



# **Student Handbook**

**2009 – 2010**



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# NORTH GWINNETT HIGH SCHOOL CHORAL PROGRAM

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Chorus Office 770-271-5173

Dear Students and Parents:

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome everyone to the 2009-2010 North Gwinnett Choral Department. Whether you are a returning member or a new student, we are looking forward to working with you this year. As one of over 200 students in chorus, we hope that you will take advantage of every opportunity to become a highly involved and committed member of our program.

This school year brings much excitement and anticipation about what new levels our choral program can reach. Last school year we broke school records in numbers of All-State Attendees, Honor's Chorus Attendees, Large Group Performance Evaluation Scores, and number of students nominated for Governor's Honors Program. Each year we push our students to higher levels of success not only as musicians, but as well rounded leaders in the North Gwinnett Community.

Students in our choral program are committed to excellence, and through our booster organization, the chorus parents are committed to supporting our efforts. **Make plans now to attend the parent meeting on August 25th for more information about our program.** Also, feel free to contact us by phone or email if you have questions. Welcome back!!!

*Leigh Ann Wearne*

*Amanda Varner*

# THE NGHS CHORAL DEPARTMENT

*Six different levels of chorus meet during the school day. Instruction in all courses will be based on the countywide Academic Knowledge and Skills. Because performance skills are assessed in these courses, each student will be graded on performance attendance.*

## **Chorus Classes**

**La Belle Musique** is a non-auditioned women's chorus made up of mostly ninth grade girls and other beginning female students in grades 10-12. This choir has earned superior or excellent ratings at LGPE for the last 10 years. All ninth grade female students and first year chorus females must register for this course.

**Men's Chorus** is a non-auditioned men's chorus made up of boys in grades 9-12 who are new to chorus at North Gwinnett. This choir sings two, three, and four part men's music in addition to combining with a women's choir to sing some mixed music. All ninth grade male students and first year chorus males must register for this course.

**Advanced Women's Chorus** is an auditioned large group chorus at NGHS. This group is made up of experienced singers from grades 10-12. Some students in this choir audition for All-State Chorus.

**Camerata Women** is an auditioned women's choir made up of students in grades 10-12. This choir will combine with Adv. Men to sing mixed repertoire on occasion. Many of the students in the choir audition for All-State Chorus and attend Honor Chorus.

**Chorale** is a highly selective auditioned women's ensemble made up of female students in grades 10-12. This choir was chosen to perform at the 2002 GMEA conference in Savannah and has consistently received superior ratings at GMEA Choral LGPE.

**Advanced Men's Chorus** is a highly selective auditioned men's ensemble made up of male students in grades 10-12. This choir was formed two years ago, and we continue to have high expectations for their performances in the future.

**Ensemble** is the highest level of chorus at NGHS, made up of female students who have had at least one year in Chorale and male students who have had at least one year in Adv. Men or participated in All State Chorus. Previously an afterschool group, Ensemble will perform collegiate level music in addition to learning combined numbers.

### **Co-curricular Activities (required)**

Students are required to attend all performances and activities associated with their choir. Specific concert dates will be posted on the class syllabus distributed at the beginning of the school year, and on the chorus website ([www.nghschorus.com](http://www.nghschorus.com)). Chorus members should be flexible and willing to work other performances/rehearsals into their schedules if the need arises. Additional performances will be announced in plenty of time for choir members to make arrangements to attend. **Required out-of-class activities will determine a portion of the student's grade (25%).**

### **Uniform (required)**

In order to maintain the excellence of the choral program, each member is required to purchase a uniform. More information on uniforms can be found on page 7, under 'other chorus fees.'

### **Extracurricular Activities (non-required)**

**All-State Chorus** is an opportunity for individual students to attend a weekend event in Savannah and sing in a large choir with students from all over the state. Students must pass a screening audition at NGHS, and two additional regional auditions. NGHS had 33 students attend All-State Chorus during the 2008-09 school year. This was the highest number of any school in Gwinnett County.

**All-State Sightreading Choir** is an opportunity for individual students to attend a weekend event in Savannah and sightread over 75 pieces of music with about 100 total students statewide. Auditions are held in November (at NGHS) for students who excel in sightreading.

**Honor Chorus** is an opportunity for individual students to attend a two-day event usually held in Athens and sing with students from other schools in our district. Mrs. Wearne and Mrs. Varner must select students for their musicianship, attitude, and work ethic.

**Originals** is a student-led men's a cappella group that rehearses at least once a week to prepare music for concert and community performances. Men in grades 9-12 are eligible to audition.

**Literary Competition** is held every March for women's trio, men's quartet, and men and women's solo. Students are chosen through an audition and rehearse after school.

**Solo and Ensemble** is a small group/soloist performance evaluation held in April. Students prepare music after school to perform for adjudication.

## Sample Schedule

Students, this is a very exciting time, as you look forward to moving through high school. It can also be confusing as you decide which classes to take and begin to shape the direction of your future. Here is a guide that may help you with making your four-year academic plan. Colleges and universities desire entering freshmen have fine arts credits, such as chorus, on their transcripts. They agree that these students' long-term commitment to these programs is a good indicator of academic and personal success in college. It is possible to be in chorus for four years and graduate with a college prep or honor's diploma with distinction!

General Points to remember:

\*Chorus is an academic elective credit –many colleges require 4 academic elective credits for admission and in order to graduate ‘with distinction,’ you must have at least 2 academic electives – Chorus fulfills this requirement.

\*World Geography is a non-required academic elective – in other words, it counts the same as Chorus and is not tested on the Georgia HS Graduation Test.

\*Health/PE is offered in summer school, and many students who want to free up space in their four-year plan choose to take this before their ninth grade year.

### Sample Schedule College Prep Diploma

<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
English	English	English	English
Math	Math	Math	Math
Science	Science	Science	Science
Health/PE	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies
<b>Chorus</b>	<b>Chorus</b>	<b>Chorus</b>	<b>Chorus</b>
<i>Elective/area VI</i>	<i>Elective (FL)</i>	Foreign Lang.	Foreign Lang.

CP Diploma Requirements:	English.....4 units
	Math.....4 units
	Science.....4 units
	Social Studies.....3 units
	Foreign Lang.....2 units
	Health/PE.....1 unit
	Area VI.....1 unit
	(Computer Science, <b>Fine Arts</b> , JROTC, Foreign Lang., Vocational)
	Electives.....3 units

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22 units

# **NORTH GWINNETT CHORUS BOOSTERS**

At NGHS, we have a quality choral program. The North Gwinnett Chorus Board (NGCB) is a completely volunteer organization of parents selected by Mrs. Wearne and Mrs. Varner, dedicated to supporting the NGHS Choral program and maintaining its high standards.

## **Goals and Objectives**

- To create and maintain an enthusiastic interest in the choral program at North Gwinnett High School.
- To cooperate with the NGHS Choral Director and Administration in maintaining a high quality level of performance, participation and community involvement.
- To build and maintain an organization of parents and other interested individuals that will help promote the activities of the choral program.
- To aid in chaperoning on choral trips, competitions, festivals, etc.
- To provide necessary financial support when county and/or local school funds are not available.
- To be involved with and work on various fundraising and support activities.
- To maintain a chorus website for the purpose of student, parent and teacher communication.
- To act as a liaison between the chorus teachers, parents, students, school administration and the community. Rev. 8/25/05

## **General Information**

The Gwinnett County Board of Education only funds instructional activities for the chorus program. Student fees and income from fundraising activities are used to supplement the instruction costs and to fund the major portion of chorus activities and awards.

\*\*Please note that the Gwinnett County Voluntary Contribution Fee of \$10 only covers basic instructional fees, and is not a part of the NGCB Fee.

## **NGCB Financial Policies**

The financial goals of the North Gwinnett High School Chorus Boosters Association are:

1. To identify the means necessary to fund the best chorus program possible.
2. To establish a system by which all chorus students and families can contribute their fair share of time, talents and financial resources.

### **Student Fees**

A participation fee of \$50 for each chorus student is required to finance the activities of the NGCB, which support and promote the chorus program. This fee includes facility rental, accompanist fees, sheet music, fall picnic facility rental, Large Group Performance Evaluation (Festival) fees, transportation fees, and general operational consumables. This payment is needed to help defray expenses as the students benefit from the activities of the NGCB. This payment is due in the fall or may be earned through fundraising opportunities. The fee for a new student entering after the beginning of the year will be prorated based upon their date of enrollment.

If a student has not paid their Student Fee, a personal Student Credit Account will not be established, and they will not be able to participate in optional chorus opportunities, such as Spiritwear purchases, Honor Chorus, All-State Chorus, class trips, and fundraising opportunities etc.

There will be a fee for any bounced checks.

Please note: It is the NGCB's intent that no student will be denied participation in the chorus program because of an inability to meet the financial policy of the Booster Board. A family who is unable to make the payments must address this to the Director and/or Treasurer in confidence. The Director and/or Treasurer will make every effort to work with the family to restructure the payment schedule and to arrange for participation in additional fundraising activities in lieu of the payment.

## Other Chorus Fees

### *Women's Uniform Expenses: (Mrs. Varner)*

The following *approximate* costs are required to be paid by new choral students and cannot be paid through fundraising:

Informal T-Shirt uniform: \$15.00 (paid in the spring semester)

Women's Dress: \$72.00

Chorus Women will have the opportunity to try-on sample dresses in each size.

### *Men's Uniform Expenses:*

This year there will be a change in Men's Uniforms that will affect the upcoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders. We will have them purchase black tux pants, and white tux shirts. As an alternative to purchasing the vests and bowties we will be renting them out.

Men's Pants and Shirts: approx. \$40

Rental Vest and Bowties: \$20

Returned **Dry Cleaned** Vest and Bowtie: \$15 dollar refund in the spring.

### *Used Uniform Sale:*

Each fall, the NGCB sponsors a 'Used Uniform Sale', where students can either sell their uniform (if they've graduated or outgrown it) or purchase a used uniform. The cost for a used chorus dress is \$40. The cost of used pants and shirts: TBA Watch for this opportunity to get a great uniform at a great price!

### *Optional Choral Activity Expenses:*

Some students may participate in extracurricular choral activities such as Spiritwear purchases, All-State Chorus, Honor Chorus, or Class Trip. The cost for each event must be covered 100% by the participating student. The following is a *cost estimate* for the 2009-2010 school year:

Spiritwear \$15 and up

All-State Chorus \$160 (includes participation and judging fee, hotel and picnic lunch)

Honor Chorus \$100 (includes hotel, participation fee, and music)

ACDA summer honor choir \$50

All State Sightreading Choir \$100 (includes hotel, participation fee)

## **Student Credit Accounts**

Upon payment of the Chorus Student Fee, a personal Student Credit Account will be established in each student's name. This account allows students to earn 'credit' towards their individual chorus expenses by participating in various fundraiser activities. The Student Credit Account program allows each participating student to earn a generous percentage of the profit received from the sale of products being sold. Credits can only be used for costs associated with participation in approved choral activities. Credits cannot be transferred to non-family members or carried over with years between participation. Credits are NOT considered to be cash. Upon graduation or leaving the choral program for any reason, the credits remaining in the account will be transferred into the NGCB general chorus account. A student's credit account can be transferred to a brother or sister who is currently enrolled in the program, or to a sibling enrolling in the next consecutive school year. A transfer request must be made by completing a Transfer of Credit Request Form (as found on the website, or in the chorus room.) to the Director or Treasurer within 30 days from the start of a new school year. Please indicate the full legal name of the current and new choral member.

## **Fundraising**

The NGCB encourages student participation in the fundraising opportunities provided. Fundraisers for the 2009-2010 school year allow students to earn credits in their Student Credit Account. This will include:

- Kroger Gift Card Program
- Holiday Wreath Sale
- Cookie Dough Sale

Additional fundraising opportunities may be provided.

## **CHORUS WEBSITE**

The North Gwinnett Chorus Boosters maintains an informational website located at [www.nghschorus.com](http://www.nghschorus.com). The website contains important information including class syllabi, fundraising information, forms, a calendar highlighting upcoming chorus events and contact information for Mrs. Varner, Mrs. Wearne, and the NGHS Chorus Boosters. The website is also a fun place for students to read articles, participate in polls and share chorus photos.

## Fall 2009 NGHS Chorus Calendar

### August

Aug 17-21	All State Screening Auditions (after school, chorus room)
Aug 25	CHORUS PARENTS' MEETING – Theatre 7:00
Aug 25	Uniform Money / \$50 participation fee Due
Aug 26-Sept 16	Cookie Dough Fundraiser

### September

TBA	Cookie Dough Delivery
Sept 11	Homecoming Weekend
Sept 26	Chorus Picnic (11 am-2 pm, Suwanee Creek Park)
Sept 23-30	Fall Spiritwear Sale
Sept 29	<b>Dress Rehearsal-Fall Concert (2:30-5:30 PM, theatre)</b>
Ongoing	All State screening + preparation (times/days TBA)

### October

Oct 1	<b>FALL CONCERT (7:00 PM, theatre)</b>
Oct 1	Christmas Wreath Fundraiser Kick-off
Oct 10	All State Region Auditions (Times TBA, Millcreek HS)
Oct 24	Taste Of Suwanee Performance (Town Center Park)
Oct 30-31	District Honor Chorus (Athens, Classic Center)

### November

Nov 14	All State Sightreading Choir Auditions
Nov 19	American Education Week Breakfast (during school)
Nov 26- Nov 28	Thanksgiving Holidays

### December

Dec 3	<b>Dress Rehearsal-Holiday Concert (2:30-5:30 PM, PHPC)</b>
Dec 7	<b>HOLIDAY CONCERT (7:00 PM, PHPC)</b>
Dec 8	Holiday Orchestra Concert (6-9pm Theatre)
Ongoing	Community Performances (Ensemble, Originals)
Dec 15	Special Performance with Georgia Southern Chorale (Duluth First United Methodist Church)
Dec 16-18	Final Exams-First Semester

## Important Second Semester Dates:

Jan 9	2 <sup>nd</sup> All State Audition
Jan 28-30	All State Reading Choir & GMEA Conference Savannah, GA
Feb 22	LGPE/Literary Concert
Feb 24-27	All State Chorus (Savannah, GA)
Mar 8-9-10	Large Group Performance Evaluation
Apr 22-24	Spring Musical Production
Apr 17 or 24	Solo and Ensemble
May 3	Dress Rehearsal-Spring Concert 2:45 FBC
May 4	Spring Concert/Awards Night 7:00 FBC
May 14	Senior Night with Mrs. Wearne/Varner

## Volunteer Opportunities

Each school year we have lots of volunteer parents help out with various activities in our program. We have over 200 students in the North Gwinnett Chorus Program, and parent volunteers are greatly appreciated. Below you will find a list of opportunities to get involved in. You can sign-up at the fall parents meeting, or contact **Mary Lee Jackson**. Her contact information is found on the NGHS Chorus website (page 8).

- Carpool Drivers for rehearsals and concerts that are off campus.
- Chaperones for Chorus trips such as Trips, All-State, + Honors Chorus
- Ladies and Men's uniform sizing (near the start of the year)
- Clean-up crews for after concerts. Help pick up left over programs in isles and pews.
- Donations of classroom supplies.
- Greeters and Attendance keepers at the start of concerts and dress rehearsals
- Fundraiser organization and distribution (one afternoon for cookie dough)
- Other general opportunities that arise



# NGHS Chorus Student/Parent Information Sheet

(Please Print Clearly)

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class Period \_\_\_\_\_  
Student Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Email addresses: **PRINT CLEARLY IN CAPITAL LETTERS**

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers:

Home \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I would like to volunteer in the following area:

\_\_\_\_\_

I have read the entire chorus **handbook** and course **syllabus** and understand the responsibilities that are inherent to being a part of the North Gwinnett High School Choral Department. I understand that a portion of my final grade will be determined by my participation in after school activities and that a chorus uniform is a requirement for this course. Being a member of chorus, I also understand that I will need to participate in fundraising activities. I am willing and ready to give 110 % effort to the work we do in rehearsal, and I am committed to going the extra mile so that we can achieve the highest quality choral performance possible.

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**I have read this document carefully and IN ITS ENTIRETY. Please sign this statement and return this portion to Mrs. Varner by Friday, August 21, 2009. Thank You.**

- I have read the NGCB Board Financial Policy and agree to adhere to the policies as stated. I will be responsible for the Student Fee of \$50, due by Friday, August 21, 2009.**
- I consent to my child’s photograph being posted on the NGHS Chorus Members Website without a name, and may be accessed by the North Gwinnett students and supporting community who subscribe to the website.**

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Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print)

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Parent/Guardian Signature Date

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Student Name (Please Print) Period

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Student Signature Date

**Please put all payments of \$50 in an envelope labeled with your child’s name and “NGCB Fees”.**

- Personal Check**    **Check #** \_\_\_\_\_  
Please print your child’s name and class period in the ‘memo’ field of any check you turn in during the school year.
- Certified Check**
- Cash**