

OAK MTN MIDDLE SCHOOL **CHOIR**

Gia Graddy
Choir Director
ggraddy@shelbyed.org
205. 682.5217

Blane Freeman
Assistant Choir Director
cfreeman@shelbyed.org
205.682.5217

Dear Choir Students & Parents,

Welcome to the OMMS Choral Department! We are so happy that you have chosen to be in choir this year. Choir is an exciting experience offering skills in musicianship, teamwork, communication, leadership, and community. Students should expect to have a variety of performance opportunities, develop music reading & vocal abilities, and have a place where they are valued as an individual within a group setting.

Most choir information can be found on the choral department website (www.ommschoir.com). On that site you will find the choir events calendar, as well as other important information regarding choir. At various times during the year, certain pages on the website will be made 'live', while others may go away, depending on what is pertinent at the time. In general, **the website will be the place that will hold the answers to any choir-related question you may have.**

We will also be sending out emails to you with updates and information. We promise not to send unnecessary emails. We ask that you please take the time to read the emails thoroughly.

We look forward to working alongside you to ensure your children have a meaningful and fun music education experience while in this choral program.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Graddy & Mr. Freeman

Continue reading below to view the Choir Handbook . . .



Choir Classes:
Apex, 6th Grade Choir, Ascent, Elevation, Pinnacle

Gia Graddy
ggraddy@shelbyed.org

Choir Website: www.ommschoir.com

Blane Freeman
cfreeman@shelbyed.org

Welcome to the OMMS Choral Department!
We are glad you're here.

Class Materials Needed: *Please have these materials by the end of the first week of school.*

- 3-ring binder w/ pencil pouch & Music
 - *This will be given to the student in class. There is no need to purchase this.*
 - Binders and Music will be returned at the end of each semester. **Damaged materials must be paid for.**
- 2 Pencils
 - **No pens or markers allowed in choir.**
 - If a student wishes to use a Red Ticonderoga pencil to mark their music, that is perfectly acceptable & encouraged
 - At least one pencil should be a regular pencil with an eraser
- Notebook Paper (approximately 30 pages)

What are we going to be learning?

In all choir classes, regardless of grade level or experience, we will introduce, study, practice, or assess these concepts:

- Sight-Singing — learning to sing pitches & rhythms
- Basic Music Theory — learning to read music & understand music terms
- Singing Technique — proper breathing, posture, phonating, articulation and resonance
- Concert Etiquette — courteous behavior as both an audience member & performer
- Stage Presence — performing with excitement & singing expressively
- Teamwork — rehearsing together daily toward common goals, treating others with kindness

Choir Procedures & Expectations

- Participate **fully** in rehearsals, performances, and written assignments. Your level of participation & preparedness effects your grade. PERFORMANCES are for a grade.
- A full list of specific classroom and behavior expectations may be found here: [CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS & BEHAVIOR](#).
- Leaving the classroom for any reason should be a **rare exception!** However, students in an emergency needing to visit the restroom, nurse, or office may only do so by presenting their Hall Pass Agenda or requesting a pass.
- **Always be kind.** Making fun of another student, speaking rudely or disrespectfully to the teacher or another student will not be tolerated...EVER. Disciplinary action will be taken if this rule is broken.
- **Always give your best effort.** We do not expect “perfection” in behavior, singing ability, or comprehension of music skills from any student. However, we do expect each student to always try their very best and work hard while in choir class.

Course Fee (6th grade choir, Apex, Ascent)

A course fee for choir is **\$55** and may be paid through My School Bucks (*link on choir website*). This \$55 will go toward paying for music for each student both semesters, choir t-shirt, bus transportation to choir festival performances, performance facility rental, accompanist payment, theory and sight-singing workbook, and other supplies & rewards used in the classroom throughout the year.

Concert Uniforms (all choir members)

All choir students, regardless of choir, will need a formal concert uniform and informal uniform (t-shirt).

- **Choir T-Shirt** ***included in the course fee.** (*Complete the t-shirt form on the choir website.*)

- **Formal Uniform** **\$30 Rental fee** (My School Bucks)

Show Choir Fees (Elevation choir members ONLY)

The show choir fee is \$525. Parents may follow the payment schedule on My School Bucks, or may make a one-time payment.

What do fees pay for?

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Music arrangements | • Costumes | • Sheet Music |
| • Instrumental tracks | • Choreographers | • Equipment truck rentals |
| • Competition Registrations | • Show props | • Costume & Equipment repair |
| • Charter buses to competitions | • Backdrops | • Performance facilities rental |

Performance Opportunities

All students in the choral department will have the opportunity to perform throughout the year. Performances will be Silver Grades. Please visit the choir website (ommschoir.com) for the updated calendar of events. The calendar indicates which choirs will be performing at the specific events. Please take a moment to print the calendar of events and put these important dates on your family's calendar.

All choir students will perform at the **Winter Concert** and **Spring Concert**. Other performance opportunities include the **Eagle Extravaganza**, **All-County Middle School Choir Festival**, **Oak Mountain Choral Festival**, and **in-school performances**.

There are state mass choir performance opportunities offered if students want a choir experience that is "above and beyond" what we do within our choral department. Sixth Grade students may participate in the **Young Voices Festival** held at the University of Alabama. Seventh & Eighth Grade students may audition for the **Alabama All-State Choir**. More information about these events will be put on the OMMS Choir website as the auditions draw nearer. There will be an extra cost associated with the Young Voices Festival and All-State Choir.

Students in Elevation will participate in various show choir competitions during second semester.

Travel

Each student in the choral department will have the opportunity at some point throughout the year to travel away from our school on a school bus or charter bus. This is a privilege. In order for students to be considered eligible for travel, they must exhibit trustworthiness, a commitment to the objectives of the field trip, have a grade of B or higher in the choir department, and have had no recent discipline issues at OMMS.

Each spring the 7th & 8th grade choir and band students take a trip. Information about the destination, trip cost, itinerary, and performance will be emailed to parents and listed on the choir website during the fall semester.

Fundraisers

Fundraisers are necessary to help provide the vital materials needed to ensure the choir students at OMMS have a significant and meaningful educational experience during their time in the program. Purchased music, theory worksheets, and sight-singing pages are our “textbook”. Performances with uniforms, buses to festivals are our “assessments”.

We will have a few fundraisers during the year. We ask each choir family to reach out to businesses or individuals to become **Choir Sponsors**. Each student receives 40% of the sponsorships they collect. This 40% goes to their choir account and may be used for trips, choir fees, uniforms, honor choirs, etc. More information about sponsorships may be found on the [SPONSORSHIPS](#) page.

Grading

The grading system is designed to allow a student to earn a grade that is indicative of his/her efforts. It rewards responsibility and improvement and encourages a student to be conscientious about his/her commitment. The 9-week grades will be based on the following criteria. Some additions or deletions may occur during the year.

Music Ensemble Effort*	Gold grade
Performances*	Silver grade
Music Theory Quizzes	Silver or Bronze grade
Marking Music & Journals	Bronze grade
Part Checks & Sight-singing	Bronze grade
Turning in Forms	Bronze grade

	20 pts – Excellent Meets/Exceeds Criteria	16 pts – Satisfactory Mostly Meets Criteria	10 pts – Does not meet criteria
COLLABORATION	Works with members of the choir/section in an efficient and professional manner	Mostly works with members of the choir/section in an efficient/professional manner	Work is detrimental to the efficiency/professionalism of the group
REFLECTION	Reflects with thoughtful consideration. Shows ability to think critically about one’s performance	Shows ability to think critically about one’s performance	Does not reflect in a manner that shows consideration of one’s thoughts, actions, performance
KNOWLEDGE OF MUSIC/PERFORMANCE	Student demonstrates high level of knowledge of the music/class goals	Student demonstrates general knowledge of the music/class goals	Student demonstrates an overall lack of understanding
CREATIVITY	Student contributes a high level of creative ideas for the good of the group	Student makes some creative contributions	Student makes little contribution and hinders group creativity
REHEARSAL PREPAREDNESS	Student is highly accountable to the objective, schedule and to others – staying on-task and focused	Student is responsible for his/her tasks and sticks to the schedule/objective	Student hinders the group’s ability to stick to a schedule and is not accountable

Communication

- The choir website — www.ommschoir.com
- Email : ggraddy@shelbyed.org or cfreeman@shelbyed.org (please email all money-related questions to Mr. Freeman)
- Remind: School Communication app (individual class codes will be communicated)
- Social Media: Instagram —oakmtnmschoir Facebook —Oak Mountain Middle School Choir

WHAT WILL BE YOUR LEVEL OF COMMITMENT THIS SCHOOL YEAR?

By Allan McMurray, Professor of Conducting Emeritus at the University of Colorado

LEVEL 1 – PARTICIPANT

The common level of commitment is that of the participant. The music participant enjoys the experience of getting together with friends and engaging in the events. The participant is conscientious about rehearsal times, works to learn the music in rehearsal, and is interested in being a good section member. The participant likes music with a good beat.

LEVEL 2 – SINGER

The next level is that of a singer. The singer is a person who loves music because it gives him/her a chance to sing. The singer wants to sing a lot and practices to achieve range and technique that can represent a great sound whenever the singer sings. The singer arrives early to practice and wants great solos. In fact, the singer judges music based on her/his part/or solos available. If it's a good part/solo that is right for their voice, it is a good piece of music; if it's a bad part/solo or is for a different voice part, it is a bad piece of music. The singer likes solos and strives to be heard. The singer loves her/his voice and enjoys getting together with other "singers." The singer will learn her/his part outside of rehearsals so he/she can sound good in rehearsals.

LEVEL 3 – MUSICIAN

The third level is that of the musician. The musician sings well and shows up to rehearsals with her/his part mastered. The musician loves choral music and singing in an ensemble because of the opportunity for musical collaboration. The musician does not come to rehearsal to learn her/his own part; the musician comes to rehearsal to learn everyone else's part. In that way, the musician is learning how to sing together by concentrating on intonation, articulation, phrasing, blend, balance, and style. The musician is about listening, learning, and collaborating with other musicians. The musician evaluates whether or not a piece of music is good by the sounds that are created by everyone and enjoys listening as much as singing. The musician likes being a contributing part of every rehearsal through collaboration.

LEVEL 4 – ARTIST

The fourth level is that of the artist. The artist has all the skills of the singer and the musician, but the artist is also a creator. The artist comes to every rehearsal prepared in every way and leaves every rehearsal with new goals. The artist loves great music making and loves to bring expression and inspiration to the performance. The artist has imagination that is fueled by opportunity. That opportunity might come in a solo or in an approach to style that amplifies the intent of the piece. The artist is a collaborator with the other members of the ensemble, with the director, and with the composer. The artist is intuitive and original, but only uses those skills in pursuit of the most beautiful performance possible. The artist evaluates whether or not a piece of music is good by how it is composed and what it expresses. The artist has the potential to elevate the listener's perception of an average piece through an extraordinary performance. The artist loves music because music fuels her/his soul.

It is important that through the year you, as the student, achieve each level. My goal for you is to reach level 4 that way you can create, practice, and teach music to others.