

Community High School District 99

North High School
Fine Arts Department



DGN Choirs

Student Handbook

2019-2020

Community High School District 99
North High School
Fine Arts Department

August 2019 -

Dear Students & Parents:

Welcome back to all choral students returning to North High School. Welcome also to those of you who are new to the choral program at DGN. We're all very excited to have you on campus and are ready for the start of a super school year!

This handbook has two basic purposes. First, it is a summary of our expectations of you as a part of the choral music program. Second, it accompanies our fine arts calendar, with all of our concert and rehearsal dates already included so that you can *mark your family calendars NOW*. You will also want to bookmark the North High School Fine Arts Department Blog and the DGN Choir Blog, which will have updated information throughout the year:

northfinearts.blogspot.com (www.csd99.org/northfinearts)

dgnchoirs.blogspot.com

Remember that concert and dress rehearsal attendance is an important part of your grade in choral classes.

Ultimately, we want to stress the importance of good communication among you, your parents, and us. We will provide visual reminders of upcoming events as they approach during the year. Your job is to keep us informed of any issues that may prevent you from attending rehearsals or concerts as soon as you are aware of them, in the rare event of a personal or family emergency. Remember that choral singing is a cooperative effort, and we function as a team. We need all of our team members together if we are to maximize our potential!

In a very special way this year, you will have the opportunity to connect to the tradition of fine choral music at North High School, and your efforts will write yet another chapter in this long, proud history. We, as your teachers, are looking forward to an exciting and rewarding year. We want this year to be one of your fondest memories of high school.

Sincerely,

Beth O'Riordan
Choir Director

Frank Piekarz
Choir Director

(630) 795-8400 -- Main Office
(630) 795-8080 -- Fine Arts Office

FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT MISSION

North High School endeavors to provide an enriching, vibrant, multidisciplinary environment for the study, creation, and presentation of the fine arts.

FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of the North High School Fine Arts Department faculty is to offer students a well-rounded curricular experience that includes exposure to genres of music and art in a wide variety of creative and re-creative settings.

The three program goals that serve as tenets for the North High School Fine Arts Department faculty are:

- *To provide a productive and cooperative learning environment in which students of various backgrounds and ability levels may learn to achieve outstanding artistic results.*
- *To engage students in a journey toward artistic and personal success at the highest level.*
- *To develop in young people the appreciation, discrimination, analysis, and participation skills necessary to become lifelong consumers of the arts.*

Our mission as teachers is to empower students with the desire to become vested shareholders in this learning process.

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The “Positively North” program is a campus-wide initiative to frame student and faculty expectations over a consistent set of character traits (RESPECTFUL – RESPONSIBLE – ENGAGED). These adjectives have aptly described DGN choir students for many years. Now it’s your turn to do your part, and help us to create an exemplary learning environment. General and specific descriptors for the Fine Arts Department at North High are given on the next two pages.

DGN Fine Arts Department

Music Classroom Expectations

RESPECTFUL

- Respect one another's musical ability.
- Encourage and treat each other as equals, regardless of skill level.
- Respect all music equipment, personal or school-owned.
- Help maintain our facilities by leaving them better than you found them.
- Keep food & drink out of the classroom (unless an exception has been given by a faculty member for a special circumstance).

RESPONSIBLE

- Understand that group success hinges on your personal preparation, and come to class prepared to perform with musical excellence.
- Set practice goals for future success.
- Follow school attendance and tardy policies.
- Maintain your instrument, insure it is in good playing condition and come prepared to class with all needed materials (music, pencil, instrument, etc.).
- Keep personal technology put away unless directed to use it for specific classroom activities.

ENGAGED

- Ask questions/make comments that demonstrate active listening
- Avoid disrupting class for personal reasons (washroom, locker, nurse, counselor, etc.)
- Actively self-monitor your personal level of engagement.
- Actively focus on the contributions of others during class.
- Never settle for anything less than artistic excellence.

IN THE CHOIR ROOM

How will we demonstrate RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, and ENGAGEMENT in our choir classroom? Here are some traits of students who will excel in our daily rehearsals:

RESPECTFUL students –

- appreciate the value of teamwork in each choir rehearsal
- encourage and treat each other as equals
- remember that all of us are here to improve and express ourselves musically
- ensure that our music is kept in good condition
- keep all food and drink out of our rehearsal space
- keep all electronic devices out of our rehearsal space
- help to maintain our fantastic facilities

RESPONSIBLE students –

- arrive at rehearsals and performances on time with a positive attitude
- place personal items in cubbies upon entering the room
- have all music and sight reading materials ready before class begins
- have a pencil in their choir folder at all times
- avoid disrupting rehearsal for personal reasons (washroom, locker, nurse, counselor, etc.)
- put their folder away at the end of rehearsal
- complete all course assignments thoughtfully and on time

ENGAGED students –

- maintain focus on our learning goals throughout the entire rehearsal
- ask questions make comments that demonstrate active listening
- make helpful rehearsal marks in the music (in pencil)
- demonstrate correct posture and head position
- sing with proper vowel shapes
- take deep, low breaths, not moving the chest cavity
- self-monitor engagement often during each rehearsal
- set goals for future learning

GRADING PROCEDURES

Grading Policy

Responsible students complete their assignments on time. Late assignments will not receive full credit. Students will have the opportunity to submit assignments until the end of a quarter for reduced credit (maximum credit for late work is 80% of the original assignment).

THE SEMESTER GRADE WILL BE PREDICATED ON THE FOLLOWING:

Positive Rehearsal Contribution	30%
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- Respectful
- Responsible
- Engaged

Musical Growth	30%
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- Development of Vocal Techniques
- Command of Performance Repertoire
- Development of Sight Reading Skills

Written Assignments	10%
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- Daily Score Marking
- Weekly Listening Journals
- Group Composition Projects

Engaged Participation in Performance	20%
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- Quarterly Concerts
- Required Tech Rehearsals (2nd & 4th Quarter)

Post-Concert Reflections	10%
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- Use of Technical Terms (i.e. "musicabulary")
- Careful Editing
- Thoughtful Self-Reflection & Goal Setting

NOTE: A music performance class, by its nature, will usually have less "assigned grades" than many other classes. Additionally, a significant number of these grades are determined toward the end of each grading period. We make every effort to keep student grades updated – please feel free to contact a teacher if you are interested in progress reports above and beyond standard reporting procedures.

THE PASS/FAIL OPTION

From time to time, students who have a schedule consisting of mostly honors classes elect to take music courses on a Pass/Fail basis. This is because most of our music classes are not currently offered for a “weighted” grade, and a high grade (such as an “A”) might actually be detrimental to a student’s G.P.A. Students who wish to take choir on a Pass/Fail basis must request the appropriate form from their counselor, and obtain a signature of parent, teacher, and Department Chairperson. The directors will grant such requests, with the following stipulations. A student enrolled in a choir on a Pass/Fail basis must:

1. complete ALL work with exemplary effort, and the work must reflect a QUALITY work ethic on the part of the student. As an honors student, it is expected that your work in choir will be of the highest quality.
2. attend school rehearsals and performances unless there is an emergency or illness.

If a student taking choir as a Pass/Fail course does not meet the above criteria, the teacher may assign a grade of “INCOMPLETE” until work meets the given standards of quality, and WILL REVOKE the Pass/Fail option for future grading periods.

FINE ARTS HONORS PROGRAM

Students enrolled in capstone music courses (i.e. A Cappella Choir, Symphonic Orchestra, Wind Ensemble & Jazz Ensemble) may apply for the Fine Arts Honors Program. Students accepted into the program will have significantly increased curricular responsibilities for the course, and their grade for the course will be calculated on a 5.0 scale. Students who consider themselves to be highly motivated in music, with an interest in adding significant rigor to their course load, should contact their teacher for the Fine Arts Honors Program Application (due within the first two weeks of the semester).

FINAL EXAM

All choir students will take a written final exam at the end of the fall and spring semesters. The exam will cover topics such as notation, score reading, musical terms, and dictation. The exam will comprise a small percentage (not more than 10%) of the semester grade.

CO-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

All Access: All Access is a non-auditioned student-led ensemble that meets twice a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) during 8th period. The group is composed of general education students working side-by-side with students with special needs. For all students, emphasis is placed on musical growth, leadership, and building relationships. Membership requires students to have an 8th hour study hall (or, for seniors, an early release). Please see Mrs. O’Riordan if you have questions.

AUDITIONED ENSEMBLES

The North High School Vocal Ensembles have two basic goals. First, they serve as a way in which serious vocalists can participate in another choral group, and learn challenging literature in a more intimate setting. Second, and equally important, the ensembles serve North High School by performing in the larger community. In a typical year, over thirty performances are given by North High School Vocal Ensembles, at various school, district, church and community events. Students who sing in our ensembles represent the DGN Choirs, North High School, and District 99, and are held to very high musical and character standards by the directors. It is expected that all ensemble members sign a copy of and adhere to the Student Activity Code. Infractions of the Code will result in a temporary suspension from ensemble activities, and may also be grounds for expulsion from ensemble participation.

Freshman Ensemble: The Freshman Ensemble is made up of freshman girls. Auditions are held in the fall, and rehearsals will begin in January. This is a nice opportunity for freshman students to experience advanced music literature in a smaller group setting. The group performs at both the North High School Vocal Festival and the North High School Spring Choral Concert.

Concert Singers: The Concert Singers are made up of members from the Concert Choir. The group is designed to challenge Concert Choir members to deepen their musical skills and experience public performance in a smaller group setting. The study of madrigals, chamber music, and vocal jazz is stressed. The group meets every day before school. Some extra performances are scheduled for this group, especially during the holiday season.

Treble Ensemble: The Treble Ensemble is the most prestigious female group at North High School, and is comprised of Treble Choir members. The group participates in extra performances in the community as well as school concerts. The group meets every day, during the second half of 4th period.

Chamber Choir: This group is the most advanced vocal ensemble at North High. It is a mixed ensemble made up of students who are enrolled in the A Cappella Choir, and meets daily during 5th period. The group performs over twenty five times during the school year for various school and community groups. This ensemble requires a high level of musical ability and commitment. NOTE: Very few, if any, of Chamber Choir’s community performances have been scheduled. These are scheduled throughout the year, and it is expected that members of the group will be flexible with their time, especially during the month of December.

PRIVATE LESSONS

Each member of the DGN Choirs is encouraged to study voice with a qualified professional. Private study offers students an outstanding opportunity to work one-on-one with a specialist on their singing technique and musical learning. Lessons are offered at DGN, generally beginning two weeks after the start of school. Students typically take a 1/2 period lesson (25 minutes) once a week, and are scheduled during a study hall or music class. All DGN vocal instructors work as "independent contractors," and payment for lessons is handled between the teacher and the family directly. All private teachers are asked to adhere to a suggested standard rate for lessons. Students who are interested in auditioning for North High School ensembles or ILMEA & ACDA honor choirs, or who would like to perform a solo at the Vocal Festival or IHSA solo and ensemble contest should **strongly consider** taking private lessons. If you are interested in this opportunity, notify your director at the start of the school year. Although you may begin lessons at any time, it is recommended that you begin in the fall to ensure placement with a teacher at the school.

ILMEA DISTRICT AND STATE FESTIVALS

DGN music students may participate in the Illinois Music Educators Association District and State Honor Choir auditions. Students audition in October with other student musicians from the suburban area for placement in the district choir, orchestra, jazz choir, and bands. Students who score exceptionally well in these auditions are invited to participate in the All-State groups at the ILMEA All-State Conference in January. Competition for spots in the district and state groups is keen. Students are encouraged to begin working on audition pieces early. Rehearsal sessions can be scheduled with Dr. Piekarz or Mrs. O'Riordan beginning with the first full week of school. Music will be distributed to interested students and must be returned at the conclusion of the audition/festival. Rehearsal tracks will be available online. If interested in participating, see your director.

DGN MUSICAL

The North High School Musical allows all students to participate in the many facets of musical theatre. Acting, singing, and dancing roles, as well as pit orchestra and technical assistance, is needed. Students in the choral program who seek a musical theatre experience should strongly consider participating in the musical. This year's musical will take place in March. Audition information will be announced as the year progresses, with auditions likely being held prior to the winter break. If you have questions, please see Dr. Piekarz or Mrs. O'Riordan.

VOCAL FESTIVAL

DGN music students have the opportunity to participate in the North High School Vocal Festival in the spring. Each performer or group will work with a professional singer in a clinic setting. All students, whether or not they are currently studying privately, are encouraged to participate in this vocal solo and ensemble festival. A select number of students will be selected to be featured in our annual District 99 Vocal Honors Recital, held each year in March. Parents and friends are encouraged to attend this performance.

OTHER INFORMATION

PERFORMANCE CODE OF CONDUCT

As a member of the DGN Choirs, you serve as an ambassador of Downers Grove North High School. Any conduct which is not exemplary or which reflects poorly on North High School will be dealt with according to the infraction and could result in dismissal from the group. We are one of the largest and most visible organizations on campus, and it is expected that you will always behave like mature young adults. Let's make Downers Grove North High School proud!

UNIFORM POLICIES

Each student participating in a choir at North High School is expected to adhere strictly to our uniform code. In an attempt to further enhance our professional stage appearance, each student will be required to purchase a pair of concert shoes. Shoes will be ordered at the same time that robes are assigned at the beginning of the school year. In addition, singers should dress conforming to one of the following two guidelines:

1. formal dress OR collarless dress blouse and skirt (hems must be completely covered by choir robe), skin-colored nylons and choir shoes
2. white collared long-sleeved dress shirt with a dark solid-colored tie or collarless dress blouse, with black dress slacks, black dress socks and choir shoes

Students participating in ensembles and/or ILMEA honor choirs will be issued a garment bag to protect uniform items. Ensemble members will be given a clean uniform, and are responsible for altering the uniform and maintaining its cleanliness and appearance. A small fee is required to cover the cost dry cleaning at the end of the year.

Members of the Freshman, Concert, and Treble Choirs will also be required to purchase a uniform T-shirt for the annual Spring Choral Showcase. More information will be available later in the year.

COLLEGE INFORMATION

From time to time, many students inquire about music programs and musical opportunities at various U.S. colleges. Students should always feel free to ask a director for information. In addition, seniors may request college recommendations at any time from either Mrs. O'Riordan or Dr. Piekarz.

PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

You are also receiving a copy of this year's performance calendar at the required August Music Department meeting. **Please** make sure that you are clear about the important dates for you. **Take this handbook home and share it with your parents**, so that they are aware of your commitments and can add concert dates to their calendars. In addition, all event dates and times are located on the Fine Arts Blog and Choir Blog.

North High School Choirs

CHOIR SHOES

In an effort to maintain the professional stage appearance of the choirs at North High, a policy has been established regarding footwear. Each student will be required to purchase a pair of concert shoes.

There are two options for uniform shoes for our singers:



- uniform 1 1/2-inch heel black character shoes. Sizes range from 5-12 in a variety of widths.



- uniform black leather tie shoes. Sizes range from 6 1/2 to 11 in full and half sizes, then from 12-17 in whole sizes. Most sizes are available in wide width.

Sample sizes will be available to try on at the same time choir robes are assigned. The cost for choir shoes will be \$37 per pair. For families with more than one child in choir, one check may be written for the total amount. If you have concerns about covering the cost of shoes for your child, please contact Mrs. O’Riordan at boriordan@csd99.org or (630) 795-8086.

Please detach and complete the form below, then return it with your check payable to North High School DGN Choirs. **Payments are due at latest by FRIDAY, AUGUST 31st.** Please write the student’s name on the check, and enclose it with the form in an envelope or staple the check to the form.

North High School Choir Shoes Payment Form

Student Name: _____

Choir: _____

Student Name: _____

Choir: _____

_____ A check in the amount of \$_____ (\$37/pair) is enclosed in payment for

(please circle) one two pair(s) of shoes

Please write student names on the check and make payable to
North High School or DGN Choirs.

**PAYMENTS DUE on or before
FRIDAY, AUGUST 30th.**