

# Zeeland High School

## Vocal Music Department

### 2016-17 Handbook

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the Zeeland High Choirs! I am thrilled that you have chosen to join us for the 2016-17 school year! Our program has a rich history full of outstanding concerts, participation at festivals, and excellent scores at local contests. We have some incredible talent in our ensembles, and I am very excited about what this year has to offer!

I like to give my students a theme for each school year. I find it serves as a quick reminder, and it is helpful in my efforts to encourage and motivate the individuals that make up our choirs. This year's theme is "BET". First, I want students to read it as the word "bet", and to bet on themselves! Every student has so much potential and is capable of amazing things! Additionally, the letters of "BET" stand for "Better Every Time". I want my students to strive to improve individually every time we repeat a warm up, rehearse a song, or perform on stage. Those individual efforts will lead to awesome achievements for our choirs and our program! Also, this lesson is applicable in and outside of the choir room!

Students in choir are challenged to grow musically, emotionally, and socially through the material that we work on and through time spent with their ensemble. They are required to respect their director, their peers, and the music they perform. Each student is responsible for his/her individual attitude and actions when participating in choir activities, whether it is at a performance or in rehearsal.

This handbook is meant to inform you about procedures, as well as prepare you for the events this year in choir. It contains information for how to get both connected and involved. Please read the handbook carefully, as it will help you understand the responsibilities and expectations of all members of choir. If you have any questions throughout the year, please consult the handbook first. If you are not able to find the answer you are looking for, do not hesitate to contact me! Looking forward to another terrific year in choir!

Sincerely,

Jonathan Van Eck  
Vocal Music Director  
Zeeland High Schools



## **Mission Statement**

It is the mission of the Zeeland High Choirs to help students develop their confidence, creativity and character through collaborative musical experiences.

## **Goals**

In our time in rehearsal and on the stage, all choir students will work to become...

- Musically literate.
  - Sight singing is a very valuable tool in a vocal ensemble, as well as other musical settings. In addition to learning how to sight sing, students will also be required to perform on the piano. The pieces required of them will be determined by how many years they have been in choir. Familiarity with the piano is an invaluable skill as a musician of any level!
- Individually expressive.
  - Music is written and performed for many reasons. As musicians, we can attempt to capture the original intent of the composer, but also express ourselves in the music we learn and perform.
- Quality and lifelong consumers of music.
  - Music is a HUGE part of our lives. It is important to recognize what is good music and what is not. Your musical taste does not need to reflect that of others, but do give it a bit of thought, and keep singing!

## **Contacting the Choir Program**

In the position that I am in, and with the classes that I teach, I am not always able to answer the phone or immediately respond to emails. If you can not get a hold of me right away, please leave a message or an email, and I will do my best to respond within twenty-four hours.

Website: [zeelandhighchoirs.weebly.com](http://zeelandhighchoirs.weebly.com)

YouTube: Zeeland High Choirs

Facebook: Zeeland High Choirs

Twitter: @ZeelandChoirs

Instagram: @Our\_Mixtape\_Is\_Chair

Mr. Jonathan Van Eck

Zeeland East High School, Room 307

616.748.3131

[jvaneck1@zps.org](mailto:jvaneck1@zps.org)

Students and parents/guardians should check their email regularly for Infinite Campus messages, homework assignments, or other emails. Students should not use a personal email

in order to contact a teacher, but instead should use the email account linked to the iPad issued by ZPS.

### **Course Descriptions (2016-17)**

\*\*Attendance at all performances and rehearsals that fall outside of the school day is mandatory and is part of the student's grade.

#### **Men's Chorus**

This class is open to all male students in ninth through twelfth grade, and audition is not required. This is a year-long class, but may be taken for one semester. There are a number of performances required outside of the normal school day, as well as other optional events that students may take part in. Much emphasis is placed on reinforcing how to use correct vocal techniques and music sight-reading in multiple parts. Students will also be introduced to piano playing and music theory. The repertoire performed includes music encompassing a wide variety of ethnic styles, historical periods, and composers.

#### **Women's Chorus**

This class is open to all female students in ninth through twelfth grade, and audition is not required. This is a year-long class, but may be taken for one semester. There are a number of performances required outside of the normal school day, as well as other optional events that students may take part in. Much emphasis is placed on reinforcing how to use correct vocal techniques and music sight-reading in multiple parts. Students will also be introduced to piano playing and music theory. The repertoire performed includes music encompassing a wide variety of ethnic styles, historical periods, and composers.

#### **Advanced Women's Ensemble**

Prerequisite: Admittance granted by audition, previous choral experience is preferred

This class is an advanced vocal ensemble made up entirely of female singers. Admittance requires a successful audition with the vocal music staff as well as a commitment of two semesters in the class. It is a class with a moderate level of performances and events outside of the normal school day. In addition to preparing for a heavier performance schedule, students spend time during class building their music reading and comprehension skills to a proficient or even advanced level. They also work to reinforce piano playing, aural, and arranging skills in a choral music setting. The repertoire performed includes music encompassing a wide variety of ethnic styles, historical periods, and composers.

#### **Varsity Voices**

Prerequisite: Admittance granted by audition, previous choral experience is preferred

This class is a select ensemble of highly skilled vocalists. Admittance requires a successful audition with the vocal music staff, as well as a commitment of two semesters in the class. It is a performance-oriented class that demands a high level of commitment to performances and events outside of the normal school day. In addition to preparing advanced music for a very busy performance schedule, students spend time during class building their music reading and comprehension skills to a proficient or even advanced level. They also work to reinforce aural, improvisation, piano playing, and arranging/composing skills in a choral music setting. The repertoire performed includes music encompassing a wide variety of ethnic styles, historical periods, and composers.

### **Code of Conduct and Attendance**

All choir students are held to the Zeeland Public Schools code of conduct. Additionally, students are expected to complete all assigned academic work and regularly attend classes. If students miss a significant number of rehearsals, it can affect a performance and the ensemble

as a whole. The director reserves the right to discipline students or pull performers from events because of any infractions or too many missed rehearsals.

### **Grading System**

Grades in choir will be determined with points accumulated over the course of each semester. Running grades will be calculated during the 1st and 2nd semesters, and will not include marking period grades. Students will be assessed in the following areas:

- 1) Rehearsal Participation (20%)
- 2) Assignments and Assessments (40%)
- 3) Performance Attendance and Participation (40%)

### **Rehearsal Participation**

Students will receive a daily rehearsal participation grade. The maximum point total a student may receive each day is three points (full credit). Points may be taken away for not meeting rehearsal expectations. A very serious approach to rehearsals pays off in performances that students, parents and the community can take pride in.

It is expected that students come prepared each day with all necessary materials, participate and have a positive attitude through all choir activities, and are respectful of others at all times during rehearsals. Our primary goal in the classroom is to make music. It is assumed that you joined choir because you enjoy singing and performing. Please come to choir ready to do so.

\*\*\*\*\* iPad Use Policy: The iPad can be a tremendous tool in regard to the material covered in choir. Students will complete homework assignments, can find ways to rehearse their repertoire, and even learn and practice the piano with the iPad. Students will occasionally use their iPads during class, but should plan on keeping their iPads stored away during class unless instructed otherwise. Should there be any issues, daily points and/or privileges will be removed.

\*\*\*\*\* Choir Department Sheet Music: Students will be provided hard copies of music for rehearsal purposes. If any music is lost or damaged, students are responsible for reimbursing the choir program in order to replace the music.

### **Assignments and Assessments**

Students will complete weekly homework assignments, in-class assessments, and music performance evaluations. Assessments in choir may be written, played, or sung.

During the first semester of the year we will focus on the basics of music theory. Students will develop their sight reading skills at the beginning of rehearsals, and will also spend time writing and reflecting on a variety of topics. We will shift our focus second semester to learning the basics of piano playing. Students will be provided a differentiated packet of music according to how many years they have spent in the choir program. They must complete the required video assignments, and piano playing tests will be administered at the end of the school year.

Finally, students will be expected to attend an approved vocal performance (choir concert, musical, etc.) each semester and write a paper connected to their experience. The event attended must be a full length performance and must feature performers at or above the same level as our choirs (high school, college, professional, etc.). Students will be provided documents that describe this assignment in more detail.

### Performance Attendance and Participation

Students in choir will have many opportunities to perform both as a part of their ensemble and as individuals. While some of these opportunities are optional, others are required. Each and every member of choir is important because everyone is a participant during performances! All choir students, therefore, *must* participate in the four major concerts and other scheduled performances throughout the year as a part of their obligations to the ensemble.

If a performance is not attended by a student, no matter the reason, the grade will be entered as a zero. The "Missed Performance Notification Form" must be filled out and turned in before a grade is received for the event (must be 2 weeks prior to event for conflicts known about in advance). There are two options available for redeeming points on a missed concert. Both options below must be completed within one month of the concert.

1. The student may sing the repertoire that was performed at the missed concert individually for Mr. Van Eck. A time outside of class must be arranged to complete this option. The student may make-up up to 100% of the concert grade based on their performance.
2. The student may request a Missed Concert Report Assignment document from Mr. Van Eck, attend an approved performance, and write a concert report on their experience. The student may make-up up to 80% of the concert grade with this assignment. This is a different assignment, and would be in addition to, the required Semester Concert Report.

Performance participation includes not only singing during, and being at the entire concert, but appropriate behavior, demeanor, and attire. Please see the guidelines below for more details and expectations regarding performances.

- *Attendance* - Students must not be late for call time and be present for the entire performance.
- *Warm-up* - Students must be in their assigned place at the designated time. Students must not use warm-up time as a social event or to finish up prior activities.
- *Uniform* - Students must wear the determined performance attire for each event.
- *Performance* - Students must act professionally at all times. In addition to giving the best musical performance we are capable of, students must also employ proper singing posture, maintain eye contact with the director, and use facial expression and physical involvement appropriate to each piece.
- *Support* - Students must act professionally during the entire performance, and must be positive towards their peers who are also performing. It is extremely important that we support all members of our choir family.

There may be times when two school events are scheduled at the same time. It is the responsibility of the student to notify all involved about the conflict in a timely fashion. The staff and, if needed, the administration will then decide how to best resolve the conflict.

If a student is gone from one of their other classes because of a choir event (i.e. additional rehearsal, performance during the school day), they are to work ahead and get any

materials turned in on time or earlier than the scheduled date. Performing in choir is not an excuse to not do other school work.

## **Uniforms**

Appearance is an important part of a student's performance grade. Choirs that appear sloppy or look inappropriate make a negative impression upon audiences and reflect poorly on the school, the choir, and the individual. Students must keep hair, jewelry, and the rest of their appearance neat and tidy.

### *Men's Chorus*

Men's Chorus members will be sized in the fall and issued a uniform for the year. A white dress shirt, pants, suit coat, cummerbund and bow tie will be provided. Uniforms provided by the school must be returned at the end of the year. Students must purchase their own black, close-toed dress shoes and black socks or nylons to wear along with their dresses. Additionally, Men's Chorus members will be asked to purchase a pair of socks from the choir program to be worn at select performances.

### *Women's Chorus*

Women's Chorus members will be sized in the fall and issued a uniform for the year. Uniforms provided by the school must be returned at the end of the year. Students must purchase their own black, close-toed dress shoes and black socks or nylons to wear along with their dresses. Additionally, Women's Chorus members will be asked to purchase a necklace from the choir program to be worn at select performances.

### *Advanced Women's Ensemble*

AWE members will be sized in the fall and issued a uniform for the year. Uniforms provided by the school must be returned at the end of the year. Students must purchase their own black, close-toed dress shoes and black socks or nylons to wear along with their dresses. Additionally, AWE members will be asked to purchase a necklace from the choir program to be worn at select performances.

### *Varsity Voices*

Men of Varsity Voices will be issued a tuxedo jacket, pants, and tuxedo shirt. Uniforms provided by the school must be returned at the end of the year. Men will be asked to purchase matching accessories (organized through the choir), as well as their own black dress shoes and black dress socks. Women are responsible for purchasing their dress as well as black, close-toed dress shoes and black socks or nylons. Students will be fitted for uniforms in the fall.

## **Additional Uniform Notes**

### *Dry-cleaning*

Students borrowing clothing items from the school will be charged \$10 at the beginning of the school year. Money must be received before uniforms are taken home. This will go towards the cost of dry-cleaning, minor repairs, and updates to the uniform collection. Checks may be made out to Zeeland High Choirs, and cash will also be accepted.

### *Alterations*

Students are responsible for making necessary alterations on their uniform. Full length dresses should touch the tip of the shoe's toe. Pants should fall two inches from the floor. If alterations are not made before a concert, the performance grade will be affected. **Do NOT cut fabric when making alterations.** Fold hems under (several times if necessary), but avoid any cutting. Please search online or in the yellow pages, or ask Mr. Van Eck if you need help finding somewhere to get alterations done. Before the uniform is returned, all pins and other items should be removed.

### *Miscellaneous*

- Female choir students must wear close-toed shoes and black socks or nylons. Leggings are not appropriate, and **bare feet and legs must not be visible to the audience!**
- In the event that your uniform has been damaged or it no longer fits, please notify Mr. Van Eck at least two weeks before a performance so that we can find a suitable alternative.
- Students will be charged for replacements or repairs of anything lost or damaged.
- Students having difficulty paying for alterations or any required items should contact Mr. Van Eck. We want everyone to be able to fully participate in our program, and we are open to coming up with alternative means of raising money and covering the cost of uniforms and other items.

## **2016-17 Calendar - Zeeland High Choirs**

September 15 - National Anthem at ZE Powderpuff Game (AWE)

September 16 - ZE Homecoming Event (VV)

\*\*September 24 - "Synergy" (AWE and VV, optional for others, open to all 5th grade and above)

September 28 - Adventures in Harmony (AWE)

October 7 - ZW Homecoming Event (VV)

October 17 - Fall Concert

November 12 - Musical Theater Solo & Ensemble (optional)

December 11 - Holiday Concert

February 4 - District Solo & Ensemble (AWE and VV, optional for others)

February 15, 16, or 17 - District Choral Festival

\*\*March 16 - March Concert

March 24-25 - State Solo & Ensemble (if qualification met)

April 12 - Combined concert with GVSU (Men's and Women's Chorus) -- Rehearsal after school

April 21 - Broadway Revue Performance

\*\*May 9 - Tulip Time Concert (VV)

May 23 - Spring Concert

May 31 - ZWHS Graduation (VV)

June 1 - ZEHS Graduation (VV)

### Other POSSIBLE optional events not yet on the calendar:

\*\*Fall Cabaret

State Festival (if qualification met)

\*\*National Anthem at local events -- ex. Grand Rapids Griffins, West Michigan Whitecaps, etc.

\*\*Honors/Spring Cabaret

() parentheses indicate specific choir that is required for event or if event is optional

\*\* asterisks indicate tickets are required for this event

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN INFO PAGE**

Please complete and return this page to Mr. Van Eck by **FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16**

### *Choir Calendar*

The calendar for choir events during this school year is on the previous page. Please look it over now and take note of which dates and performances apply to you. Record the appropriate dates in your calendars so you are not surprised when the time comes. Also, be on the lookout for more details regarding our calendar events (ticket info, uniform requirements, call time, etc.).

### *Student/Parent Agreement*

“We have read and understand our responsibilities to the choir program listed in this handbook. The performance dates are recorded on our personal calendar(s).”

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:  
\_\_\_\_\_

### *Patron Donation Information*

Have you considered donating to the choir program? Your contribution will directly help students in our ensembles. Patron donations will help provide classroom supplies, scholarships for students, choir uniforms, and more opportunities for our choirs. You can find the Patron Donation Form on the next page of the handbook and turn it in at any time.

### *Volunteer Information*

We can use your help! Please share any talents and/or interests you might be able to contribute to the choir program by circling the applicable description(s) and providing more information on the lines below.

- Advertising (To include in performing arts event programs)
- Fundraising Ideas/Opportunities
- Instrumental Accompanist
- Photography/Videography of concerts and other choir events

- Seamstress/Alterations
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please elaborate on any items circled above (if necessary):

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**Patron Donation Form**

Zeeland High Choirs - 2016-17 School Year

Description

Please show your support for our choirs by making a financial contribution to our program. Patron donations will help provide classroom supplies, scholarships for students, choir uniforms, and more opportunities for our choirs to participate in such as festivals, concerts and tours.

A successful patron drive will eliminate the need to do corporate fundraisers to support our program, and your donation is tax deductible. Additionally, we will provide choir merchandise to patrons at different donation levels (listed below)!

Donation Amount Levels

- Grandioso*.....\$200 and up → receive ZHC sweatshirt
- Vivace*.....\$100 → receive ZHC t-shirt (short sleeves)
- Accelerando*.....\$50 → receive ZHC water bottle
- Dolce*.....\$25 → receive ZHC window decal



Donation Information

Amount of payment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check #: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Send this form and your donation to this address → → →

Please make checks payable to: **Zeeland High Choirs**

Zeeland High Choirs
Attn: Cathy Lugten
Zeeland East High School
3333 96 <sup>th</sup> Avenue
Zeeland, MI 49464

Personal Information

Patron/family name (as it should appear online and in concert programs):

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone:

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Email:

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Address:

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Thank you for supporting our program. All contributions are appreciated. We love making music and sharing it with others. We look forward to seeing you at future events!

Stay in touch by visiting our Zeeland High Choirs website or finding us on social media!

<http://zeelandhighchoirs.weebly.com>

Facebook: Zeeland High Choirs

Twitter: @ZeelandChoirs

Instagram: @Our\_Mixtape\_Is\_Choir

YouTube: Zeeland High Choirs

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Circle desired t-shirt/sweatshirt size (if applicable): **S**    **M**    **L**    **XL**    **Other:**

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