

Darrell C. Swope Middle School

2016-17 Choir Handbook



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Website: www.swopemusic.weebly.com

Name _____

Class period _____

CHOIR CALENDAR 2016-17

Some of the dates and/or times for this year's events are still tentative and are designated "TBA." The items in bold are required for every choir student. All students are expected to be at performances – it is a very large percentage of your grade. More dates will be added as they become available and as needed throughout the year. You will be given plenty of notice of any changes to the schedule below. Call time for concerts is one hour before the performance time, unless otherwise instructed. Students are required to stay for the entire performance and to stay afterward to help clean up. Other performances may be scheduled throughout the year if there is student interest. After school rehearsals have not yet been scheduled. Parents will be updated through Infinite Campus e-mail of any changes or additions, and the calendar and any updates to it may be found on the website, www.swopemusic.weebly.com.

Thurs. Nov 10	Veterans Day Assembly, 8:00 a.m.
Tues. Nov. 15	WCSD Honor Choir concert, Pioneer Center, 7:00 p.m.
TBA	Nov. 28-Dec. 2 TBA - Combined after school rehearsal TBA
Sat. Dec. 3	Winter Concert, TBA, 1:00 p.m.?
Sat., Feb. TBA	Reno High Choral Zone Concert, TBA
TBA	Feb. 20-March 2 – Combined after school rehearsals TBA
Fri., March 3	WCSD Choir Festival, Damonte Ranch HS
TBA	May 1-10 TBA – Combined after school rehearsals TBA
Thurs. May 11	Spring concert for orchestra and choir, 6:30 p.m., Swope
Fri/Sat, May 19-20	8th grade trip for choir and orchestra

WCSD Middle School Honor Choir Schedule *

Auditions

Mon., Sept. 12, Sparks MS 2:30 p.m.
Tues., Sept. 13, Pine MS 2:30 p.m.

Rehearsals: 2:45-5:00 p.m. at zone school - TBA!

Mon. Oct. 10
Mon. Oct 17
Mon. Oct. 24
Mon. Oct. 31
Mon. Nov. 7

Mon., Nov. 14: Rehearsal with guest conductor, Depoali MS, 3-6 p.m.

Tues. Nov. 15: Concert day schedule

Dress rehearsal at Pioneer Center, TBA, during school
6:30 p.m. student call time
7:00 p.m. concert begins

** Swope will only participate in Honor Choir this year if enough students (at least 20) are interested.*

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Swope Middle School's choir program! Swope has one of the strongest middle school music programs in the district and I'm excited to be your director and welcome you to this tradition of excellence. Choral singing is one of the most wonderful pursuits one can undertake. It builds valuable skills that enrich the mind and lives of all those who experience it, and helps create friendships and interpersonal bonds that can never be broken. Music is the language of the world and as you become more fluent in that language the world becomes a better place. This handbook outlines our program, introduces you to some of the concepts we will be learning, and provides information on policies and procedures we must all follow in order to achieve our potential.

My goal is to provide you with a well-rounded music education you will value in your future, with opportunities for successful performances so you'll be motivated to continue in music, and with opportunities to share your music expertise and experiences with others at concerts, festivals, competitions, and community functions. I hope to introduce you to good choral literature of the past and present in a variety of styles, and to cultivate excellence by maintaining high expectations, all within a structured and comfortable classroom that allows for all this musical growth to occur.

I want you to understand the "who, what, when where and why" of music so you can become independent musicians, not just singers! You will have opportunities to participate in music as a performer, listener and creator. You will become fluent in the complex language we call music – you'll know the "lingo" and how to read and communicate it to others. I believe you'll be a better person in all ways and healthier emotionally, mentally, socially physically and spiritually, because you took this class. Expect the best from yourself and me.

You will learn a lot about me as the year progresses, but here are a few things you should know right away. I love music and I love working with students! I love for singers to make mistakes because that's something tangible we can fix. If I can't hear it, I can't fix it, so sing out! I'm available for extra help – don't be afraid to ask! Motivated students really, really excite me! I want all of you to audition for honor choir or a solo, or become a leader in your section and go the extra mile that will set you apart from the crowd. I like to have FUN – I like to play, but when it's time to work, I work and I expect you to work just as hard. This class is about **US** and the **MUSIC** we make **TOGETHER**.

I use e-mail a great deal to communicate with parents and students. Please let me know if you are not receiving messages so we can correct any address errors. And be sure to check the website, Swopemusic.weebly.com, for information and updates.

Marsha Jamison

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Website: www.swopemusic.weebly.com

SWOPE MIDDLE SCHOOL CHOIR SYLLABUS

CHOIR CLASSES AT SWOPE

Swope offers two mixed choir classes, available to all students regardless of grade or prior singing experience. Because our students have such diverse musical experiences, there is a strong emphasis on sight-reading skills and vocal technique, as well as music theory. Students with prior musical experience will be given opportunities to work beyond the level of the class or on enriching skills. Music will be performed in 2 to 4 parts, representing a wide variety of music literature. The two choir classes learn the same music and are combined into one large choir for performances, necessitating extra after-school rehearsals which are held shortly before concerts. Parents will need to provide transportation home for these. We perform at the winter and spring school concerts, Reno High School's choral zone concert, and the district choral festival, and may also have other performances opportunities throughout the year.

Ms. Jamison's 8th grade enrichment class, Swope Honor Choir, is an audition-based choir. It is open to both 7th and 8th grade singers who pass the audition. Most days we take 7th grade lunch and enrichment on Monday and Friday, and 8th grade lunch and enrichment Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Since honor choir students frequently are enrolled in other music classes or have previous music experience, we do not spend as much time learning music fundamentals except in context of the songs we're singing. In addition to performing separately, Honor Choir students learn the music for and perform with the combined choirs.

SYLLABUS – 2016-17

Our curriculum is performance based, and driven by standards for choral music education in WCSD. Students will learn the fundamentals of music notation, including reading notes and rhythms, music terminology – the “language” of music, singing alone and with others in two to four parts - “independence”, proper vocal and choral techniques, matching pitch, and music technology. Each performance is unique and we sing music from a variety of musical styles and genres, depending on the occasion. Other than materials provided in class, which include the district-adopted choral text, the music is our text. Students are expected to practice their music and technique outside of class; recordings are provided for this purpose. Since we are combining several choirs, after school rehearsals will be required before major performances.

August 8-September 16:

We focus on music and choral fundamentals in the first six weeks of class, and begin learning music in parts. A large portion of class is geared to note and rhythm reading, pitch matching, vocal tone and melodic independence so that students who wish to are prepared to audition for the WCSD Middle School Honor Choir and as a foundation on which to build musicianship.

September 19-Dec. 3:

While we continue to develop music reading skills and vocal technique, we begin preparing music for Swope's Veteran's Day Assembly and Winter concert (November 10

and December 3). The Veteran's Day Assembly is our first major Swope performance, featuring both the combined mixed choirs and the Swope Honor Choir, and our Winter Concert is a full concert with Swope's orchestras and both choirs. Two or three after school rehearsals will be required to combine our two classes prior to the Winter concert.

December 6-March 3:

We continue music reading skills, independence and vocal technique, finals preparation, and begin learning new music for the Reno High School Choral Zone Concert (TBA, a Saturday) and WCSO Choral Festivals (March 3). Two to three after school rehearsals will be required.

March 6-May 4 (or 11):

Continuation of music reading skills and vocal technique, melodic independence, and learn music for Spring Concert (May 4 or 11).

* May 19-20: 8th grade trip for choir and orchestra students (not required, but curriculum relevant)

May 15-June 2: Projects and finals preparation.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

In order for us to achieve our potential as a performing group, each student must abide by the following rules. They can be summed up in three words: **common sense, courtesy and respect.** If we all play by the rules we'll get more done and be very proud of our accomplishments.

- All students are expected to be in class on time.
- You will have two minutes to get your necessary materials (binder, music, pencil) and get to your seat or your place on the risers, if they are used that day.
- Food or drink is only allowed in the classroom by specific permission (except water bottles).
- No gum!
- No cell phone use during class – phones will be confiscated.
- Use appropriate language at all times. In addition to not using foul language, be courteous and respectful when talking to others.
- Be respectful at all times to your director, peers and school property. Take care of your materials!
- Keep your hands to yourself – no rough, rowdy or inappropriate activity. This is even more critical when we are standing on the risers.
- Stay in your assigned place and ask for permission if you need to leave the room for any reason.
- Participate actively in class.
- Pick up after yourself. Put away music, class materials and other personal belongings. Items left in class will be placed in the school lost and found.

MAKE-UP WORK POLICY

If a student is absent and the absence has been approved by Ms. Jamison, he/she will be required to make up the work in order to receive a grade. It is the student's responsibility to request make-up work within 5 days after receiving the assignment. Failure to turn in make-up work will result in a zero for that particular assignment. Sponge activities which are graded on participation only are not required to be made up if the student has an excused absence.

MISSED PERFORMANCE POLICY

Culminating performances in music are given the same weight as final exams in other classes. **Students who know they will miss a performance must notify the teacher two weeks prior to the scheduled absence. Turn in the Excused Absence and Alternate Assignment Request Form no later than two weeks before the concert.** Absences will be excused at the sole discretion of the teacher. Parents are expected to provide transportation to and from required concerts and after-school rehearsals and clinics. Students are encouraged work with other students and parents to obtain a ride if needed.

Excused absences from performances include personal illness (advance notice is appreciated, when possible), death in the family, and vacations *with parents*. Excused absences may also apply to direct conflicts with other school activities, at the discretion of the teacher, but will not be granted for absences from major performances, such as the winter and spring concerts and the district choral festival. Dates are posted as soon as they become available and students and parents are expected to make arrangements for the student's transportation and participation.

Some examples of **unexcused absences** include observation at other school activities, vacations without parents or without giving a two-week notice, extracurricular sports and other activities, or volunteer activities with other clubs or organizations. Lack of transportation is not an excused absence. Parents and students are expected to plan ahead so that students can be at required performances.

Class Fee

New this year: There is a fee of \$20 to help defray expenses for music, equipment, transportation, accompanists, clinicians or interns helping in class, and other expenses associated with events such as after school rehearsals or performances. If every student pays this fee, it will cover about 60 percent of these expenses, and we will conduct fundraisers to raise the other 40 percent.

The performance polo shirt costs \$15 (our cost), and the choir binder is \$5.

Fees (see above):	\$20
Performance uniform shirt:	\$15
Binder:	<u>5</u>
Total:	\$40

CONCERT ATTIRE

Concert attire will consist of the Swope Music Department polo shirt, black slacks, and black dress shoes (closed toe) and socks. Students must obtain appropriate dress slacks, shoes and socks by the end of the 4th week of classes. These may be obtained from discount or used clothing stores, if desired. Wearing inappropriate concert attire will result in the student being excluded from that performance or a lower performance grade, at Ms. Jamison's sole discretion. The cost of the music department performance shirt is \$15.

The Swope Honor Choir has traditionally used different performance attire. Girls wear all black. Boys wear long sleeved white dress shirts with black slacks, shoes and socks, and a tie which is loaned to students for performances. There are some performances, however, where they will need the black polo shirt worn by the rest of the choir.

FIELD TRIPS

The choir will travel for performances and festivals. It is the student's responsibility to keep up in all classes, and to get homework from other teachers prior to leaving on a field trip. Students must demonstrate excellent citizenship (citizenship grade of B or better) in order to be eligible to participate in a field trip. In order to participate in the 8th grade choir and orchestra trip, students must have an A in citizenship in their music classes and no less than a B in their other classes (and no more than two Bs in the rest of their classes).

GRADING

Your grade will be based on the following:

- 35% Daily participation and attendance (10 points per week)
- 30% Assessment
- 30% Concert participation and attendance (100 points/concert)
- 5% Tests and quizzes, homework

Daily Participation and Attendance

You will earn 10 points per week for class participation (based on percentage, 10=100%, 9=90%, etc.). This includes coming to class and being ready on time, having your music, other materials and pencil, and your effort and attention in class. "Sponge" activities – posted activities that take place within the first few minutes of class – will count toward the daily participation grade and will also be used from time to time for assessment purposes. Classroom behavior affects not only your progress in class, but the progress and success of everyone else in the choir, and it will therefore be reflected in your grades for behavior and work ethic as well.

Concert Participation and Attendance Grading

You will receive a grade for each performance. Grades will be based on:

- Proper concert attire (have proper uniform for event and look professional)
- Proper performance etiquette (professionalism and being in assigned place at all times)
- Punctuality/attendance (arrive early for call and stay for the ENTIRE concert)
- Clean-up after the concert
- Signing in at call time and signing out after clean up

Attendance at performances is mandatory and after school rehearsals will be required. It is critical to maintain good grades and citizenship in other classes in order to participate in performances which take place during the school day. Dates will be posted as soon as they are available and may be subject to change (we are not always in control of the scheduling of events). Parents will be notified of changes via e-mail, the website, and also the Panther Press whenever possible.

Assessment, Tests and Homework

In-class evaluations, observations, written quizzes or homework, and taped or in-class performance assessments are included in this grade. Since you are entering at different ability levels, performance assessment grades will be based largely on the demonstrating improvement.

Practice Records

Choir students are required to practice their music at home, when assigned, and to keep a record of their practice in their Panther Planner. At the end of the period, they will go to the website (www.swopemusic.weebly.com) to complete and submit a record of the time documented. Practice records are posted under homework (5%) and work ethic (approx. 40% of the work ethic grade).

Behavior Grades

Exemplary behavior grades are earned by your demeanor and professionalism in class. Behavior includes being actively involved in the class and setting an example by being on time, being prepared, and behaving in a manner which furthers the goals of the choir. You are respectful to the teacher and other class members, and consistently demonstrate your desire to improve your own musicianship and that of the group as a whole. Exemplary students frequently go out of their way to help other students in the class. You set the highest standard and will receive an "A" behavior grade. Inappropriate behavior by students will result in a lowered behavior grades, in addition to other disciplinary consequences for violations of class and/or school rules.

Work Ethic Grades

Exemplary work ethic grades are earned by **doing your best in class**, by having your materials and completing your assignments on time, by attending and being prepared for rehearsals and performances and demonstrating a commitment to the success of the choir. **Choir students are required to practice their music at home and this is included in both the student’s work ethic and homework grades.** Swope has developed the following 4-point rubric for work ethic grades.

Perseverance	Despite struggling, you work through it. Work to find a new solution. Don’t give up. Use different strategies. Go the extra mile – ask a parent, teacher, counselor, friend, etc. for help.
Adaptability	Have enthusiasm for learning. Tackle tasks with a positive attitude. Work through frustration to understand and complete a new learning opportunity. Work well with others using positive collaboration.
Strategies	Plan for success by creating long term and short term goals. Revise, change, modify, and apply new approaches when confronted with a roadblock to your goal. Use metacognition (think aloud) and problem solving strategies (draw a picture, make a graph, etc.) when facing challenges.
Self-Regulation	Demonstrate initiative when faced with a learning opportunity (get started right away without reminders). Ask for help when you need it. Be willing to learn from mistakes. Complete assignments and turn them in on time.

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

Inappropriate classroom behavior affects ALL students in the class and the success of the choir. Unacceptable behavior will be subject to correction using a system of progressive disciplinary actions including, but not limited to, removal from the class.

1. First offense: Students will receive a verbal warning.
2. Second offense: The student’s daily class participation points will be lowered, the student may be assigned a detention or other consequence, and a minor offense may be entered on Infinite Campus.
3. Third offense: The student will lose participation points and may be assigned a lunch detention or other consequence, and the parent will be notified. A minor offense may be entered on Infinite Campus.
4. Fourth offense: The student will receive a minor offense in Infinite Campus; if it is the student’s 4th offense, it becomes a major offense to be handled by the school administration.

Bullying or harassment of other students will result in immediate referral to the school administration and/or school police in accordance with school and district policy. Washoe County School District has just adopted new regulations regarding bullying and reporting requirements. Parents and students are strongly encouraged to read the new policy, which is available on the WCSD website: www.washoeschools.net.

SWOPE CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA
Excused Absence and Alternate Assignment Request Form

1. This form must be completely filled out, including parent/guardian signature.
2. This form is NOT the alternate assignment. See below for more information.
3. This form must be given to the teacher ***NO LATER than 2 weeks prior to a concert*** or 1 week prior to a required after school music event.
4. For extreme emergencies, this form may be turned in no later than one week after the student returns to school.
5. Alternate assignments are due by the date of the concert. In case of emergency, the teacher will assign an appropriate due date occurring within the same academic quarter as the missed concert.

Student name _____ Today's date _____

Class period: ___ 1st ___ 2nd ___ 3rd ___ 4th ___ 6th ___ 7th ___ Honor choir

Date of performance or rehearsal to be missed _____

Reason for request (be specific, use the back if necessary)

Date you first learned of this conflict _____

Student signature _____

Parent/guardian signature _____

Following are a few examples of possible alternate assignments. The teacher will chose the assignment.

- Research paper: minimum 2-page typed (double spaced, no larger than 12-pitch font) or 4 pages handwritten on a musical topic approved by the teacher. Your sources must be from the library – Wikipedia is not considered a source, though you may consider it a starting point in your research.
- Music event attendance: musical event must be preapproved by the teacher. Write a summary/review, using same specifications as for a research paper, above.
- Essay: write an essay comparing putting on a music performance to being part of a sports team and how each member's attendance, effort, behavior and attitude would affect the entire group in both cases, using same specifications as for a research paper, above.

Teacher's use only:	Teacher signature _____
Date received _____	___ Approved ___ Denied- reason _____
Alternate assignment given _____	

PAYMENT FORM

Shirt size: _____ Youth S _____ Youth M _____ Youth L _____ Youth XL
 _____ Adult S _____ Adult M _____ Adult L _____ AdultXL _____ Adult 2XL

_____ \$20 Class fee

_____ \$15 Uniform shirt

_____ \$ 5 Choir binder

_____ **TOTAL AMOUNT PAID** _____ Cash or _____ Check (check # _____)

Make checks payable to SWOPE MIDDLE SCHOOL.

STUDENT AND PARENT CONTRACT

Due Monday, August 15, 2016

The information contained in the choir handbook is essential to the success of our choral program. It is important that you read it carefully and understand the policies and procedures, particularly requirements for after-school rehearsals and performances. **Choir is a performance-based class and concerts are culminating assessments, the same as tests in other academic classes – unexcused absences may not be made up.**

Each student and his/her parent or guardian must sign the statement below, indicating you understand and will abide by these rules and policies. **Parents are responsible for providing the necessary choir uniform and arranging transportation to and from required performances and after-school rehearsals.**

Important updates and other information may be e-mailed to parents using the Infinite Campus system, and will be posted on the website, www.swopemusic.weebly.com. In addition, please provide your phone and e-mail contact information below.

Please sign and return this page by _____ (for 10 homework points).

Student Name: _____ Class Period: _____

Student Signature: _____ (STUDENTS MUST SIGN, TOO)

Parent/Legal Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature: _____

Parent/Legal Guardian Phone Number: _____

Parent/Legal Guardian **E-mail Address**: _____

PARENT VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

Our music program is made possible by the contributions and support of our wonderful parent volunteers. We appreciate any help you may be able to provide. Please check any of the following areas in which you are willing to help. Thank you!!!

- _____ Chaperone at festivals and on choir trips
- _____ Concert program design and printing
- _____ Provide food for concert receptions or for student rewards following a concert
- _____ Parent recruitment for events—calling for volunteers

- _____ Fund raising—organizing and assisting
- _____ Grant Writing
- _____ Photographer (photos)
- _____ Videotape concerts
- _____ Transportation
- _____ Sorry, I can't volunteer, but I will help financially.