

# CHORAL HANDBOOK

## PURPOSE

Welcome! You are a member of the **BOWIE HIGH SCHOOL CHORAL DEPARTMENT**. This means you can expect exciting times making outstanding music. That is what being in choir is all about.

Your choir has the potential to give you many things, but there are requirements for realizing that potential. The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint you and your parents with the AISD high school choral programs, the requirements for membership, and the basic procedures, which will be followed throughout the district.

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It is very important that you and your parents read this handout. All successful choirs have the support of parents familiar with the choir and its activities. Parents are also encouraged to join the Booster Club. Dues are \$15, \$25, or \$50 and there are approximately six meetings per year. The 2006-2007 Booster meetings are scheduled as follows:  
9/5/06, 10/3/06, 11/7/06, 1/9/07, 2/5/07, 3/6/07, 4/10/07

All Booster meetings are at 8:00 p.m. in the choir room. (Executive board members meet at 7:30 p.m. before the general meeting.)

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The Choral Program is based on a cumulative sequence of musical experiences designed to promote the continuous growth of students in musical understanding, skills, and knowledge so that they can discover, understand, enjoy, and evaluate music as art and as a healthy means of self expression.

In conjunction with the musical skills learned, the students will be given opportunities to acquire and demonstrate the life skills of responsibility, teamwork, dedication, loyalty, and self-discipline.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Students will be given opportunities to:

1. Develop and demonstrate healthy vocal techniques by employing good posture, breath control, proper phonation, and resonance.
2. Develop and demonstrate necessary choral techniques including proper balance, blend, intonation, tone quality, diction and rhythmic accuracy.
3. Recognize and use elements of music theory including the great staff, pitch and rhythmic notation, key and time signatures, music symbols and dynamic markings.
4. Develop music reading ability through a systematic approach to sight singing.
5. Experience a variety of choral styles, eras, and composers through music studied and performed, attempting to achieve an expressive, artistic interpretation of the composer's intent.
6. Listen critically to live and recorded performances.
7. Perform individually, in small ensembles, and in large groups utilizing personal and creative expression.

## **CHOIR ACTIVITIES**

Bowie High School choral activities include participation in seasonal concerts, U.I.L. competitions, AISD All-City Choir, school assemblies, social events, and many others. In addition, students are given the opportunity to participate in individual activities including: T.M.E.A. auditions leading to membership in the Texas All-State Choir, U.I.L. Solo and Ensemble Contest, Bowie Idol, and other solo performances. Participation in any and all activities will be at the discretion of the director.

## ATTENDANCE

A written calendar of all upcoming performance dates is provided so that parents and students can plan their attendance at these events. If unavoidable conflicts occur, notification and a request for permission to miss the event must be submitted in writing **by the parents** to the choir director in advance of the scheduled performance. It is expected that students will honor their commitment to the choral organization and that parents will encourage the students in this regard.

A choral performance is the culmination of many hours of rehearsal and preparation, and each singer is vital to the performance. In day-to-day rehearsals, singers become dependent on each other in musical matters of blend, balance, style and dynamics. It is unfair to the majority of the singers present for a rehearsal or performance when individual singers are absent, thereby affecting the quality of the performance.

**Attendance is also a strong consideration in grading.** A choral organization does not use a text in rehearsal, therefore the director cannot assign make-up work in lieu of attendance. Once a rehearsal/performance is missed, it cannot be made up and therefore is missed forever. Good attendance is imperative if a choral organization is to be successful. **It is understood that illness and serious emergencies will occur, but unnecessary absences must be discouraged.**

All choral organizations require attendance at scheduled performances and rehearsals. Careful planning on the part of parents and students can resolve most conflicts with rehearsal or performance dates and insure a positive musical experience for all concerned. Unexcused absences from a scheduled performance may result in possible removal from the choir, a failing or lowered grade, or some other consequence determined by the director.

## GRADING

A student's grade in choir will be determined by daily participation in class, oral and/or written tests, punctual attendance at co-curricular rehearsals, and punctual attendance at co-curricular performances.

## **U.I.L./T.M.E.A. ELIGIBILITY**

U.I.L. sponsors music activities which include Solo/Ensemble Contest and Concert/Sightreading Contest. The eligibility of a student for participation in these events is governed by U.I.L. rules. It is the responsibility of the director to certify all students entering the U.I.L. events thirty days prior to the event.

For T.M.E.A. events, a director must be a member of T.M.E.A. for his/her students to be eligible to participate. These events include individual student auditions for District, Region, Pre-Area & Area leading up to the membership in the Texas All-State Choir. Each student who chooses to enter tryouts for T.M.E.A. events must pay an audition fee at least thirty days prior to the contest and prepare the audition music.

Each February, at the TMEA Convention in San Antonio, the All State Choir, Band and Orchestra are featured. These organizations are composed of high school musicians of the highest quality from throughout the state. Each student earns membership in the respective organizations through a series of auditions beginning in the fall.

One of the highest honors for a high school singer is to become a member of the Texas All-State Choir. It has enjoyed for many years the reputation as one of the finest organizations of its kind throughout the United States. Therefore, students are encouraged to audition in the fall at the district level. The long hours of preparation and practice, both individually and in groups, result in significant personal vocal growth, which in turn, strengthens the choral organization in which he/she sings.

Participation in the U.I.L. Solo and Ensemble contest is strongly encouraged as well. Students must choose music from the U.I.L. Prescribed Music List. The PML contains representative vocal solos and ensembles in many styles and languages and each selection is classified as to the degree of difficulty.

The benefit derived from the contest participation is the opportunity for personal vocal growth through the process of music preparation and adjudication of the performance by a qualified vocal judge. The student bears a strong responsibility to prepare a solo to the best of his/her ability. Likewise, the vocal ensemble must learn to work on its own to prepare the contest music. To enter solo/ensemble contest is an exercise in developing personal discipline which results in a very special sense of personal accomplishment.

## DISCIPLINE

Making exciting music is fun and requires hard work. Outstanding choirs are the result of efficient, high-standard rehearsals. Every singer is responsible for contributing to the success of each rehearsal. Only through the mature, self-disciplined efforts of every singer can individual and group potential be realized.

Time is valuable in rehearsal because there is so much to be learned about making music really well. Therefore:

1. Every singer believes that outstanding concerts and outstanding choirs do not happen by accident. They realize that they are the result of consistent, high standard rehearsals.
2. Every singer comes to rehearsal on time with enthusiasm and energy. Then they work hard at sustaining that energy.
3. Every singer comes to rehearsal prepared with all materials (i.e. music, folder, pencil, etc.).
4. Every singer sings the maximum and talks the minimum. This avoids unnecessary repetition of instruction from the director and utilized every moment of rehearsal time.
5. Every singer takes pride in his/her individual contribution to the rehearsal. Every singer works at developing singing skills and becoming independent on a vocal part. Every singer works at developing ensemble skills as well as sight-reading skills.

What are the benefits to you? After all, none of this comes quickly or easily.

**INDIVIDUAL PRIDE AND SATISFACTION** .....You will respect yourself when you know you have met the challenge of making outstanding music. Singing is a very personal mode of expression that requires total involvement physically, mentally, and emotionally. Whatever profession you eventually choose, the disciplines and skills you learn in making music will be valuable.

**GROUP PRIDE** .....Outstanding choirs are proud of their accomplishments. Members value close friendships they make in working together to meet the highest standards of musical excellence. They accept the responsibility that comes with being in the spotlight as leaders and representatives of their school.

**OUTSTANDING CONDUCT** .....Choir directors plan activities for the choir with the assumption that the group has reached a high level of maturity and self discipline. This maturity is built on students abiding by basic rules of conduct. Therefore:

1. Conduct must be outstanding whenever you are participating in a choir activity or are representing your school as a choir member.
2. Any possession of or use of narcotics, tobacco, or alcoholic beverages while participating in a school sponsored choir event is strictly forbidden by AISD rules and may result in immediate expulsion from choir as well as other disciplinary measures taken by the school.
3. Conduct must be outstanding in non-choir activities as well. Your conduct reflects on the reputation of your choir in your school and in the community.

## **MUSIC, EQUIPMENT, AND CHOIR ROOM USE**

Students will be issued music currently being used. This music represents a considerable dollar value. It is issued to the student with the understanding that he/she accept the responsibility for its proper use and care. In the event the music is lost or damaged, the student will be put on the obligation list and be charged for the cost of replacement.

The choir room has a variety of equipment (tape decks, pianos, keyboards, etc.). All use of the equipment and facilities should only be with the director approval.

The Choir room is not a place to store books or personal belongings.

The Choir room is a welcome place for choir members to practice, study, and socialize when a rehearsal is not taking place. Students are expected to behave in a mature and appropriate manner as to not abuse this privilege of using the choir room.

**GENERAL RULE: If you borrow something, put it back. If you make a mess, clean it up!**

## **STUDENT OFFICERS**

The opportunity for students to serve in leadership capacity is an essential part of the experience in a choral organization. These officers will hold positions of leadership and responsibility and will assist the director in decisions that will affect the organization. Non-musical concerns such as roll-checking, fund raising, social activities, spring trip, banquet, and care of music are areas in which the student officers can function.

Each office has specific duties that are clearly assigned. There is no point in having officers if the positions are empty ones. Likewise, any student who is elected or appointed to a position of leadership and fails to fulfill those responsibilities is subject to removal from office.

## **OFFICE DUTIES**

**PRESIDENT:** Organizes and oversees all social activities along with other officers. Serves as choir representative at any outside activity. Introduces any guest. Takes over rehearsal whenever needed. Oversees lettering.

**CO-VICE PRESIDENTS:** Same as President in absence of President. Assists director with uniform check in/check out. Assists with keeping track of points for lettering.

**SECRETARY:** Checks roll. Types roster, any correspondence, collects money, writes receipts, keeps track of any student obligation, and assists with fund raising paper-work.

**CO-LIBRARIANS:** Pass out music, folders, and keep music control sheets updated. Keeps track of any music obligation, makes sure all choir members have necessary music, checks in music after concerts and files it away.

**HISTORIAN:** Takes pictures of choir activities and collects memorabilia for scrapbook. Puts scrapbook together and presents it a Banquet. Arranges slide show for Banquet and Spring Concert.

**EQUIPMENT MANAGER:** Organizes the set-up/tear down of equipment for all choir events.

**SECTION LEADER:** Calls sectionals whenever needed, keeps section quiet during rehearsals, checks to make sure each member has a pencil and is marking their music during rehearsal, assists in grading, and alerts director to any problems the section is having.

**SPIRIT LEADERS:** Provide spirit and entertainment and encouragement when needed!

**PUBLICITY:** Publicizes all choir events by making posters, signs, etc; typing up announcements, writing short articles for various publications.

**STUDENT DIRECTOR:** Rehearses and conducts the choir in the absence of the director.

## **UNIFORMS**

Choir uniforms represent a substantial investment and cannot be quickly replaced. Therefore, maintenance of your uniform will have a direct bearing on the future appearance, prestige, and pride of your choir. You will be issued a uniform at the beginning of the year. You are liable for the return and condition of your uniform.

Tuxedos are \$120, choir dresses are \$75 and show choir outfits are \$30.

Basic rules are as follows:

1. Do not alter your uniform without permission from the director. Major alterations can quite often be avoided by exchanging uniforms with someone else. Remember, your uniform must be used for a number of other people during its lifetime and still look good.
2. Uniforms need to be returned after the spring concert and before final exams, dry-cleaned and in good condition.

### CHOIR LETTER POINT SYSTEM

After two years in choir, students are eligible to receive a Choir letter. (Exception: students joining choir their senior year). Other awards will be given to first year students who earn enough points to letter. This is a coveted award to be earned through individual effort that is considered "above and beyond" the normal classroom requirements for conduct and participation. Each study will keep track of his/her letter points each six weeks. A list of all points earned should be turned in to the Vice-President at the end of each six weeks period.

Points will be awarded for the following:

#### TMEA AUDITIONS

District	for trying out.....	1
	for making it .....	1
Region	for trying out .....	2
	for making it .....	2
Pre-area	for trying out.....	3
	for making it .....	3
Area	for trying out .....	4
	for making ALL-STATE .....	<u>4</u>
	Total points possible	20

PEERFECT ATTENDANCE IN CHOIR (no tardies or absences) 1 per six weeks

Total points possible 6

#### UIL SOLO/ENSEMBLE

For participating (each event) ..... 1

For Division II rating .....	2
For Division I rating .....	3

FUND RAISING EVENTS

For reaching quota .....	1
For additional increments .....	1

OUTSIDE CONCERT ATTENDANCE ..... 1 (per event)

You must turn in a program or other proof of attendance. This includes other choir concerts, band, orchestra, or symphony concerts, also dress rehearsals or performances, piano recitals, voice recitals, community concerts, etc.

OUTSIDE WORK

Recruiting new choir members .....	2 (per person)
Assigned tasks (bulletin boards, posters, working in a choir booth etc.) .....	1 (per task/hour)
Donations of Food/Drink (ex: Bulldogs & Hotdogs, Cabaret, Pre-Area, etc) .....	1 (2 max)

MUSICAL ROLES

Major.....	5
Minor .....	4
Chorus .....	3

OFFICERS

President .....	10
All Others .....	5

PRIVATE VOICE LESSONS ..... 1 (per every 4 lessons, not exceed 8 pts.)

OTHER PERFORMANCES ..... 1 (per performance)

Bowie games, community events, etc.

DEMERITS

Just as points are awarded for achievements in the areas above, so shall points be taken away for failure to show responsibility in the following areas:

Unexcused Absences

To a called extra rehearsal .....	-3
To a dress rehearsal .....	-5

To a concert/performance .....	-10
In-school Suspension or Suspension .....	-1 (per day)
Class Cut .....	-5
Disruptive behavior in class .....	-1 (per offense)
Failure to complete assigned duties/homework .....	-1

**TOTAL POINTS NEEDED TO LETTER: 40**

**James Bowie High School**  
**Choral Department**

**Fund Raising/Fair Share**

Dear Choir Students and Parents:

Our department has grown tremendously. We have 10 classes: five choirs and five theory classes with approximately 300 students. Our instructional budget is only \$2450.00. (This means that we can spend a total of \$8.00 on each student for the year!!!)

Obviously, we cannot run our department on \$2450.00; therefore, it has become necessary to implement a \$60.00 "FAIR SHARE" per student to cover costs for the year such as music, sightreading materials, supplies, awards, trophies, plaques, engraving, partial banquet ticket, uniform additions, etc. **We encourage each student to raise their fair share by participating in our fund raising efforts.**

Our first fundraising project kicks off September 1 and runs through Sept. 15. Once again, the Bowie Choirs will be selling Insbrook wrapping paper and accessories. This was a successful fund-raiser for us in the past and we hope it will be an even greater success this year.

It is imperative that **ALL CHOIR MEMBERS PARTICIPATE AND EQUALLY CONTRIBUTE** in either the brochure sale OR by simply making a \$60.00 Fair Share contribution. It is every choir member's responsibility to see that his or her expenses for the year are covered. Parents, please encourage your son or daughter to fund raise their Fair Share. **If a student chooses NOT to participate in the brochure sale, then he/she needs to contribute a Fair Share of \$60.00 by September 30<sup>th</sup>.**

Our student account representative will assist in keeping track of student sales and their individual accounts. We would appreciate your understanding, support and encouragement. If you have any questions, or concerns, please call Mrs. Jones or Ms. Bagley at 414-5207.

Thank you!!!!!!!

### PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION PERMIT

We (I) are the parents (legal guardian) of \_\_\_\_\_ a student of the Austin Independent School District.

We (I) hereby grant permission for the student named above to travel to and from all choir functions for the school year \_\_\_\_\_.

The method of transportation is:

↑ Privately owned vehicle

↑ Privately owned charter bus

↑ \_\_\_\_\_

We (I) understand that the above indicated transportation to be provided is not to be driven or operated by an Austin Independent School District officer or employee acting within the scope of his employment, but is to be provided either gratuitously by individuals or by an independent contractor. Therefore, the Austin Independent School District, its trustees, officers and employees are not liable for or responsible for accidents occurring with regard to the transportation provided. We (I) accept responsibility to determine that the transportation provided is safe and reasonable for the purpose intended. We (I) agree that the Austin Independent School District, its officers, trustees and employees are not negligent in their choice of the transportation and that we (I) have freely chosen the transportation provided herein. We (I) further agree that we have the option to provide our own transportation method. We (I) hereby waive, release and discharge the Austin Independent School District, its trustees, officers and employees from any claim, demand or cause of action arising out of the transportation here provided and agree to indemnify and save harmless the Austin Independent School district from all claims for loss, damage, or injury sustained by us (me) or by our (my) child whether the same be caused by the negligence of the Austin Independent School District or its officers, agents, employees or otherwise.

Parent \_\_\_\_\_

Parent \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student (if 18 years of age or over)

(To be used for field trips, extracurricular activities and other events where transportation is provided to students but Austin Independent School District owned School buses or vehicles are not used.)

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CHORAL MEMBER AGREEMENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE CONTENTS OF THE James Bowie High School Choral Handbook and agree to abide by the stated rules and regulations.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

I further understand that I am to contribute \$60.00 by either participating in the Choir Fund Raiser or making a Fair Share contribution by September 30.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

I also understand that I am responsible for the uniform that is issued to me and that if it is lost or damaged, I will pay the appropriate amount to have it replaced or repaired. I also understand that in the event that my uniform is lost or damaged and the payment is not made, I will be held accountable, the front office will be notified, and I will be placed on the obligation list until payment is made.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_