**NCMEA High School Choral Section: Planning Calendar for New Teachers**

On behalf of the NCMEA High School Choral Section, welcome! Here is a calendar of events and major details to help you get settled, make plans, learn routines, and so forth. My name is Richard Butler, and I serve as the coordinator for new teachers. I hope that you will contact me with any questions or concerns you may have.

**Richard Butler**

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This calendar is designed to be a general guideline of suggested activities for you as you plan your year. All of our statewide events are listed, transfer them to your calendar. Ask a teacher from your area which *region* you are in, this determines your Honors Chorus Audition, MPA, or All-State District Rehearsal Site. You can also follow this link to find your region, MPA /audition sites, etc.:

<http://www.ncmea.net/sections-2/high-school-choral/programs/music-performance-adjudication-mpa/sites-dates-and-contact-info/>

Also, make sure you reach out to other people in your district so you can add other district level dates and deadlines. Good luck and I hope you have a great year!

**Tasks to be completed right away:**

* Sign up for a mentor: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeLvOMAwNY7QjSqxTkznMG5b1NOnPqCHQ9ZpF5lJQJ1lKcFpA/viewform>
* Explore our section website: <http://www.ncmea.net/sections-2/high-school-choral/> and learn as much as you can about our state wide events, policies and board members
* Learn about the benefits of NAfME and NCMEA membership: <https://www.ncmea.net/membership/benefits/>
* Become a NAfME and NCMEA member: <https://nafme.org/membership/>
* Helpful hint: Since you have to be a member in order for students to participate in Honors, All-State, MPA’s, etc. make your case to your principal and you may be allowed to use money in your chorus account (if there is any) to pay for your membership. If you have a booster organization, they might pay for it.
* Find an experienced colleague in your district who can be your “go-to” person for questions.
* If possible and appropriate, meet with your predecessor and parent/student leaders. Find out how the program worked at your school previously. It is sometimes an easier transition to a new teacher if parents and students see you honoring some traditions, maintaining the status quo when you can, and only changing what you feel you must the first year. Pick your battles!
* Be a team player at your school. Your administrators and colleagues will be more supportive of you if you have a “Can-do” and “How can I help?” attitude. Build relationships, especially with the secretaries, bookkeeper, and custodians!
* Ask a colleague in your district about **All-County Chorus** and other district events and add them to your calendar.
* Find out from your administrators about your extra-musical duties (athletic duties, hall duty, lunch duty, bus duty, etc.). If possible, request a duty in which you have vested interest (supervising the auditorium in the morning, for instance). If you have been assigned a homeroom, find an ORGANIZED and experienced teacher and model your homeroom organization after theirs.
* Check with your principal/colleagues about your music budget, ordering procedures and concert dates. Do not forget to book your performance venue for rehearsals during class, rehearsals after school, set-up before the concerts/break-down after the concerts, and of course, the concerts themselves! Remember, you are not the only person using the facility – be accommodating!
* Familiarize yourself with the state curriculum at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/artsed/scos/>.
* If your predecessor hasn’t already ordered Honors Chorus audition music, order it now! Remember to check your music library for copies first.
* For more information about Honors Chorus, follow this link. It will take you to additional links for **Online Registration** and **Information for Auditions/Clinic/Tracks**: <http://www.ncmea.net/sections-2/high-school-choral/programs/honors-chorus/>

**AUGUST**

**General tasks for this month:**

* Inform students and parents of policies/procedures and calendar as soon as possible (by open house if possible, definitely on the first day of school), things like concert dates, performance attire, rules/regulations, etc. Be aware of school/district rules and discipline policies when writing your own. Have a cover sheet on which the parents and student have to provide contact information, and sign and date a statement saying they have read, understand, and agree to abide by all the rules, policies, and procedures.
* Find out which students are interested in auditioning for NC Honors Chorus (cannot exceed 10% of choral enrollment). Audition fee: $20.00 per student.
  + Audition Coordinator: Ross Broadway – [nchonorschorus@gmail.com](mailto:nchonorschorus@gmail.com)
  + Distribute music to students
  + Direct them to audition tracks: <https://sites.google.com/site/nchonorschorus/home>
  + Schedule time to rehearse with them
  + Look for Honors Chorus Audition Prep workshops near you: <https://sites.google.com/site/nchonorschorus/workshops>
  + Fill out and submit your field trip request forms for Honors Auditions. Once approved, distribute and collect parent permission forms! Know your district’s field trip policies and follow them to the letter! And don’t forget about the substitute if your audition is on a school day!
  + Helpful hint – since Honors Chorus Auditions, Honors Chorus, All-State District Rehearsal, All-State Chorus, MPA(s), Graduation, All-County Chorus, etc. are annual field trips, see if you can create and save the field trip request forms, parent permission forms, etc. in a digital format. That way, all you need to do next year is change the dates and print! Some school systems have an online “traveltracker” application system – learn how to use it!
* If you plan to travel with students on a tour or to an amusement park festival in the spring, start checking websites for registration details and contacting tour companies:
* <http://musicintheparks.com/>, <http://www.festivalsofmusic.com/>
* Don’t forget that all of this requires field trip request forms, parent permission forms, transportation arrangements, etc. Know your district’s field trip policies and follow them to the letter! And don’t forget the substitute!

**SEPTEMBER**

**Monday, September 10**

* Registration (online) deadline for Honors Chorus auditions, fees must be POSTMARKED by this date.
* This means that you must have your school check for registration IN HAND by **Friday, September 7**. Audition fees are $20.00 per student.
* Request the check from your bookkeeper well in advance.

**Thursday, September 27**- West Honors Chorus auditions – St. Luke’s Methodist Church, Hickory, NC

**Friday, September 28**- Central Honors Chorus auditions – UNC Greensboro, Greensboro, NC

**Saturday, September 29**- East Honors Chorus auditions – Meredith College, Raleigh, NC

**General tasks for this month:**

* Finalize list of students participating in Honors Chorus auditions
* Familiarize yourself and your students with the audition process and procedures for Honors Chorus auditions: <https://sites.google.com/site/nchonorschorus/sight-singing-page>
* Email Ross Broadway at [nchonorschorus@gmail.com](mailto:nchonorschorus@gmail.com) to get a copy of the sight singing used for previous auditions (going back to the 1990’s)– it is great audition practice resource! I would suggest using the sight singing audition procedures and recordings in class, again, its great practice!
* Finalize transportation, field trip permission forms, substitute arrangements, etc. for Honors Chorus auditions. Follow up on your field trip request – just because you haven’t heard a “NO” does not mean it’s a “YES”! Know your district’s field trip policies and follow them to the letter!
* If you plan to go to the NCMEA Professional Development Conference, this will require that you get permission from your administrator if you plan on staying through Monday and Tuesday. There MIGHT even be money for professional development. IF approved….
* Pre-register for the NCMEA Fall Conference at: <https://www.ncmea.net/ncmea-conference/conference-registration-info/>

**OCTOBER**

**Honors Chorus Registration:** $20.00 per student due by event coordinator’s

(Carol Earnhardt – [nchonorschorus@gmail.com](mailto:nchonorschorus@gmail.com)) designated postmark deadline.

**General tasks for this month:**

* If students were selected for NC Honors Chorus, schedule time to rehearse with them and prepare the music. The music will be sent directly to you by JWPEPPER. You don’t need to order it, but you do have to pay for it!
* Fill out and submit your field trip request forms for Honors Chorus. Do this immediately, there are usually strict timelines and extra signatures to collect (like your superintendent’s) for overnight trips! Once approved, distribute and collect parent permission forms! Know your district’s field trip policies and follow them to the letter! No need for a substitute, it is on the weekend!
* Finalize plans to attend the NCMEA Professional Development Conference in November (discuss absence with principal, hire substitute teacher, write lesson plans for substitute, make transportation and hotel arrangements). There may or may not be money available for professional development in your district. Check with colleagues, it’s always better (and more fun) to go with others, car pool, share hotel rooms, etc. It’s also cheaper, and those car rides, lunches, and dinners are a great time to pick the brains of those veteran teachers! Don’t forget to book your hotel reservations, you can do it through the NCMEA website or on your own. The conference hotels are more convenient, but pricey. You can get a better rate off-site if you are okay with driving to the conference center each day and paying for parking.
* Sign up to attend the New Teachers/Mentoring Pre-Conference Retreat on Saturday, November 11. Benefits include getting your Saturday hotel costs reimbursed if you are okay with a roommate, half if you want a private room, AND lunch is provided on Saturday!

**NOVEMBER**

**Saturday, November 10**- NCMEA Conference, Mentoring Pre-Conference, Honors Chorus rehearsals

**Sunday, November 11**- NCMEA Conference, Honors Chorus rehearsals and concert (3:00 p.m.)

**Monday, November 12**- NCMEA Conference

**Tuesday, November 13**- NCMEA Conference

**General tasks for this month:**

* Continue to prepare students who have been selected for Honors Chorus. They will be screened upon arrival, and we do pull the unprepared, so make sure they know their stuff! You should have finalized all field trip arrangements, collected all forms, made transportation arrangements, and requested the check from you bookkeeper to pay the hotel bill! Paying hotels by check may require pre-approval by the hotel manager. Other options include: Pay with your credit card and get reimbursed (you need to discuss this option with your bookkeeper and principal, policies vary by district and school), or have each student ride and house with their own parents (you make the reservations, the parents pay the bill themselves).
* Make sure all plans have been finalized for the NCMEA Conference.
* Be sure to attend the Mentoring Pre-Conference/New Teacher Retreat.
* Make sure you attend the High School Choral Section Membership Meeting to get important updates from the board.
* Make sure to attend my INFORMATION FOR NEW HIGH SCHOOL CHORAL DIRECTORS session.
* Begin thinking about MPA (Music Performance Adjudication), whether you will participate, which ensembles you will take, what music you will perform, etc.
* Follow this link for more information on MPA: <http://www.ncmea.net/sections-2/high-school-choral/programs/music-performance-adjudication-mpa/>
* Submit your Field Trip Request Forms for All-State Chorus! Know your district’s field trip policies and follow them! To the letter!
* Register for All-State Chorus here: <http://www.ncmea.net/sections-2/high-school-choral/programs/all-state-choral-festival/registration/>
* Request the check for the $30.00 (per choir) non-refundable All-State registration fee – it must be postmarked by Friday, December 1.
* Book hotel for All-State Chorus (Saturday and Sunday, April 26 – 27, 2019 in Charlotte, NC)
* Follow this link for more information on All-State: <http://www.ncmea.net/sections-2/high-school-choral/programs/all-state-choral-festival/>

**DECEMBER**

**Friday, December 1-** Application deadline for All-State Chorus. This requires that the $30.00 (per choir) non-refundable registration fee be postmarked by this date!

See <http://www.ncmea.net/sections-2/high-school-choral/programs/all-state-choral-festival/>for more information.

**General tasks for this month:**

* Make final Winter Concert preparations. Don’t forget about typing, proofing, and copying that program! And decorations!
* Register for MPA – again these require field trip request forms, check requests, transportation arrangements, etc.:
  + Solo/Small Ensemble (up to 24 singers)
  + Large Ensemble (25 or more singers)
  + Register Online Here: <https://www.ncmea.net/sections-2/high-school-choral/programs/music-performance-adjudication-mpa/sites-dates-and-contact-info/>
* Plan for those days after the performance! A good time to view/critique the video of the concert, read new repertoire (MPA, maybe?), do some fun activities (create a holiday song game, there are tons of resources online), go caroling around the school, do a feeder school performance of selections from your winter concert, etc.
* EOC’s and NC Final Exams are coming up soon! You will attend training sessions on how to be a proctor or test administrator, but also plan to get together with an experienced teacher and talk through procedures. This will help make testing days feel less overwhelming. Assume you will NOT have a planning period during exam week, most high schools will have you in an exam all morning (8:30 a.m. – 12 noon or later), and a review session for the next day’s exam for rest of the day (12 noon – 3:30 p.m.). Since chorus exams often include individual, group, and written assessments, which are very time consuming, start the exam during the review session, or even the class period before that! Video recording is helpful so make sure you have every parent sign a video permission form! Having students audio record portions of the exam is also helpful. Create a form where you can assess each student on all the sight singing you plan on having them do (potentially 4 separate assessments: rhythms in simple and compound meters, melodic sight singing in major and minor)
* Enjoy the holiday break!

**JANUARY**

**General tasks for this month:**

* EXAMS! Some schools do exams in December, some now. You will probably NOT have a planning period exam week, so work ahead and be organized!
* Refer to the beginning of the year procedures – at the start of the new semester, repeat! This is a great time to tweak rules, policies, and procedures for the second semester.
* Register for MPA if you haven’t yet done so. See last month’s “General Tasks” for the links.
* Request check(s) for MPA registration fees, which must be postmarked by February 1.
* Ensure that all plans are in place for MPA (transportation, field trip request and permission forms, substitute hired, substitute lesson plans written, chaperones and accompanist acquired). Know your district’s field trip policies! Follow them to the letter!
* Order music for All-State (JWPEPPER has the lists, but the music doesn’t always come in together – check the repertoire lists to be sure you have everything – sometimes the repertoire is CPDL and you print it yourself). Plan when and how you will have auditions.
* Request check for All-State Registration fees, which must be postmarked by February 1.
* Start reaching out to your middle schools – registration starts early, and you need to hook those 8th Graders. Things that help are: congratulatory cards or letters to the All-State/All-County/Honors kids, inviting feeder schools to perform on your concerts, or involving them in the spring musical. If you have any by-audition-only classes, start auditions soon – you need to have those lists of approved students ready when registration begins in February.

**FEBRUARY**

**Friday, February 1 –** Registration Fee Checks for both All-State and MPA must be postmarked by today. This can be up to three checks if you are going All-State, Solo/Small Ensemble MPA, and Large Ensemble MPA. Double check to make sure you are sending the checks to the correct addresses!

**General tasks for this month:**

* Continue to prepare for Music Performance Adjudication
* Direct your All-State students to the rehearsal tracks at <http://www.ncmea.net/sections-2/high-school-choral/programs/all-state-choral-festival/practice-tracks/>
* Ensure that all plans are in place for All-State (transportation, field trip request and permission forms, substitute hired, substitute lesson plans written, chaperones and accompanist acquired). Know your district’s field trip policies! Follow them to the letter!
* Determine when and where your required All-State District Rehearsal takes place at: <http://www.ncmea.net/sections-2/high-school-choral/programs/all-state-choral-festival/district-rehearsals/>
* Submit your field trip request form for the All-State District Rehearsal. All the same preparations (transportation, field trip request and permission forms, substitute hired if necessary, substitute lesson plans written if necessary, chaperones, etc.) apply. Know your district’s field trip policies and…… you know the rest!
* REGISTRATION IS HAPPENING for next year’s classes, communicate to your returning students what class they need to take for next year. Go out and recruit!

**MARCH**

**General tasks for this month:**

* Start thinking about Graduation. Selecting the song, ordering the song, polishing up the Alma Mater and the National Anthem, will the orchestra and chorus perform together? Some schools sing the same song every year. Others change year to year. Start working on it before spring concert! You still need to fill out a field trip request, arrange transportation, get parent permission forms, figure out how (or if) the seniors and marshals are going to sing with the choir, etc. KYDFTP…..and follow them to the letter!
* Helpful hint: If there is a solo or unison section in the graduation song, use it to feature ALL the seniors. Avoid solos at graduation – no matter who you pick there will be controversy. If you MUST pick a solo, it better be a senior or there will be MAJOR controversy!
* Ensure that all plans are in place for All-State District Rehearsal (transportation, field trip request and permission forms, substitute hired/substitute lesson plans written in necessary, chaperones acquired). Know your district’s field trip policies……..
* Attend your All-State District Rehearsal this or next month, you must attend with your students for all three hours, and you MUST pitch in and play the piano, rehearse a piece, lead a sectional, etc.
* Continue to prepare for MPA (maybe have a pre-MPA practice performance), go to MPA this or next month
* Continue to prepare students for All-State
* Double check all plans for All-State (transportation, field trip request and permission forms, substitute hired/substitute lesson plans written in necessary, chaperones acquired). Know your district’s……..

**APRIL**

**Friday and Saturday, April 26 - 27, 2018** – Attend All-State Chorus in Raleigh, NC

THIS MIGHT BE DURING SPRING BREAK for some counties – be forewarned!

**General tasks for this month:**

* Continue to prepare for All-State. Make sure your students are very well prepared – they are screened at the first rehearsal and we do remove the unprepared; watch your email for messages from the All-State Coordinator that contain rehearsal notes from clinicians. These are extremely important!
* Make sure you attend the High School Choral Section Membership Meeting at All State for important updates from the board.
* Double check arrangements you made in the fall for your spring concert (performance venue booked for in-class and after-school rehearsals, set-up, break-down, and the concert itself, type/proof/copy program).

**MAY**

**General tasks for this month:**

* Spring Concert!
* Plan for those days after the performance! A good time to view/critique the video of the concert, read new repertoire (Graduation, anyone?), do some fun activities to review for the exam, do a feeder school performance of selections from your spring concert, etc.
* Begin planning a few items for the fall: Honors Chorus audition details are typically given out at All-State, so you will be able to order audition music, prepare information to give students over the summer, mark audition dates on your calendar, etc.
* Most Boards of Education have already approved the school calendar for next year, some as early as February, so start scoping out dates for concerts, etc. Collaborate with everyone that uses your performance venue (especially colleagues or organizations you had a conflict with this year) to create a schedule with a minimum of conflict and no fast break-down/set-up changes.
* EOC’s and NC Final Exams are coming up soon! You will attend training sessions on how to be a proctor or test administrator, but also plan to get together with an experienced teacher and talk through procedures. This will help make testing days feel less overwhelming. Assume you will NOT have a planning period during exam week, most high schools will have you in an exam all morning (8:30 a.m. – 12 noon or later), and a review session for the next day’s exam for rest of the day (12 noon – 3:30 p.m). Since our exams often include individual, group, and written assessments, which are very time consuming, start the exam during the review session, or even the class period before that! Video recording is helpful so make sure you have every parent sign a video permission form! Having students audio record portions of the exam is also helpful. Create a form where you can assess each student on all the sight singing you plan on having them do (potentially 4 separate assessments: rhythms in simple and compound meters, melodic sight singing in major and minor). This is a great opportunity to tweak, edit, correct, change things that did not go so smoothly first semester. Improve upon things based on your previous experience!

**JUNE**

**General tasks for this month:**

* EXAMS! You will probably NOT have a planning period exam week, so work ahead and be organized!
* Graduation! Remember these require field trip forms and all the rest. If you are transporting students on a bus, you must have a field trip form!
* You already have all your field trip requests in a digital format and should know next year’s dates by this point, so go ahead and change the dates, print, and submit for next year! You know its coming, so why wait?
* Happy summer! You made it! You are now experienced…at least a little bit. Treat yourself to something you love!