

Curriculum Development
In the Fairfield Public Schools

FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT

**VOCAL ENSEMBLES:
CONCERT CHOIR, WOMEN'S
CHOIR, AND CHAMBER SINGERS**

Board of Education Approved 04/24/2007

Vocal Ensembles: Concert Choir, Women's Choir, and Chamber Singers

Statement of Purpose

Music is inherent in the very nature of man and therefore must be an integral part of a child's education. We believe that music students in Fairfield's high schools will develop an appreciation of music and be able to intelligently express their opinions, as well as become educated consumers of music. All of our students should have opportunities to increase their musical skill levels including creating, performing, and responding. The study of music sets a foundation for lifelong participation in and appreciation of music, and reinforces skills needed for many of life's responsibilities.

Through daily ensemble rehearsal students will actively participate in analyzing and listening to a wide variety of music. Throughout the year students will perform in formal and informal settings demonstrating their increased abilities and advancing vocal techniques. Improvisation and composition will provide students an opportunity to create and express their own musical ideas. The skills acquired in vocal ensembles go beyond that of singing. They develop life skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork, leadership and self-discipline.

Audience

9th - 12th Grade Chorus students

Prerequisite

Concert Choir: Students must demonstrate a minimum of **Skill Level II** as identified on page 9.

Women's Choir: Students must demonstrate a minimum **Skill Level III** as identified on page 10.

Chamber Singers: Students must demonstrate a minimum **Skill Level IV** as identified on page 11 and audition.

Design and Description

2 Credits

All vocal ensembles meet once daily with the exception on the 3 day per week women's choir at Warde. Music of various periods and styles will be studied and performed including compositions using texts in foreign languages. Good vocal technique and ensemble skills are emphasized. Participation in all scheduled rehearsals and performances is required. Students are expected to supplement group rehearsals with daily individual practice. Adherence to the code of ethics and performance dress codes is required. Enrollment in voice class is also recommended.

Vocal ensembles at the high school are structured around the following three items that guide instruction.

- I. All students in the Fairfield choral program progress through *Skill Levels*. These skill levels are a continuation for the middle school choral program. Most students will enter high school having successfully completed Skill Level III objectives.
- II. Students in the Fairfield choral program progress through a *Repertoire Cycle*. This is a four-year cycle where students gain knowledge related specifically to the Repertoire they study and/or perform. Over four years students will study each of the units regardless of specific ensemble.
- III. Students in the Fairfield choral program will progress through a four-year series of *Tasks for Chorus* designed to meet state standards for 9-12 music.

Course Goals

- After four years of high school chorus, students will successfully complete *Skill level V* objectives.
- After four years of high school chorus, students will successfully complete all repertoire cycle topics.
- After four years of high school chorus, students will complete the eight *Tasks for Chorus*. These tasks include performing, commenting on and evaluating their own musical performances, as well as other student's performances, using appropriate musical terminology.

Summary objectives apply to students who have completed four years of high school chorus and are exiting 12th grade. They are addressed within the cumulative four years of the chorus repertoire cycle and skill levels III, IV, and V. The summary tasks and assessments found in the Assessment Document refer to these objectives by number.

Summary Objectives

Students will be able to:

- sing in tune, using solfege syllables, their voice part on a musical excerpt consistent with their ensemble as identified in Fairfield Skill Levels.
- sing in a small group accurately and expressively, with appropriate tone production, repertoire consistent with the ensemble as identified in Fairfield Skill Levels.
- sight-read in a group appropriate choral excerpts* with proper tone production, technical accuracy, and expression.
 - *Concert Choir: Fairfield Skill Level II
 - *Women's Choir: Fairfield Skill Level III
 - *Chamber Singers: Fairfield Skill Level IV
- listen to, analyze, and describe both live and recorded performances, and write critical analyses using correct music terminology.
- listen to, analyze, and describe their own performances, and use guiding questions to write a reflection, including a description of the interrelationship between music, history, cultures and other academic and artistic disciplines.

Music Standards

Vocal

Students will sing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of songs.

Students will sing with expression and technical accuracy a large and varied repertoire of vocal literature with a level of difficulty of 4, on a scale of 1 to 6, including some songs performed from memory.

Students will sing ensemble music for up to four parts, with and without accompaniment.

Students will demonstrate well-developed ensemble skills

Improvisation

Students will improvise melodies, variations and accompaniments.

Students will improvise stylistically appropriate harmonizing parts.

Students will improvise rhythmic and melodic variations on given pentatonic melodies and melodies in major and minor keys.

Students will improvise original melodies over given chord progressions, each in a consistent style, meter and tonality.

Composition

Students will compose and arrange music.

Students will compose music in several distinct styles, demonstrating creativity in using the elements of music for expressive effect.

Students will arrange pieces for voices or instruments other than those for which the pieces were written in ways that preserve or enhance the expressive effect of the music.

Students will compose and arrange music for voices and various acoustic and electronic instruments, demonstrating knowledge of the ranges and traditional usage of the sound sources.

Notation

Students will read and notate music.

Students will demonstrate the ability to read an instrumental or vocal score of up to four staves by describing how the elements of music are used.

Students will sight-read, accurately and expressively, music with a level of difficulty of 3, on a scale of 1 to 6.

Analysis

Students will listen to, describe and analyze music.

Students will analyze aural examples of a varied repertoire of music, representing diverse genres and cultures, by describing the uses of elements of music and expressive devices.

Students will demonstrate extensive knowledge of the technical vocabulary of music.

Students will identify and explain compositional devices and techniques used to provide unity and variety and tension and release in a musical work and give examples of other works that make similar uses of these devices and techniques.

Evaluation

Students will evaluate music and music performances.

Students will evolve specific criteria for making informed, critical evaluations of the quality and effectiveness of performances, compositions, arrangements and improvisations and apply the criteria in their personal participation in music.

Students will evaluate a performance, composition, arrangement, or improvisation by comparing it to similar or exemplary models.

Connections

Students will make connections between music, other disciplines and daily life.

Students will explain how elements, artistic processes and organizational principles are used in similar and distinctive ways in the various arts and cite examples.

Students will compare characteristics of two or more arts within a particular historical period or style and cite examples from various cultures.

Students will explain ways in which the principles and subject matter of various disciplines outside the arts are interrelated with those of music.

Students will apply music knowledge and skills to solve problems relevant to a variety of careers.

History And Cultures

Students will understand music in relation to history and culture.

Students will classify by genre or style and by historical period or culture unfamiliar but representative aural examples of music and explain the reasoning behind their classifications.

Students will identify sources of American music genres, trace the evolution of those genres, and cite well-known musicians associated with them.

Students will identify various roles that musicians perform, cite representative individuals who have functioned in each role, and describe their activities and performances.

Information and Technology Standards (to be added)

Essential Questions

- What is the role and importance of music in our lives?
- How is expression and communication created through performing music?
- How does the music support the meaning of the text?

Guiding Questions

Guiding questions are applicable to every genre, for each performance strand, in all years of the repertoire cycle.

- Where on the timeline below does the music we studied fall?

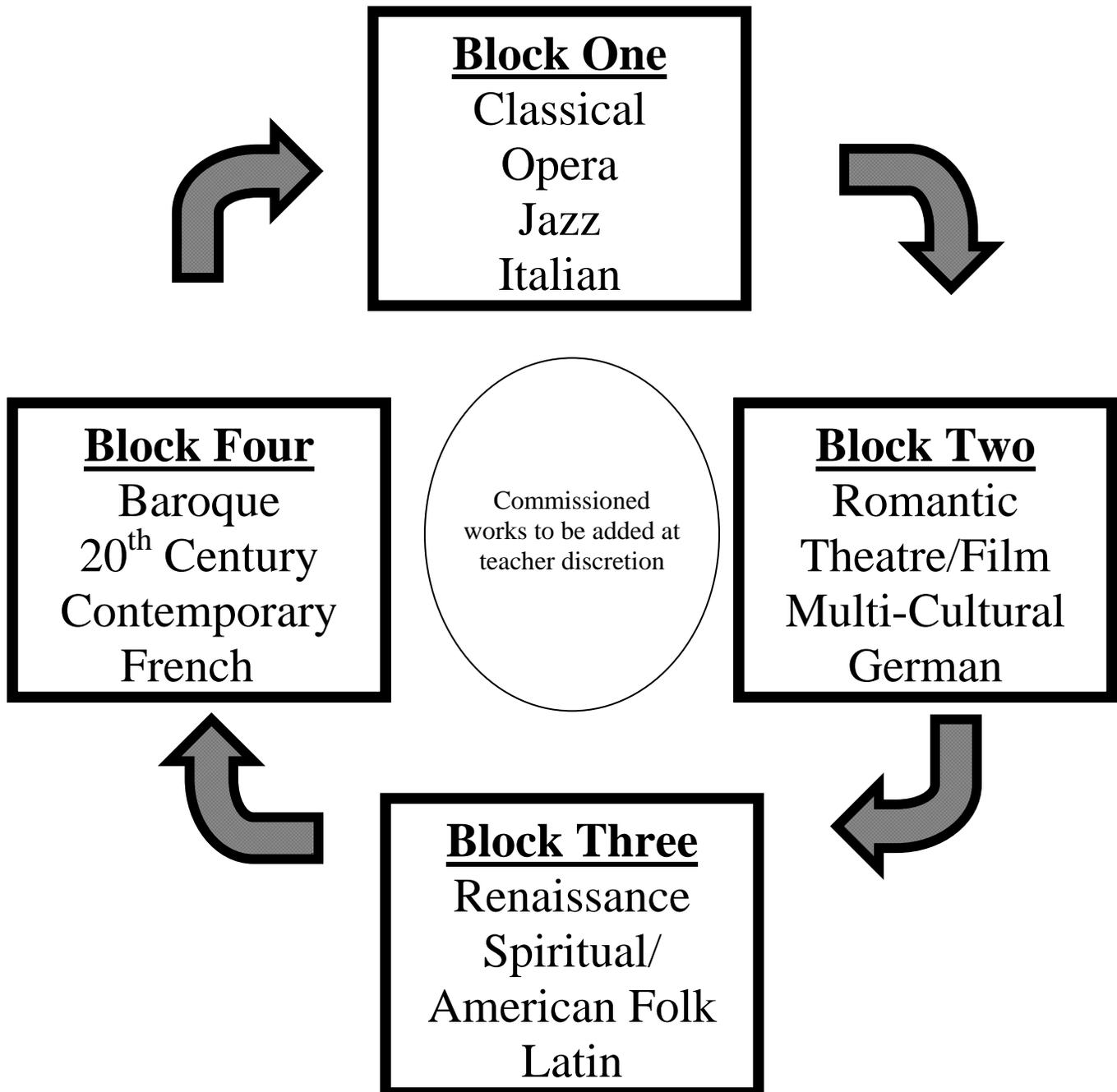
Ancient	Medieval	Renaissance	Baroque	Classical	Romantic	Impressionistic	20 th Century	Contemporary
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- Who is a significant composer from the specified style or time period?
- What is a famous composition or masterwork from this time period or genre?
- What innovation(s) in music were attributed to music of this time period or style?
- What cultural & historical influences are commonly evident in the written/performed music of this time period or genre?
- What is one musical composition you studied/performed from the specified period or style and why is it characteristic of this time period or style?

Fairfield Music Department Curriculum

High School Chorus Repertoire Cycle

All choruses will cycle through four blocks of study, focusing on one block each year regardless of an individual student's grade or the ensemble they in which they are enrolled. Subsequently, a student who takes high school chorus for four consecutive years will receive instruction in each of the four repertoire areas described below.



Repertoire Cycle

Core Topics

Opera

- Bel Canto singing style and technique
- Characteristics of an opera
- Role of the Aria in an opera

Jazz

- Scat singing
- Swing rhythm

Classical

- Compositional technique of the recapitulation
- Italian vowel and consonant sounds for singers

Romantic

- Vocal technique of vibrato
- German vowel and consonant sounds for singers

Theatre-Film

- Vocal technique of “belt-singing”
- Characteristics of a musical
- Vocal projection

Multi-Cultural

- Importance of research in authentic performance practice

Renaissance

- Vocal technique of “straight-tone singing”
- Compositional usage and performance practice of polyphony
- Identification of half and whole cadences
- Latin vowel and consonant sounds for singers

Spiritual-American Folk

- Historical importance of “oral-tradition”
- Significance of lyrics in a vocal work

Latin

- Vowel/consonant sounds unique to Latin pronunciation

Baroque

- Vocal technique of the melisma
- Compositional technique of a canon

20th Century

- Characteristics of an atonal melody
- Role of dissonance and consonance in music
- Compositional technique of mixed meter

Contemporary

- Use of vocal sound effects
- French vowel and consonant sounds for singers

High School Chorus Skill Level Objectives

These skill levels are a continuation of the Middle School Choral program. Most students will enter high school having successfully completed skill Level III objectives.

Skill Level II

(Coincides with the Middle School document)

Defines objectives for students with limited choral experience

Performance Objectives

The student will sing a variety of song literature demonstrating correct vocal technique for respiration, phonation, resonant tone production, diction, and expression in unison and two-part harmony (soprano, alto).

1. POSTURE

Students will:

- demonstrate correct singing posture while standing:
 - feet shoulder-width apart
 - knees slightly bent, relaxed
 - shoulders relaxed
 - rib-cage/chest high
 - head centered on shoulders
 - arms down at sides
- demonstrate correct singing posture while sitting:
 - on the edge of the chair (unless in choral posture chairs)*
 - both feet flat on the floor
 - “sit tall”
 - feet shoulder-width apart
 - knees lightly bent, relaxed
 - shoulders relaxed
 - rib-cage/chest high
 - head centered on shoulders
 - hands on lap or holding music

2. RESPIRATION/BREATHING

Students will:

- demonstrate a natural breathing motion.
- demonstrate increased breath management through rib-cage control slow emission of the air column upon exhalation.
- demonstrate the application of breath management to warm-up.
- demonstrate diaphragmatic breathing.

3. TONE PRODUCTION/PHONATION and RESONATION

Students will:

- sing with a free, supported and open sound.
- demonstrate the application of breath support and vocal production techniques to warm-up.

- sing with increased resonance and support throughout the vocal range (open throat, dropped jaw, forward placement).
- sing accurate pitch and resonant tone quality in head voice above c 5, chest voice below c 4 and a balance of both voices between c 4 and c 5.
- vocalize a melismatic passage with accurate pitch and focused sound.
- sing a variety of song literature in the range from g 4 to g 5 (tessitura of d 4 to d 5) with accurate pitch, resonant tone quality.

4. DICTION

Students will:

- develop the skill of accurate and intelligible singing diction through exercises.
- relate respiration, phonation and resonant tone production to word pronunciation.
- demonstrate:
 - articulators: jaw, tongue, teeth, lips, soft/hard palate
 - pure vowel sounds: ah, ay, ee, oh, oo
 - consonants:
 - voiced: b, d, g, j, v, z, th, zh
 - tuned: m, n, l, r.
 - voiceless: p, t, k, ch, f, s, th, sh
 - aspirates: h, wh

5. EXPRESSION

Students will:

- sing expressively, with correct posture, correct breathing, resonant tone production and clear diction.
- sing two to four measure phrases in one breath.
- demonstrate a range of vocal colors based on varied genres and styles.
- demonstrate a range of dynamics.

Skill Level III

(Coincides with the Middle School document)

Defines objectives most students will complete by the end of grade 8

Performance Objectives

The student will sing a variety of song literature demonstrating correct vocal technique for respiration, phonation, resonant tone production, clear diction and expression in unison and two-part harmony (soprano, alto or octaves) and three-part harmony (soprano I, soprano II, alto; or soprano, alto, baritone). All points stated in Level Two should be reinforced in Level Three.

1. POSTURE

Students will:

- demonstrate mastery of all techniques stated in Level Two.

2. RESPIRATION/BREATHING

Students will:

- demonstrate diaphragmatic breathing.
- sustain the voice on single pitches (d 4 to a 4) with proper humming production for a slow count of four.
- sing accurately a sustained descending five note pattern and other complete song phrases on one breath.
- sing accurately and with agility, song motives that contain examples of one to four pitches per syllable.

3. TONE PRODUCTION/PHONATION and RESONATION

Students will:

- sing a descending pattern with pure head voice quality and maintain a light, staccato production.
- sing accurately and solfege various tonal patterns within a suitable range.
- sing sustained pitches and short motivic patterns that center on the three vocal registers: middle (g 4), low (g 4), and high (c 5).
- sing and demonstrate correct mouth and jaw position (vertical opening and relaxed).
- sing accurately with agility.

4. DICTION

Students will:

- demonstrate mastery of all techniques stated in Level Two.

5. EXPRESSION

Students will:

- demonstrate mastery of all techniques stated in Level Two.
- identify the six different dynamic levels (*pianissimo, piano, mezzo piano, mezzo forte, forte, and fortissimo*) and vary the intensity of vocal production.
- identify the six different tempo markings (*Largo, Adagio, Andante, Moderato, Allegro, and Presto*) and vary the tempo of vocal production.

Skill Level IV

Defines objectives most students will complete after two years of high school chorus

Performance Objectives

The student will sing a variety of song literature demonstrating correct vocal technique for respiration, phonation, resonant tone production, clear diction and expression in unison, two-part harmony (soprano, alto or octaves), three-part harmony (soprano I, soprano II, alto; or soprano, alto, baritone), and four-part harmony. All points stated in Levels Two and Three should be reinforced.

1. POSTURE

Students will:

- demonstrate mastery of all techniques stated in Level Two.

2. RESPIRATION and BREATHING

Students will:

- demonstrate the natural deep breathing motion for singing.
- manage the breath for singing by diaphragmatic breathing.
- demonstrate proper production of the speaking voices, breath support and voice projection.
- singing phrases on one breath, extended phrases with staggered breathing and catch breaths between phrases.

3. TONE PRODUCTION, PHONATION and RESONATION

Students will:

- demonstrate production of spoken sound in three vocal registers: upper, lower and middle.
- demonstrate proper production of the speaking voice with breath support and voice placement.
- demonstrate proper production of the speaking voice with breath support and projection.
- sustain the voice on single pitches with proper humming production for a slow count of four.
- correctly form, solfege and sing the primary vowels with a relaxed jaw on a series of sustained pitches.
- sing sustained pitches and short ascending and descending motivic patterns throughout the vocal range with proper vocal quality in each of the registers.
- demonstrate correct mouth (vertical opening), jaw (relaxed), and throat (open) positions while singing.
- sing accurately and with agility melodic lines that contain examples of two to four pitches per syllable.
- sing accurately and with the agility arpeggios and exercises with expanding range.
- sing a variety of song literature with accurate pitch and proper quality for the three vocal registers.

4. DICTION

Students will:

- demonstrate flexibility of the vocal articulators for intelligible word pronunciation of repeated consonants, final consonants, and hissing sibilants.
- demonstrate correct production of voiceless plosives (p, t, k, ch), voiced plosives (b, d, g, j) and voiceless sibilants (f, s, sh, th) as group drills.

5. EXPRESSIONS

Students will:

- perform the six basic dynamic levels (*pianissimo*, *piano*, *mezzo piano*, *mezzo forte*, *forte*, and *fortissimo*) and vary the intensity of vocal production for both speaking and singing.

- perform the six basic tempo markings (*largo, adagio, andante, and moderato, allegro, presto*) and vary the tempo of vocal production for speaking and singing.

Skill Level V

Defines objectives most students will complete after four years of high school chorus

Performance Objectives

The students will sing a variety of song literature demonstrating correct vocal technique for respiration, phonation, resonant tone production, clear diction, and expression in unison, two, three and four-part harmony (any voice combination). All points stated in Levels Two, Three and Four should be reinforced.

1. POSTURE

Students will:

- demonstrate mastery of all techniques stated in Level Two.

2. RESPIRATION and BREATHING

Students will:

- demonstrate mastery of all techniques in Level Four.
- sing long phrases of four to eight measures in one breath (*My Country Tis' of Thee*, six measures, slow tempo mm. 72, one breath).

3. TONE PRODUCTION, PHONATION and RESONATION

Students will:

- demonstrate mastery of all techniques stated in Level Four.
- sing accurately and with agility melodic lines that contain examples of four to eight pitches per syllable.
- sing accurately and with agility arpeggios and exercises with expanding range (Soprano/Alto A3-G5, and Tenor/Bass A2-E4).
- sing with expanded dynamic range and increased projection.

4. DICTION

Students will:

- demonstrate mastery of all techniques in Level Four.
- demonstrate correct text pronunciation of repertoire including those studied in foreign languages.

5. EXPRESSION

Students will:

- demonstrate mastery of all techniques in Level Four
- perform the two basic changing tempo markings (*ritardando, accelerando*).
- perform three basic articulation markings (*staccato, legato, accents*).
- perform basic breath markings (breath, no breath).
- follow a conducting gesture associated with fermatas and grand pause (*scissors*).

6. INDEPENDENCE

Students will:

- demonstrate the ability to sing their voice part alone.
- demonstrate the ability to sing their voice part in a small ensemble not exceeding 12 members.

Skill Level VI

Defines objectives completed by a small number of students after four years of high school chorus

Performance Objectives

The students will sing a variety of song literature demonstrating correct vocal technique for respiration, phonation, resonant tone production, clear diction, and expression in four-part harmony including *divisi* (any voice combination). All points stated in Levels Two thru Five should be reinforced.

1. POSTURE:

Students will:

- demonstrate mastery of all techniques stated in Level Two.
- demonstrate appropriate use of motion or choreography as required by repertoire.

2. RESPIRATION and BREATHING:

Students will:

- demonstrate mastery of all techniques in Level Five.

3. TONE PRODUCTION, PHONATION AND RESONATION:

Students will:

- demonstrate mastery of all techniques stated in Level Five.
- demonstrate ability to sing with various tone qualities (straight tone, vibrato, bright and dark).
- sing accurately and with agility melodic lines that contain examples of eight or more pitches per syllable.
- sing accurately and with agility arpeggios and exercises with expanding range (Soprano/Alto G3-C5, and Tenor/Bass G2-G4).

4. DICTION

Students will:

- demonstrate mastery of all techniques in Level V.

5. EXPRESSION

Students will:

- demonstrate mastery of all techniques in Level Five.
- perform subtle difference between advanced tempos markings found in repertoire (*ritardando* vs. *rallentando*, *accelerando* vs. *poco accelerando*).

- perform advanced articulation markings (*tenuto, marcato, etc.*).
- perform advanced breath markings (lüftpause) and specified duration-breaths (eighth note, quarter note length breath).

6. INDEPENDENCE

Students will:

- demonstrate mastery of all techniques in Level V.
- demonstrate the ability to sing a work for solo voice or a solo in a song.
- demonstrate the ability to sing their voice part in a small ensemble equivalent to a quartet or octet (one voice per part).

Summary Tasks for Choral Curricular Objectives

Summary Objective 1

Students will be able to:

- sing in tune, using solfege syllables, their voice part on a musical excerpt consistent with their ensemble as identified in Fairfield Skill Levels.

Music Standards

Vocal

Students will sing alone and with others, a varied repertoire of songs.

Students will sing ensemble music for up to four parts, with and without accompaniment.

Task

Individual Singing

Summary Objective 2

Students will be able to:

- sing in a small group accurately and expressively, with appropriate tone production, repertoire consistent with the ensemble as identified in Fairfield Skill Levels.

Music Standards

Vocal

Students will sing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of songs

Students will sing with expression and technical accuracy a large and varied repertoire of vocal literature with a level of difficulty of 4, on a scale of 1-6, including some songs performed from memory.

Students will sing ensemble music for up to four parts, with and without accompaniment.

Students will demonstrate well-developed ensemble skills.

Notation

Students will read and notate music

Students will demonstrate the ability to read an instrumental or vocal score up to four staves by describing how the elements of music are used.

Tasks

- Group Singing #1
- Group Singing #2

Summary Objective 3

Students will be able to:

- sight-read in a group appropriate choral excerpts* with proper tone production, technical accuracy, and expression.
 - *Concert Choir: Fairfield Skill Level II
 - *Women's Choir: Fairfield Skill Level III
 - *Chamber Singers: Fairfield Skill Level IV

Music Standards

Notation

Students will read and notate music

Students will demonstrate the ability to read an instrumental or vocal score of up to four staves by describing how the elements of music are used.

Students will sight-read, accurately and expressively, music with a level of difficulty of 3, on a scale of 1 to 6.

Task

- Sight-reading

Summary Objective 4

Students will be able to:

- listen to, analyze, and describe both live and recorded performances, and write critical analyses using correct music terminology.

Music Standards

Analysis

Students will listen to, describe, and analyze music

Students will demonstrate extensive knowledge of the technical vocabulary of music.

Evaluation

Students will evaluate music and music performances

Students will evolve specific criteria for making informed, critical evaluations of the quality and effectiveness of performances, compositions, arrangements and improvisations and apply the criteria in their personal participation in music.

Task

- Listening and analyses

Summary Objective 5

Students will:

- listen to, analyze, and describe their own performances, and use guiding questions to write a reflection, including a description of the interrelationship between music, history, cultures and other academic and artistic disciplines.

Music Standards

Analysis

Students will listen to, describe, and analyze music

Students will analyze aural examples of a varied repertoire of music, representing diverse genres and cultures, by describing the uses of elements of music and expressive devices.

Students will demonstrate extensive knowledge of the technical vocabulary of music.

Evaluation

Students will evaluate music and music performances

Students will evolve specific criteria for making informed, critical evaluations of the quality and effectiveness of performances, compositions, arrangements and improvisations and apply the criteria in their personal participation in music.

Students will evaluate a performance, composition, arrangement, or improvisation by comparing it to similar or exemplary models.

Connections

Students will make connections between music, other disciplines and daily life

Students will compare characteristics of two or more arts within a particular period or style and cite examples from various cultures.

Students will explain ways in which the principles and subject matter of various disciplines outside the arts are interrelated with those of music.

History And Cultures

Students will understand music in relation to history and culture.

Students will classify by genre or style and by historical period or culture unfamiliar but representative aural examples of music and explain the reasoning behind their classifications.

Task

- Writing Assessment -*As described in your summary objective stated earlier in the document.*