Combining National and State Music Standards to
Create a Secondary Choral Curriculum for York County School Division

A Thesis submitted to
The faculty of the School of Music
In Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Music Education

by

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COMBINING NATIONAL AND STATE MUSIC STANDARDS TO CREATE A SECONDARY CHORAL CURRICULUM FOR YORK COUNTY SCHOOL DIVISION

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ABSTRACT

Despite recent revisions of the National Music Standards and the Virginia Music Standards of Learning, there have not been efforts to determine how their combination could create a localized music curriculum. Combining the national and state music standards allows the music educator to employ current music education practices and ensure students graduate with a standard set of musical skills and abilities. This study examined how secondary choral directors can combine these standards to create an effective and sequential curriculum for secondary choral directors in York County School Division (YCSD). A qualitative, historical research approach identified the history of standards-based curriculum in the choral context, their development to date, and how they can evolve in the future. Examining the literature on choral curriculum writing, previous versions of the YCSD choral curriculum, and choral curricula of other Virginia school divisions illustrated how a standards-based curriculum is most effective in the secondary choral ensemble. This investigation was needed to determine what musical skills and abilities YCSD students should accomplish before graduation and how secondary choral educators can create a curriculum that assesses these skills while incorporating national and state standards. This project intended to construct a framework on how to write said curriculum. Its results encourage further research by providing secondary music educators with the means to create a standards-based curriculum using national and state standards in their specific context.

Keywords: Choral music education, content standards, curriculum, music education, national music standards, standards-based reform, state music standards
DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to God in gratitude for His everlasting faithfulness. His steadfastness carried me through every step of this project. He showed me the possibilities of completing this study, even when I thought there were none.

I also dedicate this thesis to music educators who strive to provide their students with the highest quality music education possible. Even under the best circumstances, the perseverance of the music education community demonstrates their commitment and dedication to their students. I hope this thesis provides music educators with new and fresh ideas for their classrooms.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
Model Cornerstone Assessments (MCAs)
Music Educators National Conference (MENC)
National Association for Music Education (NAfME)
National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS)
No Child Left Behind (NCLB)
Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21)
Standards-Based Educational Reform (SBER)
Standards of Learning (SOLs)
Virginia Choral Directors Association (VCDA)
Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)
Virginia Music Education Association (VMEA)
York County School Division (YCSD)
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Following the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, the United States saw an increased focus on education at the national level. As a result, the federal government and professional organizations developed several sets of national education standards. Because education in the United States is a state power, states govern their education and need their own standards. Although most states require their teachers to use the state standards, this does not mean teachers should completely overlook and ignore national standards written by field experts. Thus, this study intended to discover how the researcher could combine national and state music standards to create a secondary choral curriculum for York County School Division (YCSD).

A qualitative method with a historical approach was used to determine the history of standards-based curriculum in music education. The researcher then utilized this historical perspective to determine how an application of the standards is different or the same in present and future contexts. The primary purpose of this study was to create a secondary choral curriculum that combined national and state music standards, and its significance was to provide other educators with a systematic approach to combining national and state standards. The state standards determined the criteria for musical skills and abilities, and the national standards supplied frameworks for artistic processes. A secondary purpose was to provide secondary choral educators with standards-based assessments that measure students’ musical skills and abilities. Although secondary choral music education was the context of this study, educators of other music and arts disciplines could apply this systematic approach to their contexts.

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Background of Topic

Standards-based educational reform is a movement that began in the 1980s following the publication of *A Nation at Risk*. This document claimed that the United States’ economic downfall was mainly because of its weak educational system. Following this publication, the federal government made several efforts to create national education standards to reform the nation’s education system. In music education, this resulted in the publication of the National Standards for Arts Education in 1994. The National Coalitions for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS), a “coalition of nine national arts and education organizations,” revised these standards in 2014. NCCAS includes the National Association for Music Education (NAfME). This revision remains the current version of national music standards.

The 2014 National Music Standards present music education in a new form entirely different from the 1994 version. Mac Randall states that “One of the most significant differences between these new standards and the [1994] National Standards is that these standards aren’t based solely on products…Instead, they’re organized around processes.” This emphasis on process was an effort of the NCCAS to align the 2014 standards to the goals of Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21), “a multidisciplinary coalition formed largely in response to the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act,” of which the NAfME is a member. Emphasizing process instead of

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3 Ibid.


5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., 35.
the product allows the music educator to focus on twenty-first century skills, such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, technology skills, and life and career skills.7 Creating standards and assessments in music allows music educators to communicate music education’s education and discipline benefits to the populace.8

The 2014 National Music Standards include three artistic processes which exist to promote musical independence: “creating new music, performing existing music with understanding and expression, and responding to others’ music with understanding.”9 The standards also “address connecting to and through music.”10 These four processes, creating, performing, responding, and connecting, make up the categories for the standards. Nierman illustrates how these processes, and the standards themselves, “call for moving beyond” the traditional emphasis on performance alone, to a mastery of “the process of performing,” which “includes not just performing the work but also becoming adept in mastering the other basic components of performing…selecting, analyzing, interpreting, and rehearsing/evaluating/refining.”11 Shuler shows that by shifting toward this process approach of music education, “music teachers will also cultivate the cross-cutting college- and career-ready and 21st-century skills that are increasingly expected of students in all subject areas.”12 Thus, the standards are successful in implementing twenty-first century skills as desired by P21.

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7 Randall, “Tuning Up the Standards,” 35.
8 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
The Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs) are Virginia’s effort towards standards-based instruction. The SOLs became the premiere document of Virginia education with the introduction of state standardized testing in the mid-late 1990s.\textsuperscript{13} In Virginia, the state department of education creates the standards, leaving it up to the local school divisions and teachers to write or adopt specific curricula.\textsuperscript{14} The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) published the most recent version of the music SOLs in May 2020.

The 2020 Virginia Music SOLs are the first revision of the Music SOLs since the 2014 National Standards. The previous version, published in 2013, still held music theory, literacy, and performance as the highest emphases of the secondary music performance classroom. The 2020 version seeks to further the twenty-first skills emphasis of the 2014 National Standards, with headings such as “Creative Process,” “Critical Thinking and Communication,” and “Innovation in the Arts.” Standards for performance do not appear until the last section of each ensemble level, under the heading “Technique and Application.”\textsuperscript{15} Thus, the SOL writers have aligned the 2020 SOLs to the 2014 National Music Standards and drastically differs from its 2013 sister’s emphases and design.

The Music SOLs include general music K-8, elementary instrumental music, secondary instrumental music, secondary choral music, and high school music theory. The researcher examined the secondary choral music standards during this study. Overall, there are seven levels of choral music SOLs: Three at the middle school level (beginning, intermediate, and advanced),


\textsuperscript{14} Virginia Board of Education, \textit{Music Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools} (Richmond, VA: Virginia Board of Education, 2020), v.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., vi-vii.
and four at the high school level (beginning, intermediate, advanced, artist). The study employed the choral music SOLs throughout the research project and are the ones the discussion refers to throughout the remainder of the paper unless otherwise noted.

York County School Division (YCSD) serves the population of Yorktown, Virginia, and includes approximately 13,000 students.¹⁶ The last revision of the YCSD music curriculum occurred in 2013. Since then, there have been two significant updates to both national and state standards. Thus, before the beginning of this study, the music curriculum needed revision.

Problem Statement

Despite national education standards, states still develop their standards as education is a state power in the United States. The desired outcome is for states to align their standards with national standards so education becomes nationally unified. This potential alignment creates complications as the federal government does not control state education. In 2008, only twenty-one states had based their standards on the 1994 National Music Standards.¹⁷ The hope is for this number to increase with the 2014 set. According to Nierman, the 2014 National Music Standards are not “a substitute for state music standards” but serve as a “starting point for thinking about what’s important to be taught and why.”¹⁸ Lehman discusses how “State standards should be [even] more specific than National Standards” as they need to provide a detailed basis for “constructing curricula, writing lesson plans, and assessing learning.”¹⁹


Although the Virginia Music SOLs align with the national standards in terms of focus on twenty-first century skills, they do not incorporate all aspects of the national standards, such as the three main artistic processes. While the SOLs integrate criteria for creative tasks, critical thinking of musical works and performances, performance skills, and assessing the relationship of music to other fine arts disciplines, they do not include frameworks for assimilating these processes into instruction. Therefore, music teachers in Virginia should not simply ignore the National Standards in favor of the Music SOLs. This study sought to determine how secondary choral directors could effectively combine both sets of standards to write a sequential secondary choral curriculum for YCSD.

An additional concern of the SOLs is their lack of sequential ordering of the standards. Upon examining the seven levels of Choral Music Standards, the researcher determined that the standards for beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels at both the middle and high school levels were mostly the same. This similarity does not make for a sequential curriculum for 6-12 choral music. Students moving from an advanced eighth-grade ensemble to a ninth-grade beginning ensemble would have already mastered the tasks of a beginning choral ensemble. Odegaard discusses that the lack of a sequential curriculum is enough justification for developing a curriculum that incorporates the 2014 National Music Standards as the standards are sequentially written and do not repeat learning objectives.20

Despite the National Standards and the SOLs’ incorporation of twenty-first century skills, they are vastly different from their 1994 and 2013 respective predecessors. Additionally, the standards themselves do not reveal how to implement them in day-to-day teaching or a localized music curriculum. As stated in the introduction to the 2020 Music SOLs, “These standards are

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not intended to establish or encompass the entire curriculum for a given grade level or course, nor to prescribe how the content should be taught.”

Thus, there is a need for music educators to develop a method for combining national and state standards for writing a music curriculum for the localized school division. Shuler does highlight how the 2014 National Standards “should make it easier to develop instruction because the structure provides an authentic sequence for outcomes.”

Still, both veteran and novice teachers need a guide implementing these standards into their classrooms.

Odegaard discusses how teachers need new resources to guide them through this significant change of emphasis from knowledge and skills to process, which exists in both updates of the National Standards and Virginia Music SOLs. Teachers need guidance on balancing this emphasis on process with a final product—the concert. Freer identifies how this paradox of performance vs. pedagogy has long inhibited choral teachers to “build curricula that achieve a balance between performance and educational goals.”

If choral educators, and by extension all performance teachers, do not receive adequate resources for adapting to a process mindset, the battle of process versus product may continue in secondary choral music education.

Assessment is another area of concern when developing standards-based music education curricula. Payne et al. define assessment as “an action or instance of making judgment about

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24 Ibid., 119.

intended learning, such as a test of knowledge or skills.” Assessment can demonstrate student progress, advocate for needed resources, and guide curricular revisions and is an effective measure of communicating information about the music program to its stakeholders (parents, administrators, community members). According to Bradford, standards-based curricula become ineffective if it does not include measures for assessment.

Russell and Austin identified “little professional consensus” regarding how, what, and when music teachers should assess despite a wealth of research in education assessment. They found that music performance teachers primarily grade students’ on attitude and attendance rather than musical skills and competencies. Music teachers reported that “the adoption of standards-based curriculum had little or no impact on their assessment practices,” even though Lehman views that this adoption helps to increase the quality of music education assessment. Fortunately, the Model Cornerstone Assessments (MCAs), published in 2016, seek to mitigate the lack of assessment consensus by providing example assessments that assess the 2014 National Music Standards. NAfME designed these adaptable assessments to be curriculum-embedded to provide “authentic assessment of understanding and transfer, and model measures adaptable for curriculum, skills, and content.”

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27 Ibid.


30 Ibid., 39.

31 Ibid., 40, 42.

In YCSD, music teachers do not implement the division music curriculum into their classroom because it is not applicable or flexible to the varied types of ensembles throughout the school division. Previous curriculum versions reflect formats of other core subjects (math, language arts, history, science), resulting in a curriculum that is not reflective of actual music teaching practices and only served to meet curricular requirements set forth by non-music district administrators. McVeigh identifies this type of curriculum as a standards-referenced system as the curriculum references, but standards do not serve as its basis.\(^{33}\) Currently, teachers in YCSD individually select curricula or base their curriculum solely on repertoire.

Although secondary music performance teachers in YCSD have different ensembles (i.e., concert choir, jazz choir, symphonic band, jazz band), there is a need for increased curricular unity across the division. This curricular unity calls for specific and measurable goals that students should accomplish by the end of a given school year and by the time they graduate from high school. Establishing an effective secondary choral curriculum that is standards-based and allows for flexibility in music styles would allow secondary choral directors across YCSD to teach similar musical concepts to their students in their context of expertise. When school divisions implement a unified curriculum, “the music program is strengthened and is less likely to be reviewed in the event of reductions or cuts.”\(^{34}\) Thus, creating and adopting a unified secondary choral curriculum would establish “a clear picture of what should be taught at each [course]” and strengthen a school music program’s academic and financial perception.\(^{35}\)

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\(^{34}\) Odegaard, Music Curriculum Writing, 14.

\(^{35}\) Ibid., 25.
Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to determine in what ways the 2014 National Music Standards and the 2020 Virginia Music SOLs could be combined to create an effective and sequential secondary choral curriculum for choral directors in YCSD. Educators consider this standards-based, meaning that the standards served as the foundation for the curriculum’s content, processes, and means of assessment. A qualitative method with a historical approach was employed to determine the evolution of standards-based education reform in music and analyze the national and state standards documents. Additionally, she analyzed secondary choral curricula of other Virginia school divisions for their combination of the national and state standards and how their model applies to the curriculum of YCSD.

Significance of Study

This study contributes to the literature on standards-based curricula in music education by providing a specific application of the 2014 National Music Standards to a localized music curriculum that also incorporates the 2020 Virginia Music SOLs. This application is essential because, as Odegaard notes, “Standards are here to stay” as they dictate the framework of “musical knowledge and skills students acquire during their educational journey, producing better musicians over time.”\textsuperscript{36} Despite Odegaard’s book, which supplies the music educator with an instructional manual on incorporating the national standards in a district curriculum, there has not been a study on how to combine the national standards with a set of state standards to create a localized music curriculum.

Additionally, the study provides the music educator with frameworks for creating standards-based assessments that measure standards achievement and adapt to specific secondary

\textsuperscript{36} Odegaard, \textit{Music Curriculum Writing}, 9.
choral ensembles (jazz, madrigal, etc.). Assessment goes hand in hand with standards-based curricula, and the MCAs provide assessment frameworks for the national standards.\textsuperscript{37} Even though Lehman discusses how state standards should be more specific than the national standards and should provide means for assessing learning, the Virginia Music SOLs provide no means for assessment.\textsuperscript{38} Thus, the study improves the quality of secondary choral music in Virginia by equipping the educator with an assessment framework supporting both national and state music standards.

While the national standards serve as a guideline for state standards, teachers should not completely ignore them, especially if their state standards do not align with the National Standards.\textsuperscript{39} In the case of the Virginia SOLs, the standards dictate the specific musical skills and abilities students should accomplish at each ensemble level, while the National Standards focus on artistic process. Although the SOLs are aligned with the National Standards in terms of content headings and provide process criteria, they do not heavily incorporate the artistic processes of creating, performing, responding, and connecting. Thus, if the Virginia music educator were to ignore the National Standards, they would be doing their students a disservice by omitting several critical elements of the artistic processes.

The secondary choral curriculum combines the National Music Standards and the Virginia Music SOLs. It utilizes the SOLs for the musical skills and abilities students should accomplish at each ensemble level and employs the national standards to encourage educators to incorporate the artistic processes. This curriculum improves music education policy by the

\textsuperscript{37} Odegaard, \textit{Music Curriculum Writing}, 9.

\textsuperscript{38} Lehman, “A Vision for the Future,” 32.

\textsuperscript{39} Nierman, “Standards 2.0—Beyond Discussion,” 6.
study’s creation of a new method of curriculum writing that enables educators to use both national and state music standards in conjunction. Additionally, educators receive frameworks for creating standards-based assessments that reflect the combination of national and state standards. Assessments are crucial to standards-based music education as they allow teachers to analyze what students have learned and their understanding.\(^\text{40}\) Finally, the study supports additional research by encouraging music educators of other performance concentrations and states to explore how their state standards align with the national standards.

Research Questions

This study examined how secondary choral directors can combine national and state music standards to create a new music curriculum for YCSD. The primary research questions for this study were:

Research Question One: In what ways can the 2020 Virginia Music Standards of Learning and the 2014 National Music Standards be combined to create an effective and sequential curriculum for secondary choral ensembles in York County School Division?

Research Question Two: In what ways can secondary music performance teachers within York County School Division balance a division-wide curriculum with individual teacher’s areas of expertise?

Hypotheses

The researcher assumed that the 2014 National Music Standards and 2020 Virginia Music SOLs could be combined to create an effective secondary choral curriculum that provides an implementation framework and sample assessments, regardless of ensemble type. Therefore, the hypotheses for this study were:

\(^\text{40}\) Odegaard, *Music Curriculum Writing 101*, 125.
Hypothesis One: The 2020 Virginia Music SOLs and the 2014 National Music Standards can be combined to create an effective and sequential curriculum for secondary choral ensembles in York County School Division by using the skills criteria of the state standards, incorporating the processes of the national standards, and creating measurable assessments.

Hypothesis Two: Secondary music performance teachers within York County School Division can balance a division-wide curriculum with individual teacher’s areas of expertise by determining general musical skills and abilities, adapting the standards to different musical styles, and designing flexible assessments.

Core Concepts

The concept of curriculum dates back to medieval times when curriculum “meant the length of time needed to complete a program of learning.”41 Today, curriculum refers to the subject content, which Nierman defines as “a set of planned experiences to promote learning.”42 Van Brummelen discusses how in addition to these planned experiences and their formal documentation, the curriculum is “everything learners experience in school,” whether planned or unplanned.43

Standards-Based Educational Reform (SBER) is a movement that began in the 1980s following the publication of A Nation at Risk, “which proclaimed that America’s economic woes were in large part due to the failing public educational system.”44 SBER begins with a


42 Nierman, “Standards 2.0—Beyond Discussion,” 7.

43 Van Brummelen, Steppingstones to Curriculum, 13-14.

“governing educational agency that creates content and curriculum standards, which promote academic excellence and indicates what students should know and be able to do.” These agencies expect teachers to implement these standards into their teaching and curricula.

There have been multiple efforts to create music standards at the national and state levels. Nationally, there have been two significant publications of music standards. These include the 1994 National Standards for Arts Education, and the 2014 Music Standards, prepared by the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards. The 1994 Standards focused on “products of music instruction,” but the 2014 Standards have shifted towards a “process orientation.” NAfME, known before 2011 as Music Educators National Conference (MENC), was a member of both standards’ writing committees.

Assessment is how teachers evaluate student understanding and is a method for students to demonstrate musical capabilities. Standards-based curricula must include effective measures for assessment to determine the accomplishment of the standards. The 2014 National Music Standards address assessment through the accompanying document, Model Cornerstone Assessments, which presents example assessments teachers can embed into their curriculum.

The Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs) are Virginia’s “system of support and accountability that has helped make Virginia’s public schools among the nation’s best.” The Music SOLs are

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50 Nierman, “Model Cornerstone Assessment, 6-7.”
the state’s effort to provide content and curriculum guidance for music teachers of all grade levels and content areas. VDOE published the most recent revision of the Music SOLs in May 2020.

York County School Division (YCSD) serves the population of Yorktown, Virginia. It incorporates nineteen schools and 13,000 students.52 Music programs in YCSD include K-5 general music, secondary band, and secondary choir. The division also offers music theory instruction at the high school level. The last revision of the YCSD secondary choral curriculum occurred in 2013. The most recent revision occurred in summer 2021. Previous writers wrote the music curriculum in division-mandated formats that were not reflective of actual music teaching practices. The goal of the summer 2021 curriculum revision was to address this issue and write a curriculum that truly reflects the work of music teachers and that would serve as a guide for new teachers.

Definition of Terms

Curriculum refers to the set(s) of planned learning experiences that guide instruction in a given course.53 A curriculum dictates the content and skills students should master before the end of a class or given term. In addition to the planned curriculum, the implicit curriculum also exists, which includes the unplanned learning experiences students have as a result of the scheduled curriculum.54


52 “About Us,” York County School Division.


54 Van Brummelen, Steppingstones to Curriculum, 70.
Content Standards define “what students should know and be able to do.” They serve as the guidelines for curriculum and instruction and “should be the basis of all assessments.” Educational experts recommend content standards exist for every subject and grade level.

A Standards-Based Curriculum is a curriculum whose content and planned learning experiences come from educational standards. Curriculum experts consider standards-based curricula sequential, meaning that content naturally unfolds for the student throughout the school year. For standards-based curricula to be effective in music, they must provide a framework for instruction and methods of assessment that serve as “a means of monitoring both student progress and the effectiveness of the curriculum as a whole.”

Assessment allows the teacher to evaluate student understanding of specific knowledge, skills, or process. Russell and Austin consider it to be “one of the most important responsibilities a teacher assumes.” Assessment and standards-based curricula go hand in hand as assessments measure the content of the standards. The standards-based curriculum “should be considered a ‘point of departure’ in formulating assessment strategies” as teachers discern the most effective assessment strategies for a particular content standard.

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57 Ibid.

58 Odegaard, Music Curriculum Writing 101, 9.


60 Odegaard, Music Curriculum Writing 101, 125.


62 Ibid., 51.
The *National Standards for Arts Education* were published in 1994 and contained dance, music, theatre, and visual arts standards. These standards were concerned with “products of music instruction;” the nine content standards in the music section indicated what students “should be able to know and do in music.” The Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, including MENC, developed them. These standards are referred to throughout this paper as the 1994 National Music Standards.

The *National Core Arts Standards* were published in 2014 and contain dance, media arts, theatre, and visual arts standards. Unlike the 1994 standards, this version focuses on the process orientation. There are eleven anchor standards spread across four artistic processes applied to each of the arts disciplines. There are five different sets of music standards: General Music, Traditional and Emerging Ensembles, Composition and Theory, Harmonizing Instruments, and Music Technology. In this paper, these standards are referred to as the 2014 National Music Standards; the Traditional and Emerging Ensembles standards are the set of standards used in the context of secondary choral instruction.

The *National Coalition for Core Arts Standards* (NCCAS) developed the National Core Arts Standards. It is a “coalition of nine national arts and education organizations” tasked with creating the 2014 National Core Arts Standards. NAfME is a member of NCCAS.

*Model Cornerstone Assessments* (MCAs) were published and 2016 to be examples of assessments that correspond with the 2014 National Core Arts Standards. The MCAs exist for all arts disciplines included in the National Core Arts Standards. The MCAs are “sample measures

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64 Ibid., 6.

65 Randall, “Tuning Up the Standards,” 35.
designed to be used as models that can and should be modified according to the goals and objectives of local music curricula as taught by local teachers.”

Teachers should look at the MCAs for assessment examples and adapt them to their specific context and repertoire.

The *Virginia Standards of Learning* (SOLs) are Virginia’s educational standards. SOLs exist for math, history, English, science, computer science, physical education, economics, fine arts, world language, driver education, economics, and family life. VDOE first integrated into the SOLs Virginia education in the mid-1990s, and SOL standardized testing began in the late-1990s. Only some subjects include a standardized test; music is not one of those subjects. The set of SOLs referred to throughout this paper are the 2020 Choral Music SOLs. There are seven levels of Choral Music SOLs: Three at the middle school level (beginning, intermediate, advanced) and four at the high school level (beginning, intermediate, advanced, artist).


**Summary**

This study sought to determine how secondary music educators could combine the 2014 National Music Standards with the Virginia Music SOLs to create an effective and sequential secondary choral curriculum for YCSD. It was needed because there had not been a previous study that combined the National Standards with a specific set of state standards to write a localized music curriculum. The purpose of the study was to create said curriculum. Its

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significance was to provide other music and arts teachers with a framework for combining national and state standards for their specific contexts.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of relevant literature pertaining to standards-based curriculum. The review consists of four sections: History of Standards-Based Education Reform in the United States, Development of National Music Standards, Music Curriculum Writing, and Assessment Practices of Secondary Music Teachers. The historical perspective of standards-based reform and the development of national music standards informs how this standards-based reform in music could remain the same or change in the future. Recommendations regarding music curriculum writing advise the author with strategies for writing the new secondary choral curriculum for YCSD. An overview of assessment practices and recommendations presents the author with curriculum-embedded assessment tools for the new curriculum.

History of Standards-Based Education Reform in the United States

Post World War II to 1980

After World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union emerged as the top two global superpowers. Mark and Madura described that tensions between these two superpowers led to the Cold War, a “broad conflict of ideologies, territory, nuclear weapons, and proxy military conflict.” Because of the war’s fears and divisions and rapid societal changes, American education became unstable as it struggled to define the changing times. According to Kenna and Russell, the Soviet union confirmed these fears when they launched Sputnik I in

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69 Ibid., 11.

70 Ibid., 12.
October 1957, beating the United States at placing the first satellite in space. The American population suspected they were falling second to the Soviet Union in science, technology, and military power, a fear no American desired to witness. They believed that the public music reform education “to defend [themselves] through technology, military might, and economic prowess.”

Mark and Madura demonstrated that during the 1950s, the beginning stage of national education reform, educators disagreed over whether school curricula should include the fine arts (music, art, drama). Reading, writing, and mathematics soon emerged as the country’s most valued school subjects. Emphasis on the three Rs continues to influence education today as educators and policymakers consider them the most essential school subjects. Nonetheless, a victory for arts education occurred in 1959 when the American Association of School Administrators recognized this evolving unbalanced curriculum, recommending “a more balanced curriculum that included music, drama, painting, poetry, sculpture, and architecture as core subjects, along with mathematics, history, and science.” This prioritization of subjects to promote creative and critical thinking was way ahead of its time.

Education continued to decline in the 1960s. Mark and Madura discussed that SAT scores “indicated that the quality of American education had deteriorated seriously,” but not at a rate

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72 Mark and Madura, *Contemporary Music Education*, 12.

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid., 13.

75 Ibid.

76 Ibid., 13

77 Ibid., 14
that alarmed the American public.\textsuperscript{78} In contrast to this education decline, educational institutions experienced economic growth as baby boomers began to attend school and college.\textsuperscript{79} The United States also experienced its first iteration of national education legislation when President Lyndon Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. This legislation sought to provide education for the nation’s most vulnerable students through federal funding.\textsuperscript{80} NAfME indicated that Title I of this law is the most historical section as it “seeks to improve basic programs for disadvantaged students.”\textsuperscript{81} ESEA remains the foundation for current education legislation.

The number of financial resources for education declined in the 1970s due to oil crises and the baby boomer generation finishing their schooling.\textsuperscript{82} This decrease in school population numbers resulted in the need for fewer teachers, which limited the availability of music classes as school districts reallocated their resources.\textsuperscript{83} Because of this lack of resources, emphasis again was placed on the core subjects of reading, writing, and mathematics.\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{78} Mark and Madura, \textit{Contemporary Music Education}, 14-15.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 14.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{82} Mark and Madura, \textit{Contemporary Music Education}, 15.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 14.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
A Nation at Risk

1980 saw a record low of SAT scores with an average of 466.\textsuperscript{85} This low achievement greatly alarmed the American public.\textsuperscript{86} Although education standards were becoming of national interest, the federal government did not have the power to enforce national education standards as education is a state power in the United States.\textsuperscript{87} To mitigate these issues, President Ronald Reagan formed the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) in 1981 and tasked them with creating a profile of American education.\textsuperscript{88} In 1983, the NCEE published A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform; Kenna and Russell declared this document as the official beginning of standards-based reform in the United States.\textsuperscript{89}

A Nation at Risk stated that the United States would fall behind on the global stage both economically and technologically if the quality of education did not improve.\textsuperscript{90} Its recommendations for reform included standards, instructional content, teacher quality, and school leadership.\textsuperscript{91} Kenna and Russell signified that the proposal for standards is the report’s most significant contribution.\textsuperscript{92}

\textsuperscript{85} Mark and Madura, \textit{Contemporary Music Education}, 15.

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., 16.

\textsuperscript{88} Kenna and Russell, “The Culture and History of Standards-Based Educational Reform and Social Studies in America,” 29.

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{90} Mark and Madura, \textit{Contemporary Music Education}, 16.

\textsuperscript{91} Kenna and Russell, “The Culture and History of Standards-Based Educational Reform and Social Studies in America,” 30.

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.
Despite the national significance of *A Nation at Risk*, the document was not without criticism. Americans feared that national education standards “would enhance the federal control of education and thereby reduce the control of state and local policymakers.”

Music educators considered the report a disappointment for music education. Lehman said it placed arts education in a “second tier of priorities, clearly subordinate to the highest-ranked fields of study.” In contrast, other 1983 education reports, including The College Board’s *Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do* and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching’s *High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America*, recommended that schools include the arts as core subjects. Thus, the debate over the inclusion of arts subjects as core subjects continued through the latter half of the twentieth century.

**1990s**

Once again, the federal government became involved in education to enact “federal legislation to adopt national education standards,” which Mark and Madura consider “the most significant development in reform since the 1950s.” This involvement came to fruition when President Bill Clinton passed the Goals 2000: Educate America Act in March 1994. This legislation stated that students would demonstrate competency in English, mathematics, science, world languages, history, and the arts by 2000. It “emphasized a voluntary standards program”

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95 Mark and Madura, *Contemporary Music Education*, 16-17.

96 Ibid., 18.

97 Ibid., 85.

98 Ibid.
and desired to “fund states to create their own standards,” resolving the public’s concerns that the federal government would take too much power away from the states.⁹⁹ In contrast, Kenna and Russell reported that Goals 2000 did not provide “clear incentives” or a system of accountability for states to demonstrate student progress.¹⁰⁰ Once Congress passed this legislation, several national education coalitions developed new national content standards for their respective subjects. MENC was a member of the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, which created the National Standards for Arts Education, including music standards.

2000s

No Child Left Behind

Because Goals 2000 expired at the turn of the century, the twenty-first century began with a reiteration of ESEA known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The Bush administration passed this legislation in 2001, which required “schools to bring all students to a certain level of proficiency in reading, math, and science by 2014.”¹⁰¹ NCLB dictated that states must develop their content standards for various core subjects, including the arts.¹⁰² Kenna and Russell wrote that this landmark legislation “managed to considerably and noticeably expand the role of the federal government in education while at the same time continuing to respect state control over standards,” continuing Goals: 2000’s strategy to leave as much regulation to the states as possible.¹⁰³ Unlike Goals: 2000, NCLB integrated a system of accountability. States had to

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¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 33.

¹⁰¹ Mark and Madura, Contemporary Music Education, 34.

¹⁰² Ibid., 87.

demonstrate proficiency through standardized testing, but NCLB only required testing in reading and mathematics. 104 If states could not document progress, then they would lose their federal funding. 105

Like any other national education legislation, NCLB was not without criticism. Mark and Madura shared that NCLB forced many schools and districts to discontinue their music programs as they had to redirect their resources towards reading and mathematics. 106 Additionally, critics stated that “success in test taking [does not indicate] a sound education program…it simply shows the ability to take tests successfully.” 107 Under NCLB, educators considered standards-based reform to have transformed to test-based reform, “where tests communicate expectations and inform practice more than standards.” 108

Desimone agreed with these critics’ debate over whether NCLB could provide proper, effective standards-based education. She stated that true standards-based reform creates high-quality content standards, assessments to assess the standards, provides support to teachers, and establishes accountability. 109 Despite these advantages, the amount of time spent on standardized test preparation for NCLB compliance greatly diminishes the available time for genuine instruction and emphasis on skills-based activities. 110 Through her qualitative examination of early attempts at standards-based reform, Desimone found that early occurrences of standards-

104 Mark and Madura, *Contemporary Music Education*, 87.

105 Ibid.

106 Ibid.

107 Ibid., 88.


110 Ibid.
based reform “were more closely aligned with the theoretical vision of standards-based reform than were later manifestation as codified under NCLB.” These early efforts at state levels saw more productive education reform than when NCLB introduced standardized testing. Thus, at its extremes, NCLB hindered teachers’ creativity and limited student achievement as a greater emphasis on reading and mathematics severely limited other available instruction, such as the arts. The battle between arts education and the focus on reading, writing, and mathematics continued.

Every Student Succeeds Act

The Obama administration passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, which remains the most recent iteration of ESEA. Whereas NCLB focused heavily on reading and math as areas of academic success, ESSA shifted the focus in education from “core academic subjects” to “well-rounded subjects.” Swain reports that this legislation was the first time the federal government enumerated music education as a well-rounded subject and thus designated that school districts could employ federal funds to support music education.

ESSA “shifted more control back to the states” and encouraged them to reflect on their educational visions and goals. Additionally, it required states to develop their standards and systems of assessment, allowing them to control their own accountability measures, unlike


112 Ibid.


NCLB’s system.\textsuperscript{116} NAfME stated that this flexible accountability system allows for “music education-friendly [assessment] measures like student engagement, parental engagement, and school culture/climate.”\textsuperscript{117}

Swain delineates that because ESSA is the first time federal legislation mandated the use of federal funds for music education, music educators should advocate to their schools and local school boards for the designation of federal funds.\textsuperscript{118} Educators can use Title I or Title IV funds to support music education, music programs, and music course offerings.\textsuperscript{119} To do this, music educators should involve all stakeholders of their local education scene and establish local music coalitions.\textsuperscript{120} ESSA also emphasizes education policy at the localized level, meaning that now, local communities have more resources than ever to establish new music programs.\textsuperscript{121} After all, Benham stated that “Access to a quality music education is the right of every student and the responsibility of every school district and community.”\textsuperscript{122}

Development of National Music Standards

Twentieth Century Efforts Towards National Music Standards

After the dawn of education reform in the 1950s, several events during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s contributed to the first set of national music standards in the 1990s. One of the first of these events was the Yale Seminar on Music Education in 1963. The Cooperative Research

\textsuperscript{116} Swain, “Music Education Advocacy Post ESSA,” 21.

\textsuperscript{117} National Association for Music Education, “The Every Student Succeeds Act.”

\textsuperscript{118} Swain, “Music Education Advocacy Post ESSA,” 18-25.

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 22-24.

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 22-23.

Program of the United States Office of Education (known today as the United States Department of Education) sponsored the event, whose purpose was to identify and address “problems facing music in American schools.” The seminar identified three problems: The development of musicality and “understanding of music literature” and criteria of repertoire selection of performance and listening. It also determined that the primary goal of K-12 music instruction is musicality, including creativity, basic musicianship, and performances. Finally, the seminar provided recommendations for new ideas of instructional strategies and K-12 curricular resources.

Music educators criticized the Yale Seminar because only five of the thirty-one participants were directly involved in music education. This criticism “stimulated music education leaders to examine basic issues from the viewpoint of music education professionals.”

This examination led to the next effort towards the advancement of music education, the Tanglewood Symposium.

The Tanglewood Symposium lasted for ten days during the summer of 1967. MENC sponsored the event as a reaction to criticisms of the Yale Seminar to allow music education leaders to contribute to the reform of American music education. The symposium’s purpose

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124 Aaron W. Wilburn, “Lead by Standards? A Historical Examination of the Guiding Principles in the National Music Standards” (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, Columbus, 2018), 111, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.


127 Ibid., 112.

128 Ibid.

“was to define the role of music education in American society at a time of rapid social, economic, and cultural change” when the United States continued to battle the Soviet Union for the top global superpower position. MENC tasked attendees with examining “the unique contributions of music to society, and how the music education profession could attain its potential” in an ideal society. The event resulted in The Tanglewood Declaration, which summarized the discussions throughout the symposium and provided recommendations for the future of music education.

Two years later, MENC began its Goals and Objectives (GO) Project, whose purpose was to actualize the recommendations of The Tanglewood Declaration. Under the leadership of Paul Lehman, the project’s committee developed two goals and thirty-five objects, eight of which MENC prioritized for immediate attention. Several of these objectives promoted comprehensive music programs, lifelong learning opportunities, and supporting music teachers with the most effective instructional techniques and resources, which MENC achieved by inaugurating new music programs and activities. Because many of the objectives concerned curriculum and instruction, the GO Project established a foundation for future standards efforts, which Wilburn considers the project’s most significant impact on the development of music education reform.

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131 Ibid.

132 Ibid., 31.

133 Ibid.


In 1974, the National Commission on Instruction published *The School Music Program: Description and Standards* in response to the recommendations of the Tanglewood Symposium for high-quality music education.137 This document identified components of ideal school music programs to which school administrators and music teachers could compare their programs and determine methods of improvement.138 It also presented a model curriculum along with sample lesson plans.139 The second edition of *The School Music Program*, published in 1986, stated that all K-12 students would have access to music classes and that both high school and college students would be required to take at least one credit in the arts.140 Because the document identified standards of high-quality music programs, MENC demonstrated to the public that music education was a serious subject that deserved attention and improvement.141 Music education would not receive this attention until the next decade.

**National Standards for Arts Education**

**Development**

The National Standards for Arts Education developed out of Goals 2000, which enacted a standards-based reform of all school subjects, including the arts.142 This legislation included the arts because of MENC’s advocacy efforts of the previous decades.143 MENC, along with the American Alliance for Theater and Education, the National Art Education Association, and the

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138 Ibid., 32-33.


140 Mark and Madura, *Contemporary Music Education*, 33.

141 Ibid.

142 Ibid., 16-17.

National Dance Association, joined the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, which created the National Committee for Standards in the Arts. Each organization formed a task force for developing standards in their own disciplines, but all standards were to dictate “what students should know and be able to do in the arts.”

Lehman, previously the leader of the GO Project, explained that the purpose of writing national arts standards was “to halt the marginalization of the arts in American schools and to secure a place for the arts on the nation’s education agenda.” Without this explicit writing of arts standards, “other agencies will define our programs for us, or we will find ourselves pushed further and further out into the periphery of the curriculum.” For arts education to be taken seriously on a national scale, Lehman felt that music education leaders need to illustrate that music, and by extension, other arts subjects, are subjects “for sequential study and not merely [activities].”

An additional goal of the National Standards for Arts Education was to provide frameworks for states and school districts to develop their standards and curricula. It was the intention of the National Committee for Standards in the Arts for states and school districts to adopt or modify the standards after their publication and to provide support and resources for their music teachers to achieve the standards. Fallis encouraged music educators to lobby their

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145 Ibid., 26.

146 Ibid., 25.

147 Ibid., 26.

148 Ibid., 26, 28.

149 Ibid., 26.
districts and states to adopt the standards as they described what music teachers were doing in the classroom and justified these teachers’ work.\textsuperscript{150} The standards committee presented the standards to U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley in November 1994.

Format

The official title of the standards is as follows: \textit{National Standards for Arts Education: What Every Young American Should Know and Be Able to do in the Arts}. Music educators refer to these standards as the 1994 National Music Standards. The standards are organized by grades, with three grade divisions: K-4, 5-8, 9-12. There are content standards for Dance, Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts; the content standards are the same for each grade level. Grade level-specific achievement standards support the content standards, which “specify the understandings and levels of achievement that students are expected to attain in the competencies, for each of the arts, at the completion of grades 4, 8, and 12.”\textsuperscript{151} Grade level 9-12 has “two levels of achievement standards,” Proficient and Advanced.\textsuperscript{152} Music has nine content standards, which “specify what students should know and be able to do” in music.”\textsuperscript{153} The 1994 National Music Content Standards are as follows:

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments
4. Composing and arranging music within specific guidelines
5. Reading and notating music
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
7. Evaluating music and music performances
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts

\textsuperscript{150} Fallis, “National Standards: What’s Next?” 28.


\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 23-24.

\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., 24.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture

Reception

As with all education publications, the National Standards for Arts Education received positive and negative reception. Fallis shared that the standards provided a “unifying voice for all music teachers” regardless of age group or discipline taught. Music educators could transition from a defensive position to a place of responsibility to develop more comprehensive music programs. Lehman delineates that the National Standards for Arts Education was the first time United States policymakers were invested in arts education and used federal funds to support the standards-writing process. The committees wrote standards for all arts disciplines in the same format and the future instead of the present.

Lehman also reported that the biggest concern of the standards was that music teachers would not have enough time to teach all the standards’ content. Byo also documented that a shortage of instructional time was a concern of both music and generalist elementary teachers. Music teachers feared that they would be held accountable for achieving all the standards with only short times for music instruction. Bell found that teachers still found the standards

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156 Ibid., 26.


158 Ibid.

159 Ibid., 28.

challenging to implement nearly a decade after their implementation. They reported that they lacked appropriate resources to do so. While teachers were aware of the standards, their implementation across the United States was inconsistent.

In 2006, the MENC Task Force on National Standards conducted a national survey that reviewed the 1994 standards, their effectiveness, and recommendations for revisions. Lehman disclosed that teachers still felt overwhelmed at the high levels of expectations within the standards. He reinforced that the standards-writers did not write the standards to reflect the status quo of music education but wrote them with long-term goals in mind to dictate what music education means in society. Although Lehman wrote that educators should not revise standards too frequently, the increasingly technological world of the twenty-first century soon required new skills of students that were previously never taught in music. New standards would be necessary to promote these twenty-first century skills in music classrooms across the United States.

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163 Ibid., 31-42.
164 Ibid., 40.
166 Ibid., 31.
167 Ibid., 28-29.
168 Ibid., 32.
National Core Arts Standards

Development

Randall provides an account that describes the future of music education standards:

Imagine a set of standards far more detailed and rigorous than the existing National Standards for Music Education created in 1994. Imagine that those standards are tied to a comprehensive framework setting out the skills that all students should have in the 21st century. Finally, imagine that those standards also connect to new assessments that guide teachers in measuring what their students know, and an evaluation system that assists teachers in illustrating to their administrators how they are meeting program goals.\(^{169}\)

By 2013, forty-nine states had adopted the 1994 National Music Standards, but technological advances meant that society was once again changing and fast.\(^{170}\) New emphases in education on twenty-first century skills rendered the 1994 standards outdated. A revision of the standards would encourage music educators to incorporate these skills into music classrooms across the United States. Shuler inserted that putting a concert onstage no longer justified the rationale for music in schools.\(^{171}\) Teachers need to assist their students in music composition, analysis, and evaluation.\(^{172}\) Mark and Madura discussed that a new set of standards, built on the previous set, would reaffirm music education’s place in the twenty-first century and teach students the skills necessary to become college and career-ready.\(^{173}\)

The National Coalition of Core Arts Standards (NCCAS) developed and wrote a new set of arts standards published in 2014. This organization is an expansion on the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, and now included Arts Education Partnership,

\(^{169}\) Randall, “Tuning Up the Standards,” 34-35.

\(^{170}\) Mark and Madura, Contemporary Music Education 36.


\(^{172}\) Ibid.

\(^{173}\) Mark and Madura, Contemporary Music Education, 36.
Educational Theater Association, The College Board, and the State Education Agency for Directors of Arts Education and the original coalition members.\textsuperscript{174} Of course, NAfME replaced MENC as the music education member. NCCAS incorporated the perspectives of hundreds of arts educations over several months to “create a new set of arts standards for America’s schools, designed to be used in alignment with P21’s arts skills map and the Common Core math and English Standards.”\textsuperscript{175} These writers employed the backward design approach of Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins to write the standards.\textsuperscript{176} This process identifies important learning outcomes first, determines acceptable evidence, and then designs the path to achieve those results.\textsuperscript{177} Music educators refer to these standards as the 2014 National Music Standards.

These new standards “created a basic conceptual framework for 21\textsuperscript{st}-century learning” with skills that reinforce the three Rs, the four Cs (critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity), technology, and life and career skills.\textsuperscript{178} Additionally, they sought to mitigate the discrepancies of arts education across the United States, especially where arts courses are not mandatory.\textsuperscript{179} These standards emphasize assessment to evaluate both student and teacher work through performance and portfolios.\textsuperscript{180} Similar to the 1994 standards, the 2014

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[\textsuperscript{174}] Mark and Madura, \textit{Contemporary Music Education}, 36.
\item[\textsuperscript{175}] Randall, “Tuning Up the Standards,” 36.
\item[\textsuperscript{177}] Ibid.
\item[\textsuperscript{178}] Randall, “Tuning Up the Standards,” 35.
\item[\textsuperscript{180}] Ibid.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
standards imply that arts education is sequential and that “learning does not happen out of context.”

Format

The National Core Arts Standards present the standards by disciplines instead of grade levels. There are eleven Anchor Standards divided into four Artistic Processes, which are the same for each discipline. Within each discipline, there are discipline-specific performance standards. There are five arts disciplines represented in these standards: dance, media arts, music, theater, and visual arts. The music standards contain five separate strands: general music (divided into grade K-8 for performance standards, harmonizing instruments, composition and theory, traditional and emerging ensembles, and music technology. The latter four include different proficiency tracks for the performance standards. For example, the traditional and emerging ensembles strand contains Novice, Intermediate, Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced performance standards. Each discipline and strand also provided Enduring Understandings and Essential Questions. These “provide conceptual throughlines and articulate value and meaning within and across the arts discipline.” Corresponding MCA documents provide teachers with model assessments for evaluating student achievement of the standards.

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186 Ibid.
Readers can find a visual representation of the four artistic processes and eleven anchor standards in Table 1.

Table 1: National Core Arts Standards\textsuperscript{187}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artistic Process</th>
<th><strong>Creating</strong></th>
<th><strong>Performing/Presenting/Producing</strong></th>
<th><strong>Responding</strong></th>
<th><strong>Connecting</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anchor Standards</td>
<td>1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.</td>
<td>4. Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.</td>
<td>7. Perceive and analyze artistic work.</td>
<td>10. Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make arts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.</td>
<td>5. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.</td>
<td>8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.</td>
<td>11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Refine and complete artistic work.</td>
<td>6. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.</td>
<td>9. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparison

The 2014 National Music Standards are not an entirely new set of standards; they are merely Version 2.0 of the original 1994 Music Standards.\textsuperscript{188} Shuler discussed that music educators should not consider this new set an abandonment of the 1994 standards but rather a method of making the standards more effective.\textsuperscript{189} The new standards are “not a national curriculum” but provide a starting point for developing localized curricula.\textsuperscript{190} They encourage


\textsuperscript{188} Nierman, “Standards 2.0—Beyond Discussion,” 6.

\textsuperscript{189} Powers, “Arts Educators Join Forces on Standards,” 24.
music educators to design curricula, instruction, and assessments that stimulate students into thinking like musicians.\textsuperscript{191}

The most significant change between the 1994 and 2014 National Music Standards is the shift from a product orientation to a process orientation. While the 1994 standards emphasized music instruction products (performance), the 2014 ones “are based on the processes of making, performing, and responding to music.”\textsuperscript{192} Several music educators discussed the impacts this shift would have on teachers. Shuler wrote that teachers who already implemented the 1994 standards and encouraged musical independence would easily adjust to the 2014 standards.\textsuperscript{193} He suggests that the 2014 format should make lesson planning easier “because the structure provides an authentic sequence for outcomes.”\textsuperscript{194} By implementing the new standards, educators teach college and career-ready and twenty-first century skills to their students.\textsuperscript{195} Because this shift from product to process requires different skill sets, Odegaard suggests that teachers explore various resources to assist them in this change.\textsuperscript{196}

Music Curriculum Writing

Purpose

There are several motivations for writing a standards-based curriculum. First, Conway reminds us that “it is important to understand that the [national] Standards themselves are not a

\textsuperscript{190} Nierman, “Standards 2.0—Beyond Discussion,” 6.
\textsuperscript{191} Shuler, Norgaard, and Blakeslee, “The New National Standards for Music Educators,” 47.
\textsuperscript{192} Odegaard, \textit{Music Curriculum Writing}, 10.
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid., 41.
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid., 41, 45.
\textsuperscript{196} Odegaard, \textit{Music Curriculum Writing}, 15.
While the national standards are not a national curriculum, Nierman states that they provide a “framework for curriculum development.” Odegaard offers that standards-based encourage teachers who only teach using the same methods their teachers employed. Standards-based curricula provide the teacher with direction, purpose, and a sequential ordering of material.

Adopting a standards-based curriculum also provides the music educator with robust advocacy tools. Both Odegaard and Whitlock discuss how creating grade level or content area curricula presents music as a curricular subject to administrators and stakeholders, resulting in music receiving equity with other curricular subjects. When music educators demonstrate through a standards-based curriculum that music is “as educationally sound as other subjects,” music has more security when budget cuts occur.

Wells and Kalogeridis present positive accounts of standards-based curriculum writing and adoption. Wells states that the national standards have improved communication among music teachers in his district and provided clear goals for teachers and students. Instruction became more focused as students learn skills through meaningful, pre-designed activities instead

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200 Ibid., 9-10.


of “hit-or-miss coverage through random class activities.” While some music educators fear that the national music standards diminish teacher and student creativity, Kalogeridis states otherwise. She reports that instruction still warrants both teacher and student creativity; the standards merely provide guidelines for creativity and student achievement. Thus, benefits of adopting a standards-based curriculum in music include, but are not limited to, increased focus and direction, strengthened advocacy, and provided guidelines for all types of instructional activities.

**Components and Design**

While Conway discussed that “There is no one correct way to write a curriculum,” writers should take the school or school district’s instructional practices into consideration. She believes that a music curriculum should contain the following components: Department/program philosophy, goals and beliefs, development skills or benchmarks, required resources (instructors, classroom and performance spaces, equipment, budget), sample lesson plans, sample assessment frameworks (checklists, rating scales, rubrics), and suggested resources. Whitlock wrote that a secondary choral curriculum should specifically include “1) vocal technique, 2) choral technique, 3) audiation/music reading, 4) vocabulary/music fundamentals/basic theory, 5) style and history.” Curricula should contain guidelines for both

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204 Wells, “Designing Curricula Based on the Standards,” 39.


206 Conway, “Curriculum Writing in Music,” 54.

207 Ibid., 55.

scope (content taught/learning) and sequence (the order in which the teacher teaches the content).^{209}

There are several options for curriculum designs. Mellizo discusses the two primary schools of thought, outcomes-based and experience-based curriculum designs. Outcomes-based design “assumes the process of learning is rational and systematic;” writers of this design start with the learning outcomes first and backwardly design the instructional activities.^{210} She inserts that experience-based design is more compatible with music teaching as this design allows learning outcomes to unfold as students experience the content naturally.^{211} In contrast, the 2014 National Music Standards writers wrote the standards with an outcomes-based design in mind.^{212} Actual music teaching probably falls in between the two designs.

Conway offers several other curricular designs. In addition to the outcomes-based design, which she labels as objectives-based, she suggests the literature-based, skills-based, knowledge-based, and grade-age-related curricular designs.^{213} In YCSD, the elementary general music curriculum reflects the grade-age curriculum design as both the 2014 National Music Standards and the 2020 Virginia Music SOLs present standards grouped by grade level. Conway suggests that the literature-based curriculum design works well for performance-based courses, which is the design of YCSD secondary choral ensembles.^{214} Regardless, teachers should incorporate

^{209} Whitlock, “Choral Curriculum as it Affects Performance at the Secondary Level,“ 39.


^{211} Ibid.


^{213} Conway, “Curriculum Writing in Music,” 56.

^{214} Ibid.
other skills into a literature-based curriculum. Directors should include additional resources that develop comprehensive musicianship skills within their students.

**Teacher Ownership**

Several music educators agree that when all music teachers involve themselves in curriculum writing, they are more likely to take ownership of the document and implement it into their classroom. Unfortunately, this is not usually the case. Wells offers a description of the typical music curriculum writing process:

Producing a written curriculum is frequently an unwelcome task for music departments. It is often initiated because of state or local school district requirements. In a series to complete the task as quickly as possible, a small group of teachers or an individual leader in the department will write a new curriculum. After it is completed and accepted by the school district, it is given to teachers who may not understand what to do with it and thus may never use it.

When only the curriculum writing process only includes the perspectives of a few music teachers, “There will be a disconnect between the written document and what is taught.” Additionally, documents that do not reflect actual teaching practices (both content and procedures) are not helpful to both teachers and students.

In contrast, curriculum writing can be a meaningful and valuable experience when all teachers participate in the process. Wells shares that because the entire music faculty met eight times during the curriculum writing process, all teachers contributed to the development of the

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217 Ibid., 34.


219 Ibid.

220 Ibid., 57.
When curriculum writers invite input from all music teachers, teachers are more likely to implement the curriculum into their classrooms. Odegaard reminds the music educator that “All music courses taught should have curriculum documents.”

**Incorporating National and State Standards**

While the national standards provide guidelines for music education on a national scope, “the responsibility for the education of our young people resides in local communities, and these communities receive their mandate to educate the citizenry from the state.” Thus, education is a state power. Because of this power, music curricula vary across the country among states and between local school districts.

The national music standards provide guidelines for states to develop their standards, informing local school districts how to write their localized curriculum. Odegaard describes this as a trickle-down effect: The national standards inform the state standards, which inform the district standards, which inform each course’s curriculum. One of the main criticisms of the 1994 National Music Standards was that the standards’ goals were too hard for teachers and students to achieve. Odegaard points out that the 2014 National Music Standards encourage

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221 Wells, “Designing Curricula Based on the Standards,” 34-35.


225 Ibid.


states and local school districts to adjust the national standards to meet the needs of their states, districts, and schools.\textsuperscript{228}

There are two schools of thought when incorporating national and state standards into the localized music curriculum. The first is that teachers should write the curriculum first and then find standards to support the content. Both Conway and Kalogeridis suggest that teachers should write the local curriculum first and “then use standards to create or enhance measurable objectives for students and track achievement.”\textsuperscript{229} The second school of thought advises teachers to examine how the content fits into the standard and not the other way around.\textsuperscript{230}

Regardless, teachers should always determine their state’s requirements for music education first before incorporating the national standards and other supplemental material into the curriculum.\textsuperscript{231} Although teachers should not wholly ignore the National Music Standards, state guidelines come first because education in the United States is a state power. Thus, when incorporating national and state standards into the localized music curriculum, teachers should first identify their state standards and requirements for music education. Then, they should determine if the state standards need additional support from the national standards. Finally, they should adapt both the national and state standards to meet the goals and needs of the teacher’s local school district. This process ensures that music educators write the localized music curriculum to meet the needs of those particular students to help them reach their full potential.\textsuperscript{232}

\textsuperscript{228} Odegaard, \textit{Music Curriculum Writing}, 119.

\textsuperscript{229} Kalogeridis, “Harmonizing with the Standards,” 28.


\textsuperscript{231} Kalogeridis, “Harmonizing with the Standards,” 28.
Assessment Practices of Secondary Music Teachers

Observations/Practices

Assessments are activities that allow teachers to evaluate student understanding. Payne et al. defined assessment as “an action or instance of making judgment about intended learning, such as a test or knowledge or skills.” Odegaard indicated that assessments should be written before lesson plans so that teachers can accurately plan activities and materials to ensure students grasp the appropriate content. Hale and Green support Odegaard’s claim, stating that teachers are more effective when establishing goals and incorporating instructional strategies to reach said goals.

Kotora and Payne et al. discussed the value of authentic assessments, indicating that they are more than just written tests. Kotora described that authentic assessments advocate for “the use of multiple measures to observe and document student achievement in situations that more closely resemble real-world application of knowledge.” Teachers should integrate multiple assessments tasks and tools “through which students demonstrate proficiencies and achievement


233 Ibid., 125.


of learning outcomes.” Teachers should not solely implement written tests, as this does not provide stakeholders with an accurate picture of student achievement.

Music education authors agree that educators can use assessment to demonstrate student work, advocate for resources, and establish connections between music educators, students, and other stakeholders (parents, administrators, community members). Policymakers and administrators employ this data for accountability measures as well as teacher evaluation.

Historically, educators have used assessment to address the following tasks:

(a) diagnosing student needs; (b) assigning grades; (c) providing feedback to students; (d) placing students in instructional groups or other programs; (e) controlling student behavior and maintaining the classroom environment; (f) planning, coordinating and evaluating instruction; (g) communicating achievement expectations; and (h) teaching important concepts and skills to students.

Assessment data can guide faculty when making “curricular decisions for program improvement.”

Music educators use assessment in the above situations to demonstrate the standards of the music program to stakeholders and gather data regarding teacher effectiveness. Standard assessment formats in music classrooms include performance exams, concert performances, as

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well as non-musical criteria such as attendance, attitude, and classroom participation.\textsuperscript{245} Many music educators have criticized this non-musical assessment approach, delineating that “the use of non-musical criteria gives students, teachers, and administrators the idea that music performance classes lack a rigorous approach to teaching and learning.”\textsuperscript{246} This status threatens music’s credibility as a curricular subject. Kotora supports that some non-musical criteria may be appropriate, as ensembles performances are “a major part of the entire musical learning experience.”\textsuperscript{247} Non-musical criteria should only constitute a small portion of the music teacher’s assessment strategies.

Assessment is a critical component of standards-based education reform; Bradford indicated that standards-based curricula are ineffective without assessment.\textsuperscript{248} Even though assessment is a central component of current education reform efforts in the United States, Russell and Austin found that there “is little professional consensus as to what teachers should assess, how they should assess, or when they should assess.”\textsuperscript{249} They also discovered that the “adoption of standards-based curricula had little or no impact on [most music teacher’s] assessment practices.”\textsuperscript{250} Similarly, Kotora found that high school choral directors choose their assessment methods based on personal choice rather than the direction of national and state


\textsuperscript{246} Kotora, Jr., “Assessment Practices in the Choral Music Classroom,” 67.

\textsuperscript{247} Ibid., 74.


\textsuperscript{249} Russell and Austin, “Assessment Practices of Secondary Music Teachers,” 38.

\textsuperscript{250} Ibid., 42
standards. These concerns about music education assessment warrant recommendations for future assessment practices.

**Recommendations**

Before providing a list of specific assessment tools, a review of the types of assessment informs music educators what types of assessment are appropriate and when. Odegaard identifies three types of assessment: Diagnostic, Formative, and Summative. Diagnostic assessment (pre-test) informs the teacher what the student needs to learn. Teachers can consider formative assessment as “checking as you go” or evaluating student progress throughout the learning. This formative feedback communicates to students what they need to improve for the final assessment. Finally, summative assessment should occur at the end of the learning process, such as a unit or performance, to determine student achievement.

There are a variety of assessment tools music educators can employ to evaluate student learning. Bradford discussed that while no single assessment method addresses all aspects of the learning process, various assessments provide the teacher with “a more complete and comprehensive picture of the students’ understanding.” Odegaard provides the music educator with an inclusive list of possible assessment tools as well as examples of each one:

1. Checklist: a list of performance criteria
2. Rubrics: a scoring guide
3. Questioning: asking students questions periodically during learning

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253 Ibid.


4. Paper and pencil test: multiple-choice, fill in the blank, etc.
5. Self-assessment
6. Writing projects
7. Day-to-day observations
8. Culminating project or performance
9. Portfolio
10. Multi-media projects

Odegaard defined a checklist as “a simple assessment that lists expectations.” Bradford noted that teachers should develop new checklists when they introduce new skills and concepts in class. When creating rubrics with four levels of performance categories, Odegaard advises teachers to write level three first, as this is where the majority of students should reside. Then, teachers should write level four, followed by levels two and one. Teachers should also include non-intrusive in-class assessments such as asking questions and short performance opportunities, such as each section singing or playing their part. Incorporating various assessment tools provides the teacher with the most accurate picture of the student’s achievement.

Payne et al. and Fox advocate for the use of Bloom’s Taxonomy in music education assessment. Bloom published this taxonomy in 1956, which outlines a hierarchy of six cognitive processes that move from lower-level knowledge recall to higher-level evaluation and creation. Fox wrote that balancing both low and high levels of cognitive questioning “encourages students to think more critically about their musicianship,” as well as maximizes

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258 Ibid., 127.
261 Ibid.
262 Ibid., 151.
their learning potential. Payne et al. claim that effective curriculum and assessment naturally reflect the different cognitive levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy.

Because music education leaders wrote the 2014 National Music Standards with a backward design, many recommend that music educators approach curriculum and assessment writing with the same process. Teachers should determine goals first and design the assessment before they tackle lesson planning. They should select acceptable criteria to complete the assessment successfully and evaluate the results after administering the assessment.

Payne et al. discuss the importance of differentiation of instruction. Teachers should equip themselves with the skills necessary to create flexible assignments that accommodate individual student needs to demonstrate their musical abilities. Assessment becomes effective when teachers respect student autonomy and provide students with various opportunities to demonstrate their skills.

Finally, Odegaard, Bradford, Hale and Green emphasized the importance of including students in the assessment writing process. Hale and Green discussed that this inclusion is important because it teaches students how to function autonomously in the real world. When teachers make students aware of the assessment expectations, “students know exactly what to do


266 Hale and Green, “Six Key Principles for Music Assessment,” 27.


268 Ibid., 39.

269 Ibid.

270 Hale and Green, “Six Key Principles for Music Assessment,” 29.
to be proficient.”271 Odegaard also recommends self and peer assessment to encourage students to “take ownership of their work,” while Hale and Green state that it improves self-application.272 Students become “active participants” and take charge of their education when teachers involve them in the assessment and decision-making process.273

**Model Cornerstone Assessments**

NAfME published the Model Cornerstone Assessments (MCAs) corresponding to the 2014 National Music Standards. These model assessments serve as exemplars that teachers can adapt to their classroom context.274 The assessments are curriculum-embedded tasks that are “intended to engage students in applying their knowledge and skills in an authentic and relevant context.” They should anchor the curriculum like a cornerstone anchors a building.275 When administered with integrity, MCAs “can reliably illustrate student learning related to the current music standards” when coupled with assessments of musical skills and abilities beyond the scope of the standards.276

**Summary**

The literature reviewed in this chapter presents the author with curriculum writing strategies and assessment tools for writing the new secondary choral curriculum for YCSD. The historical perspective of standards-based reform in the United States and the development of

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274 Randall, “Tuning Up the Standards,” 37.


national music standards determines their future implementation. These standards-based curriculum writing strategies ensures the new secondary choral curriculum for YCSD incorporates relevant and specific research-based resources.

A review of the progression of standards-based reform in United States education reveals how this curricular approach has impacted all instructional subjects, including music. The development of national music standards informs how standards-based reform has specifically changed music instruction from the pre-standards era to the present day. An examination of various music curricular writing strategies educated the researcher on the best methods for writing the new YCSD secondary choral curriculum. Finally, an analysis of assessment recommendations prepares the new curriculum for effective assessment tools.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology, design, procedure, and data analysis for this study. A qualitative method with a historical approach was employed to examine the history of standards-based reform in United States music education by examining the literature. She uses thematic analysis to synthesize themes from the emerged patterns of the literature review to determine which themes and components of standards-based music curricula she should include in the new secondary choral curriculum for YCSD.

Design

This study employed a qualitative research method with a historical approach. Creswell and Creswell define qualitative research as “using words (qualitative) rather than numbers (quantitative)” to explore “open-ended questions.” Because both research questions begin with “How,” qualitative research was the most appropriate as the study sought to answer both open-ended questions to explore and understand “the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.” Specifically, a qualitative approach was applied to analyze standards-based reform documents in music education to inform how music educators can improve this curricular approach in the future.

According to Kenna and Russell, “Historical research is the systematic approach to locating, evaluating, and synthesizing evidence in order to ascertain facts and make assertive conclusions concerning past events.” While determining past conclusions is a significant

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278 Ibid., 4.

component of historical research, researchers should also consider the impact these conclusions have on both the present and future events. Lundy states that regardless of the historical event, “historical research provides the critical contextual link of the past to the present.”280 Lundy also provides a five-step design for historical research, which includes an identification of the historical phenomenon, developing researching questions and hypotheses, exploration and collection, evaluation and analysis, and interpretation.281

In the context of music education, music educators use historical research “to understand the present and to acquire missing information or complete the record in planning and preparing for the future.”282 Heller states that the “value of historical research in music education may also spring from a need to correct errors in the existing record or verify the present record.”283 Within the context of music education, this study examined the history of standards-based education and curriculum writing. This historical perspective was utilized to create a secondary choral curriculum that reflects the past but can transition secondary choral instruction into the future.

Specific steps of the research plan are outlined in a later section.

Questions and Hypotheses

This study sought to determine how the researcher could combine national and state music standards to create a new secondary choral curriculum for YCSD. The history of standards-based reform in the United States and within the context of music education guided the

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281 Lundy, “Historical Research,” 2396.


283 Ibid.
style, components, and sequence of this curriculum. Additionally, previous versions of the YCSD secondary choral curriculum were examined to determine how the new curriculum should change or remain the same as these versions. Thus, the following research questions and hypotheses guided the study:

Research Question One: In what ways can the 2020 Virginia Music Standards of Learning and the 2014 National Music Standards be combined to create an effective and sequential curriculum for secondary choral ensembles in York County School Division?

Hypothesis One: The 2020 Virginia Music SOLs and the 2014 National Music Standards can be combined to create an effective and sequential curriculum for secondary choral ensembles in York County School Division by using the skills criteria of the state standards, incorporating the processes of the national standards, and creating measurable assessments.

Research Question Two: In what ways can secondary music performance teachers within York County School Division balance a division-wide curriculum with individual teacher’s areas of expertise?

Hypothesis Two: Secondary music performance teachers within York County School Division can balance a division-wide curriculum with individual teachers’ areas of expertise by determining general musical skills and abilities, adapting the standards to different musical styles, and designing flexible assessments.
Procedure

This study employed an examination of related literature and Lundy’s five steps for historical research. The study did not require Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval because it did not involve human participants. The literature examination provided the foundation for developing a new and effective secondary choral curriculum for teachers in YCSD.

First, participants identify the end goal of the project: a secondary choral curriculum for YCSD that incorporates aspects of both the 2014 National Music Standards and the 2020 Virginia Music SOLs. Then, she examined relevant literature regarding the evolution of standards-based education in the United States throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to determine how standards-based reform has changed since its introduction in the 1950s. This historical perspective informed how the new curriculum should change or remain the same based on past trends of standards-based curricula.

Next, the literature examination was refined to standards-based reform in music education to grasp how the adoption of national music standards has impacted music education. These ways informed how music educators could write future music curricula to reflect the increasingly standards-based design in music education. Literature regarding music curriculum and assessment writing was explored to precisely determine which curricular components of music education the YCSD secondary choral curriculum should include and recommendations for music assessment.

Comparing the 2014 National Music Standards and the 2020 Virginia Music SOLs revealed differences between the two documents. This comparison revealed that the national standards focused more on artistic processes. At the same time, the SOLs provided more specific criteria for the standards, such as specific rhythmic patterns that students should perform at each
grade level. Thus, the researcher concluded that she should employ the artistic processes of the national standards and the criteria difficulty level of the state standards to create a comprehensive secondary choral curriculum that dictates the processes for learning the criteria. She then wrote the secondary choral curriculum for YCSD.

Finally, the researcher created a set of instructions for combining the national and state standards. These instructions teach music educators of other levels and content areas how to combine national and state standards for their content area to create effective and sequential curricula for their particular teaching context or school districts. These included how the curriculum can be adapted to different ensembles while providing means for authentic assessment. Thus, the study fills an existing gap in the literature by providing music educators with instructions for combining national and state standards for their specific content area.

Following the appropriate standards for historical qualitative research, this research project examined the existing literature on standards-based instruction in music education, specifically in secondary choral instruction. The historical perspective was employed to establish connections between past trends in music education and the future of music education in the twenty-first century. The results from this study inform the secondary choral music educator how to write a curriculum that incorporates both national and state standards while directing their curriculum to produce choirs of the twenty-first century.
Data Analysis

A thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data. Thematic analysis is the process in which researchers categorize and summary data “in a way that captures the important concepts within the data set.”

Researchers must synthesize themes from patterns that emerge during the research process to contribute helpful generalizations to the literature. To complete a thematic analysis on a literature review, researchers must describe emerged patterns and the overarching theme(s) that unite them. These patterns and themes inform the author of research-based practices that she should include in the new secondary choral curriculum for YCSD. Additionally, this thematic analysis allows for synthesis of new ideas for future standards-based reform in music education based on past and present themes.

Summary

This chapter discussed the design, procedure, and data analysis for the study. A qualitative method with a historical approach determined patterns and themes of past and present standards-based music curricula that music educators should or should not apply in the future. The researcher can recommend new themes and generalizations to other music educators for inclusion in new standards-based music curricula by incorporating thematic analysis.

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286 Ibid., 867.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings of the study’s two research questions. This discussion employs the historical perspectives gathered from the literature review to determine how the new secondary choral curriculum for YCSD should be written. The literature review established the historical progression of standards-based education reform in general and music education. This progression indicates how standards-based music curricula of the present should reflect the past and prepare teachers and students for the future.

The examination of the research findings for Research Question One informs how music educators can combine national and state standards to write an effective and sequential curriculum for their teaching context based on the researcher’s experience. Discourse is presented on how she arrived at these conclusions based on the literature review and primary document analysis results. Research Question Two shares how secondary music educators can adopt a standards-based curriculum to their specific ensembles using the framework of both national and state standards. Finally, the author supplies an instruction manual of these combinations and adaptive processes so other music educators can provide high-quality music education to their students by employing both national and state music standards.

Research Question One

Research Question One sought to determine how the 2020 Virginia Music Standards of Learning and the 2014 National Music Standards could be combined to create an effective and sequential curriculum for secondary choral ensembles. The researcher hypothesized that this could be done by utilizing the skills criteria of the state standards, incorporating the processes of the national standards, and creating measurable assessments. A review of pertinent literature and
primary standards-based documents provided curricular designs and methods for adapting the national standards. It revealed the progression of standards-based reform in music education from the twentieth to the twenty-first century. This progression determined how the secondary choral curriculum of YCSD should be updated to reflect current and future trends in music education standards-based reform.

**Historical Perspectives**

The American public recognized the need for education reform following World War II when the United States showed threats of falling behind the Soviet Union in science, technology, and military power.\(^\text{287}\) Despite several efforts of MENC to nationally unify music education throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the federal government did not officially include music in the national education agenda until Goals 2000. This education law sponsored the writing of National Arts Standards, to include music, resulting in the 1994 National Music Standards.

The federal government has continued to include the arts in national education laws up to the present day. NCLB only stressed standardized testing in reading and mathematics, which diminished attention towards music education as schools struggled to raise their test scores to receive federal funds.\(^\text{288}\) In contrast, ESSA, the current education law, allows school divisions to use federal funds to support music education programs.\(^\text{289}\) ESSA was also the first time music was explicitly labeled a well-rounded subject.\(^\text{290}\) Because ESSA has emphasized the importance of music education, teachers need to write robust and creative music curricula to demonstrate their appreciation for including the arts in federal education law to federal stakeholders. Because

\(^{287}\) Mark and Madura, *Contemporary Music Education*, 12.

\(^{288}\) Ibid., 87.

\(^{289}\) National Association for Music Education, “The Every Student Succeeds Act.”

\(^{290}\) Swain, “Music Education Advocacy Post ESSA,” 20, 22.
standards-based reform continues to be a national education trend, the researcher determined this was the best approach for writing the new secondary choral curriculum for YCSD, especially since Odegaard noted that “Standards are here to stay.”

Although the federal government requests the composition of national education standards, states must still create their own standards frameworks, which they can or cannot base on the national standards. The SOLs are Virginia’s state standards. VDOE began to publish the SOLs in the mid-1990s following the lead of Goals 2000 and its following standards documents for multiple subjects. VDOE distributes the SOLs for each subject, which school divisions use to write their localized curricula.

Changes from Old to New

There are two publications of National Music Standards, the 1994 and 2014 versions. While there have been multiple versions of the Virginia Music SOLs, the most recent revision occurred in 2020. VDOE published the previous version in 2013. This section reviews the evolution of the 1994 to the 2014 National Music Standards and the 2013 to the 2020 Virginia Music SOLs. Examining these changes determines what should be include in the new secondary choral curriculum for YCSD and how she should write it to prepare the secondary choral directors of YCSD for future music education.

According to Nierman, the most significant change from previous standards versions to current ones is the change in emphasis from product to process. During the 1994 National Music Standards era, music educators, administrators, parents, and stakeholders regarded music


instruction products, i.e., performances, as essential components of music instruction. The 2014 update encourages teachers to focus on the processes of music instruction while still holding several concerts a year. This balance becomes a challenge for the music educator as society expects their students to demonstrate proficiency in each artistic process (creating, performing, responding, and connecting), even though it still places a heavy emphasis on traditional performances, such as a Winter and Spring Concert. Teachers must balance the processes with product preparation. The shift of focus from product to process reflects the technological and collaborative skills that the twenty-first century workforce demands students to learn to obtain a noteworthy profession after formal schooling.

Although music education leaders have written that shifting from a product to process orientation should not be difficult, Odegaard recognizes the need for increased curricular resources to assist teachers in making this switch. Teachers who have previously focused on musical independence will have an easier time adjusting to process-based standards than teachers who have historically focused only on technique and skills. To sustain higher-level thinking, Nierman recommends that music teachers view the standards as “measurable and attainable learning events based on artistic goals” instead of a list of skills that students should be able to do.

An additional difference is that the 2014 National Music Standards are grouped by type of class instead of by grade level. This categorization encourages specific instruction in each area of music education (ensembles, composition, music technology) rather than just a list of what

295 Ibid., 15.
students should be able to do based on their grade level. This orientation by class type presents students with an increased opportunity to learn various music skills instead of limiting them to a specific skill set determined by their age.

The 2020 Virginia Music SOLs also introduced some dramatic changes from its 2013 predecessor. There is an indication of a shift from product to process. The headings for the choral music of the 2013 version were Music Theory/Literacy, Performance, Music History and Cultural Context, Analysis, Evaluation, and Critique, and Aesthetics. The headings for the 2020 version include Creative Process, Critical Thinking and Communication, History, Culture, and Citizenship, Innovation in the Arts, and Technique and Application. Whereas the headings of the 2013 version indicate artistic products (theory, performances), the ones of the 2020 version indicate process through creativity, critical thinking, and applying appropriate technique when performing. This transformation reflects Virginia’s 5 C’s program, which asserts that Virginia students will be proficient in critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creative thinking, and citizenship upon graduation.298

Writing Recommendations

The literature review revealed several recommendations for writing a standards-based curriculum and what to include in it. Conway listed what any music curriculum should contain: a program philosophy, goals and beliefs, development skills/benchmarks, required resources, sample lesson plans, sample assessment frameworks, and suggested resources.299 Whitlock stated that a secondary choral curriculum should specifically contain guidelines for instructing vocal technique, choral technique, audiation/music reading, vocabulary and music theory, and style


The researcher strove to incorporate all of these aspects in the new secondary choral curriculum for YCSD.

The literature review also divulged several differing opinions for incorporating national and state standards into a localized curriculum. Schneckenburger recommended that teachers first research “their state’s expectations in aligning curriculum with the 2014 Music Standards.” In contrast, Conway advised teachers to write the local curriculum first, and then analyze how the curriculum needs to be adapted to meet the larger objectives of the standards. If teachers write with the larger goals first in mind, they might overlook essential components of music instruction by spending too much time on standards constraints. Kalogeridis reported that the standards “are most effective” when teachers write their curriculum first and then employ the standards to “enhance measurable objectives for students to track achievement.” Finally, Odegaard described the curriculum writing process as a “trickle-down effect” that begins with national standards, moves down to state and district standards, and ends with the individual curriculum.

Because Bradford states that standards-based curricula are ineffective without incorporating meaningful assessment, the researcher desired to study multiple assessment methods that would increase the effectiveness of the new curriculum. Recommended assessment tools include checklists, rubrics, questioning, multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank test items,

303 Ibid.
304 Ibid.
self-assessment, writing assignments, daily observations, performances, and portfolios.\textsuperscript{306}

Although these assessment tools are easily adaptable to any learning context, all studied authors agreed that assessments increase their effectiveness when the students assist the teacher in writing them. When students understand the assessment process and criteria, they are more likely to “take ownership of their own work” and demonstrate success on the assessment.\textsuperscript{307} An example of including students in this writing process is to have them provide items for a checklist or write descriptors for different performance levels in a rubric.

When creating assessments, music teachers should always consult the MCAs on the National Core Arts Standards website.\textsuperscript{308} The MCA document for middle and high school ensembles reflects the Traditional and Emerging Ensembles standards track. While the document is visually overwhelming at first, teachers may realize upon further reading that the MCAs resemble traditional teaching practices and do not require anything new of the teacher. For example, an example assessment walks the teachers through preparing students for a performance assessment such as a sectional or solo audition. Writers designed the MCAs to supply the teacher with sample assessment tools such as checklists, rubrics, and rating scales that teachers can adapt to any piece in any style. Despite these sample assessments, the most critical component of the music assessment process remains communicating the assessment’s expectations with students. If students are not made aware of these expectations, they have no idea how the teacher will evaluate their mastery of the criteria.

\textsuperscript{306} Odegaard, \textit{Music Curriculum Writing}, 126.

\textsuperscript{307} Odegaard, \textit{Music Curriculum Writing}, 126; Hale and Green, “Six Key Principles for Music Assessment,” 30.

The Writing Process

VDOE requires school divisions in Virginia to update their curriculum when they publish new SOLs. Because VDOE published the new Music SOLs in May 2020 at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, YCSD did not require the music teachers to immediately revise the curriculum as they navigated the return to school plan for the 2020-2021 school year. In October 2020, the music coordinator for YCSD communicated the need to write the new curriculum and asked for volunteers from each content area (general, choral, band; YCSD does not have orchestra) to serve on the curriculum committee.

Although the 2020 Music SOLs have new headings that reflect twenty-first century skills, their format is the same. SOL writers separated the seven levels of the choral music SOLs throughout the entire SOLs document. They are not sequential as teachers cannot easily compare one level to the next to prepare students for the next level or differentiate instruction based on individual student needs. Additionally, many of the seven levels are the same. The middle and high school beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels are the same, with minor differences. The high school artist level is different. These differences mean that students leaving an “advanced” middle school ensemble and entering a “beginning” high school ensemble would return to the same skills as the beginner level, which they would have already mastered in a beginner level ensemble in middle school. This return to previously learned skills is not reflective of secondary choral teaching practices, which, in YCSD, begin in grade six and continues through grade twelve.

In contrast, the national standards provide five levels of standards (novice, intermediate, proficient, accomplished, and advanced) that do not identify certain grade levels. This sequence reflects actual teaching practices because any YCSD student can register for a beginner ensemble
at any secondary grade level as a “new” choral student. The national standards favor sequence choral instruction from beginning to advanced levels, allowing teachers to move throughout the different instructional levels as their students grow in their technical and musical skills.

Despite the sequential nature of the national standards, they do not provide criteria for the different levels. These criteria would include the exact skills students need to master before moving on to the next level of instruction. For example, the novice level of the national standards discusses selecting repertoire that supports music reading and technical skills. But what exactly should students be able to read, and what technical skills should they master? This need for criteria is where the SOLs come into play. The SOLs do provide these specific criteria, such as what students should be able to read and do. For example, the Beginning Level of the Middle School Choral Music SOLs states that students can interpret dynamic markings and then lists the exact dynamic markings students study: “p, mp, mf, f, crescendo and decrescendo.” Thus, the researcher determined that the 2014 National Music Standards and the 2020 Virginia Music SOLs could be combined to create a sequential secondary choral curriculum for YCSD by incorporating the sequential processes of the national standards and the skills criteria of the SOLs. She gathered from the literature review that the curriculum would need effective assessment measures to establish effectiveness.

After this realization, five major components were identified for inclusion in the curriculum. These included a sequence chart, a quarter guide, sample lesson plans, assessments, and resources. The sequence chart would reflect the format of the national standards by providing teachers with a visual of each standard and their increase in difficulty/depth from the

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310 Virginia Board of Education, Music Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools, 39.
beginning to advanced levels. The quarter guide would provide teachers with a year-long structure of what they should work on with their students each quarter. It also includes tasks they must complete, such as scheduling concerts and field trips, approving fundraisings, and registering students for District Chorus auditions. The sample lesson plans and assessments would provide teachers with examples they could modify for their classrooms. These would also communicate to teachers the expectations for high-performance levels among YCSD teachers and students.

The researcher needed to merge the 2020 Virginia Music SOLs with the 2014 National Music Standards to create the sequence chart. She needed to decide how to combine the seven levels of the SOLs with the five levels of the national standards. Because the SOLs were the same for the middle and high school beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels, she reduced the SOLs from seven levels to four. Because YCSD expected her to follow the SOLs more strictly than the national standards, she decided to create a sequence chart for four levels: Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, and Artist, following the headings of the SOLs.

When writing the sequence chart, the middle school and high school beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels were first combined to ensure no criteria were left out as the high school versions were not exact copies of the middle school ones. Then, Bloom’s Taxonomy was consulted to revise verbiage of the standards to reflect the taxonomy’s progression. For example, in some cases, a verb in the analyze category of Bloom’s was embedded in the beginning level and a remembering verb in the advanced level. In this case, the verbs would have been switched so that the sequence of the standards matched the sequence of Bloom’s Taxonomy.
After all of the SOLs were revised to improve their sequence, she integrated the processes of the national standards. Many of the categories of the SOLs are similar to the artistic processes of the national standards. Again, because YCSD expected the curriculum to match the SOLs, the author kept the headings of the SOLs standards. Figure 2 delineates which artistic process of the national standards correlates to the SOL headings.

Table 2: SOL Headings and National Standards Artistic Processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOL Headings</th>
<th>National Standards Artistic Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creative Process</td>
<td>Creating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking and Communication</td>
<td>Responding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History, Culture, Citizenship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation in the Arts</td>
<td>Connecting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technique and Application</td>
<td>Performing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unlike the revised sequential verbiage of the sequence chart, the national standards contain the same terminology throughout the different performance levels but add additional process components as the levels increase in difficulty. When integrating the national standards into this sequence chart, the author decided to keep the verbiage of the SOLs and add the additional process components into the existing criteria of the SOLs. She felt this was the most effective method of demonstrating to teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders the sequential nature of music instruction.

When the researcher volunteered to write the new secondary choral curriculum for YCSD, the music coordinator requested that it would be written in detail to provide new teachers with a comprehensive snapshot of what they need to accomplish throughout the school year. She felt she could best achieve this by separating the different tasks by quarter by creating a quarter guide. This guide has two sections per quarter: Instructional Topics and Teacher Tasks. Instructional topics include the criteria that teachers should focus on during that specific quarter. For example, teach/review basic singing skills in Quarter 1 and prepare students for their first
concert, typically held in Quarter 2 before Winter Break. The Teacher Tasks encompass tasks the teacher must take care of outside instructional time. These tasks include, but are not limited to, selecting repertoire, securing concert dates and venues, hiring a pianist, scheduling field trips, and registering students for District Chorus.

The curriculum also includes multiple sample lesson plans. These lesson plans provide teachers with examples of different pacing suggestions for various needs throughout the school year. For example, a lesson at the beginning of the school year would include more warm-ups and technical exercises than the class periods leading up to a performance. The researcher incorporated a list of curricular resources consisting of recommendations for professional organizations, sight-reading, and tools for literature selection. The directors themselves are responsible for selecting repertoire. The discussion of Research Question Two includes additional guidance concerning repertoire selection.

Odegaard’s comprehensive list of assessment tools was utilized to contribute sample assessments for the curriculum. Because Odegaard closely modeled her sample assessments after the MCAs, these assessments accurately mirror the flexibility and adaptability of the MCAs. Teachers would do well to remember that assessments are most effective when they involve their students in the curriculum writing process. They can revise the assessments as needed to reflect a particular song or assessment objective. Teachers can modify the existing criteria to reflect the goals of a specific assessment.

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Instructions

The purpose of this study was to determine how the 2014 National Music Standards and the 2020 Music SOLs could be combined to create an effective and sequential curriculum for secondary choral ensembles in YCSD. A second purpose was to identify how teachers could adapt this curriculum with individual teachers’ areas of expertise and ensemble needs. Finally, the researcher sought to create an instruction manual for other music educators to write their own curriculum that incorporates both national and state standards. Because only analyzed the secondary choral music Virginia standards were analyzed, she wanted to provide other music educators, such as general and instrumental teachers, with a methodology for utilizing national and state standards in a localized music curriculum.

First, the music educator should locate the current version of the district curriculum and standards, if applicable. If there is no curriculum, the educator should consult the curricula of other nearby school districts. Then, the educator should locate the appropriate state standards document and determine the proper track of national standards. The applicable national standards track for most traditional contexts would be the General Music or Traditional and Emerging Ensembles track.

After locating the appropriate documents, the educator should determine if the state and district standards align with the national standards. If they are aligned, the educator should dig deeper to identify any discrepancies or holes and select appropriate resources for filling these holes. If they are not aligned, the educator should examine how they can combine them. The national standards provide the processes. The educator should determine if the state or district standards offer criteria.
If the documents do provide criteria, the educator can merge all standards documents by embedding the processes of the national standards within the requirements of the state and district standards. If there are no provided criteria, the educator must determine the criteria their division wants students to accomplish by graduating high school and at other benchmark grades, such as grades two, five, and eight. Next, determine how to merge these criteria with the artistic processes of the national standards. Ideally, this step, if needed, would involve all teachers of the particular area. Increased teacher participation during the curriculum writing process equates to increased teacher buy-in when it is time to implement it.

Next, the educator would employ the new or revised district standards document to write a curriculum. The educator should determine desired components of the curriculum and the most suitable option for curricular design. Often, the school district informs curricula writers what features the curriculum should include and a particular design and format. Educators should be cautious that standard curricular designs for other subjects are not necessarily the most effective for music instruction and should adjust the format if they are able.

The educator should create a year-long guide that informs teachers what topics to cover throughout certain times of the school year and tasks they must complete. This guide could present the responsibilities by month, quarter, semester, or trimester. The educator should select a time frame that best matches the time frame design of their school district. This guide should include as much information as possible to present first-year teachers with as many details as possible. This quarter guide presents challenges as some music teachers like to teach different concepts at different times of the year. It is also highly dependent on selected repertoire. YCSD gives its music teachers the flexibility to adapt the curriculum as needed. Educators should
determine their district’s leniency on moving topics around to different parts of the school year or if the administration expects uniformity across the district.

In this guide, the educator should include suggestions for adapting the curriculum to individual goals or type of ensemble. For example, the secondary choral curriculum would look different at a school that has a jazz choir versus another school that has a madrigal choir. The educator should also include suggestions for selecting repertoire and curricular resources. Additionally, the educator should inform how teachers can utilize the curriculum to create month-to-month, week-to-week, and daily plans for teaching the selected repertoire in a timely fashion that best prepares students for their performances. Despite the national standards’ emphasis on process, teachers must still put on performances, and they must start with the end in mind when teaching new music to their students.

Before the administration implements the curriculum, the curriculum writer should present the curriculum to the district music faculty of that content area. The writer should listen to their feedback and make necessary changes. Again, the more teachers are involved in the curriculum writing process, the more they implement the curriculum into their classroom. The educator should encourage teachers to document student progress via one or more of the suggested assessment tools throughout the school year. This data should inform teachers’ reflections and suggestions for future improvements of the curriculum. While the curriculum does not need an annual overhaul, an annual “checkup” would allow the district to maintain the curriculum’s effectiveness and ability to keep up with the most relevant research-based music teaching strategies.

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Research Question Two

Research Question Two sought to discover in what ways secondary music performance teachers within YCSD can balance a division-wide curriculum with individual teachers’ areas of expertise. The researcher hypothesized that she could complete this by determining general musical skills and abilities, adapting the standards to different musical styles, and designing flexible assessments. The purpose of this question was to provide secondary choral directors in YCSD with methods to adjust the division-wide curriculum to meet the demands of their unique ensembles. While most schools have choirs that sing traditional choral music, some have unique ensembles, such as a jazz choir. The division-wide curriculum must serve the needs of all teachers, students, and types of ensembles.

To adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of a particular ensemble, the educator must first determine the general musical skills and abilities students should master by the end of the course. While the sequence chart provides teachers with standards for traditional singing practices, educators need to pinpoint what additional skills students must achieve to contribute successfully to the ensemble. For example, students singing in a jazz choir need to learn different singing techniques than those in a madrigal or musical theater ensemble. Educators of these specialized ensembles must adapt and supplement the sequence chart with additional skills specific to their type of ensemble.

The nature of a standards-based curriculum suggests the curriculum has an objectives-based design. Conway described this design as developing the objectives, sequencing the objectives, designing activities, and designing assessments.\textsuperscript{313} The new curriculum for YCSD follows this model as it presents teachers with standards, a year-long sequence of the standards, and

\textsuperscript{313} Conway, “Curriculum Writing in Music,” 56.
model lesson plans, and sample assessments. When adapting the curriculum to a specific type of ensemble, the educator must decide if they should also modify its design. Other potential designs include literature-based, skills-based, and knowledge-based.

Conway discussed that a literature-based curriculum works well for performance-based courses. While all choral ensembles in YCSD are performance-based, the literature aspect is critical in specialized ensembles. Teachers need to ensure that their selected repertoire fits within the realms of their ensemble’s style. The literature should be challenging to help the students grow but attainable to master the piece efficiently. Teachers of more general choirs should present various styles of music to their students to expose them to as many genres and styles as possible to prepare them for the different opportunities in specialized ensembles.

Designing flexible assessments should be an attainable task for teachers of all ensemble types. Because the curriculum provides teachers with sample checklists, rubrics, rating scales, self-assessments, and writing projects, the teachers simply need to rewrite the assessment criteria to reflect their ensemble's specific skills and goals. Teachers should involve their students in this process so they know how the teacher will assess them.

Thus, to adapt the YCSD secondary choral curriculum for their specific ensembles, teachers must first determine the general musical skills and abilities required to participate in the choir. Then, they would add these skills to the standards sequence chart of the curriculum. The teacher would select appropriate repertoire to present students with high-quality musical selections. Finally, the teacher needs to adapt the flexible assignments provided in the curriculum to assess the students on the specific goals and skills of the ensemble.

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314 Ibid.
315 Odegaard, Music Curriculum Writing, 125.
York County School Division Secondary Choral Curriculum

Introduction

This curriculum serves as an instructional manual for secondary choral ensembles in York County School Division (YCSD). In YCSD, secondary choral ensembles exist at the middle and high school levels. There are typically two choral classes at the middle school level: Introduction to Chorus (6th Grade) and Advanced Chorus (7th and 8th Grade). At the high school level, there are non-auditioned choirs and auditioned choirs; the auditioned choirs are considered more advanced than the non-auditioned choirs.

This curriculum consists of four curricular levels: Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, and Artist. Generally, the Beginning level is used for 6th Grade Chorus, the Intermediate level for 7th and 8th Grade Chorus and lower-level high school ensembles (Chorus I and Small Vocal 1), the Advanced for upper-level high school ensembles (Chorus II and Small Vocal II), and the Artist level for the highest performing choral ensembles. However, it is up to the teacher’s discretion to determine which curricular level best serves their specific ensembles.

This curriculum is based on the 2020 Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs) for Choral Music. There are seven sets of Choral Music SOLs: Three at the middle school level (Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced) and four at the high school level (Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, and Artist). Because the standards for the Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced levels are the same for the middle and high school levels, all seven sets of Choral Music SOLs have been condensed into four curricular levels for choral instruction in YCSD. This combination ensures that students receive sequential instruction in choral music classes throughout grades 6-12 and are not repeating standards they have already achieved in a previous choral class.
The Choral Music SOLs are divided into five categories: Creative Process; Critical Thinking and Communication; History, Culture, and Citizenship; Innovation in the Arts; and Technique and Application. The organization of these categories guarantees that students are exposed to activities that integrate the Five Cs (critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration and citizenship skills) and prepare them for college and/or the workforce.

The following figure indicates how the Choral Music SOLs are implemented in each curricular level as well as provides recommendations for which curricular level to select for a given choral class:

Table 3: YCSD Curricular and Class Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curricular Level</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>State Standards Level</th>
<th>National Standards Track</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning</td>
<td>6th Grade Chorus</td>
<td>Middle School and High School Choral Music</td>
<td>Traditional and Emerging Ensembles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Beginning Levels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>7th and 8th Grade Chorus Chorus I</td>
<td>Middle School and High School Choral Music Intermediate Levels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Small Vocal I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Chorus II</td>
<td>Middle School and High School Choral Music</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small Vocal II</td>
<td>Advanced Levels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>Ensembles that directors determine are of high achieving and performance capabilities</td>
<td>High School Choral Music Artist Level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The curriculum consists of the following components: Sequence Chart, Quarter Guide, and Resources. The Sequence Chart is the condensed version of the SOLs. Providing all teachers, regardless of ensemble level, with this Sequence Chart allows them to differentiate instruction to members within each ensemble who may perform on different curricular levels.
Additionally, the Sequence Chart encourages teachers to prepare their students for the next highest curricular level and a higher-level ensemble.

The Quarter Guide provides teachers with a general guide of when to focus on specific standards and musical skills, with the understanding that some standards and skills are incorporated into daily lessons. Timeframes for teacher duties, such as registering students for District Chorus and District Assessment are also included.

Additional resources included in the Resource section include literature guides, warm-up books, sight-reading methods, and scheduling concerts and field trips.

**Sequence Chart**

The following charts present the teacher with a sequence of the revised Choral Music SOLs. There are five charts reflective of the five categories of the SOLs. The author revised the verbiage of the standards to ensure that each graduating level is sequential. The processes of the National Standards are embedded within the standards and at the bottom of each category.

**Creative Process**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOL</th>
<th>CREATIVE PROCESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The student will create music as a means of individual expression.</td>
<td><strong>Beginning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) Compose a four-measure rhythmic-melodic variation that reflects music studied in rehearsal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Improvise simple rhythmic and melodic examples in call-and-response styles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Write and play rhythmic variations of four-measure selections taken from songs, exercises, or etudes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anchor Standard</td>
<td>1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>Imagine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential Questions</td>
<td>How do musicians generate creative ideas?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**National Standards: Creating**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>d) Preserve compositions and improvisations through standard notation and audio recording.</th>
<th>d) Preserve compositions and improvisations through standard notation and audio recording.</th>
<th>d) Preserve compositions and improvisations through standard notation and audio recording.</th>
<th>d) Preserve compositions and improvisations through standard notation, audio, or video recording.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e) Share composed melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives, individually or as an ensemble, that demonstrate an understanding of music studied in rehearsal.</td>
<td>e) Share composed melodies and rhythmic variations, individually or as an ensemble, that demonstrate an understanding of music studied in rehearsal.</td>
<td>e) Share composed melodies and rhythmic variations, individually or as an ensemble, that address identified purposes.</td>
<td>e) Share composed melodies, rhythms, arrangements, and short compositions, individually or as an ensemble, that address identified purposes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **The student will apply a creative process for music.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a) Identify steps of a creative process in a variety of contexts in choral music.</th>
<th>a) Apply steps of a creative process in a variety of contexts in choral music.</th>
<th>a) Develop, draft, refine, and share choral music ideas.</th>
<th>a) Develop, compose, improvise, draft, refine, and share choral music ideas in a variety of contexts.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b) Refine choral music ideas and skills and compositions and improvisations based on teacher-provided criteria.</td>
<td>b) Refine choral music ideas and skills and compositions and improvisations based on collaboratively-developed (peer) criteria.</td>
<td>b) Refine choral music ideas and skills and compositions and improvisations based on established criteria by giving and receiving constructive criticism to improve performance.</td>
<td>b) Evaluate and refine choral music ideas and skills and compositions and improvisations based on personally-developed criteria by giving and receiving constructive criticism to improve performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Collaboratively identify and examine inquiry-based questions related to choral music.</td>
<td>c) Independently research and examine inquiry-based questions related to choral music.</td>
<td>c) Analyze research of a focused choral music topic of personal interest. Document this research and inquiry in the student portfolio.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Create student portfolios that demonstrate growth and learning of choral music ideas and skills.</td>
<td>d) Develop the student portfolio by documenting growth, skill development, and learning in the development of individual musical repertoire that documents the creative process and final product(s).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Terms**

- Imagine
- Plan and Make
- Evaluate and Refine
- Present

**Essential Questions**

- How do musicians generate creative ideas?
- How do musicians make creative decisions?
- How do musicians improve the quality of their work?
- When is creative work ready to share?
### Critical Thinking and Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITICAL THINKING AND COMMUNICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The student will analyze, interpret, and evaluate choral music.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The student will formulate and justify personal responses to music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The student will identify and apply collaboration and communication skills for music rehearsal and performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Explain active listening for rehearsal, performance, and as an audience member.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### National Standards: Responding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anchor Standard</th>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>Essential Questions</th>
<th>7. Perceive and analyze artistic work.</th>
<th>8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.</th>
<th>9. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select</td>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>How do individuals choose music to experience?</td>
<td>How do we discern the musical creators’ and performers’ expressive intent?</td>
<td>How do we judge the quality of musical works and performances?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### History, Culture, and Citizenship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOL</th>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
<th>Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. The student will explore historical and cultural influences of music.</td>
<td>a) Identify the cultural influences, musical styles, composers, and historical periods associated with the music literature being studied.</td>
<td>a) Describe the cultural influences, musical styles, composers, and historical periods associated with the music literature being studied.</td>
<td>a) Analyze the cultural influences, musical styles, composers, and historical periods associated with the music literature being studied.</td>
<td>a) Compare and contrast the cultural influences, musical styles, composers, and historical periods associated with the music literature being studied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Define ways in which culture and history influence the development of choral music and vocal music styles.</td>
<td>b) Explain how the factors of time and place influence the characteristics that give meaning and value to a work of music.</td>
<td>b) Compare and contrast cultural and historical influences of a variety of choral and vocal music styles using music terminology.</td>
<td>b) Assess the cultural and historical influences of a variety of choral and vocal music styles using music terminology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The student will examine the role of music in the greater community.</td>
<td>The student will explore the functions of music, including the use of music as a form of expression, communication, ceremony, and entertainment.</td>
<td>The student will describe how musicians, consumers of music, and music advocates impact the community.</td>
<td>The student will identify the value of musical performance to the school community.</td>
<td>The student will examine evaluate opportunities for music performance and advocacy within the community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. The student will consider ethical and legal principles of music and intellectual property.

- The student will identify ethical standards as applied to the use of intellectual property.
- The student will apply digital citizenship skills related to intellectual property in music research, performance, and sharing.
- The student will analyze digital citizenship skills related to intellectual property in music research, performance, and sharing.
- The student will assess the use and misuse of ethical standards as applied to intellectual property in music research, performance, and sharing.

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### Innovation in the Arts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOL</th>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
<th>Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>9. The student will connect musical skills to college, career, and workplace opportunities.</strong></td>
<td>The student will identify career options in music in relation to career preparation.</td>
<td>The student will investigate connections between music skills and college, career, and workplace skills.</td>
<td>The student will research career options in music and a variety of careers that involve skills learned in music.</td>
<td>The student will construct career pathways in the music field and discuss opportunities to be a lifelong learner of music and the future of music-related careers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10. The student will explore the impact of technology on music.</strong></td>
<td>The student will explore ways in which new media and technology influence the development and performance of music and musical styles.</td>
<td>The student will illustrate ways in which new media and technology can influence the creation and development of music and musical styles.</td>
<td>The student will test ways in which innovative tools and media can influence the creation and development of music and musical styles.</td>
<td>The student will evaluate how innovative media, tools, and processes are influencing vocal music and connecting communities of musicians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11. The student will cultivate connections to other fine arts and fields of knowledge.</strong></td>
<td>The student will describe the relationship of choral music to other fine arts.</td>
<td>The student will give examples of cross-disciplinary connections of choral music to other fine arts and fields of knowledge.</td>
<td>The student will investigate cross-disciplinary connections to identify how music works with other disciplines to develop innovative solutions to inquiry-based problems.</td>
<td>The student will evaluate how music works together with other disciplines to develop innovative solutions to problems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### National Standards: Connecting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anchor Standard</th>
<th>Essential Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>10. Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.</strong></td>
<td>How do musicians make meaningful connections to creating, performing, and responding?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.</strong></td>
<td>How do the other arts, other disciplines, contexts, and daily life inform creating, performing, and responding to music?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Technique and Application

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOL</th>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
<th>Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. The student will demonstrate music literacy.</td>
<td>a) Identify, define, and use basic standard notation for pitch, rhythm, meter, dynamics, and other elements of music.</td>
<td>a) Employ standard notation for pitch, rhythm, meter, dynamics, and other elements of music.</td>
<td>a) Notate student-created compositions using standard notation using contemporary technology.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Notate student-created compositions using standard notation.</td>
<td>b) Notate student-created compositions using standard notation.</td>
<td>a) Notate student-created compositions using standard notation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Echo, read, count, and notate rhythmic patterns.</td>
<td>c) Read and count rhythmic patterns.</td>
<td>b) Read and count, and notate complex rhythmic patterns.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) Sight-sing eight-measure, stepwise melodic patterns from unison examples that use scale degrees 1 through 5 of a major scale while maintaining a steady beat.</td>
<td>d) Sight-sing eight-measure melodic patterns from unison and two-part examples that include steps and diatonic skips from the major scale while maintaining a steady beat.</td>
<td>c) Sight-sing eight-measure melodic patterns from three or four-part examples that include varied intervals while maintaining a steady beat.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e) Identify components of a vocal score.</td>
<td>e) Identify components of a three-part choral score.</td>
<td>d) Identify the components of a four-part vocal score.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f) Define the rules for identifying key signatures.</td>
<td>g) Define the rules for identifying time signatures in triple meters.</td>
<td>e) Apply the rules for identifying key signatures to determine major key signatures.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>g) Differentiate by sight call-and-response songs, canons, and partner songs.</td>
<td>h) Identify the function of accidentals.</td>
<td>f) Sing major and minor scales using appropriate solmization.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h) Identify dynamic markings, including pp, p, mp, mf, f, ff, crescendo, and decrescendo.</td>
<td>i) Identify fermata, repeat sign, da capo, dal segno, coda, and fine.</td>
<td>g) Demonstrate basic conducting patterns in duplet meter.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>j) Identify tempo markings, including presto, allegro, andante, adagio, rallentando, ritardando, and accelerando.</td>
<td></td>
<td>h) Identify various compositional procedures and techniques, including fugue, modulation, word painting, and aleatoric music.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The student will develop aural skills.</td>
<td>a) Recognize diatonic intervals (P4, P5, octave).</td>
<td>a) Recognize diatonic intervals (M2, M3, P4, P5, octave).</td>
<td>a) Recognize and demonstrate diatonic intervals (m2, M2, m3, octave).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Identify similar and contrasting musical phrases and sections.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Identify same and different melodic patterns.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Identify simple musical forms.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Identify and explain complex musical forms.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Write simple four-measure rhythmic phrases from dictation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Write increasingly difficult four-measure rhythmic phrases from dictation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Write eight-measure rhythmic phrases from dictation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Write complex eight-measure rhythmic from dictation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>Distinguish major and minor tonalities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e)</td>
<td>Recognize a cappella vs. accompanied singing and monophonic vs. homophonic textures.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e)</td>
<td>Recognize descants and ostinatos.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e)</td>
<td>Identify a variety of musical styles.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Differentiate melodic and harmonic patterns.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**14. The student will demonstrate vocal techniques and choral skills.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>Identify proper posture and breathing techniques for choral singing that support vocal production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>Demonstrate proper posture and breathing techniques for choral singing that support vocal production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>Model proper posture and breathing techniques for choral singing that support vocal production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>Asses proper posture and breathing techniques for choral singing that support proper vocal production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Identify components of the vocal anatomy and vocal health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Investigate components of the vocal anatomy and vocal health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Identify the effects of physiological changes and external influences on the voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Integrate principles of vocal health and development while singing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Develop vocal agility and range through vocal exercises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Strengthen vocal agility and range by singing developmentally appropriate vocal exercises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Increase vocal agility and range by singing appropriate vocal exercises, including use of head and chest voices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Employ breath control, vocal independence, and agility while singing appropriate vocal exercises throughout the vocal range.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>Develop breath control through strength and endurance exercises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>Strengthen breath control through increasingly difficult strength and endurance exercises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>Use advanced vocal techniques to control dynamics and articulation and to improve intonation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e)</td>
<td>Demonstrate the difference between head voice and chest voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e)</td>
<td>Use correct intonation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f)</td>
<td>Blend with other singers on the same vocal part and across the ensemble using correct intonation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f)</td>
<td>Blend and balance with other singers on the same vocal part and across the ensemble using correct intonation and by applying listening skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f)</td>
<td>Model blending and balancing with other singers on the same vocal part and across the ensemble by applying listening skills to adjust intonation and dynamics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g)</td>
<td>Identify proper diction (e.g., pure vowel sounds, diphthongs, and consonants with g)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f)</td>
<td>Model proper diction (e.g., pure vowel sounds, diphthongs, voiced and unvoiced consonants).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f)</td>
<td>Evaluate proper diction (e.g., pure vowel sounds, diphthongs, voiced and unvoiced consonants).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. The student will identify and demonstrate expressive qualities of choral music.</td>
<td>a) Interpret the components of a vocal score, dynamic markings, tempo markings, musical road signs/form features, and articulations, style, and phrasing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Interpret tempo markings (allegro, andante, adagio).</td>
<td>b) Interpret tempo markings (presto, allegro, andante, adagio, ritardando, accelerando).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Perform, from musical scores and rhythmic exercises, rhythmic patterns that include whole notes, dotted half notes, half notes, dotted quarter notes, quarter notes, eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and corresponding rests.</td>
<td>c) Perform rhythmic patterns that include dotted-half-quarter, dotted-quarter-eighth, dotted-eighth-sixteenth, and corresponding rests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Interpret dynamic markings (pp, p, mp, mf, f, ff, crescendo, decrescendo).</td>
<td>d) Consistently apply dynamic markings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Identify expressive phrasing techniques.</td>
<td>e) Interpret expressive phrasing techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Respond to basic conducting patterns and interpretive gestures.</td>
<td>f) Respond to a wide range of conducting patterns and interpretative gestures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
g) Recognize facial and physical expressions that reflect the mood and style of the music.

h) Select varied repertoire to study based on interest, music reading skills, context, and technical skill of the ensemble.

16. The student will examine the use of choreography in musical settings.

The student will respond to music with movement by applying various styles of choreography to different musical compositions.

The student will develop choreography individually or collaboratively to interpret a musical composition.

The student will justify choreography as a form of expression and communication.

National Standards: Performing

**Anchor Standard**

4. Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.  
5. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.  
6. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

**Terms**

Select  
Analyze  
Interpret  
Rehearse, Evaluate, and Refine  
Present

**Essential Questions**

How do performers select repertoire?  
How does understanding the structure and context of musical works inform performance?  
How do performers interpret musical works?  
How do musicians improve the quality of their performance?  
When is a performance judged ready to present?  
How do context and the manner in which musical work is presented influence audience response?

Quarter Guide

The Quarter Guide presents the teacher with four charts, one for each quarter. Each quarter chart contains topics for classroom instruction and teacher tasks. The author separated the topics for classroom instruction into two categories: Beginning and Intermediate, Advanced, Artist. This separation is because Beginning ensembles in YCSD are not permitted to audition for District Chorus and it is not the tradition that they attend District Choral Assessment. These differences warranted separate lists for instructional topics.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter 1: Beginning</th>
<th>Quarter 1: Intermediate, Advanced, Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Establish classroom and rehearsal procedures</td>
<td>• Establish classroom and rehearsal procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduce basic rhythms</td>
<td>• Review basic rhythms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduce head voice vs. chest voice</td>
<td>• Review head voice vs. chest voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduce proper singing posture and breathing techniques</td>
<td>• Review proper singing posture and breathing techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use call-and-response songs, canons, partner songs, and other warm-ups to develop vocal agility, range, diction, and breath control</td>
<td>• Use call-and-response songs, canons, partner songs, and other warm-ups to develop vocal agility, range, diction, and breath control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduce the concept of blend</td>
<td>• Review how to blend with singers on the same part and across the ensemble using intonation and listening skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduce sight-reading</td>
<td>• Introduce sight-reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Work on Winter Concert literature by applying the components for healthy singing</td>
<td>• Introduce and teach the District Chorus audition song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Work on Winter Concert literature by applying the components for healthy singing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOLs to consider

- 12, 14, 15

Teacher Tasks

- Secure concert venues, dates, and times as well as any mandatory rehearsals. Complete facilities requests form, if applicable. Communicate these dates with students and families on the first day of school, if possible. You will also need to communicate this information to building administrators and the activities director. Typically, directors hold a Winter and Spring Concert, but you have the flexibility to schedule concerts in a different manner.
- Communicate with students and families the requirements for concert attire. Families will need ample time to purchase attire if students are not using school uniforms.
- Secure field trip dates. These might include, but are not limited to, District Chorus, District Choral Assessment, a Spring Trip, community performances, and professional concerts. All field trips must be reported to the School Board no later than September 30th. Your building administrator or activities director will tell you how to report these trips.
- Schedule and get approval for any fundraisers.
- Attend the fall District VIII Choral Directors Meeting. Your District Representative should contact you with meeting details such as location and time. However, seek guidance from another YCSD secondary choral director for meeting information.
- Register your students for District Chorus Auditions and attend the auditions. The District Audition chairs will contact you with registration details such as location, date, time, price, payment, and audition selection. This information will also be discussed in the fall Directors’ meeting. Typically, middle school auditions are held the last weekend of
October and high school the first weekend of November. The Audition chair will also let you know if it is your turn to judge auditions. You are required to judge every other year for the level opposite the one you teach.

- Finish selecting your Winter Concert literature if you have not already done so.
- Secure an accompanist for the year’s performances as well as any rehearsals, if applicable.
- Begin to finalize details for your Spring Trip, if applicable, such as price, t-shirts, method of travel (bus, plane), meals, hotel reservations, and chaperones.
- Begin to select District Choral Assessment literature. Remember that at least one of your pieces must be listed in the VCDA, Texas, and/or New York literature manuals.

Quarter 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Intermediate, Advanced, Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Introduce increasingly difficult warm-ups and vocal exercises that will support the development of vocal production, posture, diction, breath control, vocal agility, blend, and range</td>
<td>• Introduce increasingly difficult warm-ups and vocal exercises that will support the development of vocal production, posture, diction, breath control, vocal agility, blend, and range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increase the complexity of sight-reading examples</td>
<td>• Increase the complexity of sight-reading examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prepare for the Winter Concert by discussing accepted criteria used for critiquing musical performances.</td>
<td>• Prepare for the Winter Concert by applying accepted criteria used for critiquing musical performances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Polish Winter Concert literature</td>
<td>• Polish Winter Concert literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide opportunities for short musical compositions as applicable</td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for short musical compositions as applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduce Spring Concert music after the Winter Concert</td>
<td>• Introduce Spring Concert literature upon return from Winter Concert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evaluate and critique the Winter Concert performance(s) using teacher approved criteria</td>
<td>• Evaluate and critique the Winter Concert performance(s) using teacher approved criteria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOLs to consider

- 1, 2, 3, 5, 12, 14, 15

Teacher Tasks

- Create a program for the Winter Concert. Be sure to have students approve the spelling of their names before final printing. Print enough programs for three per student. Save a copy of the program for your summative evaluation folder.
• Successfully execute and evaluate the Winter Concert.
• Execute any fundraisers as applicable.
• Purchase music for those students selected for District Chorus. Distribute music to students so they can begin practicing the music. The District Representative will share any rehearsal tracks or special requests from the guest directors.
• The District Representative or District Chorus Event Chair will request any needed information about your selected students, to include program information and meal requests. They will also communicate the District Chorus schedule.
• Pay for students who were selected for District Chorus. This payment is required regardless of whether or not the student attends the event.
• Complete the bus request for District Chorus. District Chorus is typically held the second Thursday (high school only), Friday, and Saturday of February.
• Register any ensembles for District Choral Assessment. The Assessment Chairs will contact you with registration details, such as location, date, time, price, and payment. Assessment is typically held the second Thursday and Friday of March.
• Review Assessment procedures and select your two pieces if you have not already done so. Remember that at least one of your pieces must be listed in the VCDA, Texas, and/or New York literature manuals. Both must come from one of the lists of you are seeking Blue Ribbon status.
• Finish selecting literature for the Spring Concert and any festivals/competitions if you have not already done so.
• Continue to finalize details for your Spring Trip. Consider setting up early payment plans if students need extra time to pay for their trip.
• If you teach high school, the All-Virginia Chorus Audition Chair will contact you with registration details such as location, date, time, price, and payment. The audition selection and accompaniment tracks are available on the VCDA website (www.vcda.net). Auditions are typically held during the Thursday night rehearsal during District Chorus. Register students for the auditions and begin preparing them.
• Attend the annual VMEA conference.

Quarter 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Intermediate, Advanced, Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Continue to increase the complexity, as needed or required, of warm-ups and vocal exercises that will support the development of vocal production, posture, diction, breath control, vocal agility, blend, and range</td>
<td>• Continue to increase the complexity, as needed or required, of warm-ups and vocal exercises that will support the development of vocal production, posture, diction, breath control, vocal agility, blend, and range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Apply these components to literature studied during daily rehearsals</td>
<td>• Prepare for District Choral Assessment by polishing the required pieces and rehearsing previous sight-reading examples</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Apply these components to literature studied during daily rehearsals
- Introduce the remaining Spring Concert literature
- During Music in our Schools Month (March), discuss the relationship of the choral program to other programs in school culture
- Record practice performances of assessment pieces and use the VCDA rubric to evaluate the recordings
- Evaluate and critique the District Choral Assessment performance using teacher approved criteria
- Introduce the remaining Spring Concert literature
- During Music in our Schools Month (March), discuss the relationship of the choral program to other programs in school culture

**SOLs to consider**

- 3, 4, 5, 7, 11, 12, 14, 15

**Teacher Tasks**

- Attend District Chorus with your selected students as well as All-Virginia Chorus auditions as applicable.
- Attend the spring District VIII Choral Directors Meeting, which is usually held on the Saturday morning of District Chorus.
- Once the District Choral Assessment chair has communicated the Assessment schedule, complete the bus request for pick up and return times.
- Finalize any required components to attend District Choral Assessment, such as gathering three original copies of all pieces and numbering all measures. The Assessment chairs will provide further guidance as to any required forms. Submit payment for Assessment.
- Successfully attend District Choral Assessment.
- Finalize details for the Spring Trip, to include bus requests, t-shirts, payments, chaperones, chaperone groups, itineraries, hotel groupings, park tickets, and travel.

**Quarter 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Intermediate, Advanced, Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polish Spring Concert literature</td>
<td>Polish Spring Concert literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate and critique the Spring Concert</td>
<td>Evaluate and critique the Spring Concert performance(s) using</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>performance(s) using teacher approved criteria</td>
<td>teacher approved criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare students for advanced choir</td>
<td>Prepare for any festivals or competitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>auditions for the following school year</td>
<td>Evaluate and critique the festival/competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the final performance, create cultural</td>
<td>performance(s) using teacher approved criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>project that examines various styles and</td>
<td>Prepare students for advanced choir auditions for the following</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>genres of vocal and choral music</td>
<td>school year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After the final performance, create cultural project that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>examines various styles and genres of vocal and choral music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Also after the final performance, allow students to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>attend other classes as needed for SOL or AP remediation to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>prepare for successful testing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Also after the final performance, allow students to attend other classes as needed for SOL or AP remediation to prepare for successful testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOLs to consider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 14, 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create a program for the Spring Concert. Be sure to have students approve the spelling of their names before final printing. Print enough programs for three per student. Save a copy of the program for your summative evaluation folder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successfully execute and evaluate the Spring Concert.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successfully execute a Spring Trip and reflect on this execution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure concert locations, dates, and times for the following school year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure Spring Trip location and dates for the following school year. Begin to secure travel as applicable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin to search for new literature for next school year. Finalize a few pieces so you will have a foundation on which you can build the following school year. This will save you immense time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Lesson Plans

The curriculum provides the teacher with three sample lesson plans. The plans include instructional time for ninety-five-minute class blocks, which is the average length of time for a secondary choral class. The three plans present teachers with a plan for introducing a new technical skill, literacy skill, or piece of music, a plan for preparing for a performance, and a plan for post-performance. Teachers can adapt the same lesson plans as needed to meet the needs of their specific class and ensemble.

**Lesson Plan 1 – Introducing New Material**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Plan 1 – Introducing New Material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The student will sing in head voice using tall vowels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The student will increase breath control by singing in increasingly long phrases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The student will apply said technical skills to their repertoire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The student will identify whole, half, and quarter notes and their rhythmic values.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- The student will demonstrate their understanding of rhythmic values by clapping and counting various rhythmic examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 mins</td>
<td>Attendance and Announcements</td>
<td>• Take attendance&lt;br&gt;• Make any pertinent announcements, such as deadlines and performance dates</td>
<td>• Ensure all students are in the classroom</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 mins</td>
<td>Warm-up</td>
<td>• Employ warm-ups to teach specific singing skills, including head voice, tall vowels, and increasing breath control</td>
<td>• Students sing in head voice using tall vowels&lt;br&gt;• Students develop breath control by singing increasingly long phrases</td>
<td>• Auditory and visual assessment of students’ ability to sing in head voice using tall vowels as well as increased breath control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 mins</td>
<td>Repertoire</td>
<td>• Introduce or review selected spots in repertoire&lt;br&gt;• Discuss where students should be applying the technical skills taught during warm-up&lt;br&gt;• Rehearse employing these technical skills in the repertoire</td>
<td>• Students will sing their repertoire in head voice using tall vowels&lt;br&gt;• Students will apply breath control skills to long phrases in their repertoire</td>
<td>• Auditory and visual assessment of students’ ability to sing in head voice using tall vowels as well as increased breath control as applied to the repertoire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 mins</td>
<td>Music Theory</td>
<td>• Teacher introduces whole, half, and quarter notes&lt;br&gt;• Students clap and count various rhythm exercises</td>
<td>• Students can identify whole, half, and quarter notes and their rhythmic values&lt;br&gt;• Students can accurately clap and count rhythmic exercises</td>
<td>• Auditory and visual assessment of students’ ability to accurately count and clap various rhythmic exercises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Tasks</td>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 20 mins | Repertoire   | • Introduce or review selected spots in repertoire  
• Review head voice, tall vowels, and breath control  
• Discover whole, half, and quarter notes within the repertoire | • Students will sing their repertoire in head voice using tall vowels  
• Students will apply breath control skills to long phrases in their repertoire  
• Students can identify whole, half, and quarter notes within the rehearsed passages of the repertoire | • Auditory and visual assessment of students’ ability to sing in head voice using tall vowels as well as increased breath control as applied to the repertoire  
• Teacher uses questioning to assess students’ ability to identify specific rhythmic patterns in their repertoire | |
| 10 mins | Exit Ticket  | • Students will compose two measures in 4/4 time using whole, half, and quarter notes | • Students can accurately select appropriate note values to compose two measures in 4/4 time using whole, half, and quarter notes | • Teacher collects papers or checks notation software for accuracy | |

Total: 95 mins

Lesson Plan 2 – Performance Preparation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5 mins | Attendance and Announcements | • Take attendance  
• Make any pertinent announcements for the performance | • Ensure all students are in the classroom | N/A |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 mins</td>
<td>Warm-up</td>
<td>• Teacher uses specific warm-ups to address technique and expressive skills required by the context of the performance</td>
<td>• Students accurately demonstrate their ability to sing with appropriate technique and expression</td>
<td>• Auditory and visual assessment of students’ ability to sing with appropriate technique and expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 mins</td>
<td>Concert Run-Through</td>
<td>• The ensemble completes a full run through of their performance repertoire • The teacher video records the rehearsal</td>
<td>• Students can perform the entire concert using previously-identified criteria</td>
<td>• Auditory and visual assessment of students’ ability to appropriately rehearse for the performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 mins</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>• Students watch the recording and complete an evaluation of their performance using an established rubric</td>
<td>• Students can accurately evaluate their performance based on the criteria of the performance rubric</td>
<td>• Students turn in their evaluation rubrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 mins</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>• Students participate in a teacher-lead discussion of the performance • Students identified what went well about the performance and what needs to improve</td>
<td>• Students identify what went well about the performance and what needs to improve</td>
<td>• Auditory assessment of students’ ability to appropriate identify strong and weak sections of the performance repertoire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 mins</td>
<td>Rehearsal</td>
<td>• The teacher rehearses specific spots that the students identified as needing improvement</td>
<td>• Students contribute to the improvement of the performance repertoire by rehearsing specific passages</td>
<td>• Auditory and visual assessment of students’ improvement of the selected passages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 95 mins
Lesson Plan 3 – Performance Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 mins</td>
<td>Attendance and Announcements</td>
<td>• Take attendance</td>
<td>• Ensure all students are in the classroom</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Make any pertinent announcements for the performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 mins</td>
<td>Pre-Discussion</td>
<td>• Students participate in a teacher-lead discussion of their initial thoughts of the performance</td>
<td>• Students can identify their initial thoughts regarding the performance</td>
<td>• Auditory assessment of students’ ability to articulate their thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 mins</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>• Students watch a video recording of the performance and complete an evaluation using the established rubric</td>
<td>• Students can accurately evaluate their performance using the established rubric</td>
<td>• Students submit their completed performance rubric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 mins</td>
<td>Post-Discussion</td>
<td>• Students participate in a teacher-lead discussion of their thoughts after watching the video</td>
<td>• Students can determine if their thoughts regarding the performance have changed after watching the performance recording</td>
<td>• Auditory assessment of students’ ability to determine if their initial thoughts have changed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 mins</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>• Students participate in a teacher-lead discussion of what they can improve for future repertoire and performances</td>
<td>• Students can examine how they can improve for their next performance</td>
<td>• Auditory assessment of students’ ability to articulate their thoughts regarding future improvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 95 mins
Assessments

Authentic assessment validates the effectiveness of a standards-based curriculum. The assessments portion of the curriculum provides the teacher with five sample assessments, a checklist, a rubric, a rating scale, a self-evaluation, and a writing project. Teachers can adapt these assessments to fit the specific performance requirements of their ensembles. These assessments were modeled after the MCAs and Odegaard’s sample assessments.

Checklist

Checklists are assessments that list expectations.\(^{316}\) Teachers can employ checklists when assessing a specific skill or a short passage from the ensemble’s repertoire. Teachers should involve students when writing the checklist criteria; students know exactly how to perform on the assessment when they have the checklist ahead of time.\(^{317}\)

The following checklist provides an example of an assessment of a short excerpt (sixteen measures) from a repertoire piece for the purpose of a singing quiz. In this example, the teacher would select a passage for students to sing in small groups to assess their execution of tone, diction, breathing, dynamics, and other criteria. Teachers can adapt this checklist to match the criteria required to perform their selected example for assessment.

\(^{316}\) Odegaard, *Music Curriculum Writing*, 127.

\(^{317}\) Ibid.
Latin Singing Quiz Checklist

Name: ___________________________  Class: ___________________________

You will sing measures 16 – 32 from the selected piece. The teacher will check “Evident” or “Not Evident” based on her assessment of your singing and your demonstration of the following criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Evident</th>
<th>Not Evident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tone</strong></td>
<td>The student supports their tone with appropriate muscle engagement. The student’s tone is healthy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The student sings in head voice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The student blends with others in their small group.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diction</strong></td>
<td>The student sings appropriate Latin vowels.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The student sings appropriate Latin consonants.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breath</strong></td>
<td>The student supports their tone with appropriate breath control.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The student breathes in the correct places.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dynamics</strong></td>
<td>The student demonstrates accurate dynamic levels based on the markings in the music and teacher-developed criteria.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The student accurately executes crescendos and decrescendos based on the markings in the music and teacher-developed criteria.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Artistry</strong></td>
<td>The student sings with appropriate expression that matches the music’s emotional demands.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The student sings with appropriate facial expressions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments:

Figure 1: Latin Singing Quiz Checklist

Rubric

A rubric is an accessible assessment tool because of its ability to communicate expectations ahead of time. The criteria is located on the left of the table with “graduated qualitative statements of accomplishments across to the right of each criterion.”

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secondary choral ensembles attend Virginia District Choral Assessment each year, the Virginia Choral Directors Association Choral Assessment Adjudication Form is the most relevant rubric to secondary choral instruction in YCSD. The rubric is as follows:

![VMEA/VCDA Choral Assessment Adjudication Form](image)

Figure 2: VMEA/VCDA Choral Assessment Adjudication Form

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320 Virginia Choral Directors Association, “VMEA/VCDA Choral Assessment Adjudication Form,” accessed October 30, 2021, https://www.vcda.net/index.php/component/easyfolderlistingpro/?view=download&format=raw&data=eNpNT9EOgijAM_JVJPyCoQS1PRoMPmPhKJswA4ysQOqM_7G0pJu9np3vQqlY_gQjMBL3UGp0PCXYRsCLoYW00ubjAifO93js4HqHPYNEHAo2VVDUh2dTpcMM_zCfPTMUg70af3RVfKoAqVVMFURA2zhh6zW05aqwUW7dD9ifMnY7oK227r7zF5jHlq3TnhrqozP3nWdHGo9fLcegHY6880nI5dq7CWhlU4d3Hh6cwiBL4Ts85QIXWleNC_L9ARznZiQ,.

321 Ibid.
Self-Evaluation

Research indicates that students take ownership of their education if they understand the teacher’s expectations for performance and complete self-evaluations. The following self-evaluation is designed for students to complete quarterly. It provides students with the opportunity to reflect on their performance openly and honestly in their choral class and to make suggestions for improvements during the subsequent marking period. This self-evaluation was adapted from Odegaard’s secondary ensemble self-reflection.

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323 Ibid., 15.

324 Ibid., 146.
Self-Evaluation for YCSD Secondary Choral Ensembles

Name: ___________________________                     Class: ______________________________

Quarter (circle one):   1     2     3     4

This quarterly self-evaluation will show your approach to learning and preparation for this class. It is an opportunity to show your strengths and to determine what areas you could continue to work on.

Directions: Rate yourself on a scale from 4 to 1 for each of the following statements. Use the following criteria for selecting the appropriate number

4 = always                3 = most of the time                2 = some of the time                1 = rarely

_____ 1. I come to class with the attitude that I can make a contribution to this ensemble.

_____ 2. I am well prepared for class and practice so that I know my part.

_____ 3. I work on my posture so I can sing to the best of my ability.

_____ 4. I do not talk or sing during class unless I am asked to do so.

_____ 5. My folder is organized and I mark my music carefully using only pencil.

_____ 6. I am attentive during class.

_____ 7. I appreciate my teacher’s evaluations and work on the areas that show I need improvement.

_____ 8. I avoid disrupting class by planning ahead for my needs.

_____ 9. I contribute to the overall success of the ensemble by putting forth effort, singing out, and demonstrating energy and emotion while I sing.

_____ 10. I am successful at the general effect of performing, which includes posture, breathing, facial expressions, and presentation.

What are some strengths you exhibited during this quarter?

What are some weaknesses you exhibited during this quarter?

What are some strategies you can employ to your weakness from this quarter into strengths for the next?

Figure 3: Self-Evaluation for YCSD Secondary Choral Ensembles
Resources

These resources provide the teacher with pertinent information regarding music instruction in Virginia and YCSD. Several websites present the teacher with key information regarding the Virginia Choral Directors Association events, deadlines, and instructional resources. The instructional resources provide information regarding literature selection, literacy instruction, and sight-reading.

Table 4: Curricular Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Link</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Core Arts Standards</td>
<td><a href="https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/">https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/</a></td>
<td>On the NCAS website, teachers can access the 2014 National Music Standards and their corresponding MCAs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts SOLs</td>
<td><a href="https://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/fine_arts/index.shtml">https://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/fine_arts/index.shtml</a></td>
<td>Teachers can access the 2020 Virginia Music SOLs as well as crosswalk documents from the 2013 version.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Association for Music Education</td>
<td><a href="https://nafme.org/">https://nafme.org/</a></td>
<td>NAfME is the national professional organization for music education. Subscription to NAfME allows teachers to access music education research and policy and instructional resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Music Education Association (VMEA)</td>
<td><a href="https://www.vmea.com/">https://www.vmea.com/</a></td>
<td>VMEA is Virginia’s music education professional organization. VMEA presents teachers will information regarding the annual conference, instructional resources, and links to suborganizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Choral Directors Association (VCDA)</td>
<td><a href="https://www.vcda.net/">https://www.vcda.net/</a></td>
<td>VCDA allows teachers to access the Virginia literature list for annual district choral assessment. The website also contains the performance rubric and information regarding district and all-state choir.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight Reading Factory (SRF)</td>
<td><a href="https://www.sightreadingfactory.com/">https://www.sightreadingfactory.com/</a></td>
<td>SRF is an online instructional tool for teaching sight reading. Teachers can create student accounts to monitor individual progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JWPepper</td>
<td><a href="https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/welcome.jsp">https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/welcome.jsp</a></td>
<td>JWPepper allows teachers to search for developmentally and contextually appropriate repertoire, instructional materials, and other equipment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

The research questions of this study sought to explore possibilities for combing national and state music standards to create a new secondary choral curriculum for YCSD. The researcher concluded that this is possible by merging the artistic processes of the national standards with the criteria of the state standards. Teachers can then adapt the curriculum to the needs of their specific ensembles, as some choral ensembles require particular skills and vocal technique to be successful. Teachers can employ the sample assessments of the curriculum to effectively measure their students' progress and adapt the assessments to the specific contexts of their ensembles.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Introduction

The conclusion chapter reviews the purpose, significance, procedures, and findings of the study. The need for the study is revisited to identify if the research findings filled the existing gap in the literature. A discussion of the study’s limitations informs recommendations for future research to continue the survey of standards-based curricula in music within other states and teaching contexts. Finally, implications for practice discuss the implementation of the new YCSD secondary choral curriculum into practice.

Summary of Study

Because VDOE released a new set of music SOLs in May 2020, YCSD had to revise its music curricula to reflect these new standards. The researcher volunteered to write the secondary choral curriculum in October 2020. Challenges of this curriculum writing process included the lack of sequential SOLs and the dramatic change in emphasis from the 2013 SOLs. The secondary choral music SOLs are not sequential as the beginning, intermediate, and advanced standards contain the same terminology for the middle and high school levels. Additionally, the 2020 revision included a shift from musical products to artistic processes, much like the changes between the 1994 and 2014 versions of the national standards. Finally, previous versions of the YCSD music curriculum were not reflective of actual music teaching practices as division leaders required the music curriculum writers to write the curriculum in a format similar to other core classes.

To combat these problems, the researcher turned to the Traditional and Emerging Ensembles track of the 2014 National Music Standards. She knew she could not ignore the SOLs altogether as VDOE requires local school divisions to employ the SOLs as the primary standards
system. She began to look for connections between the national and state standards to determine if they could be combined or incorporated into each other to create one single curriculum for 6-12 choral instruction in YCSD. Upon further examination, it was determined that she could integrate the skills criteria of the SOLs into the artistic processes of the national standards.

A qualitative method with a historical approach was utilized to determine the future of standards-based education reform in music based on its past and present. She then integrated these trends with the specific curricular needs of YCSD to create a localized, effective curriculum that would serve the musical abilities of YCSD choral students. In its final form, this curriculum includes the following components: statement of philosophy, standards sequence chart, quarter guide, sample lesson plans, and model assessments. Teachers can adapt these standards, lesson plans, and assessments to meet their students’ abilities and the unique performance requirements of their specialized ensembles.

Summary of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine how the 2014 National Music Standards and the 2020 Virginia Music SOLs could be combined to create an effective and sequential curriculum for secondary choral ensembles in YCSD. A secondary purpose was to discover ways in which secondary choral directors in YCSD could balance and adapt this division-wide curriculum with the specialized qualifications of their ensembles. A qualitative method with a historical approach was employed to unveil possibilities to combine these two sets of standards.

This historical approach established a foundation of the progression of standards-based reform in music education since the 1950s. It informed how standards-based curricula in music should change or remain the same in the future. From the perspectives gathered in the literature review, it was determined that the future of standards-based curricula in music should encompass
artistic processes and other twenty-first century skills. Providing secondary choral directors in YCSD with a curriculum that reinforces these strategies prepares these teachers and their students for future music education.

Summary of Significance

Prior to this study, research did not exist on how to combine a specific track of the 2014 National Music Standards with one particular track of the Virginia Music SOLs to create a localized music curriculum. Similar studies include Odegaard’s work on employing the national standards to write a district curriculum, but there was no mention of selecting state standards for implementation. Even though Virginia requires its teachers to utilize the SOLs, music teachers should not ignore the national standards, especially when they do not heavily focus on the artistic process more than they do on criteria. Thus, the study and its ensuing curriculum provide the YCSD secondary choral director with a curriculum that explicitly applies the national and state choral music standards to the musical needs of YCSD.

In addition to adapting the national and state standards to the needs of YCSD, the new curriculum also provides teachers with assessment frameworks. Bradford stated that standards-based curricula are ineffective without assessment. Thus, teachers needed example assessments.325 While the national standards provide the teacher with MCAs, the Virginia Music SOLs provide no means or examples of assessment. Without incorporating the national standards and their MCAs, Virginia music teachers have no support in terms of assessment.

This study improved secondary choral music education in YCSD by supplying the teacher with artistic processes, criteria for achieving these processes, and assessments to analyze if students have grasped the material. It improved music education policy by creating a new

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method of writing music curriculum. Finally, the study encourages additional research in other music education contexts to examine how national and state standards could be combined to write a curriculum for that specific context, such as general music or secondary instrumental music.

Summary of Findings and Prior Research

Throughout Summer 2021, the researcher reviewed pertinent literature on standards-based education reform in music education. The data gathered from this literature review provided a historical overview of standards-based reform in music throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Four categories emerged from this review, including the history of standards-based reform in the United States, the development of national music standards, music curriculum writing, and assessment practices of secondary music teachers.

The discussion of standards-based reform began in the United States when the Soviet Union surpassed the U.S. in military, economic, and technological power. Education stakeholders believed that the best method of returning the United States to the top of global prowess was improving American education by defining the exact skills and knowledge students must master upon completion of a course. Even though this discussion began in the 1950s, music education did not receive national attention within the standards discussion until the passage of Goals 2000, which required the creation of national music standards.

During this era of Goals 2000, music standards focused on musical products, such as performances. The 1994 National Music Standards centered around “what students should

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326 Mark and Madura, *Contemporary Music Education*, 12.

327 Ibid.

know and be able to do in the arts.”329 As education became increasingly focused around twenty-first century skills, such as collaboration, critical thinking, and communication, music education progressively emphasized artistic processes such as creating, performing, and responding. These processes then served as the foundation for the 2014 National Music Standards. Examples of these processes include composition, preparing for a performance, and analyzing a musical piece.

There are several options for writing a music curriculum. While a standards-based music curriculum implies an objectives-based design, teachers can incorporate teaching strategies from other designs, such as skills-based, knowledge-based, and literature-based. Conway described the latter as an effective method for ensemble-style performance-based classes.330 Conway also identified the main components of a music curriculum, which include a program philosophy, goals and beliefs, benchmarks, resources, sample lesson plans, and assessment frameworks.331 Despite the various curricular components and designs, the data showed that teachers are more likely to buy into a curriculum when administrators involve all teachers in the writing process.332

Music education assessment is not nationally unified due to its lack of professional consensus.333 Most music teachers grade on non-musical criteria such as attendance and attitude, and many reported that adopting a standards-based curriculum did not impact their assessment process.334 Instead, teachers should view assessment as a method of communicating with parents,

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331 Ibid., 55.
334 Ibid., 39.
administrators, and other stakeholders the value of music education based on the acquired skills. Odegaard recommended several assessment tools, which served as models for the sample assessments in the new curriculum. Although various assessment methods in the music classroom exist, music education experts stated that when teachers involve students in the assessment writing process, students better understand how they need to perform on the assessment, thus improving grades.\(^{335}\)

Discussion of Research Question One

Research Question One sought to determine how the researcher could combine the national and Virginia standards to create a new secondary choral curriculum for YCSD. After further examination of both standards documents, she determined that she could incorporate the criteria of the Virginia SOLs into the artistic processes of the national standards. This combination served as the foundation for writing the curriculum. The two sets of standards were merged into one sequence chart, which operates at the division standards.

Other curriculum components include a description of how to implement the curriculum, a quarter guide that provides a yearlong sequence of topics and tasks, sample lesson plans, and sample assessments. The assessments were modeled after the MCAs and Odegaard’s sample assessments. Assessment tools include checklists, rubrics, rating scales, writing projects, performance projects, and self-evaluations.

The historical perspective of standards-based reform in music education established through the literature review informed past and present trends that dictate future curricula. Although standards-based reform has remained a constant force in education since the mid-late twentieth century, the standards' focus has changed during the twenty-first century. The

researcher concluded that the new curriculum should be standards-based as this education trend may remain the same for many years to come. The new curriculum should also reflect the recent trends to emphasize artistic processes and twenty-first century skills.

Discussion of Research Question Two

Research Question Two sought to discover how secondary choral directors in YCSD could balance a division-wide curriculum with unique requirements of specialized ensembles. This question arose out of the ensemble variety throughout the different secondary choral programs in YCSD. While all directors have general choirs, some have specialized ensembles, such as an a cappella choir, a jazz choir, or a madrigal choir. Because teachers should not have to sacrifice these unique specifications just to implement a division-wide requirement, the researcher strove to write a curriculum that teachers could adapt to any type of secondary choral ensemble.

Both the national and state standards encourage literature variety and do not limit directors to a singular style of choral literature. Thus, it was determined that the most effective way for teachers to adapt the curriculum into their specialized ensembles is to incorporate performance standards specific to their ensemble into the division sequence chart. While this does create more work for the individual teachers, the teachers are more effective if they have a general idea of what they want their students to master before the beginning of the school year. These specific performance standards provide the student with high-quality choral music education along with the division standards. Teachers can then adapt the sample assessments to reflect these standards.
Limitations

A literature review was conducted to complete a qualitative study with a historical approach. Limitations of this methodology include the lack of interviews, surveys, and polls. The researcher did not conduct interviews of any educators of standards-based reform in the secondary choral classroom. She did not interview any secondary choral directors within YCSD to gather the division's perspective of curricular needs. Historical research through examining the literature introduces potential bias, especially when authors insert their personal opinions into their writing. Bias was eliminated as much as possible by investigating the facts of sources instead of opinions.

To complete this study on combining national and state music standards to create a localized curriculum, the researcher only examined one set of national standards and one set of state standards. The study only considered the curricular needs of one school division and only one teaching context (secondary choral instruction) within that division. These limitations prevented the study from determining how national and state standards could be combined on a national level. Each state publishes its standards in different formats and has other requirements for the content of its standards.

Recommendations for Future Research

Because the study only examined one set of national standards and one set of state standards, music teachers of other contexts are encouraged to replicate this study by employing the standards of their content areas. These contexts include, but are not limited to, primary and secondary general music, primary and secondary instrumental music, keyboard and harmonizing instruments, music theory, music composition, music technology, and music careers. Further research on combining national and state standards in other music teaching contexts would
reveal if the 2020 Music SOLs align with the 2014 National Music Standards within these contexts.

Music teachers of other states can also replicate this study by choosing a strand of the national standards and identifying the appropriate standards document within their state. These additional studies would also reveal if states other than Virginia have aligned their state standards to the 2014 National Music Standards, as Lehman recommends.336 Previously, only twenty-one states had aligned their music standards to the 1994 National Music Standards. Thus, research of combining national and state standards in other states would identify how many states have aligned their standards to the updated 2014 version.337

Future research should encompass how to implement a standards-based curriculum into a localized school division successfully. Although several authors agree that teacher buy-in to a curriculum increases when all teachers are involved in the curriculum writing process, this inclusion of all teachers is not likely or feasible in today’s fast-paced and busy world.338 Researching balancing teacher buy-in with the effectiveness of standards-curriculum would increase the rate of curriculum implementation, even if a teacher was not involved in the writing process.

Finally, collegiate music education professors should discover ways to incorporate national and state standards into their general music and specified methods classes if they do not already do so. When professors eliminate standards-based reform from the collegiate music education classroom, they are not preparing their students for the standards-based demands they

337 Ibid., 28.
338 Wells, “Designing Curricula Based on the Standards,” 34.
will face when entering the K-12 music classroom, especially in a public school setting. When professors do include this in their curricula, they are setting their students up for success in the classroom as informed, effective, and sequential teachers of music.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to discover how the researcher could combine the 2014 National Music Standards and the 2020 Virginia Music SOLs to create an effective and sequential secondary choral curriculum for YCSD. By examining relevant literature and primary standards documents, this historical perspective determined this combination was possible by integrating the criteria of the SOLs into the artistic processes of the national standards. This new curriculum provides secondary choral directors in YCSD with a sequence chart of the integrated standards and sample lesson plans and assessments. Teachers can adapt the lesson plans and assessments to fit the needs of their ensembles best. Thus, this new curriculum is effective because of its effective assessments, and it is sequential because of the sequential ordering of the standards.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Virginia Choral Directors Association. “VMEA/VCDA Choral Assessment Adjudication Form.” Accessed October 30, 2021. https://www.vcda.net/index.php/component/easyfolderlistingpro/?view=download&format=raw&data=eNpNT9EOgjAM_JV1PyCoQS1PROMPmPhKJiswA4ysQ0mM_7GIPjU9np3vQqIY_gQJMBL3Ug0PCXYRsCILoYWO0ubjAiJf093js4HQhPYNH/EAo2VVDUuh2dTpcMM_zCfPTMug70af3RVfkoAqyVMFURAZhPh6z-

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Thesis Defense Approval

Leah Parr successfully defended her thesis this morning

Damon, Betty Melinda (Commercial Music) LinkedIn
Mon 11/29/2021 2:07 PM
To: Parr, Leah Grace
Cc: Pritchard, Stephanie Kristin (School of Music, Admin); Stiffler, Brian (Dept. of Music and Worship)

Good Morning All,

We would like to congratulate Leah Parr on her successful defense this morning. **Congrats, Leah!** Please proceed now with the one change mentioned by Dr. Stiffler and then submit to the Scholar's Commons as set forth in your handbook. We are so very proud of you, Leah!

Dr. Mindy Damon, Ed. D., Ed. S., DWS, MM, BS
Professor of Voice and Commercial Music
Coordinator of Artist Development
School of Music

(434) 582-2000

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