

# Depoali Middle School Choir Handbook



**2020-21**

WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT ♦ RENO, NEVADA

**GG.GG/CHOIR**

Darrell Crowther, Director

**DARRELL.CROWTHER@WASHOESCHOOLS.NET**

August 17, 2020

Dear Depoali Middle School Choir Students and Parents:

Welcome to the Depoali Middle School Choral Music Program. You are now a very important member of team, called an ensemble, that will work towards musical mastery. We are entering a new year with new unexplored territory during a pandemic. Although our experience will be untraditional, I sincerely hope your membership in the choir will increase your love for singing, learning music, and contributing to positive traditions.

Singing in a music ensemble provides a student with opportunities to grow musically, intellectually, and socially. Similarly, the musical foundation built in choir provides a training ground for successful life patterns. Here's an overview of what each singer will experience this year:

**Musically and Intellectually:**

- Sight reading: *Reading, Writing, and Performing*
- Rhythm reading: *Reading, Writing, and Performing*
- Vocal Technique: *Breathing, Sound Production, Ensemble sound, Diction, Pitch Music Reading: Music Symbols, Note and Score Reading*
- Performance: *Interpretation, Improvisation, Analyzing, Solo/Ensemble, Blend*

**Socially: Success Skills**

- |                       |                  |                       |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| • Team work           | • Responsibility | • Time management     |
| • Focus               | • Multi-tasking  | • Problem solving     |
| • Empathy             | • Leadership     | • Active listening    |
| • Self esteem         | • Goal setting   | • Coachability        |
| • Confidence          | • Independence   | • Decorum & etiquette |
| • Attention to detail | • Collaboration  |                       |

*"In life we learn that we as individuals are but a small part of a great whole... a fellowship, a family. As an individual we cannot grow or even survive without others. With this in mind we realize that no personal sacrifice is too great for the preservation of the group. We learn that the clamor of desires and ambitions within us must be silenced whenever they could damage the group. We find that we must consider the needs of others and not ourselves. It is obvious that the group must survive or we as individuals will not."*

I am looking forward to working with each one of you. Your talent and hard work can make this year at Depoali exciting, fun-filled, and musically rewarding for all of us.

Sincerely,



Mr. Darrell T. Crowther  
Choral Director  
Depoali Middle School



# STANDARDS & CURRICULUM

The arts are essential in education provide students with a means to think, feel, and understand the world in unique ways. Meta-cognitive skills learned through instruction in the arts fosters effective work habits, creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, communication, and collaboration, each of which transfers across content areas preparing students for life in the 21st century.

Nevada Academic Content Standards for Fine Arts are predicated on a belief that artistic literacy provides students with an ability to create, present, critique, and connect art to their academic studies, lives, and the world around them. In a world inundated with an array of messages and meanings, an arts education helps young people explore, understand and accept ambiguity and subjectivity. At the same time, the arts bring excitement and exhilaration to the learning process which transcend subject matter boundaries.

Choir is designed as the study of vocal production and music fundamentals. A variety of repertoire included in the Depoali vocal music curriculum is selected based on its place in music history, educational content, vocal demand, and support for modern and ongoing compositions and composers. Much of the standard choral music literature includes settings of religious texts. Religious ideas are not taught in the Depoali Middle School music classes, although the integral parts of context and culture may be explored. Musical selections with religious texts are used to teach classic music history, style, concepts, and techniques.

## NEVADA STATE CONTENT STANDARDS:

### CREATING

- Conceiving and developing new artistic work and ideas.
  - Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
  - Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
  - Refine and complete artistic work.

### PERFORMING

- Realizing artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation.
  - Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation.
  - Develop and refine artistic work for presentation.
  - Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

### RESPONDING

- Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning.
  - Perceive and analyze artistic work.
  - Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
  - Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

### CONNECTING

- Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context.
  - Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
  - Related artistic ideas and work with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

# ASSESSMENT & GRADING: ACADEMIC

For the purposes of regular, measurable assessment, the following activities may be used:

- Classroom contribution: *rehearsal etiquette, preparedness for class, level of cooperation with director and fellow singers, ability to follow classroom and departmental procedures.*
- Performances: **MANDATORY**
- Quiz/Tests: *Written or skill-based*
- Written & electronic work: *music theory, dictation, ear training, performance evaluation.*

- Skill Checks: *rhythm clapping, singing alone or in small groups, demonstrating correct technique*

Assessments with **objective criteria** (e.g., music theory) are typically awarded points based on the number of items correct or percentage correct. Assessments with **subjective criteria** (e.g., performances) points are typically awarded points based on self-assessment rubrics completed by students, either on paper or electronically. Rubrics and grading guides will be shared with students prior to assignment submission. More information about assignments can periodically be found on the choir website at [gg.gg/choir](http://gg.gg/choir).

NOTE: Many assignments require students to self-assess. Students are expected to act with **integrity** when completing self-assessments. If the teacher deems the student's self-assessment as overly generous, overly punitive, or an incomplete self-reflection, the students grade will be marked as a '0' or 'incomplete' in the grade book until the student conferences one-on-one with the teacher during office hours. If in doubt, consider asking trusted classmates to provide you with honest feedback and guidance.

**Categories & Weights:**

<b>Performances (either live or electronic)</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Approach to Learning (Daily contribution)</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Homework/Classwork Assignments</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Tests/Quizzes/Exams</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Quarters (2 per semester)</b>	<b>80% (40% each)</b>
<b>Semester Exams</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Semester &amp; Final Grades</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Grading Scale:**

- 90-100% = A
- 80-89% = B
- 70-79% = C
- 60-69% = D
- 59% or below = F

# EXPECTATIONS & GRADING: BEHAVIOR

**General Expectations:**

- **BE SAFE - emotionally and physically.** Use kind language, serve others, and respect boundaries and personal space. Do not store personal belongings in choir room.
- **BE RESPECTFUL.** Arrive on time. Follow directions from all designated leaders. Use respectful language. Be considerate of personal space. Be in the right place at the right time.
- **BE RESPONSIBLE.** Arrive prepared with all required materials (music, pencil, folder, homework, etc.). Place materials where they belong and keep things clean, organized, and well-maintained. Gum, food, drink, and electronic devices are prohibited (unless otherwise directed). Act with maturity.
- **ALWAYS DO YOUR BEST.** Work hard. Play smart. Sing strong.

**Specific Expectations and Procedures (Approach to Learning):**

- Be in your assigned seat with all necessary materials **before** class begins. NOTE: Mr. C. takes attendance **quickly** by looking for vacant seats. A student is marked absent when they are not in their assigned seat.
- Students are expected to have all of their required materials in every class.
- Actively engage in class. Contribute positively.
- Use proper musical technique technique, including posture, Curwen hand signs, etc.
- Do not disrupt or distract others with talking or by any other means.

- Raise your hand when you wish to speak. Don't blurt out.
- Do not chew gum in class. Ever. Never ever.
- Never leave your seat without permission.
- Keep personal electronic devices off and away until the teacher indicates differently.
- Do not play or handle instruments without teacher permission.
- Students are expected and encouraged to practice on their personal time.
- All other Depoali and WCSD rules apply in addition to the classroom expectations.

Consequences for progressive discipline may include warnings, parent phone calls, detention, removal of privileges, and minor or major referrals.

End-of-quarter behavior grades will be calculated using a self-assessment rubric and/or the cumulative result of a student's "Approach to Learning" grade. Both academic and behavior grades will be negatively impacted based on the nature of the behavior (e.g., disrupting, incessant talking, chewing gum, using phone, etc.). Please review the choir website at [gg.gg/choir](http://gg.gg/choir) for additional classroom expectations.

## MAKE-UP WORK & ATTENDANCE

The instructional calendar with all assignments will be posted on the choir website at [gg.gg/choir](http://gg.gg/choir). Students will be required to complete their assignments by the deadline either posted or communicated in class. All electronic submissions will be expected prior to 2pm on the due date. Late work will generally not be accepted. Due to the nature of our hybrid model and access to technology, students will need to adhere to deadlines and all assignment requirements as a condition of attendance.

## FEES, FUNDRAISERS, FINES

### Fees

All students enrolled in the choir program are responsible for paying a class fee. Fees provide the following:

- Sheet music
- Instrument and equipment maintenance and acquisition
- Music Software & applications

All fees are paid to the school office. For your protection, please be sure to maintain receipts for all financial transactions. Finances are tracked by the teacher using electronic ledgers. Student funds remaining on ledgers will roll-over with contiguous enrollment in the choir program and can be applied to fees in subsequent school years. Funds earned and paid to the choir program remain in the program and are credited to the student on ledger — funds do not travel with the student. Students who damage or misplace equipment and materials, including sheet music, will be responsible to repair or replace that item.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Technology will be frequently used in the classroom.
- Students are encouraged to take private music lessons. Piano is an excellent choice for learning both treble and bass clef, developing coordination, and understanding harmony and music theory. Inquire with Mr. Crowther for names of music stores and private music teachers.

- Students are also encouraged to participate in ensembles outside of the school, such as church choirs, community choirs, and music theater groups. The Sierra Nevada Children’s Choir is an outstanding organization that hastens your child’s musical progress.

- Honor Choir opportunities are an awesome way of singing in amazing ensembles and in amazing venues. Listen and watch for details about the opportunities available throughout the year.

- We like (nice) tissue and disinfecting wipes. We appreciate any donations!

## HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

After reading through this handbook, please complete the Handbook Acknowledgment Form at [this link](#) within two weeks from receiving it. Please contact the teacher at [darrell.crowther@washoeschools.net](mailto:darrell.crowther@washoeschools.net) if you have any questions or concerns.

---

### Mr. C’s Office Hours for 2020-21

After school every day,  
except Wednesday, by appointment.



**GG.GG/CHOIR**