

2025-2026 Student Handbook

Theodore Roosevelt High School

VOCAL MUSIC DEPARTMENT



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Theodore Roosevelt High School Vocal Music Department

OUR MISSION & GOALS

The Theodore Roosevelt High School Vocal Music department seeks to provide an environment for students and staff that is a safe and inclusive place to experience a wide variety of music. Honest mistakes are welcome in our journey to create beautiful moments and memories through great music. We will unify to create a culture of understanding while also acknowledging the various cultures of our community. We will exemplify TRHS and work to build character and musicianship in our courses, through accountability to each other.

VOCAL MUSIC DIRECTORS

Mr. Parker Haley is an active jazz vocalist, arranger, clinician, and educator currently based in the Des Moines area, and he is thrilled to be joining the vocal music team at Roosevelt High this year. He recently completed his Master's in Music at the University of North Texas in the Jazz Voice Area where he was responsible for directing the West End vocal jazz ensemble, teaching private lessons, and numerous administrative duties within the Vocal Jazz department. He has been privileged to perform with the UNT Jazz Singers, the 5 o'clock Lab Band, numerous combos, and has written many arrangements in different settings.

Prior to his time at UNT, Mr. Haley spent six years teaching middle school and high school vocal music in the Orion School District in northwestern Illinois. During this time, he directed four vocal ensembles, founded the "Syncopation" Vocal Jazz Ensemble, taught private lessons, and coached students to selection in multiple All-State ensembles. A graduate of St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa, he received a degree in Music Education with a concentration in Vocal Music while student-directing multiple ensembles and regularly performing on campus and in the Quad City area. When he isn't making music, Mr. Haley loves to spend time with family, including his wife Madison and son Isaiah, play and coach volleyball, and relax with a good cup of coffee.

Mr. Alexander M. Gray is a 2022 Simpson College graduate with degrees in Music Education and Vocal Performance. At Simpson, he performed in every opera production leading up to student teaching, all choral ensembles, symphonic band on trumpet, and two orchestra concerts also on trumpet. Prior to living over half his life in Iowa, Mr. Gray grew up in Northwest Indiana where his love for music began. His mother would not let him listen to rap (while she was around) and he did not discover jazz until he hit double digits, so gospel was his go-to choice, whether it be on the radio, CD's, or cassette tapes. His fondest memories are his Sundays being completely occupied from 7am to 10pm by the Old Landmark Church in Chicago, Illinois. Some teachers that have positively shaped his life include Dr. Stephanie Council, Dr.

Bernard McDonald, Dr. Mike Eckerty, Dr. Tim McMillan, Dr. Kellie Motter, Professor Bruce Brown, Mr. Cortez Daniel, and Mrs. Sarah Brugman. For fun, Mr. Gray plays trumpet in the Des Moines Gamer Symphony Orchestra, watches or plays sports ball with friends, or takes long walks with or without a beach view.

OUR WEBSITES

Vocal Music Department Website: www.trhsvocalmusic.org

Bridges 2 Harmony Website: www.bridges2harmony.org

CHOIR OFFERINGS

Bridges 2 Harmony Gospel Choir (B2H) (S1/S2, VOC223/VOC224 - Period 6) is open to students in grades 10-12 by audition only. This choir focuses on the study and performance of the international gospel tradition; this includes traditional United States gospel, modern/urban gospel, contemporary Christian and inspirational music, African gospel, and an array of spirituals, all with a purposeful social justice lens. Students will gain mastery in aural skills, gospel vocal technique, and appropriate stylistic qualities. This ensemble has an intense performance schedule during the school year, with performances throughout venues in the midwest. B2H is directed by Mr. Alexander Gray.

Forte Treble Choir (S1/S2, VOC111/VOC112 - Period 3) is open to all students with treble voices in grades 9-12, non-audition. Students in this ensemble will build vocal technique, performance skills, and overall musical ability. This ensemble will explore a range of choral styles and genres with an emphasis on multicultural representation. This choir performs at three (3) concerts at Roosevelt throughout the year and Large Group Contest. Ninth grade students in this choir are also eligible to audition for Opus Honor Choir; all students are eligible to participate in State Solo and Ensemble Contest. Forte is co-directed by Mr. Haley and Mr. Gray.

Chamber Choir (S1/S2, VOC311/VOC312 - Period 7) is open to students in grades 9-12 by audition only. This choir focuses on learning advanced vocal technique, sight-singing, and rehearsal technique. The ensemble performs the highest quality of choral music, through a survey of international, historic, and modern choral works. Chamber collaborates yearly with local and school ensembles, including bands, orchestras, and other choirs. Students have the opportunity to audition for Iowa All-State Chorus. Students are highly encouraged to participate in State Solo/Ensemble Contest and Large Group Festival each year. This ensemble performs a number of times during the school year at Roosevelt and at various community events. Chamber Choir is co-directed by Mr. Alexander Gray and Mr. Haley

Da capo Vocal Jazz (S1/S2, VOC221/VOC222 - Period 5) is a highly selective ensemble open to students in grades 10-12 by audition only. Students will develop the styles and techniques appropriate for a cappella vocal jazz literature along with advanced sight-singing and aural training skills. This ensemble performs a number of times during the school year at Roosevelt and at various community events. Da Capo is directed by Mr. Haley

Revelation Show Choir (S1/S2, VOC403/VOC404 - Period 8) is open to students in grades 9-12 by audition only. This choir focuses on learning about and performing choral arrangements of popular, musical theatre, and jazz literature. Students will develop the vocal technique and style along with the theatrical dance skill appropriate for this genre of music. This ensemble performs at two (2) concerts a year, four to six competitions, and various community events.

Riderchor Bass Choir (S1/S2, VOC113/VOC114 - Period 2) is open to all students with tenor/bass voices in grades 9-12, non-audition. Students in this ensemble will build vocal technique, performance skills, and overall musical ability. This ensemble will explore a range of choral styles and genres with an emphasis on multicultural representation. This choir performs at three (3) concerts at Roosevelt throughout the year and Large Group Contest. Ninth grade students in this choir are also eligible to audition for Opus Honor Choir; all students are eligible to participate in State Solo and Ensemble Contest. Riderchor is directed by Mr. Alexander Gray.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Student Leadership

We value student voice in the vocal music department. We have choir and departmental positions.

- Choir Positions: Each choir will have its own set of leadership opportunities. These positions vary for each choir and are voted on by students or selected by the directors. These also can change or alternate depending on the needs of the choir.
- Departmental positions are: equipment managers and librarians. The equipment managers will organize and set-up all equipment (risers, shells, microphones, drum-set, keyboards, etc.) before and after concerts/performances. The librarians will primarily organize, distribute, and maintain the music for all 8 ensembles.

Individual Practicing

We strongly recommend students practice their music (and/or dancing) outside of the class period, in order to improve the skills and abilities necessary for success in our choirs.

"Never neglect an opportunity for improvement." -Sir William Jones

Selection of Choral Literature

Students participating in choirs at Roosevelt High School will study and perform a wide variety of choral literature. Based on the following criteria, the directors determine the selection of literature:

- The literature will be of appropriate musical material to aid the physical development and function of the vocal mechanism
- The literature will be representative of the genres appropriate for each ensemble, often emphasizing multicultural representations
- The literature will be written by a range of composers, including historical and contemporary perspectives
- The literature will represent a wide variety of text sources and types

Students will have the opportunity to engage in repertoire selection and arrangement in some way in every choir.

Voice Lessons

We are fortunate at Roosevelt to offer individualized 15-20 minute vocal lessons for department students. These lessons will focus specifically on attention to breath management and basic vocal technique. RiderChor and Forte singers will be required to do one voice lesson per quarter with one of the Vocal Music directors as a part of their class grade.

Students in Chamber Choir will have the opportunity to take lessons in-school. These lessons will focus on developing advanced vocal technique, while studying a range of solo repertoire which includes, but is not limited to, All-State Audition and Solo/Ensemble prep. Though students in Revelation, Bridges, and Da Capo are not required to take voice lessons, we encourage all students to take extracurricular voice lessons. Mr. Haley and Mr. Gray will provide outside-of-school lesson recommendations for all interested students.

Concert Attire Requirements

For performances and concerts, our choirs will be uniformly dressed. Each choir has specific attire requirements set in advance by the directors. All attire should be professional and appropriate. Your directors will outline specifics and/or changes for each performance. At the conclusion of each year, you must return all uniform pieces or you will incur an additional fee.

Sheet Music and Additional Materials

Each singer will be given sheet music and/or lyric sheets, a music folder, and pencils. (Bridges does not use music folders, but may use physical music during the term.) You will be assigned a number and specific folder slot per choir. You are responsible for having your sheet music and/or lyric sheets, and folders at every rehearsal. Additionally, you must have two (2) No. 2 pencils in your folders for every rehearsal. You are expected to maintain and return the sheet music and folder in good condition at the end of the term. At the conclusion of each year, you must return all music and material or you will incur an additional fee.

Community Expectations

Members of our ensembles must adhere to the classroom, building, and district expectations and behaviors. Our classroom community will be built on the following tenets¹:

- Be Kind: *Respect people, property, places, and yourself*
- Be Safe: *Maintain a safe environment for yourself and others*
- Be True: *Conduct yourself with honesty and integrity*
- Be Curious: *Explore the world of people and ideas*

Additionally, we will uphold and maintain Roosevelt High School's Learning Expectations. These expectations extend to all spaces in which you are representing the Vocal Music Department and TRHS.

Attendance Policy (Including Events/Performances)

Choirs require **active participation of each member in class and in performance**. The tardy/late procedures will be consistent with Roosevelt policy.

Because the courses are co-curricular, there will be events outside of the school day that you must attend. **When joining the TRHS Vocal Music Department, you agree to and commit to participation in all activities and events both in and out of school.** Performances are considered assessments of our learning, thus are mandatory. Rare exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis as described below.

Excused Absences from Performances

Students are expected to notify the directors of all absences (excused or unexcused) via email or in writing from a parent/guardian **at least 48 hours in advance of the activity or event.** Excused absences are rare and typically are only permitted in the case of personal illness or an unavoidable family emergency.

¹ Adapted from Exploration School Community Expectations, 2017

This does NOT include:

- Not finding a ride
- Having to work
- Other **avoidable** scenarios

Unexcused Absences from Performances

Since performances are the equivalent of our assessments, any student who misses a performance will automatically be given a “Not Met” grade in the corresponding piece of evidence of the Performing standard. Because the conditions surrounding live performance cannot be replicated, it is vital that all ensemble members are present for performances so that we can best showcase the hard work we have all put in leading up to concerts.

Roosevelt Activity Conflicts

If there is a conflict with another Roosevelt activity, you must tell Mr. Haley, Mr. Gray, and the other involved coach/sponsor as soon as you know of the conflict. It will then be sorted out by the teachers involved to decide how the conflict will be resolved.

Performance/Event Calendar

Our performance/event calendar of events can be found: [TRHS Vocal Music Department Calendar 2025-26](#). *All events are subject to change.*

Class Study Days - NEW THIS YEAR

Your directors understand the difficulty of maintaining the choir schedule amongst all of the other activities you have. As a way to balance the extra time required by participation, each class will be allotted two (2) study days per semester. During study day, the class can use the selected class time to complete work for other classes (Note: You can only work on **school related** assignments during this time). We recommend that during these days students find peers who are working on similar classwork so that you all can study together and ask each other questions. To be clear, unlike previous years, ***you will not be allotted individual study days in addition to these class study days.***

Food/Drinks

To maintain a clean and hospitable classroom, food and drinks will not be allowed during a class, except water. Circumstantial exceptions can be made on an individual and/or ensemble basis. There will be no gum allowed during the rehearsal block.

Cell Phones

Personal technology policies will follow the discretion of the TRHS policy.

Expectation Violations*

- Verbal Warning
- Level I Referral, Parental/Guardian Contact
- Level II Referral, Parental/Guardian Contact

*Severity Clause: Any student who engages in violence, damages property, is extremely disrespectful, or engages in any other severe incidents will immediately be sent to administration.

Conflict Resolution

Before engaging in any resolution, you must not spread rumors or share gossip. In order for us to make progress and create a safe space for ALL students, we must respect ALL students. Always treat others how you would like to be treated, as well as how they deserve to be treated.

Student & Student

1. If comfortable, privately speak with the other student to gain further understanding.
2. If you do not feel comfortable or the individual meeting is unsuccessful, please reach out to your director or a counselor to engage in a restorative conversation.
3. If a resolution can't be reached through restorative conversation, we will involve parents/guardians into the matter.

Student & Teacher

1. Set up a time to meet with that teacher. If desired, you may meet along with your student liaison (usually choir president), another student you trust, or your parent/guardian.
2. If the previous meeting is unsuccessful, please reach out to an administrator to facilitate a restorative conversation with the teacher.

Parent & Teacher

1. If there is a direct student issue, refer to one of the previous sections.
2. If there is a parent issue, set up a time to meet with that teacher.
3. If the issue is unresolved, schedule a meeting with the teacher and an administrator.

Lettering

Each student has the opportunity to earn a letter for their participation in vocal music during their 2025-26 school year. [Forms are available online](#) and will be due after Spring Break.

Grading

For more information on our grading practices or general SRG, please visit:

<http://performingarts.dmschools.org/vocal.html> or <http://grading.dmschools.org>. More details will be provided for each student and family in the first 2 weeks of school.

ELIGIBILITY: IOWA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Good Conduct/GPA Policies and Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities (February 2017)

The Iowa Department of Education and the Iowa High School Music Association occasionally receive questions about the application of locally developed Good Conduct or “minimum grade point” policies to students who participate in curricular activities (those activities that are part of the curriculum and which generate grades or academic credit) and co-curricular activities (those activities that are outside of but usually complementing the regular curriculum).

The school must balance (1) the interests in ensuring that it is represented by performers who uphold high standards of citizenship and academic attainment with (2) its obligation to ensure that students’ academic records accurately reflect each student’s actual academic achievement. If a student is a representative of a school in a performance or competition (whether sponsored by the IHSMA or not), a district may permissibly exclude a student based upon violations of a Good Conduct policy or a minimum grade point standard only if it is co-curricular in nature. The district must ask whether the performance or competition is curricular or co-curricular in nature. Note: The IHSMA defines music events under its jurisdiction as either “competitive” or “evaluative.” If the music event is “evaluative” (ratings are given but schools are not in competition with each other), the IHSMA permits the Academic Eligibility Rule to be set aside if the school has deemed the music event to be curricular.

The IHSMA applies the Academic Eligibility Rule to all “competitive” events (events where placings or rankings are given). For that reason, “evaluative” music events may be curricular or co-curricular. “Competitive” music events may not be curricular in nature: they may only be co-curricular. The answer to that question will determine the district’s next steps.

I. If being excluded from the event or performance due to a Good Conduct or minimum GPA policy violation will have no effect on a student’s academic record, the activity is co-curricular in nature. No further action is required, and the district may apply its policy and the IHSMA Academic Eligibility Rule.

II. If being excluded from the event or performance due to a Good Conduct or minimum GPA policy violation will have an actual or potential negative effect on a student's academic record, the activity is curricular in nature. The student may not be excluded from that activity based on application of a Good Conduct or minimum GPA policy. To do otherwise would be contrary to State Board decisions.

Penalizing a student by reducing the student's grades for acts that have no relation to the subject matter being assessed would be an impermissible double punishment and is contrary to the best interest of education. See, e.g., Audubon Cmty. Sch. Dist., 13 D.o.E. App. Dec. 284 (1996); Dallas Center-Grimes Cmty. Sch. Dist., 13 D.o.E. App. Dec 332 (1996); Algona Cmty. Sch. Dist., 5 D.o.E. App. Dec. 270 (1987); see also Larry Bartlett, Academic Evaluation and Student Discipline Don't Mix: A Critical Review, 16 J.L. & Educ. 155 (1987). In *Valentine v. Independent Community School District*, 187 Iowa 555, 174 N.W. 334 (1919), the Supreme Court of Iowa overturned a school district's decision to withhold earned diplomas and grades from graduates who refused to wear caps and gowns for commencement activities. For this reason, "competitive" music events cannot be used to determine a child's course grade: application of the IHSMA's Academic Eligibility Rule may result in a prohibited double punishment.

[\(Good Conduct/GPA Policies and Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities\)](#)