

# Calhoun Middle School

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HANDBOOK

Ms. Denise E. Stephens, Director

Mrs. Jackie San Miguel- Lozano, Principal

Assistant Principal:

Mr. John Curtis

Mr. John Milmo

2024-2025

## Calhoun Middle School Colts Choirs

Denise Stephens, Director of Choral Activities

709 W. Congress St  
Denton, Tx 76209

Dear students and parents,

Welcome to the Calhoun Middle School Choral Department. I am VERY excited about the opportunity to work with you this year. This class promises to be fun, rewarding, educational, and successful. Students will have the opportunity to exhibit their talents and skills in a friendly and respectful environment. As the program has grown over the past several years, so have the students' musical abilities and, as in the past, this year the standards of excellence will be raised as students continue developing their skills and talents. One of my many goals is to share my love of music and singing with you. In addition, I want to help you learn more about musical terms, symbols, styles, periods, history, composers, being a responsible team member, and performing. In order to be a successful team, we all must do our part on a regular basis. **YOU AND YOU ONLY** are responsible for seeing that this is achieved. Please do not expect others to do your work or pull your load. With effort, commitment, and enthusiasm, we can look forward to a year of continued excellence.

In the following pages, you will become familiar with the standards and expectations of you in this class for the year. As a member of the CMS Choirs, you will be a key part of helping this choral program succeed. You will be singing in many concerts, competitions, and other performances and you will also have opportunities to gain individual recognition through events such as the All-Region Choir, Solo & Ensemble, etc. Along with participating in musical activities, students in the Colts Choirs will enjoy a broad range of social events, including parties and trips.

This handbook contains valuable information about grading policies, uniforms, fundraising, private lessons, calendar events, and more. Please read each page **CLOSELY** and **CAREFULLY**; sign and return the appropriate pages by **Friday, August 23**. These forms will be kept on file and referenced when needed.

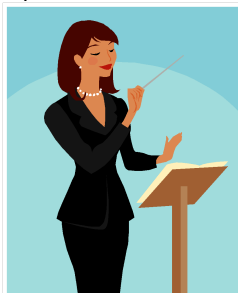
Again, welcome to the Colts Choir FAMILY!! I am excited to work with you and am looking forward to many great musical experiences over the next year. If I can be of any assistance, please contact me at (940)369-2400 or by email at [dstephens1@dentonisd.org](mailto:dstephens1@dentonisd.org)

Sincerely,

Denise E. Stephens

Denise Stephens

Director of Choral Activities  
Calhoun Middle School  
[Dstephens1@dentonisd.org](mailto:Dstephens1@dentonisd.org)

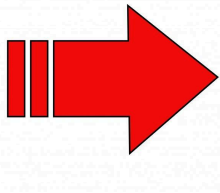


# Ms. Denise Stephens

Denise Stephens, a native of Denton, Tx, has been singing all of her life. She is the daughter of Dennis and Gloria Stephens, has one sister, Janae, and one daughter, Jennifer. Throughout her school tenure in the public school, she was very active in choral activities. She was a consistent member of All-District, All-Region, and All-State Choirs, and was an eight (8) time first place winner of the National Association of Teacher's of Singing (N.A.T.S.) Ms. Stephens, a member of the NAACP, placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 1992 ACT-SO Competition, which was held in Nashville, TN. She has performed extensively in Texas, New York City, Toronto, Canada; Graz, Austria; Vienna, Austria; Prague, Czech Republic; and Budapest. Denise is a graduate of Baylor University, where she received her Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance, and was awarded the Thomas Stuart Award in Vocal Excellence. While at Baylor, she performed the role of "Donna Anna" in Mozart's Don Giovanni and "Lady Billows" in Benjamin Britten's Albert Herring. Denise has also appeared on Daystar TV network's "Celebration" and Fox 4 KDFW's "Insights," as well as KRNH 105.7. Most recently, she sang the role of "Queen of the Night" in Mozart's Die Zauberflöte with the University of North Texas, and performed the role of "BJ" in Denton Community Theatre's Production of Smokey Joe's Café. Denise is currently in her 28th year of teaching; 27<sup>th</sup> at Calhoun Middle School. Under her direction, her students have earned 1<sup>st</sup> Division Ratings in UIL Concert & Sight Reading and Solo & Ensemble competitions. Her mission is to educate and promote vocal excellence and foster the musicians of the future. Denise is a member of TMEA, TCDA, ACDA, & ATPE.

## CMS Choral Department Goals

- ❖ Individual growth in vocal technical skills.
- ❖ Individual growth and progress in music reading skills.
- ❖ Musical excellence.
- ❖ Strive for a rehearsal atmosphere based on courtesy, discipline, and consideration for other choir members.
- ❖ Present a public image of the highest possible quality.
- ❖ 100% attendance at outside rehearsals and activities.



## Classroom Rules & Procedures

To maintain an organized and successful classroom, the following rules and procedures have been established. **Please understand that these rules will be enforced daily**

- 1.** Be in your place on the risers with your charged CHROMEBOOK, CHOIR folder, music and pencil by the **tardy bell**. Entering the classroom as the bell rings is counted as being tardy. In order for the tardy to be excused, you must present a pass from another teacher or administrator.
- 2.** Talking is to be kept to a minimum during rehearsal (we'll discuss levels).
- 3.** **Cell phones** are not to be seen or heard at ANYTIME during the class period. If your phone is visible or goes off during the class period, it will be collected and given to administration. A fee of \$15 must be paid before it is returned (please see school handbook). Students also run the risk of losing participation grade points.
- 4.** **Chewing gum, food, candy, and beverages are not allowed in the choir room at any time.**
- 5.** You are expected to be an active participant in rehearsal mentally, physically and vocally. If for any reason you are unable to do this, you must consult with the director before class begins.
- 6.** **Students will not be allowed to leave the class during the first or last 5 minutes.** This includes passes to the restroom, nurse, library, counselor, another teacher's classroom, etc. Use your passing period wisely. Make sure to sign-out/Sign-in
- 7.** Students are not permitted to play or adjust the classroom piano.

## **Daily Procedures**

**Tardies:** I, the director, assume that you, the student, are present in my class and in the choir program because you WANT to be here. Therefore, I expect you to report to class on time with your supplies. Walking in late to a rehearsal or running to your seat during warm-ups is disruptive and disrespectful to the choir. Be on time.

**Music:** Throughout the year, you will be given music that the CMS Choir fund has purchased. Just as you are expected to return textbooks to the school, I expect you to return each piece of music to me. To avoid any fines to pay for the cost of the music, please take care of your music and return it on time. You may make markings in the music with PENCIL. Always write your name on the front cover so that it can be returned to you if it becomes misplaced. If you lose your music, you will be required to pay for the cost to replace each piece.

**Care of the Choir Room:** I am very proud of the **NEW** choir room that we have at Calhoun. Few choirs in the state are as fortunate as we are to have such modern facilities. Therefore, we should work hard to maintain a neat appearance in the room. The choir room is NOT your locker. Do not plan on using it as such.

## **Rehearsal Etiquette**

**Positive Attitude:** Come to rehearsals with the attitude that hard work DOES pay off! Excellence is achieved all the more quickly with an open and hard working mind. Leave other classes and problems outside the choir room door so that our musical goals can be the focus of class.

**Supplies:** Having YOUR choir music/folder in your hands each day is CRITICAL. You must also have a pencil so that you can mark your music. Just as you would take a textbook to a class, bring your music and pencil to rehearsal.

**Concentration:** The best choir rehearsals move quickly. To accomplish this, each choir member must be completely attentive at all times. Even when your section is not singing, you must listen and be ready to jump back in. This is not the time to sleep, draw, talk or complete homework for another class.

**Respect:** When many people work closely on a musical project, it is important to maintain respect for each other. This means respect for the director as well as other choir members. Choral music requires the focus of musicianship as well as the emotions. Be sensitive to the feelings of others in the group. **TREAT EACH OTHER AS YOU WOULD WANT TO BE TREATED!!!!**

## **Classroom Behavior**

1<sup>st</sup> infraction- Warning & teacher/student conference

2<sup>nd</sup> infraction- Parent contact

3<sup>rd</sup> infraction- Parent Contact and detention assigned

4<sup>th</sup> infraction- Office Referral

## **Eligibility**

Choir activities that occur outside of class time are classified as either co-curricular or extra-curricular. **\*See trip requirements section for additional information.**

**Co-Curricular:** An activity is co-curricular if it is an extension of classroom instruction, and if it is not a competition or an event that charges an admission fee. All students are allowed to participate in co-curricular activities; however, grades and behavior in ALL classes must be satisfactory. Participation in such activities will be determined at Ms. Stephens' discretion. Examples are: Pre UIL, UIL, Winter Concert, Grammy Concert, etc.

**Extra-Curricular:** Only students who maintain at least a "70" in all classes are allowed to participate in extracurricular activities. Examples are: Andy B's Field Trip, DHS Tour, Six Flags Festivals, NRH2O Festival, Epic Water Festival, etc.

## **Attendance**

Unlike traditional classes, choir does require attendance to scheduled activities outside of regular school hours. The Texas Education Agency tells us that Co-Curricular classes may require outside of class attendance at events (i.e. rehearsals, concerts, etc.) that are part of the course requirements, and may include these activities in the student's grade for that course. It is important that parents and students understand this time commitment, and agree to it before signing up for choir. **All performances will count as test grades (double weighted) and an unexcused absence will result in a "0." Absences will be excused for \*emergencies only. A written excuse signed by the parent must be submitted to the director on the following school day from the missed performance in order for the absence to be considered excused. It is the responsibility of the student and/or parent to meet this deadline. Students who are excused from a performance will be given an alternate assignment. If the student is absent from school on the day of the performance, he or she will still be expected to complete the alternate assignment.** In addition to concerts, there will be extra MANDATORY rehearsals called at various times throughout the year. Extra rehearsals are necessary for our success and growth

as a performing group. **Unexcused absences will be treated on the same basis as an unexcused absence from class and will adversely affect the student's grade. Please review the choir calendar regularly for required events and activities.**

## **Safety**

For the safety and security of your child, please make sure that transportation arrangements are made prior to any co-curricular or extra-curricular event. Students must be picked up within 30 minutes from any scheduled event. Failure to do so will forfeit participation in future choral extra-curricular activities.

### **EMERGENCIES *DO NOT* INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:**

No transportation

Doctor appointments

Family Vacations/Visits

Non-school athletic events

Non-school recitals, concerts, etc.

Please carefully review the [2024-25 CMS Choir Calendar](#)

## **Grading Policy**

Purpose: Quantifying and Assessing Student Progress and Achievement on the Secondary Choral Level

The key purpose of awarding grades is to correlate and communicate the achievements of DISD students according to state standards, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), and the district curriculum for DISD Fine Arts on the Secondary Level, Choral. We are dedicated to cultivating an environment where quality instruction, assessment, and evaluation occur to develop students as future leaders of our community. Our academic grades will be reflective in formative and summative assessment, based on the student's mastery of the state standards (TEKS) and district curriculum.

Your classroom grade will be determined by the following:

Formative Assessment: (Does not count towards overall grade)

Formative Assessment directs the teacher's instructional decisions regarding adjustments or re-teaching needed to ensure students success on the curriculum and/or learning goal(s). Formative scores will be a tool for teachers, students, and parents to monitor the progress of the student. They should reflect progress on standards only.

Formative Assessment: (Counts as 0)

1. Class Discussions
2. Daily Rehearsal Practices
3. Director Observations
4. Questioning
5. Checking for Understanding
6. Classroom Assignments

Summative Assessment: Counts towards overall grade

Summative assessments are designed to provide information about a student's mastery of the curriculum/learning goal(s). Summative assessment occurs after teachers have provided feedback to students through formative assessments.

❖ Minor Summative= 40%

➤ *This category includes:*

1. Practical theory or sight-reading oral or written quizzes (MS TEK 1 & 2, A-E-3E)
2. Daily rehearsal evaluation (in and out of class) (MS TEK 3 A-D, F)
3. Short pieces of writing (including Lyrical & Historical Interpretation), Concert critiques (MS TEK 5 B-E -4, A-D)
4. Oral questions in class (including Lyrical & Historical Interpretation), Music vocabulary, Theory concepts, Concert critiques & Expectations (All TEKS)
5. Performance tasks (including Physical & Kinesthetic Movement) (MS TEKS 3 B)
6. Score study, Listening, Analysis and Markings (MS TEKS 1 A-D – 2 A-E)

❖ Major Summative= 60%

➤ *This category includes:*

1. Concert performance for audience (includes actual performance & concert etiquette) (MS TEKS 5 1-E – 3 A-D, F-G)
2. Alternative assignments, Projects (including all general music concepts in writing research papers, Creating final drafts, Essays and Presentations) (All TEKS)
3. Music Portfolio (including score study, Listening, Analysis and Markings) (MS TEK 1 A-D - 2 A- E)



## Reassessment:

A student may reassess a major summative assessment only after the student has demonstrated new learning to justify a reassessment. This acknowledges that students process and master material at different rates. Each teacher will make sure students know the specific activities and relearning that will need to take place in order to reassess. This information will be included in each teacher's syllabus.

1. The student must have completed ALL formative assessments. They must complete reassessment within ten (10) days of getting the first assessment's grade.
2. One opportunity for reassessment of major summative assessments excluding the semester performances.

## **Uniforms- CONCERT BLACK**

### **Formal uniforms- 7th & 8th Grade Musicians**

These will be worn in formal concerts, including UIL , All-Region, & Fall/Winter choir concerts.

Women: Solid black, long sleeved dress. Knee length or longer  
**OR** Black, long sleeved, button-down dress blouse\* **with**  
 Black skirt (below the knee) or dress pants (no designs or other colors) or dress\*  
 Dress Shoes (closed toe, up to 2" heels acceptable)\*

Men: Black, long sleeved, button-down dress shirt \*  
 Plain undershirt to be worn underneath dress shirt\*  
 Black dress pants (no jeans)\*  
 Black socks\*  
 Black DRESS shoes\*

### **Formal uniforms- 6th Grade Musicians- [Click here](#)**

### **Casual uniforms- All Grades (Men & Women)**

These will be worn in casual situations where we want to be uniform, but not formal.

CMS Choir t-shirt\* (you will receive your choir shirt once dues are paid in full)  
 Blue jeans (must cover the entire leg-no holes)\*  
 Comfortable/Casual/Tennis Shoes\*

\*To be provided by students. Please see me if you have questions concerning attire.

**Spring Grammy Concert attire-**

Since this is our Spring “pops” concert, students are permitted to wear any solid or combination of the colors black, white, red, silver, grey, and gold. Please make sure that dress lengths are appropriate. Shoulders must be covered—no sleeveless dresses or blouses. No jeans, athletic shorts or t-shirts.

**Jewelry:** Large jewelry is not acceptable. Women may only wear studs in their ears. No dangling earrings, necklaces, watches, or bracelets are allowed. Men, no earrings are allowed.

**Hair:** Hair must be away from the eyes. Women, hair must stay behind the dress. If it cannot stay there, you must tie it back. Men, be sure that your bangs stay out of the eyes.

**Hygiene:** Middle school marks a time in your life where your body goes through many changes. It is important that each student keep good hygiene rules in mind when preparing for concerts. This includes **using deodorant**. **Do not** use perfume or cologne to cover your body odors. Some perfumes and colognes can cause allergic reactions and can affect the health of our students.

## **Required Materials**

In order for successful rehearsals to take place, all students must be prepared for class each and every day. Please have the following materials by the end of the first week of school. Materials marked with an asterisk (\*) are required in class **daily**.

1. Two (2) boxes of facial tissue.
2. \*Charged CHROMEBOOK
3. \* Music (Supplied by teacher)
4. \*Black Choir Folder (Supplied by teacher)
5. \*Pencil pouch with pencil, eraser, highlighter (Supplied by teacher. Student must replace if lost)
6. \*Notebook paper or spiral notebook

## Dues and Expenses

Most costs of participating in choir are covered by the CMS Choral Department's budget; however, participation in choir does require some financial commitment.

To help offset these costs, a non-refundable \$50 choir fee is due by **Friday, September 6, 2024**. If you are unable to pay the full amount by this date, see the payment plan on page 17 of this handbook. These dues include, but are not limited to, a **2024-25** choir t-shirt, uniform rental, and maintenance of formal uniforms. They also help subsidize costs for the classroom, trips, festivals, clinicians to work with students and other social events. Every student enrolled in CMS Choir is expected to pay choir dues. **Please note that students will not be able to participate in attending reward trips until dues are paid in full.**

\*Other costs associated with the CMS Choirs are *optional* and are dependent on the student's participation in *optional* events. Please understand that the cost of these events is **SEPARATE** from the choir dues unless noted otherwise.

All-Region Choir Auditions	\$10 (Required of all Varsity students-included in dues)
Solo & Ensemble	\$10 (Required for all Varsity students- included in dues)
Honor Choir	\$10 (6th Graders only- included in dues)
%Fall Reward Trip	\$30
%Spring Reward Field Trip	\$50
%Spring Festival Contests	\$50 each (Hurricane Harbor, NRH20, Epic Waters, etc.)

The CMS Choral Department will be participating in fundraising activities throughout the year. There are many costs that go into operating a choral program, and the school district gives us only a portion of that money; therefore we must fundraise the rest. We expect **each** student to help in our fundraisers. Students choosing not to participate in the fundraisers will need to cover all/any fees associated with optional events (rewards trips, etc). Please note that fundraiser money cannot be transferred to other students nor does it carry over into the next fiscal year.

Note: Finances should never affect a student's participation, progress, or potential in choir. In the event that finances become a concern, please contact the director-arrangements can often be made in these situations!!

# **Calhoun Choir Fundraising**

Fundraising is a great way to lower the cost for our choir program. It can be expensive to run a choir program in today's economy, as well as for families to get the supplies your children need. We encourage all of our students to participate in fundraising to help lower costs. Students will also have an opportunity to fundraise for their individual choir account to help them pay for their choir membership dues or supplies they may need throughout the year, and help raise money for things our entire choir needs. Fundraising is NOT required, but is highly encouraged for all students.

## **Student Fundraising**

\*\*Students must have turned in the fundraiser form in order to participate in selling items for fundraisers. In addition, students will not be allowed to attend reward field trips unless fundraising money is paid in full\*\*

Please use the links below to complete the following Google Forms for your child.

- ❖ [Information/Medical Release](#)
- ❖ [Field Trip Acknowledgement Form](#)
- ❖ [Choir Calendar 24-25](#)
- ❖ [Acknowledgement Form](#)