

Dear Choir Students and Parents,

My name is David Schmiech and I am the choral director at North Allegheny Senior High School. I direct the choral ensembles at the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade levels. Lisa Pontiere is the choral director at North Allegheny Intermediate High School and directs the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade ensembles. I am delighted to welcome all high school choir students to an exciting year of singing at North Allegheny.

Our ensemble breakdown is as follows:

Ninth Grade Choir	Mrs. Pontiere
Tenth Grade Choir	Mrs. Pontiere
Treble Ensemble (NAI and NASH)	Mrs. Pontiere & Mr. Schmiech
Concert Choir (NASH)	Mr. Schmiech
Honors Chamber Choir	Mr. Schmiech

In choral music education, our curriculum is our repertoire. Each North Allegheny choir sings musical selections that are chosen to educate our students in the craft of singing and musicianship, as well as music history and culture. In order to broaden the musical experiences of our students, they are exposed to music from a wide variety of cultures, languages, time periods, and styles. Our performance selections are intended to represent that diversity within a skill level that is appropriately challenging.

### Grading Policy and System

Each student receives a weekly participation grade based on preparedness (music & pencil at every rehearsal), behavior (focused and respectful), and musical responsibility (learning parts and singing maturely). **All choir students must purchase a 1/2 inch black three-ring binder by Tuesday, September 3.** This will be part of your participation grade for the second week. Students will be voice tested twice per year to check in with individual singers on tone, proficiency with repertoire from concerts, and solfege intervals. This is graded and will determine their ensemble placements for the following year. Score checks and other assignments will be graded to ensure that students are marking their music with assigned markings (phrasing, solfege, translations, etc.) and working on their musicianship. The Honors Chamber Choir will have additional small group quizzes as necessary to assess accountability.

50% Participation	A 90-100%	D 60-69%
25% Concert/afterschool rehearsal attendance	B 80-89%	F 0-59%
15% Score checks/other assignments	C 70-79%	
10% Voice Testing		

Attendance at concerts and afterschool rehearsals as marked on the calendar is mandatory. **Absence from a concert or after-school rehearsal will result in a significant**

**grade loss, usually a letter grade – 25% of your grade is attendance at these events.** After an absence, a counsel will be administered to determine if the student should continue in the choral program. There are not many mandatory events and you have ample time to plan. In a performing ensemble, each member is important and takes on a responsibility to this group. Choir is a curricular course that affects your GPA and transcript, unlike extracurricular activities.

Detentions will be referred for students with 4 unexcused tardies to class, and immature or inappropriate behavior. Dismissal from the choral program will occur after two absences of mandatory events, skipping a choral class during school hours, possession of alcohol, tobacco, or drug paraphernalia (including e-cigarettes and vapes) at choral functions, or consistent misbehavior in choir (with the conductor or a substitute).

Students are responsible for taking care of their choir attire (robes, garment bags, tuxes, gowns, jewelry, etc. as applicable). If a piece of choir attire is destroyed, lost, or damaged, it is at the expense of the student to replace or repair the item. Honors Chamber Choir students may choose to keep their tux or gown over the summer, but no robes will be kept over the summer. If you are in Honors Chamber Choir and kept your attire, try it on ASAP and let me know if you need to swap sizes.

Honors Chamber Choir members have required attendance at all additional scheduled performances. If you must be absent for a once-in-a-lifetime reason, you must clear it with the director two weeks in advance.

### **New Choir Attire**

This year we are looking to update the performance attire. More info to come!

Optional NA choir merchandise will be available, including sweatshirts, t-shirts, quarter zips, and more! Order forms and samples will be posted on Mr. Schmiech's website.

### **Cabaret**

Students will have the opportunity to audition for a cabaret that will feature solo singers of a wide variety of styles. Any student in a NASH choral ensemble may audition with a solo piece of their choosing. At the Cabaret, we will collect donations to the choir program general fund. Repertoire will include musical theatre, classical, pop, jazz, etc. and will be tailored to the students that are selected. Final repertoire selections are at the discretion of the director. See Mr. Schmiech if you are interested in playing in the band.

Dress rehearsal – Thursday, October 24 after school – mandatory for participation  
Performance – Saturday, October 26, location TBA

Other rehearsals will be scheduled individually and it is your responsibility to be proactive in scheduling and rehearsing with Mr. Schmiech.

### Auditions

Bring a piece of music or two of your choosing and sheet music with piano accompaniment in the key you wish to sing. If you have any questions about what to sing or how to acquire sheet music, ask Mr. Schmiech or a friend for help. Sing something you love!

Auditions are soon: **Saturday, Sept. 7 in the choir room**

Sign up here:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1wHW1iVKe0NF0BXCex9KbQbFo2ITagLYkGly24ht\\_ySQ/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1wHW1iVKe0NF0BXCex9KbQbFo2ITagLYkGly24ht_ySQ/edit?usp=sharing)

### Stay in touch with NA Choirs

Follow us on twitter: @NASHChoirs

For student account balances and other info: <https://www.northalleghey.org/Page/27964>

### NACPA

The North Allegheny Choral Patrons Association (NACPA) is an organization made up of parents with children in grades 9-12. Their job is to assist the director and students with concerts, choral banquets, fundraising, and choir trips. Our monthly, one-hour meetings take place in the NASH Choral Room. Our officers' and chairpersons' contact info is listed at the end of this document, feel free to reach out. Because of the constant growth of our choral program, I urge you as parents to join this worthwhile organization and support your child's musical experiences and education throughout their high school years. If we wish to increase the educational value and quality of singing, not to mention the level of enjoyment on choral trips, parental assistance is necessary. We need the help and support of ALL parents of singers in choir grades 9-12. We encourage all of you to join us. Meetings will be announced via the email system.

### Fundraising Programs

Our Giant Eagle gift card program is being replaced with a new program that will allow us to raise money while buying from a large number of stores and vendors. Please stay tuned

for more information through the Choral Parent meetings. We are trying to make it as convenient as possible for you to raise money for your child's account. There will be another large trip for the senior high students next year!

### Choir Participation Fee

In lieu of door-to-door fundraising, we are continuing the choir participation donation as voted by the NACPA in 2013. **All students are asked to send a \$25 check per family, payable to NACPA, to cover necessary costs of operating our choral program.** An envelope will be sent home with students to be returned with a check for the year. Additional fundraising, such as the Cabaret and concessions, will help to offset a small part of the costs, but this is vital to the NACPA's operating budget which makes this program possible.

Thank you so much for being an important part of this choral department. I am so thrilled by the support and enthusiasm for the choral program here at North Allegheny. do not hesitate to reach out if you need to contact me or Mrs. Pontiere. I thank you and look forward to working with all of you! Let's have a happy, safe, and musically fulfilling school year.

Sincerely,

David Schmiech  
North Allegheny Senior High Choral Director

Lisa Pontiere  
North Allegheny Intermediate High Choral Director