

Mitchell High School Vocal Music Handbook 2026-2027



***“You have to love the sound of the ensemble more
than the sound of your own voice!”***

Nic Caberos, Director of Choral Activities
www.kernelchoirs.com

Welcome to the Mitchell High School Vocal Music Department!

It is with enthusiasm and excitement that we welcome you to the program. We are glad you have chosen to sing in choir, and we look forward to an outstanding year together!

The purpose of the Mitchell Vocal Music Program is to help each individual develop – musically, socially, and personally. We believe that being in music ensembles helps build self-discipline, confidence, dedication, and learning how to work with others toward a common goal. As performance oriented groups, we strive to be the best we can be in all aspects of our craft.

The Vocal Music Program at Mitchell High School has a tradition of outstanding excellence that long predates my arrival at MHS, even long before you and I were born. The people who have graced our rooms with their voices have left a joyful sound that still rings true every day. It is important that we honor their traditions and make them proud, while we make our own unique sounds, and thus pass on the torch for generations to come. We do not succeed as Choral Ensembles without the sound of ALL our individuals; each person's voice is so, so important. We WILL continue the standards of excellence on a regional and national level, and we WILL become lifelong learners and musicians once we leave our rehearsal spaces.

I am honored to be your director, and I CANNOT WAIT for an incredible year of hard-work, joy, and taking Kernel Choirs to new heights!

**Nic Caberos
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Mitchell High School
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Vocal Music Philosophy

The Vocal Music Department of Mitchell High School believes that Music, as much as – if not more than any other academic subject - is a discipline that truly crosses all curricular areas. The study of music was a required element of education for ancient civilizations because its activity encompassed the whole person. The Mitchell Vocal Music Department believe very strongly that these principles still apply today:

MUSIC IS A SCIENCE

Music is exact, specific, and it demands exact acoustics. A conductor's full score is a chart/graph that indicates frequencies, intensities, volume changes, melody, and harmony all at once and with the most exact control of time.

MUSIC IS MATHEMATICAL

Music is rhythmically based on the subdivisions of time into fractions which must be done instantaneously, not worked out on paper.

MUSIC USES NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGES

Most of the terms relating to music are in Italian, German, or French. Many of the most compelling and long lasting choral works are in a differing language. And, most importantly, the notation of music itself is certainly not English, but a highly developed kind of shorthand that uses symbols to represent ideas. The semantics of music is the most complete language.

MUSIC IS SOCIAL STUDIES

Music usually reflects the environment and times of its creation. It often embodies the culture of a particular group of people. In addition, the performance of music is a social skill requiring at least two participants, a performer and a listener.

MUSIC IS PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The performance of music requires fantastic coordination skills, whether it be instrumental or vocal music. Vocal musicians are required to control and coordinate muscles of posture, inhalation and exhalation with the muscles that control the larynx. All muscle groups must then respond instantly in order to produce the pitch that the ear hears and the mind interprets.

MUSIC IS MAGIC

Music doesn't make sense sometimes. Music can create emotions, prove us wrong, and create new opportunities for growth we never thought possible. Singing, especially, has a bond that connects us spiritually in ways we can't explain, and it binds us together in new, colorful, and exciting ways.

MUSIC IS ART

Music allows human beings to take all of the above disciplines and techniques and use them to create human feeling and emotion. Music allows humans to explore their humanity, sociality, and spiritually. It is this aspect that separates Music from the other disciplines of study.

I. CHOIR EXPECTATIONS

1. SHOW RESPECT for all people and property.
2. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY for your actions.
3. BE READY for all class activities.

II. GRADING

Grades will be weighted by the following categories:

- 40%** Performances
- 40%** Singing Assessments & Written Work (Assignments, Quizzes, Tests, Reflections, Lessons etc.)
- 20%** Sight-singing/music theory semester final

Performances (40%)

Generally the work of each academic quarter culminates in a final performance. Show Choir will see most of their concerts/performances in the spring during their competition season. Other various performances/concerts will be scheduled throughout the year (i.e. National Anthem for athletic events, Large Group Contest, etc.). **Attendance at all concerts and dress rehearsals is mandatory and required in order to successfully complete every curricular choir course.** There are no excuses for missing a scheduled performance **except a serious family emergency or medical situation. WORK CONFLICTS ARE NOT AN EXCUSE.**

In the event of conflicts with important family ceremonies (wedding, confirmation, etc.), **written notification** (email is preferred) from a parent/guardian must be given to your director at least 2 weeks prior to the event in order to qualify for an excused absence. In the event of a family emergency, please contact the director as soon as possible.

ONLY IN EXCUSED ABSENCE situations, students must complete a make-up assignment (see below).

Choir Performance Make-up Assignment

Part 1 – Performance

You, and any other students who missed the concert, will perform the music we performed at the missed concert during our class time for the rest of the class. You will be expected to wear your concert/performance attire. I will conduct/accompany. We will create as realistic of a performance setting as possible.

You will be assessed using the Iowa High School Music Association Large Group Contest ballot. This performance will be completed during the first class period you are present for following the missed concert. See Mr. Caberos with any questions.

Part 2 – Research Paper

Please choose a musical subject of your choice to write a paper on. It could be about a composer, a period of music, a style of music, or a musical concept/theory. Other ideas are welcome but all topics must be approved by Mr. Caberos prior to starting your paper. *If you turn in a paper on a topic not previously approved it will only be worth 1/2 credit.*

Your paper must follow correct MLA Style in all areas. Your paper must be typed with normal one-inch margins, size 12 Times New Roman font, and double-spaced. It must be 3-5 pages in length. If you are only going to write three pages, it better be three very strong, completely filled pages. This paper is due one week from the date of the missed concert. A paper that uses plagiarism or AI will receive a zero. See Mr. Caberos with any questions.

Concert Attire

Just as the ensemble sound is important, appearance is also important to the overall effect of the performance. Absolutely no visible jewelry will be allowed on stage. Anything else that is deemed by the director to be visually distracting from the rest of the ensemble will not be permitted. **Hair must be up and out of the face for all performers.** Required concert attire is listed below.

All performers

Students will be responsible for wearing THEIR OWN Concert Black Dress Clothes. Dress Clothes MUST be worn onstage, otherwise the student will not perform. Examples of what to wear are listed below, including items that are OPTIONAL at the student's/family discretion:

Masculine:

- Black Dress Shirt (button down)
- Black Dress Shoes (not sneakers, must NOT have any white)
- Black socks (long)
- Black belt
- All black Sport or Suit Coat (optional)
- All black tie (optional, may have designs, but no other colors)

Feminine:

- Black Dress (length must be appropriate according to School Dress Code)
- Black Skirt
- Black Blouse
- Black Shoes (can be heels, flats, etc., must NOT have any white, must be close-toed)
- Black nylons or pantyhose (may have designs, as long as they're not distracting)

Robes

Students MAY be issued a robe provided by the school. This robe will need to be returned at the end of the year in the same shape it was when issued to the student. The student will be financially responsible for any damage to the robe or if the robe is not returned. The student will still be responsible for wearing their appropriate Concert Black Attire underneath their Robes.

Musical

All students NOT involved in the school musical will be required to attend at least 1 performance of the musical. Students not able to attend any of the performances will be required to complete a make-up assignment only in excused absence situations. Performance dates listed below:

Thursday, October 22nd, 2026	7pm	Saturday, October 24th, 2026	2pm
Friday, October 23rd, 2026	7pm	Saturday, October 24th, 2026	7pm

Assessments/Evaluations (40%)

(Singing Tests, Written-Work, Folder Checks, etc.)

Singing Tests: Periodically, students will demonstrate their proficiencies by performing repertoire and other material learned in class. Students will sing in small ensembles or individually, and the instructor will evaluate the performance. The following areas will be evaluated:

Expression (both vocal and visual), Tone Quality, Intonation, Part Accuracy, Rhythmic Accuracy, Musicianship, and Diction.

Written-Work: Throughout the semester students will complete various quizzes, tests, worksheets, self-evaluations, and journal entries as a means of assessing their individual progress and understanding of the concepts covered. Many of these activities will also be used for purposes of self-reflection and goal setting in furthering the student's musical progress.

Folder Checks: It is very important to your success in Choir that you put all directions/markings in your music. It is also important that you keep all pertinent information/handouts in your folder along with all music. Nothing else should be kept in your choir folder. Your folder and music should be taken very good care of. You will be responsible for any damage done to your folder or music, including lost music.

****Your section leaders will be checking for all materials each day! Included in/with your binder should be all of the following:**

- Black Binder
- Pencil
- ALL Music (must be in the binder)
- Lettering Packets
- Kernel Choirs schedule
- Handbook

+For each day of missing materials for choir, singers will be required to complete one Music Theory Assignment provided by Mr. Caberos, due the next choir rehearsal. While Folder Checks will not be graded, Music Theory Assignments WILL in turn be graded.+

Lessons (1 Per Semester): New this year, each singer will be required to have at least 1 voice lesson with Mr. Caberos during SRB, after school, or otherwise (this does not apply to singers in Class Voice). Each voice lesson will last 15 minutes and must be done individually. Only under extenuating circumstances will Mr. Caberos allow students to have a lesson with only one other person present. Each singer should have a plan of what they'd like to work on with Mr. Caberos, which COULD include any of the following: tricky notes in choir music, working on expanding singing range, confidence in performing, all-state music, etc. **Each lesson is to help assess each singers' strengths and potential areas for growth, and will not be a source of judgement or failure. Mr. Caberos will do everything to make sure you leave feeling confident and with a plan for a successful future in your singing endeavors.**

- Failure to participate in 1 lesson with Mr. Caberos by the end of each semester will result in an "F" for that assignment.
- Singers must have a lesson schedule online with Mr. Caberos beforehand; they may not show up and ask for one right then and there. To sign up for a lesson with Mr. Caberos, visit kernelchoirs.com, under the "High School Choirs" tab, and click on "Lesson Sign-Up".

Semester Final (20%)

A semester final will be given during the final week of each semester. This final will be determined at a later date depending on student achievement/abilities, but may include: Sight-Singing test (individual or in groups), Music Theory test, group research projects, etc.

Classroom Participation/Contribution **(Not Graded, still important!)**

Each student's daily participation and class contribution are critical to their personal musical growth in addition to the growth and success of the ensemble. Students will not receive a participation grade, however it is expected that each student is actively and positively participating fully in class activities, bringing necessary materials, and demonstrating a respectful and responsible attitude. If students are not following all expectations, individual conversations, phone calls home, etc., may take place in order to properly deal with these issues. Examples include (but are not limited to): disruptive behavior (talking), not having materials, chewing gum, being tardy, etc.

Daily Procedures & Expectations

1. NEW: Choir ensembles will enforce cell phone policies as mandated in the High School Handbook. Students must have their phones, smart watches, headphones, etc., in their designated slots before rehearsals start, and they must remain in there until dismissed from rehearsal. Students caught utilizing these devices, not complying with regulations, etc., will immediately be sent to the Main Office.
2. There will be a short bathroom break in the middle of the block, however, in emergency situations, if a student needs to use the restroom at any point, they MUST sign out utilizing the provided iPad and Securly system. Singers MUST ask for permission from the director prior to going to the bathroom. Students may not bring their phones with them to the bathroom.
3. Be standing in your assigned spot with your folder and pencil by the time rehearsal begins.
4. Demonstrate ACTIVE participation in all vocal, physical, and intellectual activities of the rehearsal or performance in progress. Focus your attention and respond appropriately to directions.
5. Rehearsals will ALWAYS begin ON TIME, not two minutes after the bell, and will conclude ON TIME as well. A small ensemble break for bathrooms, stretching, etc., MAY be given in the middle of rehearsal at the director's discretion.
6. Always make decisions that have the entire ensemble's best interest at heart.
7. Maintain good singing posture/vocal technique as covered in rehearsal.
8. Do not waste time during rehearsals (i.e. talking, cell phone use). Remain quiet during instructional time. Listen carefully to the other sections as they rehearse; number your measures; study your vocal part, the text, or other aspects of the score when another voice part is being rehearsed.
9. Take good care of your folder/music. You are responsible for the music entrusted to you. You will be asked to reimburse the school for the music that is lost or damaged.

10. No food, gum, candy or drinks (except water – water is encouraged).
11. Be respectful of the ensemble space. Leave it in just as good, if not better shape, than when you entered (no garbage/items left in room, keep everything straight and orderly, etc), especially Practice Rooms, offices, group practice rooms, etc..
 - a. Do not touch any equipment unless instructed to do so.
12. Have fun and be positive! Your attitude accounts for 99% of all successes or challenges.
13. In short, **EXPECT THE BEST/GIVE YOUR BEST** – which also means showing **respect** for yourself, your classmates, the facilities/materials, your director, and any guest teachers/clinicians/substitutes. ☺

Safe Zone

The Choir Room is a **safe** environment. All students should feel safe and supported in choir. To ensure that this happens, there will be a Zero Tolerance Policy for any form of bullying, put-downs, or negativity shown towards another student. Anyone who bullies or puts down another person (even if that student claims to be joking) may automatically receive a Detention or Office Referral with no warning required.

Materials Needed for Class

Bring these supplies to Choir EVERY DAY. Having the necessary supplies with you is part of your active participation.

1. Your Folder/Binder (including all music). All choir members will need to provide a choir folder/binder. This bind should be entirely black, and should not be larger than 1/2” if you’d like to store it in the choir cabinets. If you wish to have a larger binder, you must carry it with you (it will not have any alternate storage areas in the choir room). All music, handouts, and pertinent information should be kept in your folder/binder.
2. A pencil. All markings/directions need to be marked into all scores. This is **very** important. PEN/ERASABLE PEN IS NOT ACCEPTABLE IN CHOIR. Please have multiple pencils readily available in case one breaks, etc.

Consequences

1. A verbal reminder will be given. Any time the teacher reminds you by name to follow instructions, or asks you to stop a certain behavior counts as a verbal reminder. (Example: “Joey, please stop talking while I’m talking” is a reminder.)
2. At the next offensive behavior (or failure to follow instructions), the student’s parents may be called.
3. The third offense will result in the completion of an Office Referral depending on your behavior. An Office Referral carries with it a consequence including office and parent notification.

**I may contact parents regarding any student behavior problems, but will strive to resolve most problems directly with the student!*

Non-Choir Grades

“Any participant who is on the current failing list with at least one letter grade of ‘F’ may not travel to a competition or event if it means any lost school time.”

Our district policy makes it clear that our grades outside of the choir room must be satisfactory if not superior in order for us to participate in extra or co-curricular activities. We **MUST** make sure to be passing all of our classes and exemplify academic excellence in all aspects both inside and outside of the choir room. This policy can affect events such as: District Large Ensemble Contest, travelling to show choir competitions, etc.

III. COMMUNICATION

Communication is the **KEY** to success. Most issues can be solved with just a simple conversation. In any situation, with any questions or concerns, student or parent; communicate, communicate, communicate!

PRIMARY COMMUNICATION THIS YEAR – ALL Parents and Students must be in the **TEAM REACH** groups for messaging. This is the primary source of communication I will be using throughout the year for updates, itineraries, etc.

There is an app to download to your phone and/or to download on your computer. You'll be asked to create an account or sign-in, and from there you'll be instructed to Join a Class with the following group code:

MHSKChoirs2627

Students – If at any time, you feel like myself, or anyone else in the classroom has been disrespectful to you or someone else, please make sure to talk to me as soon as possible after class or after school. I am **always** here to listen and will do whatever I can to resolve the situation as quickly as possible. If you have any other questions or concerns, never hesitate to come talk to me! I would be happy to do whatever I can for you.

Parents – Thank you for taking the time to look over this information with your student. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this information, what we are doing in choir, or if there is anything else I can help you with! The best time to speak with me would be after school from 3:00-3:30 PM. I always enjoy an email, but am always open to a phone call. I am also more than happy to communicate with your student(s), so please encourage them to come and talk to me at any time when they have a question or concern.

Thank you for all of your help and support! I am looking forward to an outstanding year!

-Mr. Caberos

KERNEL CHOIRS 2026-2027 SCHEDULE

(all dates, times, etc., subject to change. kernelchoirs.com calendar will always be up to date)

*(**all Kernel Choir members not involved in musical must attend at least ONE performance of Fall Musical**)*

	Ensembles	Date	Weekday	Event Time	End Time	Event Name	Location
☐	All-State Auditionees	8/26/27	Wednesday	2:00: PM	3:00: PM	All-State Chorus Rehearsals Begin	Choir Room
☐	Friend de Coup	9/7/26	Monday	6:53: PM	8:30: PM	FDC Singer/Dancer Learn-Night	Auditorium
☐	Friend de Coup	9/8/26	Tuesday	6:53: PM	8:30: PM	FDC Singer/Dancer Learn-Night	Auditorium
☐	Friend de Coup	9/10/26	Thursday	6:53: PM	8:30: PM	FDC Singer/Dancer Learn-Night	Auditorium
☐	Friend de Coup	9/11/26	Friday	4:00: PM	8:00: PM	FDC Singer/Dancer Auditions	Auditorium
☐	ALL Tenors & Basses	9/14/26	Monday	All Day	All Day	Mitchell Area Bass Clef Festival	Auditorium
☐	Varsity Chorale	9/21/27	Monday	7:00: PM	8:00: PM	Coronation	Auditorium
☐	Kernel Choirs	9/1/26	Friday	6:00: PM	7:05: PM	Homecoming Game, National Anthem	Joe Quintal Field
☐	**Kernel Choirs**	10/22/26	Thursday	7:00 PM		Fall Musical Performance #1	Auditorium
☐	**Kernel Choirs**	10/23/26	Friday	7:00 PM		Fall Musical Performance #2	Auditorium
☐	**Kernel Choirs**	10/24/26	Saturday	2:00 PM		Fall Musical Performance #3	Auditorium
☐	**Kernel Choirs**	10/24/26	Saturday	7:00 PM		Fall Musical Performance #4	Auditorium
☐	Kernel Choirs	10/27/26	Tuesday	7:00: PM		Fall Choir Concert	Auditorium
☐	Select Students	10/29/26	Thursday			All-State Choir & Orchestra	Rapid City
☐	Select Students	10/30/26	Friday			All-State Choir & Orchestra	Rapid City
☐	Select Students	10/31/26	Saturday			All-State Choir & Orchestra	Rapid City
☐	Select Students	11/9/26	Monday	All Day	All Day	SDMEA Freshmen Festival Choir	Auditorium
☐	Kernel Choirs	12/9/26	Wednesday	1:45: PM	3:15: PM	Kernel Choirs Combined SRB Rehearsal	Auditorium
☐	Kernel Choirs	12/10/26	Thursday	7:00: PM		Winter Combined Concert	Auditorium
☐	Class Voice	12/11/26	Friday	7:00: PM		Class Voice Winter Recital	PAC Blackbox
☐	Kernel Choirs	3/16/27	Tuesday	7:00 PM		Spring Combined Concert	Auditorium
☐	Kernel Choirs	3/24/27	Wednesday	TBA	TBA	Region V Large Group Contest	PAC + All
☐	Select Students	4/29/27	Wednesday	All Day	All Day	Mitchell Solo / Small Ensemble Contest	Kimball
☐	Select Students	5/6/27	Thursday			All-State Jazz Band & Show Choir	PAC +All
☐	Select Students	5/7/27	Friday			All-State Jazz Band & Show Choir	PAC +All
☐	Select Students	5/8/27	Saturday			All-State Jazz Band & Show Choir	PAC +All
☐	Kernel Choirs	5/12/27	Wednesday	7:15: AM	8:05: AM	Pops Combined Rehearsal	Auditorium
☐	Kernel Choirs	5/13/27	Thursday	7:00: PM		Pops Combined Concert	Auditorium
☐	Class Voice	5/14/27	Friday	7:00: PM		Class Voice Spring Recital	PAC Blackbox
☐	Varsity Chorale	5/23/27	Sunday	2:00: PM		Graduation Performance	Corn Palace

2026-2027 Kernel Choirs Calendar Student/Parent Response Form

Please complete and return this page to Mr. Caberos by Friday, 08/28/2016.

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ Phone #: _____

Contact Information

Any information that is the same for both parents/guardians, you only need to list on one side. However, please list any information that is different on each respective side (phone number, email, etc.). Please list any email addresses you use, as it is an effective way to reach a large number of people. Also, join the Kernel Choirs Team Reach group, by downloading Team Reach app, signing in/creating an account, and inputting the group code MHSKChoirs2627. I will use Team Reach most often when communicating with students and parents. Please make sure both students AND parents/guardians have joined Team Reach.

MOTHER/GUARDIAN		FATHER/GUARDIAN	
	Name		
	Street Address		
	City		
	Zip Code		
	Home Phone		
	Cell Phone		
	E-mail Address		

Student/Parent Initials

_____/_____
I have received & looked over the calendar for my/my child's respective choir.

_____/_____
I understand that the required events are 100% mandatory and that it is vital for the success of the whole choir that I (my child) am (is) on time, present, and prepared for all events.

_____/_____
I have made note of and marked all events on my personal calendar.

_____/_____
I have joined the Kernel Choirs Team Reach group message.

Select One Below:

_____/_____
I foresee no potential conflicts with any of the listed dates.

_____/_____
I have listed all foreseen potential conflicts below:

_____/_____
I understand that communication is the key. I promise to (help my child) stay organized and communicate any future conflicts ASAP. Any conflicts that arise must be communicated with Mr. Caberos in writing, at least 2 weeks in advance. Exceptions to this will only be made in the case of serious emergencies.

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Thank you for your cooperation and support!!! ☺
I am looking forward to an awesome year!