



Hello WMS Choir Students & Parents!

It's my favorite time of year! Fall is here, the leaves are beautiful... it's sweater weather! Normally, I would be excitedly promoting our Annual Choir Code Celebration (CCC) which traditionally is a 12-hour event on a Saturday near the end of October. Sadly, this year we will not be able to hold our normal event due to COVID-19 and social distancing requirements. In the past, 300+ students and volunteers would attend this incredible day of fun, friendship, food, and fellowship! All that said, don't despair! The CCC is not entirely cancelled... it's just going to need to spread out a bit. In fact, continuing with the theme of distancing, we're in the planning stages right now of offering several wonderful enrichment opportunities to students over the course of the entire school year that will all connect to the Choir Code, the WMS Path of a Titan, and John Wooden's Pyramid of Success! The WMS Choirs are in great shape and it's going to be a **FUN** year of singing! Please read the remainder of the newsletter and stay tuned for several important dates to add to your calendar in the coming months. Thank you!

Newsletter in a Nutshell...

Choir Code, Path of a Titan, and John Wooden's Pyramid of Success

Choir Code Celebration: Reimagined

Vocal Music Learning Goals & Scales (3 Fundamentals: Posture / Breathing / Vowels)

Music Literacy Pre-Test

SING!-a-thon Fundraiser

Parent Volunteers and Meetings

Music Boosters

Choir Code, Path of a Titan, and John Wooden's Pyramid of Success

The [Choir Code](#), WMS [Path of a Titan](#), and John Wooden's [Pyramid of Success](#) have been the focus of the first five weeks and will continue to be part of each lesson until we complete the series of videos about [Character for Life](#). We are also beginning to connect these lessons about character to the 3 fundamentals of Vocal Production: Posture, Breathing, and Vowels... more on that later. As I have shared with the students (especially 6th graders who may be growing a bit impatient regarding their desire to spend more time singing), the foundation for exemplary and successful singing is so much stronger when we understand the value of character for life and apply these principles as a team.

Choir Code Celebration: Reimagined

The primary goals and benefits of the WMS Choirs and the Choir Code Celebration (CCC) are focused on developing character for life. We do this in the classroom and beyond through activities and lessons based on the Choir Code, the WMS Path of a Titan, and John Wooden's Pyramid of Success. Our traditional CCC is an annual event and this October would be our fifth year. Unfortunately, due to social distancing requirements based on COVID-19 we will be unable to host our annual event in a traditional way. However, rather than just cancelling everything, we are planning to provide innovative alternatives over the course of the year that will create lasting memories and help to develop character for life! We hope to return to our annual all-day



celebration next year. I am still planning to give all Choir students a Choir Code T-Shirt (hopefully sometime before Christmas). They can wear this throughout the year, and as part of a performance uniform for our spring concert or video recordings in class or from home. Find out more about the [Choir Code Celebration](#) and the [team-building challenge activities](#) on our website. Stay tuned for more information about new CCC activities!

Vocal Music Learning Goals & Scales (3 Fundamentals: Posture / Breathing / Vowels)

We are currently focusing on the first of four Vocal Music Learning Goals & Scales: Vocal Production The three fundamentals of vocal production that lead to exemplary tone quality are...

Posture / Body Alignment:

1. Feet shoulder width apart
2. One foot slightly in front of the other
3. Knees loose, not locked
4. Hips over the heels, not cocked
5. Rib cage expanded
6. Sternum lifted and hooked
7. Shoulders back and down
8. Hold a crown
9. Hands down
10. Botox :-D

Singer's Breath:

1. Silent
2. Deep
3. Low
4. Fully expanded
5. (around the waist)

Vowel Shapes:

1. Vertical Vowels
2. TALL not WIDE
3. Lips Off the Teeth
4. Corners Tucked in

Music Literacy Pre-Test

By the end of October all students will complete a [music literacy pre-test](#). There are two links on the choir website. The first (in blue) is only for TCAPS students (it automatically captures their email address), and the second (in orange) is for parents and other non-TCAPS visitors. 6th grade students will most likely score very low on the pre-test which is to be expected since most of what is on the test is new information to them. A few 6th grade students and many 7th Grade Choir students may score 50% or higher because of previous music literacy lessons including elementary music as well as private lessons or previous participation in a choir (WMS Choir, All City Choir, NMC Children's Choir, etc.), band, or orchestra. Most 8th Grade Choir students will probably score an 80% or higher on the pre-test depending on their retention from 7th grade. All of these scores will likely be entered in PowerSchool for reference by students, parents, and teachers, but the grades will not count towards any final grades in choir. They will be weighted as a 0% value and only used for reference when we take the re-test and post-test later in the year to see growth.

SING!-a-thon Fundraiser

The Annual Music Department Discount Card Fall Fundraiser was postponed this year, and even if it hadn't been, the WMS Choirs are excited to try something new and different this year so we will not be participating in the TCAPS Music Department Discount Card Fundraiser. Instead, we are planning on hosting a SING!-a-thon fundraiser. The date and details of this event are still being determined. Please stay tuned for more information in the coming weeks! In the meantime, if you would still like to purchase a discount card and support the West Choirs, there will be many West Senior HS Choir students selling the cards and we would be glad to have you



support them. We also hope that you will still support your own West Middle School Choir students when it comes time to sponsor them through your financial donations based on their singing. We are hopeful that this pivot to a new form of fundraising will allow us to focus our time in class on what we're here to do - make music rather than on fundraising. Our annual amount raised from the fall and spring fundraisers is usually around \$15,000-\$20,000 (an average of about \$60-\$80 per student). A small portion of this money usually goes right back to students in the form of cash incentives or choir apparel. Additionally, 7th and 8th Grade students are able to begin banking money in a personal student account after contributing \$100 to the choir program. This money can be used in the future to help offset the cost of traveling, specifically the trip that HS Choir students usually take once every three years to locations in Europe. Our past success has allowed us to award scholarships for private lessons and summer camps and provided us with the funds to host several very special guests and events! Thank you for your ongoing financial support and more importantly for encouraging your students' love of singing!

Calendar of Events

The [WMS Choirs Google Calendar](#) is the best way to see all events for the year. Please subscribe.

Parent Meetings

The Traverse City West Choir Organization (TCWCO) holds meetings at TC West Senior HS in the auditorium the second Saturday of most months from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. It would be wonderful to have more representation from WMS! The agenda covers everything from fundraising to volunteer needs, upcoming events, and future goals for the program. Please consider attending. Our next meeting is tomorrow, Saturday, October 10th. Future meetings are December 12th, February 13th, April 17th, and May 8th. The meeting will also be [broadcast on Zoom](#) for those unable to attend or uncomfortable with joining the meeting in person.

Music Boosters

Another area where parent volunteers are needed is in the TCAPS Music Boosters. This organization provides support to all TCAPS Band, Choir, Orchestra, and General Music programs through practical and financial contributions including annual scholarships. The following letter is from Kevin Smiley (TC Music Booster's President)... ***VIRTUAL Annual Meeting: Tuesday, October 27, 2020 @ 6:30 p.m*** [Google Meet Link](#) *We will kick off the meeting with performances by the West and Central Marching Bands! You will have a "press box" view of featured selections from the 2020 shows. We value your input and ideas as we strive to support the TCAPS music programs and our students! Please join us! [Music Boosters Contact Information](#) To learn more about our organization, please visit our [website](#) and our [facebook page](#).*

Sincerely,

Kevin Smiley
President, Traverse City Music Boosters
tcmusicboostersINC@gmail.com





The theme song for WMS Choirs will continue to be “Why We Sing” and I’m eager to share this message with students and their families throughout the year! We will also continue singing a song that choir students learned last year entitled, “I Have a Voice.” You can listen to and watch our *WMS Virtual Choir* performing [“I Have a Voice” on YouTube](#). Here are the lyrics by Robin Lerner:

*I have a voice, simple and clear. It speaks the truth, for all to hear.
It gives me hope, It gives me faith, It lifts me up, It keeps me safe.
I have a voice, it's mine alone. It comforts me, It is my own.
Although it's small, I'm not afraid for I am strong in its embrace.
No one can say, what I have seen or understand where I have been.
For what I've found inside myself belongs to me and no one else.
If I were blind and had no eyes to see still I would hear that voice inside of me
I wish that you, I wish that you could hear it too.*

*I have a voice (I have a voice), simple and clear (simple and clear).
It speaks the truth (it speaks the truth) for all to hear (for all to hear).
It gives me hope (it gives me hope). It gives me faith (It gives me faith).
I have a voice and I am safe (and I am safe).
No one can say, what I have seen or understand where I have been.
For what I found inside myself belongs to me and no one else.
If I were blind and had no eyes to see still I would hear that voice that lives in me
I wish that you, I wish that you could hear it too.
I have a voice, it's mine alone. It comforts me, it is my own.
I know it's small, but it is strong. I have a voice, it is my song.*

Sincerely,

Mr. Emerick Dee
deem@tcaps.net

www.wmschoirs.com

Follow us on [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#) @ tcwmschoirs

P.S. Students should be accessing their grade level [“Music PDFs & Recordings”](#) page on the website. This page requires a password: SING! (ALL CAPS + !). Students should be listening to their songs and singing at home. Don’t forget [tupractice!](#) :-)

P.P.S. Erich Wangeman is officially the teacher for the 7th & 8th Grade Tenor / Bass Choir this year, but since it meets during 6th hour which is my planning period, I will be occasionally volunteering my time to work with this class. Some specific details regarding class content, grading, etc. may vary from what is included in these newsletters. Please reach out to me and/or Mr. Wangeman with any questions. Thank you.