

RISD Choir Program Guidelines

Auditions

- All RISD choir courses require full year participation and involve outside of school rehearsals and performances.
- Students are required to audition for select performance ensembles.
- The Head Director determines audition requirements.
- Directors will notify students of audition dates, requirements, and results in a timely fashion.
- Directors will serve as evaluators during auditions.
- Students may be reevaluated periodically for participation in performance ensembles.
- Students may be evaluated to qualify for participation in UIL or other competitions.
- Auditions may be live or recorded at the director's discretion.
- Audition material will reflect the director's anticipated performance level for the students and will be based on prior learning.

Booster Club

- One Band, Choir and Orchestra Booster Club will exist in each high school attendance area. The Head Director will serve as an advisor and should help facilitate all UIL and RISD Guidelines that pertain to booster clubs. The main objectives of the Booster Club are to support and enhance the area band, choir and orchestra programs for the high school and all of its feeder schools grades 7-12, and to provide program communication to students and parents at all levels of participation.

Calendar of Events

- Each secondary music program is responsible for developing an annual calendar of activities that includes major events and activities. The calendar should be made available to students and parents no later than the start of each semester. Revisions will be communicated in a timely fashion.

Conduct

- Any organization that has high performance standards must also have high behavioral standards. The basic behavioral guidelines for students in music activities are taken from the RISD Student Code of Conduct Handbook. Specific guidelines above and beyond those outlined in the RISD Student Code of Conduct can be found in your organization's specifics located in the campus organization's music handbook.
- With the approval of the Principal and Superintendent, sponsors and coaches of extracurricular activities, including interscholastic athletics and marching band, may develop and enforce standards of behavior that are higher than the District-developed Student Code of Conduct. Adherence to these standards may condition membership or participation in the activity. Extracurricular standards of behavior may take into consideration conduct that occurs at any time, on or off school property. No provision of an extracurricular behavioral standard shall have the effect of discrimination on the basis of sex, race, disability, religion, or ethnicity.

- Students shall be informed of any extracurricular behavioral standards at the beginning of each school year or, in the case of interscholastic athletics and marching band, at the time the students report for workouts or practices that occur prior to the beginning of classes. Students and their parents shall sign and return to the director or coach an acknowledgement of the behavioral standards as a condition of participation in the activity.

Extracurricular Code of Conduct and Drug and Alcohol Policy

- All students enrolled in band, choir and orchestra must have a signed Extracurricular Activity Acknowledgment and Agreement Form on file in the Head Director’s office. The complete guidelines are found in the appendix.

Due Process

- All RISD students are entitled to due process in accordance with the Richardson Independent School District Policy. Contact the campus Principal for inquiries concerning due process procedures.

Eligibility

- All music organizations adhere to the eligibility rules and regulations as stated by TEA and the district (see RISD Secondary Program of Studies). To be eligible at the high school level at the beginning of the school year, students must have earned the accumulated number of credits in state approved courses indicated below:
 - Beginning of the 9th grade year – an overall average of 70 in each of the following subjects: language arts, mathematics, social studies and science
 - Beginning of the 10th grade year – at least 5 credits toward graduation
 - Beginning of the 11th grade year – at least 10 credits toward graduation
 - Beginning of the 12th grade year – at least 15 credits toward graduation
- To be eligible to participate in any nine-week period following the initial six-week period of a school year, a student must have recorded a grade average of at least 70 on a scale of 0 to 100 in non-exempt courses for that preceding nine- week period.
- Any student whose recorded nine-week grade average in any course is lower than 70 at the end of a nine-week period shall be suspended from participation during the succeeding nine-week period. However, a student may regain eligibility seven calendar days after the succeeding three-week evaluation period if the student is passing all courses on the last class day of the three-school-week or six-school-week evaluation period. See the UIL Eligibility Calendar for specific dates. If the student has at least a grade of 70 on a scale of 0-100 for work done since the end of the previous grading period, the student regains eligibility seven calendar days later at the end of the regular school day.
- The District provides a list of courses that are exempt from eligibility requirements.
- Spring UIL Concert and Sightreading contest is exempt.

Grading Guidelines in Music

- The RISD has established district-wide instructional objectives that relate to the mandated Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for grade level subjects or courses. These objectives are aligned to address the academic skills needed for successful performance in the next grade or next course in a sequence of courses.

- Assignments, tests, projects, classroom activities, and other instructional activities must be designed so that the student’s performance indicates the level of mastery of the designated District objectives. The student’s mastery level of these objectives is a major factor in determining the grade for a subject or course.
- In accordance with RISD policy, all “excused” absences will be honored with no grade penalty.
- A major part of the music curriculum is the development of performance skills. Therefore, “unexcused” absences from a sectional, rehearsal or performance, which are integral to developing these performance skills, will lower a student’s course grade as follows:
 - Sectionals and rehearsals are course requirements that require interaction from members of a group and cannot be made up. Therefore, an “unexcused” absence/tardy from a before or after school sectional or rehearsal will lower a student’s participation average.
 - Performances are mandatory as a culmination of group course requirements and cannot be made up. Therefore, an “unexcused” absence from a scheduled performance will reflect a grade of “0” to be averaged into the student’s nine-week performance grade, and the student may be subject to removal from the course.
- Students in grades 9-12 are able to earn Honors credit in Band, Choir and Orchestra. The Honors student must be committed to developing individual academic and musical skills and be disciplined with expectations to deadlines.
- A choir member’s nine-week grade will be an average of the following:
 - **Fundamentals (25% JH) (20% HS)**
 - The student will be expected to improve fundamentals of singing and sight-reading.
 - The student will be evaluated for improvement of music fundamentals through daily observation during each rehearsal and each sectional.
 - The student will be expected to demonstrate correct posture, tone production, air production, articulation and attentiveness as monitored during rehearsals.
 - The student will be expected to develop a historical knowledge of the literature relative to choral history and/or his/her voice part.
 - **Skills (25% JH) (20% HS)**
 - The student will be expected to improve individual music skills.
 - The student’s individual skill development will be evaluated through recorded singing tests, individual singing tests, sightreading tests and written tests.
 - The student will be evaluated on improvement of ensemble skills during daily rehearsals.
 - **Participation (25% JH) (30% HS)**
 - The student will receive a grade for each before and after school sectional and rehearsal during a grading period.
 - The student will be on task and focused during all rehearsals.
 - The student will have folder, music, pencil and supplies.
 - The student will be prepared to sing his/her part successfully.
 - The student will mark music and take notes as needed.

➤ **Performance (25% JH) (30% HS)**

- ❑ The student will receive a grade for each performance during a grading period.
- ❑ Performances will be counted as major exams.
- ❑ The number of performances will be determined by the performance calendar.
- ❑ If no public performance occurs during a grading period, the performance grade will be based upon informal classroom performances determined by the director.

➤ **Additional Criteria Affecting Grades**

❑ **Excused Absences**

In accordance with RISD policy, all excused absences will be honored with no grade penalty. These will include:

Medical emergency or illness

Death in the family

Religious holiday

Family emergency

Medical or dental appointment

Circumstances may justify an excused absence for reasons other than those listed above in accordance with RISD policy. Please refer to RISD Student Code of Conduct Handbook for a complete list of extenuating circumstances and non-extenuating circumstances. If an excused absence is anticipated, a written or email notification should be submitted at least two days in advance.

❑ **Unexcused Absences/Tardiness**

See **Grading Guidelines in Music** above.

➤ **Semester Exam**

Semester grades shall consist of an average of the 2 nine-week grading periods and a semester exam. The average of the 2 nine-week grading periods shall count as a minimum of 80% of the overall semester grade. The semester exam shall count a maximum of 20% of the overall semester grade.

Honors Credit (HS Only)

- Students in grades 9-12 are able to earn Honors credit in Band, Choir and Orchestra. The Honors student must be committed to developing individual academic and musical skills and be disciplined with expectations to deadlines. The goal of this rigorous Honors program is to challenge outstanding students to improve their individual musical skills at a high level and have a positive impact on the student's overall grade point average.
- Students must enroll in Honors Band, Choir and Orchestra at the beginning of each semester. In accordance with RISD Guidelines, students have 15 days from the first day of each semester to decide whether to stay enrolled in the Honors Course and complete all requirements or drop it and enroll in Regular Band, Choir and Orchestra. At the end of the semester, students earning a passing grade in Honors Band, Choir and Orchestra shall receive 5 additional quality points in the GPA/Rank.
- Band, Choir and Orchestra students who wish to enroll in the Honors program, must have a minimum average grade of 80 in previous Band, Choir and Orchestra classes, show potential for completing the requirements for Honors courses and be recommended by their director. The final determination for admittance to the Honors program rests with the director.

- The focus of Honors Band, Choir and Orchestra is the development of independent musicianship in contrast to Regular Band, Choir and Orchestra where the focus is on large group performance with a conductor. The expectations of the Honors courses will be at higher levels of expertise, confidence, performance and skill development in order for participating students to be independent musicians functioning as soloists and chamber music participants. Research projects and work with music theory will enable the Honors student to be a more knowledgeable, well-rounded musician.
- Honors Band, Choir and Orchestra exceed the requirements of Regular Band, Choir and Orchestra by requiring additional work outside the classroom as described under **Grading Guidelines in Music**. The student enrolled in the Honors course must fulfill the curriculum for the Regular Band, Choir and Orchestra classes at an advanced level plus the rigorous Honors course requirements. The director will communicate specific requirements and deadlines at the beginning of each semester. The Honors student must:
 - Exhibit an advanced level of participation, skills, fundamentals and performance.
 - Attend two professional performances or other performances approved in advance by the director each semester in the student's respective Honors area. Documentation of these performances will include a program and a minimum two-page critique of each performance. The paper must be typed 12 point, Times New Roman font, double-spaced and must reflect the writing quality, content, and construction expected of an Honors student.
 - Prepare all of the TMEA All Region audition materials during the fall.
 - Audition for All Region during the fall unless waived by director.
 - Complete a research paper each semester on a topic approved by the director. The paper must be a minimum of six pages typed 12 point, Times New Roman font, double spaced, and include a work-cited page. A minimum of three sources is required. The paper must reflect the writing quality, content, and construction expected of an Honors student.
 - Participate in the RISD Vocal Music Festival as a solo performer.
- The student, with director approval, may choose one of the following as an alternative to the research paper for one semester only.
 - Complete individual music theory projects as assigned using the music computer lab.
 - Compose an original piece of music – length and content to be approved by the director.

Individual Musicianship Expectations

- Helping students grow individually at their craft is a top priority in RISD secondary music programs. Being a valuable member of any ensemble is aided by consistent growth as an individual musician. Students in secondary band, choir, and orchestra programs will be expected to participate in fall and spring semester individual musicianship growth goals. (This applies to all students in their second year of the program and beyond.) These curricular components help students set goals for themselves to become better individual musicians including, but not limited to the following areas: tone, technique, range, literacy, and musicianship. Students will have appropriate musical selections chosen for them by their directors during the All Region season and again during the Solo and Ensemble season. Participation in the All Region Auditions or the district Solo and Ensemble Festival will be at the discretion and encouragement of the music staff. All students will have growth goals and consistent opportunities to receive feedback from their directors throughout each season. The goal is for every student to experience these valuable processes throughout their musical careers in RISD, while becoming better individual and ensemble members.

Medical Release & Permission to Travel Form

- All students enrolled in band, choir and orchestra must have a Medical Release & Permission to Travel Form on file in the Head Director's office.

Private Lessons – Voluntary Music Enrichment Program

- Private lessons are provided for interested students as an enrichment program in Band, Choir and Orchestra.
- The Head Director/Lesson Coordinator coordinates the private lesson program in each high school attendance area in collaboration with RISD guidelines.
- The private teachers are contracted through the RISD and must complete an Application and a Criminal History check.
- The private teachers are hired, supervised and evaluated by the Head Director/Lesson Coordinator at each high school and teach at each secondary campus.
- Private study fees are consistent throughout the District and are determined through the Office of Fine Arts. The current fee is \$22 per lesson.
- While private study is not a requirement for participation in any of the music organizations, students are strongly encouraged to participate.

Rehearsal/Performance Schedules

- Participation at sectionals, rehearsals, and performances is required and will be integrated into the student's grade in accordance with the **Grading Guidelines in Music** contained in this Handbook, the RISD Program of Studies and TEA/UIIL regulations.
- A schedule of activities and events will be provided to students and parents. Updated schedules will be provided as needed.
- Regularly scheduled sectionals, rehearsals, and concerts are curricular and have no academic eligibility requirements, provided they are on campus and do not charge admission.
- The Head Director, or someone designed by the Head Director, will supervise all required practices, rehearsals, and/or performances that are school-sponsored.
- In addition to local performances, special performance ensembles may make numerous other appearances during the year.
- Performance courses in Band, Choir and Orchestra involve outside of school rehearsals and performances. Students who are members of varsity performing groups are expected to participate fully in all performance activities including approved travel.

Religious Music Guidelines

Background Information

- During the 1999-2000 school year a Religious Practices Committee, comprised of parents, community members, clergy, teachers, administrators and students, reviewed current RISD Guidelines for Religious Practices. Their recommendations were accepted and approved by the Board of Trustees in June, 2000.
- One of the components reviewed by the committee was religious music in public schools. The RISD guidelines concerning religious music in school, as stated below, were approved by the Board of Trustees and are in compliance with current law.

- District bands, choirs and orchestras, as part of a secular program of instruction, may perform religious music. District personnel must make every effort to assure that such music reflects a diversity of religious beliefs.

Required Expenses and Fees

- All high school music organizations levy fees to cover expenses of uniform upkeep, additional equipment, school-owned instrument rental fees, repairs, supplies and other program operation expenses not covered in the regular music budget. Program fees will not exceed \$750 per student and are managed through the local booster club, a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization.
- Travel fees are separate from program fees and are assessed according to the requirements of approved travel.
- All monies raised during fundraising activities belong to the organization's general fund from which student scholarships may be dispersed. There are no refunds granted from fundraising monies.
- If a high school student withdraws from an organization or fails academically and is unable to participate in the organization, any money earned through fundraisers or granted through scholarships will remain in the organization's general fund. Any money over and above the costs of the "operating fee" and trip costs will remain in the organization's general fund.
- All fundraising activities must be approved by the Head Director, the Area Booster Club, and the school principal.
- All funds raised must be deposited with and accounted for through each Area Booster Club.
- Junior High fundraising activities are to be group efforts, which go into a group account to support group activities. Students fundraise for activities that support their programs, for additional equipment, for the ability to assist students who have financial problems, etc. An integral part of fundraising is the spirit and unity that comes as a result of the group effort.
 - An RISD instrument usage fee, a school uniform fee or an individual competition entry fee may be charged.
 - No individual student fundraising accounts will be maintained.
 - No fundraising participation is expected from 6th grade band and orchestra students.
- Instrument purchase/rental: Individual instruments are the responsibility of the student/parent, and may be purchased or rented. A limited number of district-owned instruments may be available for an annual usage fee.
- Financial assistance is available for students who need help meeting required maintenance fees and other expenses related to this activity. Assistance, based on the organization's needs and, on the commitment, and interest of the individual student, may be obtained through fundraising or other resources (local booster club, campus funds, etc.). Consult the Head Director for more information.

Transportation

- All transportation arrangements must be through District approved vendors.
- The Head Band, Choir and Orchestra Director and Principal will determine mode of transportation to and from all performances.

Travel

- Out of district trips are not mandatory for any member and will not affect their status or grade in any way. However, students in the varsity music ensembles do have a travel expectation.
- Since participation in our music program is a team effort, any student not participating in a spring trip should advise the director well in advance of the trip (a minimum of eight weeks is recommended). The director can then initiate alternative arrangements for missing students.
- When traveling, each student must meet all local and state eligibility requirements to participate in the competition.
- Students must be able to satisfactorily perform the material assigned for the performance.
- Students must attend scheduled rehearsals.
- Students must fulfill their financial obligation.
- Junior High music groups may only travel overnight by invitation of the Texas Music Educators Association. Any exception to this will be with the approval of the Executive Director of Fine Arts, principal and Superintendent.

Uniforms

- The District provides uniforms for junior high and high school music groups and these are mandatory for participation in Band, Choir and Orchestra performances.
- The individual student must provide uniform accessories such as shoes, socks, gloves, etc. as needed.
- Students are responsible for maintenance/cleaning fees.
- Each student is responsible for repair or replacement of any damaged or unreturned uniform or accessory.

Vocal Ensemble

- To participate in vocal ensemble (pop choir), a student must have concurrent membership in the school choir program. Exceptions may be made only for instrumentalists with the approval of the Head Choir Director, the Executive Director of Fine Arts and the building Principal.