

RAMS

MINERAL WELLS

**Mineral Wells High School
Choral Department Handbook**

2015-2016

**Mineral Wells High School
3801 Ram Blvd.
Mineral Wells, TX 76067**



Mineral Wells High School Choirs
Jeanne Baker, Director of Choral Activities

3801 Ram Blvd.
Mineral Wells, TX 76067

August 24, 2015

Welcome to the 2015-2016 Mineral Wells High School Choirs! We are eagerly looking forward to the possibilities of this coming year and I am excited that you have chosen to be a part of the Mineral Wells Choral Program!

As a member of the MWHS Choirs, you will be a key part of helping this choral program succeed. You will be singing in many concerts, competitions, and other performances and you will also have opportunities to gain individual recognition through events such as the All-Region Choir, and Solo & Ensemble. Students in the Rams choir will enjoy a broad range of social events and fun parties.

This handbook contains valuable information about grading policies, uniforms, fundraising, private lessons, calendar events, and more. Please read this information *closely and carefully* and sign and return the appropriate pages by August 28, 2015.

Thank you for joining the MWHS choir family! I am excited to work with you and am looking forward to many great musical experiences over the next year! I am confident that this year will only continue the great traditions already established in the MWHS Choral Department.

Go Rams!

Jeanne Baker
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Contact Information

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Philosophy of Choral Music

It is the philosophy of the Mineral Wells High School Choral Department to provide students with a well-rounded choral music experience. Through participation in choral music, students learn musical skills such as literacy, history and culture, vocabulary, improvisation, technology, and many more. These skills not only develop the student's musical competency, but help to shape the student non-musically, as well.

The study of choral music also helps the student to develop many non-musical skills that they can reflect on and use in different situations throughout their lives. These include, but are not limited to social skills, patience, teamwork, responsibility, accountability, risk-taking, leadership, pride, and self-respect. Through a variety of choral music experiences, students will receive quality learning experiences where student ownership of learning is stressed daily.

Through sectionals rehearsals, and performances of diverse repertoire, the choral music experience at MWHS promotes diversity both inside and outside of the schools. This provides students with an unbiased look into different languages, religions, and cultures, while honoring each student's personal beliefs and opinions.

We are all consumers of music—the evidence is seen daily. It is the philosophy of the MWHS Choral Department to provide students with an outlet of expression through the singing and performance of choral music. The musical skills learned in the classroom are important; however, when those musical skills are combined with non-musical skills, the learning experience becomes holistic and helps to create a better, more knowledgeable child and society.

State and National Music Education Standards

While at Mineral Wells High School, choir members learn a wide range of quality choral repertoire ranging from classical and jazz to spirituals and multicultural music, spanning from the Medieval to Contemporary periods.

MWHS choral rehearsals are centered on the six standards listed in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS):

1. Perception – the student describes and analyzes musical sound and demonstrates musical artistry.
2. Creative expression/performance – the student sings, individually and in groups, performing a varied repertoire of music.
3. Creative expression/performance – the student reads and writes music notation.
4. Creative expression/performance – the student creates and arranges music within specified guidelines.
5. Historical/cultural heritage – the student relates music to history, to society, and culture.
6. Response/evaluation – the student responds to and evaluates music and musical performance.

State and National Music Education Standards cont.....

In addition to learning strong choral repertoire, MWHS choral rehearsals also address the nine national standards of music education, as determined by the Music Educators National Conference (MENC):

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
5. Reading and notating music.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and notating music.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

Choir Supplies

In order for successful rehearsals to take place, all students must be prepared for class each and every day. Failure to bring required materials will result in a grade reduction. All students should acquire the following materials for the school year:

- ♪ 12 Pack of #2 Yellow Pencils (to be used by all students)
- ♪ 1 box of Kleenex

Other materials (worksheets, homework assignments, etc.) will also need to be brought to class on their due dates or when instructed by the Director.

Fees and Expenses

Most costs of participating in choir are covered by the MWHs Choral Department's budget; however, participation in choir does require some financial commitment.

While in the choral program at MWHs each choir member is expected to pay for the purchase of a choir t-shirt as well as a rental fee for their choir uniform. This fee goes towards having the uniforms dry cleaned after performance. Please see the attachment at the end of the handbook for more information on the t-shirt.

- ♪ T-Shirt /Rental Fee- **\$25 DUE September 30th**

Note: Finances should never affect a student's participation, progress, or potential in choir. In the event that finances become a concern, please contact the Director—arrangements can often be made in these situations.

Fundraising

During the school year the MWHs will have the opportunity to participate in fundraising if the need occurs. When fundraising, it is important that all students participate. Money that students get from fundraising go right back into their education.

Note: Finances should never affect a student's participation, progress, or potential in choir. In the event that finances become a concern, please contact the Director—arrangements can often be made in these situations.

Trips

During the school year students will have the opportunity to participate in after school as well as during school activities. It is very important that students keep up with their studies so that they are eligible to participate. See "Eligibility" for more information.

Classroom Rules

1. Be ready on risers with folder and pencil and music in hand when the bell rings.
2. Do not talk while the director is talking, even if you are talking about the music. If you have a question and/or comment, please wait until the director is done talking, and then raise your hand.
3. Keep your hands, feet, and other objects to yourself.
4. No food or drinks (including gum) are allowed in the choir room (except water, must be in a closed container).
5. No cell phones. Cell phones should be put away during class in their backpacks.
6. Respect each other, and the traditions of MWHS Choirs by serving as a model citizen in the choral program, the school, and in the community.

Consequences

As members of the MWHS Choirs, you “set the bar” for how the choral department is perceived. Good behavior and model citizenship should be synonymous with the MWHS Choirs. We hope that these behaviors will be commonplace this year; however, when a student breaks a classroom or school rule, the following procedure will be implemented:

1st offense: Warning

2nd offense: Loss of Participation Points

3rd offense: Lunch Detention and student teacher conference after class

4th offense: Parent Conference

Other consequences can include disciplinary referrals such as in-school suspension, or discipline as the director sees fit.

Students must also follow all school rules. Any violation of school rules will be dealt with not only by the Director, but also by the appropriate school officials.

When attending off-campus events, such as trips or contests, all school rules still apply

Facilities and Materials

Choir Room

Maintaining the choir room should be a top priority for our students. No food or drink (except water in a sealable container) is allowed in the choir room.

Piano/Stereo

Students may use the piano and stereo with a director's permission before or after school. Preference is given to those practicing for All-Region auditions or Solo & Ensemble. Please do not set any of your belongings (especially water) on top of the piano or stereo system.

Music

Throughout the year, you will be given music that has been purchased by the MWHS choral department. If you lose your music, or it is in poor condition upon return, you must pay the replacement cost. When marking in music, always use pencil. This ensures that the music will be able to be used for future choirs.

Practice Room

Priority for practice room use should be given to those taking voice lessons, practicing All-Region or Solo and Ensemble music, or taking sight-reading tests. Students may use these rooms only with a director's permission.

Choir Office

The choir office is our home away from home. We spend almost as many hours of our day here as we do in our homes. We want to get to know each and every one of you, but please knock before entering. If we are not busy, we will let you enter. If we do not answer, we are either busy in conference, or on the phone. Please try again later. I do want to talk to you. ☺

Student and Director Expectations

When coming to choir, I expect the following out of each student:

- ♪ **A positive attitude** toward the director and other students.
- ♪ **Concentration and Focus**—Both of these are essential for successful choir rehearsals. This means not talking when the director is talking and following along in your music when other sections are working.
- ♪ **Music**—All students should have their binders (containing all music), in hand.
- ♪ **Good Posture** – it's the only way to go!
- ♪ **Pencil**—This allows for you to write down markings, notes, and places to work on outside of class. Markings may only be written in pencil.

In turn, you can expect the following out of your choir directors:

- ♪ **A positive attitude** toward each student and the rehearsal at hand.
- ♪ **Preparedness**—I will come to choir each day with our music well-prepared and will have a plan for success for each rehearsal.
- ♪ **Energy**—You can expect me to give it my all every day.
- ♪ **A continuing desire to teach!**

Grading Policies

Daily Grade/Rehearsal Accountability

The student's daily grade consists of work done during the choral rehearsal. Each day is worth 100 points, making each week worth 500 points, and each six-week grading period worth 2500 points. Deductions will occur for the following offenses:

Talking (-10 points)	Tardy (-10 points)
No pencil (-10 points)	Food/drink/gum (-10 points)
No music (-10 points)	Office referral (-20 points)
Phone use without permission (-20)	Lack of Participation (-20 points)

The director reserves the right to deduct any number of points for other offenses.

Concert Attendance

Performance outside of the school day is a necessary component of performing in choirs. Attendance is required for all concerts, sectionals, and outside rehearsals, as they are a form of assessment in choir. Performance dates are listed on the calendar of events, and other extra-curricular activity dates will be given to students with adequate notice. Absence from a concert will significantly reduce the student's grade. An excused absence will be awarded only on a case-by-case basis. Parents must contact me prior to the concert if there are any circumstances that keep the student from performing. Students are expected to be on time to all concerts, sectionals, and outside rehearsals. **Concert grades are double-weighted.** One grade is given for performance and the other is given for concert etiquette. Concert grades are figured with the following guidelines:

Concert Performance:

Tardy (-20 points)
Attire Problems (-50 points,
And will not perform)

Concert Etiquette

Talking on Stage (-20 points)
Misbehavior Backstage/During Concert (-50points)

If a student is ineligible for a concert, or has been granted an excused absence, they will be given an alternative assignment to replace the zero. If a student does not attend the concert and has not talked to the director beforehand, a zero will go in the grade book. If a student does not participate in class rehearsals on a daily basis, the director has the right to not let them perform in a concert. Instead, the student will do an alternative assignment during the concert.

If a student does not turn in their forms, the director has the right to keep them from participating in off campus activities.

Assignments

Assignments such as sight-reading tests, memory checks, short papers, and web-based assignments will be given at the discretion of the director. Doing so allows assessment of the students at an individual level, rather than as a group.

Attendance Policies

Rehearsals

Unlike other academic classes, it is impossible to make up activities that occur during a choral rehearsal, thus attendance is imperative at all rehearsals, concerts, and extra-curricular activities. Excessive unexcused absences will have a negative effect on the student's grade.

Concerts

Attendance at any choral concert is mandatory. Missing a concert will lower the student's grade drastically. Absences will only be excused in special situations, such as a medical/family emergency, religious holiday, or death in the family. Written documentation should be provided to the director as soon as a problem arises.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Students will be given sufficient notice of any activities outside of the school day, including rehearsals, sectionals, and concerts. These activities are essential to the development of the choral program. As with concerts, an unexcused absence at an extra-curricular activity will lower the student's grade. The director will make every effort to limit the time spent outside of the school day. Any conflicts, including appointments, athletics, other student organizations, etc. should be brought to the director as soon as possible.

Excused vs. Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences will have an effect on your daily grade. Absences will be considered excused with prior documentation (doctor's note for sickness, letter from teacher for involvement in another organization). If you know you are going to be absent, let me know. I will be happy to work with you.

Eligibility

According to University Interscholastic League (UIL) rules and House Bill 72 (No Pass/No Play), a student must stay academically eligible in order to participate in an extra-curricular activity.

Students are **required** to participate in all class rehearsals and performances where admission is not charged, regardless of eligibility.

Students who are **ineligible** will not be allowed to participate in the following:

- ♪ Any MWHS choral concert where admission is charged
- ♪ All-Region Choir Auditions & Concerts
- ♪ Solo & Ensemble Contest
- ♪ UIL Concert & Sight-Reading Contest
- ♪ Choir Field Trips
- ♪ Any event where we leave campus by means of school transportation

In order to receive a grade for these situations when ineligible, appropriate written assignments will be given. A student who is ineligible after the six-week grading period cannot become eligible until the three-week mark of the following grading period, granted that he/she is passing the class failed on the report card. Students cannot lose eligibility at the three-week mark if they passed their classes on the previous six weeks report card.

Uniforms

At the beginning of the year, measurements will be taken to help fit you with a uniform. The uniforms will be issued to you at the beginning of the school year. Each dress/uniform is given a specific number assigned to each student. At the end of the school year all uniforms must be returned in the condition they were given out. If a uniform is not turned in or is damaged, that student will owe for the total of the uniform as well as receive a deduction in their grade.

Formal Uniforms – 7th & 8th Grade

These will be worn in formal concerts, including UIL, festivals, and MWHS winter and spring choir concerts.

Women: Choir dress
 Black dress shoes (closed toe, up to 2” heels acceptable) *
 Black hose *

Men: White tuxedo shirt
 Black Vest
 Plain white t-shirt to be worn underneath *
 Black pants
 Ties
 Black socks *
 Black shoes *

Casual Uniforms – All Grades (Men and Women)

These will be worn in casual situations where we want to be uniform, but not formal.

MWHS Choir t-shirt (must be tucked in)

Blue jeans (must cover the entire leg) *

Tennis shoes *

* To be provided by student

Jewelry: Large jewelry is not acceptable. Women may only wear studs in their ears. **No** dangling earrings, necklaces, watches, or bracelets are allowed. Men, no earrings are allowed.

Hair: Hair must be away from the eyes. Men, be sure that your bangs stay out of the eyes.

Hygiene: It is important that each student keep good hygiene rules in mind when preparing for concerts. This includes **using deodorant**. **Do not** use perfume or cologne to cover your body odors. Some perfumes and colognes can cause allergic reactions and can affect the health of other students.

Choir Officers

Choir officers are selected by their classmates based on their leadership qualities, participation in, and service to the choir program. Choir officers are expected to aid the directors in maintaining high standards of behavior and choral singing and should thus be respected by the membership for their efforts. These individuals must maintain good academic records, be great leaders, have good behavior, and a positive attitude.

Choir President (1)

The director will choose this office. This position is responsible for the entire department (all choirs) and should be considered an assistant to the directors. They are expected to be one of the first to show up and one of the last to leave. Only upper classmen are eligible for this office.

- Assist and advise the Choir Director on a daily basis, with communication, clerical, student and related music items.
- Preside at and help plan choir officer meetings.
- Lead other choir officers in making sure their duties are carried out.
- Help choir director assemble and supervise committees for special projects
- Help choir director plan social events.
- Help choir program promote itself within in the school as well as off campus.

Vice-President (4)

Each choir will elect one member to serve on the board and represent their choir. This office is equivalent to president and should not be taken lightly, as it requires many outside requirements and leadership opportunities. Vice-Presidents will be elected in Women's Treble, Varsity Mixed, and Ramblers Show Choir.

- Help in preparation/set-up and take-down for choir activities/performances
- Serve in the absence of the President
- Post items of importance on bulletin board
- Helps President in planning special projects and activities
- Assist Historian with publicity
- Promote and represent MWHS Choirs throughout the school and community
- Attend all Choir Council meetings
- Takes attendance Daily

Librarian (1)

This office will be responsible for all of the music for the choral program. All choirs are permitted to vote for this office.

- Assists directors with all music functions
- Keeps records of all music loaned out
- Checks in and files music at end of semester
- Checks in and files any new music

Historian (2)

This office will be responsible for maintaining a history of the choir program. All choirs are permitted to vote for this office.

- Takes pictures of all events throughout the school year
- Maintains choir bulletin boards

Uniform Manager (4)

This office will be responsible for the uniforms of the choral program. All choirs are permitted to vote for this office. There will be one manager per class.

- Organize and maintain uniform room
- Keep a record of uniform check-out/in
- Attend all Choir Council meetings

Section Leader

The director will choose this office, and there will be one for each section in each choir.

- Serve as a positive and affirming rehearsal leader
- Help Vice President with taking role for your section.
- Thoroughly know your own part for each piece to lead out in rehearsals
- Be willing to lead sight reading practice in break-out sessions
- Attend all Choir Council meetings

Other Offices

Other offices may be added at the discretion of the directors.

Being an officer is a privilege, not a right. The director has the right to remove any officer from their position because of poor behavior, abuse of power, lack of motivation, etc.

Awards and Honors

Director's Award

The Director's Award is based on leadership skills and musical ability. The director will choose one boy and one girl from each grade for this award.

Singer of the Year

Students will select one singer from each choir to be named as "Singer of the Year." This award will be presented at the spring concert.

All-Region Choir

Seventh and eighth grade students have the opportunity to audition for placement in the TMEA Region II All-Region Choir that performs in November. To audition, students must first attend rehearsals and audition with the director and then must travel to the audition site on the designated audition day. Students will sing a blind audition (in front of a curtain) that is scored by five judges. All-Region Choir is a prestigious, yet competitive choir that is well worth the work.

Concert Etiquette

The following guidelines should be followed to ensure a pleasant concert experience for the performers and audience:

- ♪ Dress appropriately for the performance. Concerts are formal unless noted otherwise.
- ♪ Turn off all cellular phones during the performance.
- ♪ Food or drink is not allowed in the performance hall.
- ♪ Refrain from talking while the Director is talking or the choir is performing.
Concerts are recorded and recording equipment can pick up the slightest whisper.
- ♪ Only enter or leave the seating area during applause.
- ♪ Do not take flash photographs while the group is singing.

Parent Volunteers

Parent volunteers are always needed in the MWHs Choral Department, especially in the areas listed below! If you are interested in volunteering your time please contact Mrs. Baker through e-mail at jbaker@mwisd.net . Thank you in advance!

- ♪ Uniforms (Measurement & Alterations)
- ♪ Finances/Fundraising
- ♪ Social Events/Chaperoning
- ♪ Administrative (Copies, Form Processing, etc.)

Disclaimer

All information in this handbook was accurate at the time of printing of this document. All dates and times should be considered tentative until the director gives the final word.

2015-2016 Mineral Wells High School Choir Calendar

August

- 24 First Day of the first six weeks
- 24-28 Voice Placement (New Students)
- 28 Handbook Forms Due
- 28 Officer Forms Due

September

- 7 Labor Day
- 3-4 Uniform Fitting
- 20 Auditions SSC at Boswell High School
- 25 Choir Fees / Acknowledgment Form Due

October

- 2 End of Second Six Weeks
- 3 SSC Auditions at Boswell High School
- 5 Beginning of Second Six Weeks
- 26 Fall Concert- MWHS Auditorium

November

- 6 End of Second Six Weeks
- 9 Beginning of Third Six Weeks
- 20, 21 All-Region Clinic and Concert
- 23-27 Thanksgiving Break

December

- 7 Holiday Concert-MWHS Auditorium
- 18 End of Third Six Weeks
- 21- Jan 4 Semester Break

January

- 5 First Day of Fourth Six Weeks
- 9 Area Auditions
- 18 Martin Luther King Day

February

- 19 End of Fourth Six Weeks
- 22 Beginning of Fifth Six Weeks

March

- 7-11 Spring Break
- TBD Pre-UIL Concert-MWHS Auditorium

April

- 12 UIL
- 15 End of Fifth Six Weeks
- 18 Beginning of Sixth Six Weeks

May

- 23 Spring Concert-MWHS Auditorium
- 28, 30 Texas State Solo and Ensemble Contest
- 30 Memorial Day

June

- 2 Last Day of School

Student Info/Commitment Form 2015-2016



Name _____ (circle one) 9th 10th 11th 12th

Choir(s): _____

Home Address _____

Cell Phone: _____

Parent/Guardian's Name: _____ Birthday: _____

Parents Email: _____ Locker #: _____

Class Schedule:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

7. _____

Sports/Extra-Curricular Activities:

What is your main goal or expectation for choir this year?

Acknowledgment Form

I, _____, have read the expectations, grading policy, rules, and attendance policies for MWHS Choirs. I understand that my participation in choir requires me to be a model for others not only at MWHS but in the community as well. I understand that failure to comply with these guidelines will reduce my grade and could lead to removal from the choral department.

Student Signature

I have read the expectations, grading policy, rules, and attendance policies for MWHS Choirs. I understand that my child's participation in choir requires them to be a model for others not only at MWHS but in the community as well. I understand that failure to comply with these guidelines will reduce their grade and could lead to removal from the choral department. I also understand that successful organizations that work require teamwork between the parents, students, and teachers.

Parent Signature

Choir T-Shirt/Rental Fee

All choir members are required to purchase a t-shirt for use during informal concerts, activities, and trips. Please circle your size below.

Name: _____ Class Period: _____

Youth S Youth M Youth L Adult S Adult M Adult L Adult XL Adult XXL

Please return this order form and the payment of **\$25.00** by no later than **September 25, 2015**.



Mineral Wells High School Choir
Jeanne Baker, Director of Choral Activities

3801 Ram Blvd.
Mineral Wells, TX 76067

Mineral Wells Independent School District
Permission for School-Sponsored Trip

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Throughout the year your child will be singing around the city of Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. They will be singing at banks, elementary schools, contests, as well as other locations. The school will attempt to supervise the trip(s) properly, but it is impossible to ensure that no accidents will occur.

Therefore, be it hereby understood that Mineral Wells High School and Mineral Wells ISD is free from any liability and responsibility in case of accident on the trip.

It is understood that the pupil is still directly responsible to those teachers sponsoring the trip from the time of leaving until returning, the same as if in regular school attendance. Pupils must go and return by the same means of transportation, unless by mutual agreement by both parents and sponsors, through written approval.

It is further agreed that if the above agreements are not satisfactory to you, you will refrain from signing this permit. No student is permitted to travel unless the permit is signed.

This is a blanket form to cover all trips taken in Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex and other surrounding areas during the 2015-2016 school year.

Student Name

has my permission to go with the Mineral Wells High School Choir on a field trip to a specified location within the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex and surrounding areas.

Parent/Guardian Signature