

# PLD DUNBAR CHOIR

## Handbook

2023-2024

For STUDENTS and PARENTS

Mrs. Tiffany Marsh

Director of Choirs

[tiffany.marsh@fayette.kyschools.us](mailto:tiffany.marsh@fayette.kyschools.us)

Paul Laurence Dunbar High School

1600 Man O' War Drive

Lexington, KY 40513

859-279-2061

[www.pldchoir.org](http://www.pldchoir.org)

@pldchoir

# PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR CHORAL PROGRAM

## Introduction

On behalf of our administration and myself, I gladly welcome you to the Paul Laurence Dunbar High School Choral Music Program. You are now a very important member of a group that will emphasize high level performance and musical excellence, and I sincerely hope you will enjoy being a part of this organization.

I believe that our choir program offers many things to the individual student: an opportunity to demonstrate and build his/her musical ability; an opportunity to develop leadership skills; an opportunity to develop a sense of responsibility; an opportunity to for community building and meet/make new friends; an opportunity to participate in music field trips; an opportunity to perform as a representative of PLD High School; and an opportunity to discover the unique thrill of performance.

With this year being different, with the unknown of instruction method, I can say that we will continue to provide a quality musical experience. We will still sing; we will still work on vocal development and musicianship skills. We will explore special vocal/choral topics. We will attend virtual masterclasses with local singers and musicians. And we will continue to build a music community for all students.

As members of the PLD Choral Program, we can be as outstanding as we want to be; it all depends on you. High level performing music groups are a result of many hours of hard work as well as a strong dedication and commitment from each member. If we work well together and have high expectations for the group, as well for ourselves, we will have a successful year.

This handbook is provided to make your orientation to the PLD Choral Music Program a quick and easy task. I encourage you and your parents/guardians to read this handbook so that you may better understand our policies, guidelines, and your obligations. A PLD High School choir member should be cooperative, strive for the highest possible scholastic record, develop a positive attitude toward the choir, school, and community, and in general, distinguish him/herself by always doing the right thing at the right time.

I am looking forward to working with each one of you this year. Whether you are new to the program or a seasoned member we will all face many new challenges, but with the right attitude we can make it a fantastic year. Your talent and group effort can make this year at PLD very exciting, fun-filled, and musically rewarding for all of us.

Sincerely,



Tiffany Marsh, choral director

# Paul Laurence Dunbar Choral Program Objectives

Choir is designed as a study in ensemble singing, vocal production, and music fundamentals. Students will have many opportunities to sing for personal enjoyment and perform a variety of choral literature.

## Goals:

To develop pride in performance.

To develop correct vocal techniques.

To develop fundamental music skills in notation and sight singing.

To recognize musical elements and demonstrate expressive qualities in varying styles of choral music.

To contribute to the blend, balance, and quality of the ensemble by developing the ability to sing a part securely and independently.

To develop confidence in performing by practicing performance etiquette and decorum.

To develop rehearsal skills which allow us to rehearse and perform at the highest level.

To have opportunities for the enjoyment of music through active participation.

To develop self-discipline by functioning as a responsible member of the organization.

To experience successful achievement and pleasure through group involvement.

To develop personal character traits of leadership, poise, and dependability as well as provide an avenue for self-expression.

To develop a community with other choral members.

To develop a desire to continue musical experiences.

## How Parents Can Help

Encourage student engagement and participation.

Show an interest in the music study of your son/daughter, attend concerts and events.

Keep a record of your son/daughter's various music activities.

Notify Mrs. Marsh if your son/daughter is to be absent or tardy at rehearsals or performances.

Teach your student to be punctual at rehearsals and performances.

Discuss with the director anything that will help her better understand your student.

Become a choral parent volunteer or booster club member. We strongly urge parents to get involved with this fine organization to provide many services to each singer in the choral program.

We are all here because we have something in common; we enjoy singing. How we sound as a group has a lot to do with how we work together. If you will follow the class procedures listed below every day of the year, the result will be a choral group that truly makes beautiful music. The success of our group rests upon your individual self-discipline. Singing in harmony can only be accomplished by working in harmony.

# Classroom Conduct and Operating Procedures

Upon entering the choir room for rehearsal, you are to **pick up your folder and be seated quietly in your assigned seat.**

Students are expected to have a **pencil every day.** Marks in the music are to be made **in pencil only.**

**Gum, candy, food, and drink are not permitted in the choir room.** When we have gum, candy, or food in our mouths, our tonal production and diction are affected. Daily participation points will be deducted as well as other discipline actions may be taken. The only exception to this rule is bottled water.

Students are expected to demonstrate good posture for singing during rehearsal.

**Talking during a rehearsal and cell phones will not be tolerated.** Rehearse in a professional manner and be courteous to your fellow students. (See PLD Cell Phone Policy below)

Sometimes in the course of rehearsal, only one section will be singing. The members of the sections not singing at the time should be **carefully following the musical part that is being rehearsed** so that the total knowledge of the score is achieved.

Every member of the choir is expected to **listen closely for each instruction** given by the director, so that the instruction can be done correctly by every member of the group the first time.

Each student is responsible for **returning his/her folder to its appropriate location** following rehearsal.

**Students are expected to rehearse music outside of class.** For this reason, **music folders may be checked out overnight;** however, it is imperative that the music folder returns to the room the following rehearsal. Failure to have music in rehearsal will result in a loss of rehearsal points.

Please exhibit **common courtesy** toward others at all times. Treat others as you would want them to treat you. We are a unit, a family and we work best when we work together.

Students are expected to **exhibit their best behavior and rehearsal skills** when a guest is in the classroom. This includes substitutes, student teachers, guest directors, Dunbar staff, and visiting students.

**Minimal restroom passes** will be given during choir, except in an emergency. Please take care of everything before you come to class.

# Guidelines for Success

## Cell Phone/Personal Electronic Devices SBDM Policy

During class, personal devices are to be used for instructional purposes only unless authorized by the teacher.

Headphones/earbuds MAY NOT be used during class unless authorized by a teacher.

The following will be enforced for a student using technology during class when it has not been approved by the teacher.

The teacher will inform the student of the infraction and tell the student to put away the device.

The teacher will inform the parent/guardian by phone or email and document the parent contact in the PLP.

The teacher will write a discipline referral for “failure to follow directions” and include in the description of the incident “personal electronic device refusal.”

Failure to put away the device when requested is considered “failure to follow staff instructions” and will result in a minimum of two days in SAFE.

Personal electronic devices MAY NOT be used to take pictures, videos, or audio recordings of anyone without consent.

The school shall not be responsible for any device that is damaged, lost, or stolen.

# SBG Grading

## Classwork/Homework

The purpose of classwork and homework is to practice using the skills and competencies we are learning in class. It is an essential part of learning.

All students are expected to participate in class activities and to do their best on practice, formative, and summative tasks for each class in order to receive accurate and timely feedback on their learning progress.

Practice is meant to develop skills; therefore, it will not factor into the final grade.

## Formative Assessments

Formative assessments are short checks of learning given during the learning process. The purpose of formative assessment is to measure students’ progress as they learn. *All students are expected to complete all formative assessments to the best of their ability in order to monitor their progress toward mastery of course standards.*

All units will be designed with formative assessments focused on learning targets that build toward the summative assessment.

Formative assessment is meant for feedback; therefore, it will not factor into the final grade.

## Intervention and Enrichment During Learning

The goal is to help all students reach or exceed mastery for the standards in this class.

Formative assessment results will be used routinely to develop individual, small group, and whole-class interventions and extensions during class.

Intervention and enrichment activities will be during class prior to the summative assessment during the last 30 minutes of class or on specified days.

## Summative Assessments/Projects

Summative assessments measure achievement on standards at the end of learning.

Summative assessments will take the form of major quizzes, unit tests, papers, projects, presentations, performances, part checks, etc.

Students who have not produced adequate evidence of their learning during a unit may not be eligible to take the initial summative assessment, which will be recorded as a missing grade in the gradebook. They will continue to practice skills until reassessment(s). If this procedure is implemented it will be documented in the student's PLP and gradebook.

Summative assessments will be scored using the 5-point rubric below:

Performance	Pts	General Description
Advanced Mastery	5	The student demonstrates evidence of mastery at a higher level of rigor or complexity than the standard states.
Mastery of Standard	4	The student demonstrates evidence of mastery at the level of rigor that is consistent with the language of the standard.
Approaching Mastery	3	The student demonstrates evidence of mastery of most of the learning goals associated with the standard, but does not demonstrate mastery on the full grade-level standard.
Developing Skills	2	The student demonstrates evidence of minimal competency on the standard.
Not Yet	0.1	The student demonstrates little or no evidence of mastery of the learning goals associated with the standard (typically by failing to demonstrate the knowledge, processes, skills, and/or understandings stated in the standard).
Missing	M	The student does not submit the required work.

Scoring guidelines, models, and/or rubrics with clear descriptions of the work at the Mastery of Standard and Advanced Mastery levels for the standards/ learning goals being assessed will be provided.

*Minimal Competency Requirement: In order to receive a passing grade, students must demonstrate minimal competency for the course by scoring at least a 2 on 50% of the standards assessed summatively during the semester. Students failing to meet this requirement will receive a failing grade on their report card and on the transcript unless/until the student attains minimal competency.*

## Requesting Reassessment on a Standard

All students will have at least one opportunity to improve their learning results on a summative assessment of a standard (excluding final exams/ final projects) after the following have occurred:

Students must complete all required unit practice satisfactorily before requesting a reassessment on a standard within a teacher-designated deadline.

For standards that are repeated within the same semester, standards may be embedded in an assessment later rather than offering a stand-alone re-take.

To request reassessment, students should speak with Mrs. Marsh before the end of the 6-week grading period.

## Final Exam

Final exams/projects may be reported as a cumulative score.

Retakes are not available for final exams or projects.

### Gradebook Category Weights

Practice & Formative*	Summative	Final Exam
15%	70%	15%

*\*The purpose of formative assessment is to measure student progress as he/she learns. It is meant for feedback; therefore, it should not factor into the final grade.*

### Course Grading Scale

Final Course Average	Letter Grade
4.0-5.0	A
3.0-3.99	B
2.0-2.99	C
1.0-1.99	D
0-0.99	F

*Please note that the Infinite Campus gradebook category and course averages will display as a % between 0-5. The letter grade will match the ranges listed above.*

*Minimal Competency Requirement: In order to receive a passing grade, students must demonstrate minimal competency for the course by scoring at least a 2 on 50% of the standards assessed summatively during the semester. Students failing to meet this requirement will receive a failing grade on their report card and on the transcript unless/until the student attains minimal competency.*



### School Wide Expectations

Report to class on time. You must get a tardy note before coming to class if you are late. Tardies are counted cumulatively (all classes together). Students accumulating excessive tardies will face disciplinary action.

Hall passes are at the teacher's discretion and are intended for emergency use only. Hall passes must be visible and students should return to class quickly.

Follow all school rules.

# Attendance

## Daily Participation/Attendance

Attendance is crucial for every choir member. Due to the nature of the course, when a student is absent from school, he/she misses rehearsal and explanations that cannot be made up. In addition, the entire choir suffers because that student was not in school to learn his/her part along with the rest of the choir.

Students who are unable to sing 100% in a rehearsal **should write a brief note** for Mrs. Marsh and give it to her **at the start of class before rehearsal begins**. Students are still required to participate in rehearsal through music following and marking of score. A persisting lack of vocal participation will require a parental or doctor's note or a parent conference.

## Extra Rehearsals

Many times the difference between a superior and a mediocre musical performance is determined by the amount of rehearsal time spent in preparation. Extra rehearsals allow for many things: individual and small group work, combining ensembles, help from visiting clinicians, and more time for that "extra polishing." They are vital for any good performing organizations. Please consult your schedules for rehearsals that will take place outside of class time. **ALL EXTRA REHEARSALS ARE REQUIRED** and **will** be categorized as a **SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT** (i.e. Pre-Performance). You will always be notified of an extra rehearsal well enough in advance in order to make arrangements to attend. If students are late or have to leave early, they **must have completed the online absence request form IN ADVANCE** to Mrs. Marsh. Excuses will be accepted for missing extra rehearsals only if notification is received *prior* to the rehearsal date. Rehearsal absence forms are available online. The director will determine whether an absence is excused or unexcused. **If a student does not attend the rehearsal without approval, he/she will not be allowed to eligible to perform at the concert without completing a part check.**

## Performance Attendance

This is a performing organization. We work constantly to be prepared to perform. When performing, students receive a deeper appreciation of music and a greater feeling of unity from the organization and the people with whom they are involved. Every member of the choir plays a vital role in the success of the entire organization.

There is no other way as a director to duplicate a performance for the student who is absent. There is no other means to make-up the unique thrill of performing. Due to this, the following policies regarding performance attendance apply:

All performances on the schedule at the beginning of the semester, as well as those with at least four weeks notice, are **required** performances, marked with an \* on the schedule and categorized as a **SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT**. Should you have a conflict that cannot be resolved, notify Mrs. Marsh **at least two weeks ahead of time** verbally **and IN WRITING**. The further ahead problems are discovered, the easier they are to deal with. Parents should call the choral program at 859-279-2061 or e-mail, and leave a message explaining the situation.



Excused absences include personal illness, death in the family, or an emergency over which the student has no control. **Work is not an excused absence for a performance that was scheduled at least four weeks in advance.** It is a good idea to give a copy of the performance schedule to employers. Mrs. Marsh is willing to write a note to an employer if necessary.

If an absence is excused, it is the student's responsibility to get the make-up assignment from the choir table (also available on the choir website: [www.pldchoir.org/forms.html](http://www.pldchoir.org/forms.html)). If an absence is unexcused, the student will not be given the privilege of making up the points lost due to the absence. **In addition, students must be in attendance at school the day of the concert, or will not be eligible to perform.**

Grades for each performance will be based on the following:

- **Demonstrating performance skill (as reviewed in class)**
- **Demonstrating music knowledge (as reviewed in class)**
- **Demonstrating proper concert requirements (as reviewed in class)**
- **Demonstrating proper concert etiquette (as reviewed in class)**

### **Student Activity Conflicts**

Although we try our best to avoid scheduling performances at the same time as other school related events, occasionally conflicts do arise which cannot be remedied.

When a practice or rehearsal and an event (game, contest, concert) are scheduled simultaneously, the EVENT takes precedent.

When two events are scheduled simultaneously, a District competition event takes precedence over a regular event, a Regional event takes precedence over a District event, a State event takes precedence over a Regional event, and a National event takes precedence over a Regional event.

When two practices or rehearsals are scheduled simultaneously, the students may SELECT the event in which she/he will participate. **She/he should make the decision, whenever possible, at least seven (7) days in advance. He/she should advise the sponsors/teachers/coaches affected by the conflict immediately.** Under NO circumstance will the student be penalized for his/her decision; that is, class grades are not to be lowered or unreasonable make-up work required, the student will not be benched, nor will the student's ability to earn a letter be impaired because of the decision.

In case of a disagreement among the parties concerned, the matter should be referred to the administrator or administrators in charge for a solution.

# In-Person Performance Attire

Our choir has a reputation of looking very professional in performance. In order for us to look this way, we must all wear the same outfits. Formal concert attire is provided for rental to members of the Paul Laurence Dunbar High School Concert Choir, Women's Choir, and Beginning Chorus. These garments will be issued to students before the winter performance. They are to be used strictly for the purpose of choral performances (NO EXCEPTIONS). **Each family of a choral student is provided the opportunity to rent or purchase the attire used by the PLD choral program. Rental is \$30 which covers dry cleaning and attire maintenance. Purchase price will be provided prior to fitting.** If garments should need cleaning during the year it will be the responsibility of the individual student. All uniforms must be wrinkle-free and in top condition for **ALL** performances. Students not wearing appropriate attire may not be allowed to perform. Please read the section pertaining to your choir to determine your uniform requirements.

**\*Make checks payable to PLD Choir and bring to choir class prior to or during the attire fitting dates (see calendar).**

## Soprano/Alto

- Will be assigned a properly fitted concert attire with an option of black dress pants and black blouse or black dress.
- It is the student's responsibility to provide black dress shoes (small heels recommended) (no athletic shoes, flip flops or sandals). See Mrs. Marsh if needing assistance obtaining dress shoes.
- Small/minimal jewelry is allowed.

## Tenor/Bass

- Will be assigned a black tuxedo pants, black dress shirt, and black and red neckties.
- It is the student's responsibility to provide black socks and black dress shoes (no athletic shoes). See Mrs. Marsh if needing assistance obtaining dress shoes.

### **READ THIS CAREFULLY!!!**

An extreme amount of time, effort, and money has been given (by students, parents, and teachers) to assure that the PLD choirs are outfitted professionally. Fines for missing uniforms may be assessed depending on the cost of replacement. This would include loss of the bow tie or cummerbund or any part of the garment that is damaged by negligence.

## All Choirs

We will also have a casual uniform consisting of a t-shirt for less formal performances, travel, and to wear to school on performance days. You will receive more information in the coming weeks.

# Course Description and Goals - CONCERT CHOIR

## Course Description

The PLD Concert Choir serves as the intermediate mixed (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) vocal ensemble of the choral program. The Concert Choir is a performance-oriented class geared to expose students to a wide variety of choral literature, ranging from the various historical styles through rehearsal and performance. Students will be given the opportunity to learn proper vocal/choral techniques, breathing skills, sight reading skills, and basic musicianship (theory and history). Performances will take place throughout the school year and students will be given opportunities to participate individually, as well as in the choral ensemble. PLD Concert Choir is open to students by audition.

## Goals

- Improve vocal technique
- Improve sight singing skills, which leads to vocal independence
- Listening to and analyzing performances of choral music
- Learn music from various time periods
- Learn music of various cultures and languages
- Learn music of various styles
- Produce high-quality programs

## 1st Quarter

- Learn about instrument & establish/refine vocal technique
- Work on "ensemble" community building
- Begin sight singing process (rhythmic, melodic, solfege system through Sight Reading Factory)
- Begin at least one contest level piece
- Prepare music for Fall Concert, All-State auditions, and other fall events and festivals

## 2nd Quarter

- Explore vocal timbres as related to musical style
- Explore diversity in music
- Continue sight singing process (rhythmic, melodic, solfege system through Sight Reading Factory)
- Work on at least two contest level pieces
- Prepare music for Winter Concerts

## 3rd Quarter

- Concentrated study of music for District Choral Assessment
- Continue to refine ensemble skills
- Continue sight singing (increase harmonic activity and rhythmic complexity, solfege system)
- Begin music for Spring Concerts and other second semester performance events

## 4th Quarter

- Continue refining sight singing skills through literature study
- Preparation for PLD choral audition
- Identify time periods of music performed
- Refine music for Spring Concerts and Graduation

# Course Description and Goals - CHAMBER CHOIR

## Course Description

The PLD Chamber Choir serves as the advanced mixed (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) vocal ensemble of the choral program. The Chamber Choir is a performance-oriented class geared to expose students to a wide variety of advanced choral literature, ranging from the various historical styles through rehearsal and performance. Students will be given the opportunity to continue working good vocal/choral techniques, breathing skills, sight reading skills, and advance their musicianship (including theory and history). Performances will take place throughout the school year and students will be given opportunities to participate individually, as well as full ensemble. PLD Chamber Choir is open to students by audition.

## Goals

- Improve vocal technique
- Improve sight singing skills, which leads to vocal independence
- Listening to and analyzing performances of choral music
- Learn music from various time periods
- Learn music of various cultures and languages
- Learn music of various styles
- Produce high-quality programs

## 1st Quarter

- Learn about instrument & establish/refine vocal technique
- Work on "ensemble" community building
- Begin sight singing process (rhythmic, melodic, solfege system through Sight Reading Factory)
- Begin KMEA All-State Chorus audition piece
- Begin one contest level piece and Chamber Choir Competition piece
- Prepare music for Fall Concert, All-State auditions, and other fall festivals

## 2nd Quarter

- Explore vocal timbres as related to musical style
- Explore diversity in music
- Continue sight singing process (rhythmic, melodic, solfege system through Sight Reading Factory)
- Work on two additional Chamber Choir Competition pieces
- Prepare music for Winter Concert
- Prepare for community run out concerts

## 3rd Quarter

- Concentrated study of music for District Choral Assessment & Chamber Choir Competition
- Continue to refine ensemble skills
- Continue sight singing (increase harmonic activity and rhythmic complexity, solfege system)
- Begin music for Spring Concerts and other second semester performance events

## 4th Quarter

- Continue refining sight singing skills through literature study
- Preparation for PLD choral audition
- Identify time periods of music performed
- Refine music for Spring Concerts and Graduation

## **Extra Performance and Involvement Opportunities**

### **PLD Pop Ensemble - PL-D Major**

The P.L. Dunbar Pop Ensemble is an after school choral ensemble that meets once a week and performs a collection of lighter popular repertoire that spans the generations. This group performs at the winter and spring concerts and for some PLD sporting events. This ensemble is open to any PLD choral student who is interested in auditioning.

### **Mastering Musicianship (M2) Voice**

The M2 private vocal lesson program is provided each year to PLD choral students who are interested in signing up. These individual voice lessons are given by high quality instructors and run over a 10-week session each semester. The bonus of this program is that it is convenient being at PLD and typically less expensive than other lessons you may find in the community. Sign-ups will be out mid-August and lessons will begin in September.

### **Extracurricular Performing**

There will be a variety of additional performance opportunities available to the P.L. Dunbar choral students throughout the year. These opportunities include, but are not limited to, UK Bluegrass Choral Festival, KMEA and KJHC All-State Choruses, ACDA Honor Choir, UofL Honor Choir, Solo and Ensemble, UK Male Chorus Day, and drama/musical productions. The music department strongly encourages students to participate in these activities to expand their musical horizons. Involvement in these activities carries with it an expectation of hard work and excellence. These activities should be considered a privilege and an honor. Look for information about these opportunities throughout the year.

### **Tri-M Music Honor Society**

PLD supports a chapter of the Tri-M Music Honor Society. This is an international society for middle school and high school students involved in music. Since this is an honor society, students will be selected by Mrs. Marsh to complete an application to become a member. Generally students are nominated in their sophomore, junior, or senior year of choir. The criterion for membership includes exceptional scholarship, leadership, service, and character. Nominations and inductions typically occur in November. You may go to the Tri-M website at <http://musiced.nafme.org/tri-m/> and find out more information about the Tri-M Music Honor Society