

Reading Public Schools

Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow



Fine and Performing Arts Curriculum Guide

Course: Select Choir

Course Description

Select Choir is a full-year, every-other-day choral ensemble open to all students (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass). All students wishing to be in Select Choir must audition in March for the following school year. As the name implies, Select Choir is an auditioned group of accomplished choral musicians that performs advanced SATB divisi music. Members also perform musical theater and popular music as part of two small ensembles: Fermata Nowhere and the Crescendudes. Members are expected to hold themselves to a high level of work ethic, skill, and independence. Select Choir performs frequently during the school year, including major concerts, fundraisers, school events, festivals, competitions, and other activities where suitable.

Sequential Development of Singing Skills: Grades 9-12

Approximate Range: Sing in the typical range of a soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, or bass.

Scale Systems: Learn a wide variety of tonal and atonal song and choral repertoire.

Tone Matching: Sing in multiple parts, maintaining accurate intonation and vocal blend, a wide variety of styles of choral music such as: rounds and canons, composed songs (classical, jazz, and pop), authentic folk song arrangements, and pieces authentically representing a wide range of cultures, genres, and historical periods.

Vocal Production: Learn proper use of all physiological parts of the singing apparatus and how they may be used to produce a beautiful, healthy, and expressive sound. Develop stylistically advanced, nuanced ensemble singing skills.

Source: MA Arts Curriculum Framework 2019, page 70

Content Standards for a Proficient Ensemble

Creating:

1. Apply research to support musical interpretation (e.g. students listen to several different recordings of a given piece to determine an approach to interpretation).
2. Arrange a melody for multiple instruments or voices.
3. Refine draft arrangements to ensure consistency in style, genre, and notation.

Performing:

4. Contribute to the production of a small group performance (e.g. run a section of a rehearsal).
5. Perform with accuracy and expression works from the vocal or instrumental literature with a level of difficulty of 4, on a scale of 1 to 6.
6. Modify a performance by anticipating audience responses to better align to student's artistic intent.

Responding:

7. Examine how structure of music impacts and informs performances.
8. Compare and contrast the artistic elements that make contemporary music unique.
9. Choose and defend different criteria for evaluating a specific musical performance.

Connecting:

10. Describe how music influences one's approach to other academic disciplines (e.g. how the physics of sound influences how one makes music).
11. Explain the relationship between music and commercialization or propaganda.

Source: MA Arts Curriculum Framework 2019, page 47



Concepts	Essential Questions
Music Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is music communicated in written form? • How do composers use markings and symbols to create expression? • How does learning to read and notate music allow students to see what they hear and hear what they see?
Aural Skills and Sight-Singing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the relationship between rhythm and beat? • Why is identifying the time and key signature significant to the sight-singing process? • Why does knowing Kodaly solfege syllables aid in learning new music? • Why does developing my listening and aural skills improve the quality of my contributions to the overall ensemble?
Vocal Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What criteria should be used to evaluate vocal production? • Why are proper body alignment and breath support considered to be the foundation of healthy vocal technique? • What is the relationship between vowel formation and intonation? • How do musicians improve the quality of their performance?
Musicianship and Ensemble Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there such thing as good harmony and bad harmony? • How does understanding the structure and context of musical works inform performance? • What does it mean to sing with expression? • How does performing music provide a means for artistic growth? • What is my role within the ensemble? • What is the importance of the conductor of the ensemble?
Performance Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the creation of music relate to the human experience? • What is the role of the artist in societies past and present? • When is a performance judged ready to present? • Does a performance have to be public to be meaningful? • How does following established ensemble decorum contribute to a quality performance?

Structures for Learning

During a typical ensemble rehearsal, students and teachers may be engaged in...

- Physical and vocal warm-up exercises
- Technical drills
- Performance tasks (e.g. analyzing choral scores, rhythmic counting, sight-singing notated music, and pronouncing foreign language texts)
- Whole class instruction
- Student-led small group rehearsals
- Formative assessments in the form of independent part checks
- Preparing for summative assessments in the form of concerts and other performances for an audience
- Listening to and watching exemplar performances of choral music
- Written self-evaluations

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Fine and Performing Arts Curriculum Guide Overview

Curriculum Guide

Curriculum guides are public documents aligned with the Massachusetts Department of Education Curriculum Frameworks. They outline and highlight the set of standards that students will learn within certain disciplines at each grade level. Curriculum guides are intended for teachers, parents, and the wide school community to provide an overview of the course of study for the year.

Curriculum Map

Curriculum maps are internal documents utilized as planning tools for teachers and administrators. Curriculum maps keep a focus on the end-of-year standards and chart a course for teaching and learning over the year. They are typically organized by month and/or marking period and may include: genres/topics or units of study, methods of assessment, and major content resources. Maps are fluid documents that are revised and revisited regularly to ensure students' needs are being met.

Content Standards

The standards used as the foundation of our curriculum come directly from the Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework. State standards may be viewed here: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/>

Sequential Development of Singing Skills

Singing provides an essential learning process for music students of all ages. It should be a foundational centerpiece in all general music classes and ensembles from preschool through high school. To that end, the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Arts includes a singing skill sequence, included in this guide. The singing skill sequence provides benchmarks showing how to develop both in-tune singing as well as healthy vocal technique and habits. It delineates the specific range, scale, tone matching, and vocal production standards that should be met or exceeded by the majority of students at the end of each grade span (PreK-K, 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, and 9-12).

Essential Questions

Essential questions are questions that are not answerable with an easy answer or a simple instruction. The purpose of essential questions is to provide opportunities for inquiry into learning and act as an umbrella to anchor the unit/lesson.

Structures for Learning

Structures for learning are examples of the instructional contexts and activities that students and teachers *might* be engaged in during arts instruction. Those listed represent a sampling and the list is in no way exhaustive. The list is not intended to mandate or require certain types of instruction at any given time, merely to suggest best practices.