

Platteville  
High School  
*Choir Handbook*  
2018-2019



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## *Mrs. Armstrong's Philosophy*

Everyone can learn to sing, and it's my job to teach you.

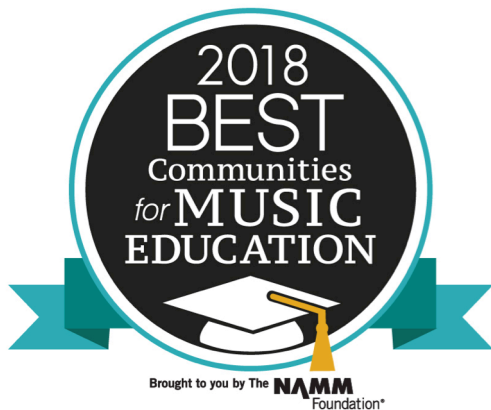
Everyone can improve their singing through effort and persistence.

Singing lets us express what we think and feel when we've run out of words.

Singing a variety of music connects us to people, places and experiences different than our own.

When we sing together, we create a bond that is stronger than our individual selves.

We were musicians before we entered this room, and we will be lifelong musicians after we leave this room.



Congratulations Platteville! We were named a Best Community for Music Education in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 by the NAMM Foundation. This award was earned by students, teachers, parents, and community support of music education as an essential part of the school curriculum. Thank you!

## *General information*

Director: Mrs. Amelia Armstrong  
School phone: 342-4020 x2200  
Email: [armstrong@platteville.k12.wi.us](mailto:armstrong@platteville.k12.wi.us)  
Class Website: [www.plattevillechoirs.weebly.com](http://www.plattevillechoirs.weebly.com)  
Twitter: @PvilleChoirs

This is Mrs. Armstrong's fifteenth year as the vocal music teacher at PHS. She teaches two curricular choirs (Choralaires and Cantorum), Beginning Guitar, and weekly voice lessons to every choir student. She also directs the Blue Notes jazz choir and the biennial musical. Mrs. Armstrong grew up in Wausau, and graduated from Wausau West High School in 2000. While she was in high school, Mrs. A. enjoyed participating in music, athletics, theater, and publications staff.

In college, Mrs. Armstrong studied vocal music education and Spanish. She received her Bachelor of Music Education degree from Wartburg College (Waverly, Iowa) in May of 2004, and earned her Master of Music Education degree from the University of Illinois (Champaign-Urbana) in August of 2009. In her spare time, Mrs. A. enjoys cooking and being outdoors. She and her husband Zack live in Platteville with their two sons, Gabriel (8) and Samuel (5).

## *Classroom Rules*

**Be focused**

**Be positive**

**Be patient**

**Be respectful**

**Be your best**

## *Curricular choirs*

### Chorales – 23 members this year

6<sup>th</sup> hour, Red Days, freshmen and sophomores

A beginning mixed choir, for experienced and new singers.

### Cantorum-23 members this year

3<sup>rd</sup> hour, Grey Days, juniors and seniors

An advanced mixed choir, for experienced musicians.

## *Course Description*

Both Chorales and Cantorum perform music spanning the Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Impressionistic, Contemporary and World Music traditions.

Students in these ensembles focus on the fundamentals of proper breath, posture, and placement to produce a relaxed and open vocal tone. As singers advance, there is an increased emphasis on balance, blend, part independence, the singing of foreign languages, and lifelong musicianship. In addition to learning and performing repertoire, students in these ensembles regularly sight-read, audiate, compose, and write about music.

Every choir student receives weekly voice lessons which develop the individual singer. Lessons reinforce concepts learned in class, and help prepare students for opportunities in solo and ensemble festivals, honor choirs, and music at the collegiate level.

## *Other Music Department Courses*

<u>Concert Band</u>	5 <sup>th</sup> hour, Red Days – Mr. Cooley
<u>Orchestra</u>	5 <sup>th</sup> hour, Grey Days – Mr. Strizic
<u>Beginning Guitar</u>	8 <sup>th</sup> hour, Red Days – Mrs. Armstrong
<u>Music Theory</u>	3 <sup>rd</sup> hour, Red Days – Mr. Cooley

## *Class Expectations* \*See rubric in Appendix

### Daily Requirements

To receive full daily participation points, all choir students should:

1. Be seated in their assigned chair before the bell rings.
2. Put away all personal belongings underneath their chair.
3. Have their folder, handbook, and a sharpened pencil.
4. Get rid of gum, candy, and all choking hazards before class.
5. Be respectful to their peers, their teacher, and the choir room.
6. Participate fully in all aspects of class – be ready to sing!

### Sight Singing and Audiation

Each week in rehearsal the choir will complete sight singing and audiation exercises taken from one of several books or software programs. These exercises are intended to improve musicianship by reinforcing aural and reading skills.

### Writing/Composing Assignments

Students will be asked to respond in writing as part of three yearly concert critiques, and other written responses to music listening. Choir students will also complete a group composition project each year.

### Music Reading Skills

Students may be assigned short worksheets to practice their music reading skills, including understanding and writing music notation, musical symbols, vocabulary, key signatures and time signatures. Practicing these concepts is embedded into our rehearsal of music each year, but will improve each time we review our skills.

### Technology

Much of our course content and a course calendar are available on our choir website, [www.plattevillechoirs.weebly.com](http://www.plattevillechoirs.weebly.com) . Student and department laptops will be able to access music resources, practice tools, and enrichment material to reinforce what is covered in class. Teacher and student use of software for music notation, recording, warmups, guided practice, and smart accompaniment is encouraged.

## Assessment

A performance assessment, usually a quartet check-off, will occur following each of the three concert units. A project or written assessment will occur following units on composition, music reading, and voice function. Professional adjudicators will assess solo/ensemble performances at festival.

## Vocal Rest

Students who are unable to sing for any medical reason may use a vocal rest day up to twice per semester. **Students must request a vocal rest day from Mrs. Armstrong before rehearsal begins.** Full daily participation points can be earned by filling out a vocal rest form and turning it into Mrs. Armstrong at the end of rehearsal. A sample form can be found in this handbook.

## Music Pass

Students with a scheduled lesson do not need a pass, and should report directly to the choir room at their specified time. Students wishing to utilize their study hall time for extra practice **must see a music teacher ahead of time** to obtain a music pass.

## Solo and Ensemble / Third Quarter Performance Project

During third quarter, all students prepare a piece from the WSMA list. This is typically a vocal solo, but can be an ensemble with teacher permission. To receive full credit, students choose one or more of the following performance venues:

1. Perform at District Solo/Ensemble Festival.
2. Perform for the class.
3. Perform for at least two peers in a formal setting.
4. Perform at a public event, i.e. wedding or church service.

## Rehearsal Makeups

Choir students can be 'excused absent' from class twice per quarter without penalty. The third and subsequent times a student misses choir for any reason earns a zero for daily participation. Upon completion of rehearsal makeups, a student may earn back their points. Rehearsal makeups can include article reviews, outside concert attendance, or music volunteer time, and forms are located in the music hallway. Unexcused absences will earn a zero and are not eligible for rehearsal makeups.

## *Voice Lessons \*See objectives in Appendix*

Every choir student receives weekly voice lessons each quarter. Based on availability, upperclassmen will be given priority for individual lessons. Students can earn up to 12 points and a stamp in their handbook for each lesson completed. There will be four to six voice lessons during each quarter.

Students are able to make up lessons missed due to illness or school-related conflict for full credit within the grading period. Unexcused lesson absences can be made up for a maximum of 10/12 points no more than **twice per quarter** at the teacher's discretion. Lesson schedules are posted on the choir website, in the choir room and the IMC. **Students should check these schedules weekly to confirm their lesson time.** The voice lesson calendar for 2018-2019 follows the stamp chart.

	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5
1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter					
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter					
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter					
4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter					



## Voice Lesson Calendar 2018-2019

### First Quarter

Sept. 4	No lessons
<b>Sept. 10</b>	<b>Lesson Week 1</b>
<b>Sept. 17</b>	<b>Lesson Week 2</b>
<b>Sept. 24</b>	<b>Lesson Week 3</b>
Oct. 1	No lessons
<b>Oct. 8</b>	<b>Lesson Week 4</b>
<b>Oct. 15</b>	<b>Lesson Week 5</b>
Oct. 22	No lessons –WMEA conv.
<b>Oct. 29</b>	<b>Makeup lessons</b>

### Second Quarter

Nov. 5	No lessons
Nov. 12	No lessons – Choir concert
Nov. 19	No lessons – Thanksgiving
<b>Nov. 26</b>	<b>Lesson Week 1 – Senior Music Trip</b>
<b>Dec. 3</b>	<b>Lesson Week 2</b>
<b>Dec. 10</b>	<b>Lesson Week 3 – Select solos</b>
<b>Dec. 17</b>	<b>Lesson Week 4</b>
<b>Jan. 7</b>	<b>Lesson Week 5</b>
<b>Jan. 14</b>	<b>Makeup lessons – Choir concert</b>

### Third Quarter

<b>Jan. 21</b>	<b>Lesson Week 1</b>
<b>Jan. 28</b>	<b>Lesson Week 2</b>
<b>Feb. 4</b>	<b>Lesson Week 3</b>
Feb. 11	No Lessons – Hillmen Jazz Night
<b>Feb. 18</b>	<b>Lesson Week 4 – Accompanist Week 1</b>
<b>Feb. 25</b>	<b>Lesson Week 5 – Accompanist Week 2 *Dist SE March 2<sup>nd</sup>*</b>
<b>Mar. 4</b>	<b>Makeup Lessons</b>
Mar 11	No Lessons
Mar 25	No Lessons

### Fourth Quarter

<b>Apr. 1</b>	<b>Lesson Week 1</b>
<b>Apr. 8</b>	<b>Lesson Week 2</b>
<b>Apr. 15</b>	<b>Lesson Week 3</b>
<b>April 23</b>	<b>Lesson Week 4 **State Solo/Ensemble April 28**</b>
<b>April 29</b>	<b>Lesson Week 5</b>
<b>May 6</b>	<b>Makeup Lessons- Choir concert</b>
May 13-June 7	No lessons – graduation choir prep, Pops Concert prep

## *Concert Expectations \*See rubric in Appendix*

Concerts are worth 50 points each, and are a major part of the quarter grade. To receive full points, students are expected to:

1. Arrive early for the scheduled warmup time.
2. Wear appropriate concert dress as outlined below.
3. Practice good concert etiquette, stay for entire concert.
4. Give their best effort to represent the work they have done.
5. Put away and clean up all equipment after the concert.

## *Required Concert Dates*

Thur., Nov. 15	Fall 6-12 Choir Concert	7:00 PM
Tue., Jan. 15	Winter 9-12 Choir Concert	7:00 PM
Mon., May 6	PHS Band / Choir / Orch Concert	7:00 PM

## *Concert Dress*

All choir students will wear music department formalwear, and will change into concert apparel at school. Students may choose whether they prefer a tux or gown. Students **MUST** wear the following items beneath their tux and gown:

TUX: White dress shirt (long or short sleeved), black dress pants, black socks, black dress shoes. [Tux coat, cummerbund and bowtie provided.]

GOWN: Natural colored nylons or knee-highs and black flats. [Black gown provided.]

Note: *Local thrift stores have an excellent variety of concert dress clothes. In an emergency, the Music Department does have a limited supply of concert dress clothes. Please see any music teacher.*

## *Concert Absence Policy*

Only concert absences due to illness or family emergency will be considered excused. All other absences will be considered unexcused.

A unique thing about choir is that evening and weekend activities are graded as class work. Three concerts per year are a critical part of your grade. Each student is responsible for communicating important music events to parents, coaches, employers, and any other activity leaders. Extra copies of the music calendar for 2017-2018 are available for this purpose.

If a student misses a concert due to work conflict, athletic contest, family event, or any other outside activity, it will be considered unexcused, and the student will receive a 0 for their concert grade. Makeup assignments will not be offered for unexcused absences.

Excused absences due to illness or family emergency must be called in (342-4020 x2200) or emailed ([armstrong@platteville.k12.wi.us](mailto:armstrong@platteville.k12.wi.us)) by a parent or guardian **prior to the concert** in order for the student to receive a makeup assignment. Makeup assignments consist of a short paper to be chosen from several topics.

## *Concert Warmup Schedule*

6:00 p.m.	Blue Notes
6:15 p.m.	Cantorum
6:30 p.m.	Choralaires
6:45 p.m.	Restrooms, drink break, find seats
7:00 p.m.	Concert begins

## *Grading Policy*

Music Skills (singing, listening, writing, reading).....	25%
Class Participation, Attitude, Attendance .....	25%
Voice Lessons .....	25%
Concert Requirements .....	25%
Daily rehearsal (2 or 3/week) .....	2 points each
Weekly lesson (4-6/quarter).....	12 points each
Concert (1/quarter).....	50 points each
Singing, listening, writing, reading .....	10-50 points each
Assessments (music skills, 3-5 per year).....	20-50 points each

## *Extra Credit*

Students can earn 5 points of extra credit for each of the following activities. Requests for extra credit can be made during the last week of each quarter by submitting a list to Mrs. Armstrong. Extra credit done outside of school can be verified by an email from a supervisor.

Private Voice Lessons	(once per quarter of participation)
Church/Community Choir	(once per quarter of participation)
Concert setup/teardown	(30 minutes per session, unlimited)
National Anthem	(30 minutes per session, unlimited)
Music library assistance	(30 minutes per session, unlimited)
Equipment hauling/lifting	(30 minutes per session, unlimited)
Usher a performance	(45 minutes per session, unlimited)
Other opportunities at teacher discretion	

## *Travel*

The PHS Music Department offers an overnight cultural excursion for seniors in music to destinations like Chicago. The class of 2019 Senior Music Trip will be Nov. 30-Dec. 1, 2018 to see the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Art Institute of Chicago, MISS SAIGON, and the Chicago House of Blues. The trip cost is approximately \$400.