School day and only one day) Cumming FUMC Mandatory
May 17	Spring Concert – All Grades 6:15 p.m. 6 th , 7:00 p.m. 7 th & 8 th WFHC Auditorium Mandatory
May 26	End-of-the-Year Celebration

Cafeteria, 4:30 – 6:00 p.m.