

Whatever you are, be a good one!



ANKENY HIGH SCHOOL CHORAL MUSIC HANDBOOK 2025-2026

Live with excellence, enthusiasm, and passion!



Mr. Ben Walters & Mr. Riley Anderson, Vocal Music Directors

"I am not suggesting that going from good to great is easy...I am asserting that those who strive to turn good into great find the process no more painful or exhausting than those who settle for just letting things wallow along in mind numbing mediocrity."

- Jim Collins

Welcome to Ankeny High School Choral Music

Dear Singers & Families,

Welcome to the Ankeny High School Choral Music Department! We are excited that you have chosen to be a part of the AHS choral music community and make singing a part of your high school experience. Your membership in this program indicates your interest in music and your desire and willingness to further develop and use your talents. By participating in Concert Choir, Cantorei, Chorale, Ankeny Singers, Show Choirs, and related activities you provide yourself with the chance to study and perform a wide variety of music, perform in a number of concert venues and settings, and make friends and develop bonds with students who have similar interests and talents.

Our mission is to help each student develop musically, socially, and personally as we believe that music education fosters self-discipline, dedication, confidence, and learning how to work with a group towards a common goal. As performance oriented entities, we strive to be the best we can be in all respects.

This handbook is designed to assist students and parents in understanding the policies and procedures of the AHS Choral Music Department. Please read the information in this handbook carefully so that together we can build a choral program with the highest standards of excellence. In addition to this handbook, we encourage you to become acquainted with our department website (www.ankenychoralmusic.org) This website contains up-to-date announcements, calendars, and resources as we navigate the school year together.

We have high expectations for this school year and look forward to working with each of you in a collaborative effort to produce outstanding music performances, create lasting memories, and have a great time along the way. Here's to a great year!

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Course Offerings & Content

Choral music studies at Ankeny High School seek to provide students with an understanding of the human voice and its use, choral ensemble techniques, a basic understanding of music history, theory, and concepts through the practice and performance of a wide variety of quality choral literature, and the opportunity to grow as singers and musicians aspiring towards artistic performances while performing in a variety of settings.

Choral Ensembles

Concert Choir (Honors Auditioned Mixed Chorus)

The Ankeny Concert Choir is the most select ensemble in the Ankeny Choral Music Department and is open to students in grades 10-12 who exhibit a mature vocal tone, as well as demonstrated sight reading ability and aural accuracy. This ensemble is intended for the serious singer who desires an intensive music-making experience. In depth study of music from each period of music history will be explored with focus on vocal production, independence, music literacy (including solfege), musical precision, and advanced ensemble skills. The ensemble performs regularly in home concerts and in various community engagements. Students in all core ensembles are eligible and encouraged to participate in other musical opportunities outside of the school day. *Mr. Walters directs Concert Choir.*

Cantorei (Auditioned Advanced Treble Clef)

Cantorei is an auditioned treble ensemble for students at AHS. Study of vocal pedagogy related specifically to the treble voice will be explored. Integration of solfege, music literacy, and ensemble skills including sound unification, intonation, and vocal independence will be incorporated through a varied repertoire of quality treble choral literature. Students in all core ensembles are eligible and encouraged to participate in other musical opportunities outside of the school day. *Mr. Walters directs Cantorei.*

Chorale (Auditioned Mixed)

Chorale is a mixed ensemble open to all students in grades 10-12 by audition. Music fundamentals and music literacy (including solfege and terminology) will be emphasized, as well as study of good choral tone and healthy vocal production in a choral setting, using a varied repertoire of quality literature. Students in all core ensembles are eligible and encouraged to participate in other musical opportunities outside of the school day. *Mr. Anderson directs Chorale.*

Ankeny Singers (Mixed Chorus)

Ankeny Singers is a mixed chorus open to any 10-12th grade student at Ankeny High School who enjoys singing and being part of a musical team. Music fundamentals and music literacy (including solfege and terminology) will be emphasized, as well as study of healthy vocal production in a choral setting. Students in all core ensembles are eligible and encouraged to participate in other musical opportunities outside of the school day. *Mr. Anderson directs Ankeny Singers.*

Show Choirs

Show Choirs are extracurricular extensions of the Ankeny High School Choral Music Program. These ensembles include the combination of choral singing and innovative choreography and movement to create a competitive performance program. Show Choirs perform regularly throughout the winter/spring months at locations across the state/region. Students in a show choir are expected to be enrolled in a core ensemble and making consistent positive contribution and personal vocal growth in that setting.

Visual Adrenaline (Varsity Mixed-Mr. Walters, director)

Perpetual Motion (Junior-Varsity/Prep Mixed-Mr. Anderson, director)

Intensity (Junior-Varsity/Prep Mixed-Ms. Feldhans & Ms. Nelson, directors)

Literature Selection

AHS Repertoire Statement

Choral literature for each of our choirs is chosen very carefully. It is the belief of the AHS Choral Music Department that students be exposed to a variety of high quality choral literature. Selection of music for each ensemble is determined by the instructor based on quality, educational value, and suitability for healthy vocal development and musical growth. It is not the intent of this department to persuade students' views with opposing beliefs or ideals that a musical selection's text may present. Rather, we desire to familiarize students with quality choral literature that will give them historical and global perspective as well as to make them conversant with musical aesthetics. It is our goal to include music programming from a broad perspective of choral composers, styles, cultures, and time periods of music history; both sacred and secular.

National Association for Music Education Sacred Music Position Statement

It is the position of the National Association for Music Education that the study and performance of religious music within an educational context is a vital and appropriate part of a comprehensive music education. The omission of sacred music from the school curriculum would result in an incomplete educational experience.

Rehearsal Expectations, Procedures, & Materials

Rehearsal Expectations

The success of our choral organizations is directly related to each student's daily contribution, behavior, and attitude. Students are expected to:

1. Demonstrate an awareness of the importance of rehearsal time. Be in the room with all necessary materials at the bell. Use of restrooms during rehearsals should be avoided due to secured doors and loss of instructional time (use restrooms between classes.) Once you have dropped off personal materials (see #7) report to your assigned position on the risers immediately and check the board for announcements while waiting for warm-ups or introductory announcements/activities.
2. Focus mental energy toward the conductor, music, and to giving your best efforts.
3. Focus physical energy to the correct application of good singing technique. (Using proper alignment/ posture, breathing properly, etc.)
4. Demonstrate respect for the rehearsal facilities and equipment. (Get permission to play the piano, keep the room clean, store music and uniforms properly, etc.)
5. Refrain from the use of technology in any capacity (Cell Phones, Chromebooks, etc) during instruction/rehearsal unless otherwise requested by your director.
6. Bring ONLY WATER to the risers for rehearsal. Other pop, tea, *flavored waters*, food, gum, candy, etc is **not allowed**. Please dispose of these items before class or as you come in. (*Bottled water is encouraged, as breaks cannot always be accommodated.)

7. Leave personal items (including but not limited to: book bags, purses, phones, materials for other classes, technology not needed for the day, etc.) on the sides of the room. Students should have only their music, pencil, and water bottle with them on the risers.

Attitude accounts for 99% of all successes OR challenges

Attendance/Tardiness

Due to the collaborative and interdependent nature of a choral ensemble, missing rehearsal time has an adverse impact on others.

- Students are expected to be in their assigned standing arrangement by the bell. (Checking the white board & screen for assignments & announcements.)
- Habitual absences or tardiness will impact a student's work habits grade and may impact future audition decisions.
- Leaving a rehearsal for any reason should be an extremely rare occurrence and reserved for true emergencies. Permission to leave rehearsal must be obtained from a staff member.
 - Fill water bottles prior to rehearsal.

Materials

1. Black Binder: Members of all choirs need a black three-ring binder to store their choral music. (Music is provided by AHS.) When this binder is not being taken home for practice purposes, it should be stored in its correct slot in the choir room. *If you need assistance acquiring a binder, contact the director of your ensemble.*
2. Music (assigned by AHS) is distributed to students by assigned number. Students should be sure to pick up music that is only their number and are responsible for the return of each piece of music at the conclusion of each concert period. (Lost or damaged music will result in a fee being assessed.)
3. **Pencil** (NOT A PEN) is required for each rehearsal. Part of being an active member of the rehearsal process is marking the music according to the conductor's instructions/class discussion. It is a wise idea to store a pencil in your folder.

Concert Formal Wear

Each student is issued school owned formal wear for public performance.

Either Gown (Concert Choir=black lace sequin; Cantorei=black/claret; Chorale & Ankeny Singers=black)

- Black flat dress shoes
- Concert Choir=necklace
 - No other neck or wrist jewelry.
- Garment bag

Or

Tuxedo coat, pants

- Black dress shoes
- Concert Choir=white dress shirt, vest, neck tie
- Chorale & Ankeny Singers= white tux shirt, bow tie
- Garment bag

*Concert formal wear will be taken home in the fall. Students are responsible for the safe return of all pieces of their school-owned formal wear at the conclusion of the academic year. **Lost or damaged formal wear will result in student charges being assessed prior to check out in the spring.**

Earning Your Grade

Grades are given each semester for the choral ensembles at Ankeny High School. Full academic credit is earned. The following criteria are considered when determining grades.

Note: Students' main objective in a choral ensemble is to be actively engaged and appropriately participating in the rehearsal and music making process by demonstrating and applying music performance, literacy, and critical thinking skills via singing/performing, score marking, and discussion activities.

Students will be graded in the following areas:

1. Vocal Music Standards (80%)
 - a. Melodic Literacy (Sight Reading) (20%)
 - b. Rhythmic Literacy (10%)
 - c. Vocal Technique & Ensemble Skills (50%)
2. Live Performance (Concerts) (20%)

Vocal Music Standards (80%):

Throughout the year, students will be assessed on the following vocal music standards; multiple opportunities to show growth and proficiency will be provided:

1. Ensemble Skills (Posture, phonation/articulation, breathing, aural skills, score marking, labeling, defining, and performing dynamics, articulations, phrasing, etc, reflection/analysis, discussion)
2. Melodic Literacy (sight-reading/solfege)
3. Rhythm/ Meter

Individual Musical Growth (IMG)

Throughout the year, students will self-schedule Individual Musical Growth appointments with their director. These may be individual or small groups at the discretion of the director. These appointments may include any of the following (but is not limited to): 1. Assessment of vocal music standards, 2. Assessment of Concert Readiness 3. Individual vocal coachings, 4. Sectionals

Concerts: Musical Readiness & Live Performance (20%):

Each concert event will be worth 125 points and will be scored as follows:

1. Musical Readiness: 100 points
2. Live Performance: 25 points

Musical Readiness:

1. Students will be required to demonstrate proficiency of their concert music in order to perform in the concert. Students will be evaluated in any/all of the following areas: Intonation, Rhythmic accuracy, Musicianship/Execution of score markings, Independence of vocal line.

2. A [rubric](#) will be utilized to evaluate each student's performance. Students must obtain a minimum score of 60% to perform in the concert.

3. The method of evaluation is at the discretion of the director and may vary by ensemble and concert.

Live Performance:

As an entity of the performing arts, participation in a live concert performance is considered both crucial and mandatory to the music education experience.

Attendance at ALL PERFORMANCES AND EXTRA REHEARSALS associated with the ensemble you are enrolled in is **mandatory**. Any student who must be absent from a performance or dress rehearsal MUST provide communication from home **in advance** (email/note) explaining the nature of the absence. Students with an *excused* absence from a performance will be given an opportunity for make-up work.

Ankeny Community Schools Board-Approved Standards & Guiding Practices:

How students will be graded:

- Letter grades will continue to be assigned for all courses at the secondary level based on the 0-100 percent scale.
- Grading Scale for Non-Weighted Classes:

Minimum Percent	92.5	89.5	86.5	82.5	79.5	76.5	72.5	69.5	66.5	62.5	59.5	59 and below
Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to commit to high standards of personal and academic integrity. Students are expected to do their own work and document sources appropriately.

Guiding Practices:

Multiple and Varied Assessment Opportunities

All students should have multiple and varied assessment opportunities to demonstrate higher levels of achievement. Additional opportunities may include being reassessed on only the content/skills not mastered, spiraling assessment of content/skill on subsequent assessments, reassessment of an alternate form of an assessment (e.g., Form B instead of Form A), student revisions of work products based on descriptive feedback, or alternative methods of assessments (e.g., an oral response rather than a written test).

Guidelines for reassessment opportunities include the following:

- Students will be provided the opportunity to be reassessed - best practice is to provide additional opportunities for students to demonstrate learning during future assessments.
- Teachers determine appropriateness and authentic need for reassessments.
- Reassessment method will be provided at the discretion of the teacher.
- Reassessments will be given within a reasonable time frame that the teacher determines and students will be communicated with in advance.

Homework / Independent Practice

Homework is an opportunity for students to practice skills, apply knowledge, review and build on past learning, and extend learning. Homework is individualized and based on each student's progress towards established standards. The purpose of the assignment will determine whether or not a grade is given and will be clearly articulated to students. Through independent learning tasks (homework), students assume more responsibility for their learning and are given opportunities to apply what they have learned to new situations or experiences.

Extra Credit and Bonus Points

To ensure that grades reflect progress toward and achievement of the standards, giving extra credit points or bonus points will not occur in this class.

Behavioral Expectations

The work habits/behavior standards are for grades 6-12 courses in our district. These work habits/behavior standards will be reported throughout the semester and are as follows:

- Organization and Readiness
- Productivity and Accountability
- Collaboration Skills

For those of you accessing this document electronically, the work habits tool can be accessed online: [Work Habit Tool Online Link](#). We will be using the following performance levels

Performance Levels for Work Habits/Behavior Standards:

MS = Meets Standard

PM = Partially Meets Standard

DM = Doesn't Meet Standard

NE = No Evidence

These descriptors are intended for feedback and communication and do not impact a student's GPA.

**Formative and Summative Assessment:
Definitions**

- **Formative Assessment:** Formal and informal processes teachers and students use to gather evidence for the purpose of improving learning.
- **Summative Assessment:** Assessments that provide evidence of student achievement for the purpose of making a judgment about student competence or program effectiveness.



LEVELS OF PROFICIENCY

ADVANCED

ADV

ADVANCED

The student demonstrates learning beyond the expectations of proficiency.

MEETING

MTG

MEETING

The student demonstrates learning that meets the expectations of proficiency.

PROGRESSING

PRG

PROGRESSING

The student demonstrates learning that partially meets the expectations of proficiency.

BEGINNING

BEG

BEGINNING

The student demonstrates learning that begins to meet the expectations of proficiency.

INSUFFICIENT

INS

INSUFFICIENT

The student has not yet submitted the required amount of evidence. It is missing or it is incomplete.



ANKENY
COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Statement on AI:

Per music department expectations, teachers or administrators reserve the right to conduct a verbal review of any written work that is turned in. This is consistent with many secondary, post-secondary, and business practices used to maintain academic integrity.

Additional Concert & Performance Information

Reminder: Attendance at all concerts and outside of school dress rehearsals is MANDATORY.

Live Performance Credit Requirements:

To earn full credit for the *live component* of a concert/dress rehearsal, students must:

- 1.) Arrive by the announced call time for their ensemble. (To be early is to be on time!)
- 2.) Be dressed appropriately according to the guidelines in this handbook.
 - No jewelry beyond what is part of the assigned uniform is permitted.
- 3.) Fully participate in the concert as a performer
- 4.) Be a respectful audience member (see below)
- 5.) Clean-up: Take home formal wear, remove any trash (water bottles, etc.), take home personal items from the music rehearsal rooms.

Live Performance Make-Up:

There is no way to truly replicate the experience of performing in a live concert. However, in the unfortunate and unlikely event that a student has to miss a performance, in order to make-up points students may:

1. Attend another choral concert and complete a [director-supplied reflection form](#) for the event. The performance level of the concert should be high school or above (i.e. another high school, college/university, community choir, etc.)
2. Record themselves singing the concert material with the supplied concert recording. Students will be evaluated using the [Concert Readiness Rubric](#).
 - a. Students have one month from the missed performance date to complete their make-up assignment.

Reminder: Communication from a parent/guardian is required IN ADVANCE of an *excused* absence. (Examples: sickness, family emergency; NON-Examples: having to work, attending a concert at Casey's Center.)

Audience Member Concert Etiquette:

- 1.) Be respectful of the performing ensemble and others seated in the auditorium.
- 2.) Exit and enter the performance at appropriate pauses during performances.
- 3.) Polite applause is most appropriate and encouraged following a selection.
- 4.) Use of cell phones is not appropriate.
- 5.) Remain in the auditorium for the duration of the concert.

Social Media & Copyright Law:

Due to copyright restrictions, the recording and posting of vocal music performances on personal social media channels is not allowed. Recordings of performances are not sold.

Ticketed Events:

The following vocal music events have admission charges: Show Choir Preview (November), Show Choir 101 Camp (November), Julefest (December), Spring Show Choir Spectacular (March).

Visit www.seatyourself.biz (code: ankenychoralmusic) to purchase tickets. Tickets go on sale approximately two weeks prior to an event. Watch our monthly newsletter and email communications for details.

Building & Auditorium Access:

Unless noted in communications, all performance events happen in the Ankeny High School Auditorium & Fine Arts Wing on the East side of Ankeny High School. Audience members should enter through door E26. Students will enter through door E26 or W33 depending on the event. The auditorium opens approximately 15-30 minutes prior to the start of a performance.

Communication Tools

Canvas

Canvas will be the primary platform for academic work and resources including assignments, assessments, and supplementary materials.

Students should be enrolled in their choir's Canvas page via Infinite Campus.

Choral Music Department Website

Our website is the main hub for information about the AHS Choral Music Program. It contains announcements, calendars, volunteer information, documents, contact information, and more. Please bookmark the web address and visit it often for updates. (www.ankenychoralmusic.org)

Cut Time

Cut Time is a communication platform used by the music department for mass communications. If you are not receiving communications from the vocal music department, please contact the director of your student's ensemble(s). Please fully read these communications, there is often a lot of information included in a single message.

Parent/Student Square: Text Announcements

Parent Square will be used to distribute short, ensemble-specific announcements. Parent Square has replaced Remind, which was discontinued by the district.

Vocal Music Calendar (At-a-glance; List form): click [here](#).

Social Media

Social Media is used to disseminate a variety of announcements, accolades, and photos.

X (Twitter): [@ahs_vocal_music](#)

Instagram: [@ankeny_choirs](#)

Ankeny Choral Messenger

A monthly department newsletter will be distributed through CutTime to communicate upcoming events and pertinent time sensitive information.

In Touch

The AHS Vocal Music Departments uses In Touch for collecting individual financial contributions for show choirs. (This is the same online system used by the ACSD for registration fees, lunch fees, etc.)

Email

Email is the best way to get in contact with the directors.

Mr. Walters, Director of Choral Activities (Concert Choir/Cantorei/Visual Adrenaline):

ben.walters@ankenyschools.org

Mr. Anderson, Assistant Director of Choral Activities (Chorale/Ankeny Singers/Perpetual Motion):

riley.anderson@ankenyschools.org

Ms. Feldhans & Ms. Nelson (Intensity):

emma.feldhans@ankenyschools.org



Additional Vocal Music Opportunities

All-State Chorus: Advanced or highly motivated students may audition for the Iowa All-State Chorus. Being selected to this ensemble is the highest honor a high school musician can receive in the state of Iowa. Auditioning for this group is a major time commitment, but a very rewarding one. All-State rehearsals occur outside of the school day throughout the fall. Auditions take place in October, with the All-State Festival occurring in November.

Private Voice Instruction: Students with an increased interest in their vocal technique and development are encouraged to study voice in a more targeted way. Students may schedule lessons with their choral director and/or may also consider studying with a private instructor outside of school; for those interested in private instruction, the directors can provide suggestions of area voice teachers who would be a good fit for your objectives and needs.

Solo Contest: Students who wish to perform a solo for a rating and clinic with a judge may choose to participate in Solo Contest in April. Interested students should see their director *well in advance* of April to begin preparations.

Honor Choirs: AHS Choral music students may be eligible to participate in honor choir festivals held across the state. If you are interested in being considered for an honor choir, please see your director. Students are chosen for honor choirs by the director based on attitude, work ethic, vocal music ability, and sometimes audition.

National Anthem Singers: Singers are often needed to sing the National Anthem at various home sporting events. If you are interested in being on the list supplied to the activities office, see Mr. Walters.

Hawktime Enrichment: Opportunities to explore other genres of vocal music, types of ensembles, etc may be explored during "Hawktime" throughout the year.

Please print and return the "Statement of Understanding" (last page of this packet) to Mr. Ben Walters or Mr. Riley Anderson, Ankeny High School Choral Directors, by Friday, September 5. Keep the remainder of this handbook for your reference or you can always access the latest version online on the choral music website.

The latest calendar updates will always be reflected on our Google Calendar on the choral music website.

Statement of Understanding Ankeny High School Choral Music 2025-2026



We have read the choral music handbook and understand the expectations associated with the Ankeny High School Choral Music Program, including the mandatory nature of outside of school day concerts and rehearsals. We further understand that the directors are available for consultation should questions arise throughout the year.

Student Name (Please print clearly)_____

Student Signature_____

Parent/Guardian Signature_____

Date_____

Please initial:

___ We are receiving mass communications from CUT TIME.

___ We (student & parent/guardian) are receiving communications from PARENT/STUDENT SQUARE.

___ We are aware of www.ankenychoralmusic.org and understand that this will be the “hub” for the most up-to-date calendars and information about AHS Vocal Music.

