

the **HANDBOOK** **2015**
2016

Western High School

Chorus

& Vocal Music Programs

Brandon R Monse MME
Choral Music Director
Department Chairman, WHS Fine Arts
District Chairman, Florida Vocal Assoc.

Jimmy Arrojo
Principal



@westernchorus

www.westernchorus.com

EXECUTIVE STUDENT BOARD

Co-Presidents	Arissa Cushnie Sabrina Lacusky
Executive Vice President	Alejandra Cordero
Vice Presidents, Outreach & Advocacy	Samuel Palmisano Kaitlyn Wallace
Executive Publicist	Evangeline Rivera
Property Supervisor	Carmen Rondon
Recording Secretary	Jasmine Douglas
Executive Historian	Meghan St. Pierre
Parliamentarian	W. Zachary Dean

Section Leaders / S	Rachel Jaison
A	Alejandra Cordero
T	Zedrick Richardson
B	Dassi Romain

additional officers & their committees are listed at westernchorus.com/officers

VISION

In singing, we unite to form something bigger than any one of us. We are one voice, one heartbeat, one soul. Music is not just notes on a staff, but rather a connective resonance flowing through all of us, and it is our privilege to have the opportunity to convey art to the world.

—the officers class of 2013

OBJECTIVES

Students shall endeavor

1. to be able to perform alone and in a group.
2. to be able to create artistic music
3. to be able to use the vocabulary and notation of music.
4. to be able to perform properly with their voice and be cognizant of its care.
5. to be able to respond to music aesthetically, intellectually, and emotionally.
6. to be able to continue their musical involvement individually.
7. to become acquainted with a wide variety of musical styles and uses.
8. to develop a feeling of support for community music activities.
9. to develop individual leadership and teamwork characteristics.

DAILY TASKS

- ▶ *participation* in all activities, rehearsals, and performances; including correct posture
- ▶ *maintenance* of an assigned choir folder, 1" black non-shiny binder (**no clear plastic covers please**), uniforms
- ▶ *contribution* to the classroom environment
- ▶ *cooperation* with other class members, officers, and director

MR. MONSE'S "5" RULES

1. **Be prompt.** Be on time and present to class and all other events, including those before/after school, with your student ID barcode ready.
2. **Be prepared.** Have your pencil, binder, music folder, and water, every day. (There will be no water/restroom passes issued.)
3. **Be respectful.** Show respect for people, property, facilities, and music — with a positive attitude, using correct posture — and only use electronic devices with prior approval. Follow directions issued by director or his designees. Speak during appropriate times only. Do not bring food, gum, candy, or drinks into the chorus room or any other performing arts facility; dispose of trash properly.
4. **Be a leader.** Take ownership of your art and your ensemble.
5. **Be engaged.** Have an open mind, *try new things*, be proud of the art we make, have fun!

Class rehearsal points will be withheld for any violation of the classroom rules. (NGSSS DA.912.S.2.1)

STEPPING INTO A UNIVERSE OF POSSIBILITIES

The Handbook is a guide for students and parents about the Western High School Chorus & Vocal Music Program, which has been performing continuously for over thirty years.

As a member of this organization, you will be responsible for maintaining its reputation by assuming the role of **professional musician**; and for furthering our mission to develop lifelong musicians and achieve an expert understanding of music, musicianship, and especially: **artistry**. I encourage and expect you to use your time wisely so that your participation in Chorus will be fun and enjoyable for you, and your peers, in this artistic domain.

Members of the Chorus must discover and realize their commitment to the organization, and do their part for this **TEAM**, by attending all rehearsals and performances, so that our next 33 years may be even more exciting and successful than the first 33. Chorus has a history of individual Music Performance Assessment ratings ranging from “good” and “excellent” to “superior with distinction”, not only at the county level, also at state evaluations. The **Western Singers** have earned Superior ratings on several occasions, and have toured throughout Florida, the South, and the Atlantic coast. Select ensembles have been chosen to perform at Carnegie Hall & other venues in New York City; in 2011, singers returned to NYC to perform as guests of The Festival Singers of Florida. The 2013 **Western Legatos** opened for the Yale University Spizzwinks, the oldest underclass *cappella* ensemble in the US, in addition to performing for our local Congressional delegation. Our tradition of travel — which may include regional, national, and international travel — shall continue as long as the members of the Chorus demonstrate an outstanding knowledge of teamwork, musical technique, pride, and artistry. These past endeavors are reflected upon not in comparison to other choral programs; instead, with pride in our ability to positively affect the lives of students and our community.

The WHS Fine Arts Department faculty believes strongly in the power of aesthetic experiences, which the performing arts provide to all people. It’s now your job, as musicians, to provide each other and our community with the highest level of art and musicianship.

Welcome to our world of musical **art**, where we shall strive to create and share beautiful and unique sounds with each other, for our listeners. I’m incredibly excited to step into this “universe of possibilities” with you.

Brandon R Monse MME
Chair, Department of The Fine Arts, Western High School
Chair, District 15 — Broward County, Florida Vocal Association
brandon.monse at browardschools.com

STUDENT/PARENT CHECKLIST





1 **Print and read Handbook**

2 **Print and complete** personalized Participation Contract, Annual Field Trip Form, and Permission Form for Medical Treatment, from the EMC (follow instructions on separate handout)

3 **Notarize** Permission Form for Medical Treatment and return all three forms by 26 August

4 **Visit westernchorus.com. Click Contact** to subscribe to e-mail list

*Students must access the system at **emc.westernchorus.com** daily with their individual login information in order to access forms, and complete written assignments and at-home vocal practice.*

5 **Follow @westernchorus** across your social media networks.    

6 **Subscribe** to SMS reminders for your specific class — see page 3

7 **Keep** this Handbook in a handy spot for continued reference

8 *(Optional)* Read and sign Honors Credit contract

Only students in Chorus 5 Honors or Chorus 6 Honors qualify, with prior director approval.

Participation Contract / Notarized Permission Form for Medical Treatment / Annual Field Trip Form
all due 26th August (3rd day of school)

— **complete forms and have notarized now** to avoid losing points

— **there are notaries public available at WHS**

— **grade points will be partially withheld for forms received after 26 August**

* from Zander & Zander (2000) “The Art of Possibility: Transforming Professional and Personal Life”

STUDENT ACCOUNTS

Accounts are provided to members of the Program in order to facilitate the payment of trip fees, ensemble fees, etc. Certain fundraising activities distribute a portion/percentage of profits into accounts. Students who do not participate in fundraising cannot enjoy the benefits of the student account system. The Director reserves the right to debit student accounts for any money owed. Money collected in the name of the Program remains in the Program — it is not a bank. Remaining fees and fundraising monies are property of the Program and do not rollover.

WEB SITE, E-MAIL LIST, SOCIAL MEDIA, & SMS TEXTS

The official Chorus website is www.westernchorus.com. Please visit the website and join our e-mail list in order to receive updates. We also have a presence on social media: **@westernchorus** on Facebook, Twitter, Google+, SoundCloud, Instagram, and YouTube. Parents and students are now able to subscribe to SMS text message announcements. Text **@WesternChorus1516** (CHORUS H/L I or CHORUS H/L II students) or **@WSingers1516** (3rd period only) to **23559** to subscribe to announcements for your class. This is a free service; only your standard rates apply.



@westernchorus

MUSIC TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION CENTER (FORMERLY “EMC”)

The virtual learning environment at mtec.westernchorus.com hosts the online component of the choral curriculum. Here, students are required to print forms, complete assignments and vocal practice, and create online audio recordings on MTEC. All students have personal accounts and passwords and may not share their account or use someone else's credentials. A modern web browser such as *Chrome*, *Safari*, or *Firefox* is required.

OFFICIAL CALENDAR

The official Calendar is located on the Website. Grading is partially based on participation at events listed in this official Calendar, so please check it often since events on **the Calendar will change** as performances are booked. Chorus students/parents are responsible to schedule appointments *around* rehearsals & performances. The Calendar will always be the master location of chorus events and supercedes any other information such as social media posts. We recommend subscribing to Calendar updates via Google Calendar.

CO-CURRICULAR MUSIC ACTIVITIES

from FSMA, the Florida School Music Association

“Some activities are co-curricular, meaning the activity is an extension of the classroom curriculum, as defined in lesson plans for a state approved academic course/elective. Band, orchestra, and chorus classes are “performance” classes in which the performance is an important portion of the assessment for the “unit” taught. (The performance is equivalent to a unit test.) Therefore, it is fully appropriate for students who are members of bands, orchestras, and choruses to study musical selections, rehearse them ...for a period of time, have individual assessments, and then a culminating performance as a part of the evaluation of the student, as well as the progress of the class.

As the Evaluation/Festivals, sanctioned by the FSMA, are the culminating activities in the state for marching band, concert band - orchestra - chorus, where students spend a number of weeks in preparation; as the Evaluation/Festivals are not competitions, but are evaluations of music organizations; and as the preparation for participation in the evaluation/festival does include and support curriculum as defined in the Curriculum Framework for the Arts, the performance at these specific events should be considered co-curricular.”

Course narrative notice:

Special Note: This course requires students to participate in extra rehearsals and performances beyond the school day to support, extend, and assess learning in the classroom.

PRACTICES IN OUR UNIVERSE

“IT’S ALL INVENTED”

“The frames our minds create define—and confine—what we perceive to be possible.”

*“What might I now invent,
That I haven’t yet invented,
That would give me other choices?”*

. . .
. . .
. . .

BE A CONTRIBUTION

Every day that you are a contribution to the Chorus, you will make a difference. Sometimes you may not understand how or why, so dedicate yourself to *being a contribution* and *assume* that you will be one. You may be surprised!

LEADING FROM ANY CHAIR

In Chorus you will share the stage with students from every grade, from freshmen to seniors — sometimes even our Western alumni, of whom we are very proud! Whether your class neighbor is a famous pop artist (we have at least two alumni who are) or someone who has never performed before, assume that everyone has the ability to lead, even if they are now discovering that ability. Whether you are new or a four-year senior; or whether you are an officer or a brand new recruit; be a leader from wherever you sit. Everyone is a key person and everyone is needed very much.

GIVING WAY TO PASSION

Music & the arts create powerful aesthetic experiences for those creating music, and for those listening to it. Learn to allow yourself to share emotions and paint musical pictures.

LIGHT A SPARK

Come prepared daily with an open mind and an open voice. Be ready to participate, and be willing to be moved and inspired by music — and to move and inspire others with music.

CREATE FRAMEWORKS FOR POSSIBILITY

Rather than setting limits for yourself, set goals that align with our combined Chorus vision. You may be surprised to find you like a new or different kind of music than before, or that you are able to achieve at a higher level than you perhaps predicted.

A LITTLE STORY

Some students invariably ask “What is the big deal if I miss rehearsal? I am just one person...they can do without me.” “I’ve never missed a rehearsal before.” Or the old chestnut: “I already know my part.” To students (and parents) that would ask such questions, we present the following story:

On Being a “Kxy Pxrson”



Xvxn though my computxr is an old modxl, it works quitx wxll xxcxpt for onx kxy. Thrx arx 119 kxys that function wxll xnough, but just onx kxy not working makxs thx diffxrxncx. Somxtimxs it sxxms to mx that a musical group is somxwhat likx my computxr: Not all thx kxys arx working proprly. You may say, “wxll, I am only onx pxrson; it won’t makx much of a diffxrxncx.” But you sxx, thx xnsxmblx, to bx xffctivx, nxxds thx activx participation of vxry pxrson. So thx nxxt timx you think you arx only onx pxrson and that your xffort is not nxxdxd, rxmxxbxxr my computxr and rxalizx this:

You arx a kxy pxrson, and you arx nxxdxd vxry much.

"How will I be a contribution today?"

All students must attend all daily rehearsals, including those during school hours **and** those outside school hours (which are graded assignments pursuant to School Board Policy 6306.1). Performing in any music ensemble requires **combined** effort and therefore, skipping class, and skipping co-curricular music activities, will be considered poor musicianship. Students start each week with 0 points earned, and have the opportunity to earn 20 daily rehearsal points. Any unexcused absence from a daily class rehearsal will result in 20 points withheld from the student's weekly rehearsal grade; any unexcused tardy will result in 15 points withheld. Due to the "one-time" nature of choral rehearsals, any excusable tardy or absence will result in the withholding of 5 points from the weekly participation grade. **Although this page probably seems wordy, its message is simple: if you are not in rehearsal, you have not been a contribution, so you have not earned points.**

Be prompt — while it may seem harmless to show up to events 2 or 3 minutes late, in the "real world," people may be fired for being even one minute late. Work on punctuality now, and you will never have to worry about it in the future. We suggest always planning to arrive 5 minutes earlier than necessary to ensure that you will not be late. Remember this motto:

 **"Early is on time, on time is late, late is unthinkable"** 

You are a key person and you have an effect on your peers. Affect your peers in a positive way by exhibiting punctuality.

All students are required to attend each Main Concert, as well as district and state Music Performance Assessments (MPAs) sanctioned FSMA. An unexcusable absence from a Main Concert will result in failure for the term. Students who miss concert(s) may not be allowed to attend Chorus trips. An excusable absence* from a main concert may be made up with a written assignment at the director's discretion. The annual District MPA, held at a local school, provides an opportunity for the Chorus to receive an outside, professional adjudication of our performance. For this reason, all students must participate in the District MPA, and, if the Chorus qualifies, the State MPA.

Excusable absences from rehearsals and performances, including those outside school hours, include **only**: extreme illness on the student's part (doctor's note **required**, and **please e-mail us to let us know why you will be missing rehearsal**), a death in the immediate family (documented), a religious obligation (note from religious official required), wedding/family event, receiving a Pulitzer Prize for Music, receiving an Oscar for Best Soundtrack. In cases of extreme illness, please contact the Chorus Office as soon as possible. A student seeking to excuse an extreme illness must present a doctor letter immediately to the Chorus Office.

Students must be picked up promptly at the end of rehearsal and shouldn't be waiting in front of the school. Parents should not wait for a student phone call before coming to school to pick up a student. **If a student is waiting beyond 15 minutes after an event, Davie Police Department will be called to pick up the abandoned student.**

Unexcusable absences from rehearsals and performances, **including those outside school hours**, include, for example: work, transportation problems, babysitting for family or others, **doctor or dental appointment**, sports practice, detentions, homework/studying for a test, club meetings, driving exam, unexcused absence from school. Unexcusable absences from performances will result in letter-grade deductions or failure and the possibility that students will not be allowed to participate in any or all future choral events. Understand that unlike club meetings and sports, **Chorus events are academic assignments** and you will be graded on your participation and musicianship. Students: post your Chorus schedule at work so that they do not schedule you. *Employers are not allowed to interfere with school.* The director will contact any job supervisor, to clarify this, upon request.

*Since Chorus events often take place after school, conflicts such as doctor appointments, which would be excused during the school day, are not excusable when they result in missing an after-school choral event. Arrange your appointments around Chorus events. If you accidentally schedule a **conflicting** appointment, re-schedule it. Everyone will appreciate it.*

All officers must be in attendance at all Chorus activities, including extra- and co-curricular events. No exception to this policy will be made. Officers who exhibit absenteeism may forfeit their position.

Remember, there is **no such thing** as an EXCUSED absence — i.e., where a student is excused from completing *make-up work*. If you miss an event and believe your absence is excusable in accordance with this page, see the Director for make-up work and complete it promptly to earn your points. (It is not Mr. Monse's responsibility to find you and present you with make-up work!)

[1]	+Performances/+Rehearsal (on- or off-campus, during and/or after school) & Tests	weighted 0.41
[2]	Class Rehearsal (weekly rubric) including punctuality, proper supplies including water, folder, singer's Posture Levels, attitude, musicianship. etc.	weighted 0.34
[3]	Quizzes, Music Theory, Homework (written and other), and Music Knowledge Quizzes, Sectional Rehearsals (productivity, behavior, respect)	weighted 0.25

Events marked with a "+" symbol on the Calendar a graded in category 1

If, during any term, there are no assignments in an individual category, the remaining two will have weights adjusted to 0.51 and 0.49.

The Fine Arts Department Faculty strongly believes in accountability, and we hold ourselves to the same high standards to which other core subjects are held. If you are absent from a performance or rehearsal, provided the absence is excusable, you will have earned 0 points, and must make up the work or time missed in order to earn those points. *Imagine: If "Suzy Soprano" was sick & absent from school the day of the big English test, the teacher would not give her 100% upon her return, even if her absence was "excused." Suzy would still have to make up the test. The same concept applies to Chorus events. If an absence is excusable you will have time to make up your missed work, pursuant to School Board Policy 5.8. If unexcused, work may not be made up.*

You are here to work hard and you will have fun and many **rewards**. Treating music and the arts like they are unimportant is one reason many school music programs are in serious jeopardy. Activities for suggested make-up work include:

- ▶ Perform all of your music independently for the Director. (for missed rehearsals only)
- ▶ Perform a mentorship at Tequesta Trace Middle Chorus, Indian Ridge Middle School chorus, with approval from both Directors. (time allotment to be determined)
- ▶ Miscellaneous musical projects – Director approval is needed beforehand
- ▶ A Make-up Essay; format, length, and subject area provided by the Director

Make-up assignments are selected at the discretion of the director only.

STUDENT ID CARDS / BARCODES

Your ID will be scanned for event attendance, uniform checkout, etc. Any School Board-issued ID card is acceptable for these purposes, as long as it has your student ID number barcoded on it. (You may use a middle school ID if you have not yet received a WHS ID card.) You will receive barcoded documents from WHS; it is recommended to keep one handy, such as your first day schedule. *Failure to scan your ID on demand causes significant delays — our events often involve well over 100 people — so it will result in withheld points.*

PRIVATE LESSONS

One-to-one lessons are vital to success for a young musician. Students who study privately with a professional show rapid improvement in individual musicianship. As that student improves, their contribution to their Chorus becomes stronger and greater. The director can assist you in locating a private voice teacher.

TRAVEL

Chorus may take local & overnight trips, provided student participation is sufficient for a successful performance. Trip dates will be announced in advance, and monies paid will become nonrefundable after a specified date. When on trips, all rules of the program, school, and district apply. Students who do not obey rules or exhibit unacceptable attitude or behavior will be sent home at parents' expense. Severe disciplinary actions will be conferred upon return. Students should always have a good attitude, be informed, and be in the right place at the right time. Always work to fulfill the vision.

FACILITIES & OFFICE

The Director's Office is a private office, not part of the choral space. Students should never be in the office without permission of the director. Additionally, students must never occupy any music practice rooms or use the Electronic Music Center equipment without music faculty authorization.

SCHEDULE CHANGES

Chorus is an elective class; students are not placed in Chorus without electing to take the course. Therefore, schedule changes will not be authorized for any reason other than a pre-existing academic conflict.

FLORIDA MUSIC EDUCATORS' ASSOCIATION / FLORIDA VOCAL ASSOCIATION
ALL-STATE ENSEMBLES

FMEA STATE CONFERENCE, 13-16 JANUARY 2016, TAMPA

(optional) This is an auditioned group of the finest high school singer-musicians in the state. In order to audition, students first need to pass a written musicianship exam and a sight reading test. Then each will learn his/her respective part on all All-State selected pieces. The student then must pass a vocal audition. Those singers with the highest scores throughout the state will be eligible to sing in one of several choruses which will assemble in Tampa in January for the Florida Music Educators' Association Conference. To be chosen a member of an All-State Chorus is one of the highest honors and one of the greatest experiences any high school singer can achieve. **After-school practices will be held throughout August and September, see the Calendar.** (~\$20 registration fee for audition, additional expenses if accepted to attend All-State in Tampa). Participation requires director approval.

BROWARD ALL-COUNTY HONOR CHORUS

(optional) The Broward All-County Honor Choir is another opportunity for highly-motivated choral students. Students may sign up, learn the chorus music and then audition for the directors of Broward County. Singers are required to attend all scheduled rehearsals and concerts. Rehearsals are held at various schools around the county. Concerts are generally at one of the performing arts centers in Broward. In the event of high interest, the director will select eligible students based on class & chorus seniority, musicianship and commitment. (Participation fee applies)

AMERICAN CHORAL DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION
DIVISIONAL & NATIONAL HONOR CHOIRS

ACDA SOUTHERN DIVISION CONVENTION, 9-12 MARCH 2016, CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE

(optional) These highly-select choirs are formed of the best auditioned singers in the Southern Division of ACDA and/or the country, in alternating years. Singers are required to attend all scheduled rehearsals and concerts as well as stay in pre-designated hotels at the division and/or national conference of ACDA. To be selected for an Honor Choir is a grand honor and one of the most memorable and greatest experiences any singer can achieve. Students are financially liable for their own participation, must provide a parent chaperone, and are permitted to audition at the discretion of the Director.

OFFICERS

Choral students may apply to be a chorus officer for the 2016-17 school year. Applications will be available from the Director during the final quarter. Officers meet every two weeks after school for 30-45 minutes. If at any time an officer does not perform his/her duties, the executive board has the right to petition for a new appointment. This may be done only when 51% of board members agree in writing and present their petition with signatures to the director. Certain officers may be designated as Student Conductors. In this role, they will lead the class on the conductor's podium. Chorus students are required to treat any conductor with the same respect as the Director; inappropriate behavior during a student-led rehearsal, sectional, or performance is very poor form, and will result in academic & disciplinary intervention. The answer to the pop quiz we will have on Aug. 25 is "25"

MISCELLANEOUS

- ▶ Loud, boisterous behavior is inappropriate in the chorus room and damaging to the vocal mechanism. This type of behavior is never acceptable. Students should speak at appropriate volume. There is to be no talking during announcements. You only get one voice — so take care of yours
- ▶ Gum, food, and drink are NEVER allowed in music facilities. The only exception is water in a spill-proof bottle. Rehearsal breaks for water are extremely disruptive and will not be permitted. **Bring water to rehearsal.**
- ▶ Phones must remain off and out of sight at all times, including "transitional" periods of rehearsals, unless directed by school staff. **BCPS PERMITS THE CONFISCATION OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES BY SCHOOL STAFF, TO BE RETURNED ONLY TO PARENT — SEE DISTRICT CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT.**
- ▶ Do not touch other people's belongings, or verbally or physically harass other students.
- ▶ Bring a sharpened **pencil** to class daily. Mark in your score all musical directives given by the Director. Do this only in pencil. **Never mark music or do music-related work, in pen.** Borrow a Mini Monse Pencil when you arrive, if needed.
- ▶ Leaving the chorus room for personal reasons is rarely acceptable. Use the restroom between classes only. No gold passes will be issued, and the black pass will not be available for general use.
- ▶ Class and other events will be dismissed by the Director and not by any bell.
- ▶ Students will be held financially liable for any loss of department materials including musical scores, folders, uniforms, etc. Obligations will be issued for any liability, which may preclude students from participating in field trips, homecoming, prom, and even from graduating.