

WINTER SING CURRICULUM



NORTHBROOK SCHOOL DISTRICT 28
NORTHBROOK, IL
2011

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The Winter Sing Curriculum was developed based on three underlying principles:

1. All music and activities must be educationally sound.
2. All music and activities must be constitutionally permissible.
3. All music and activities must be sensitive to the student population of the District 28 community.

In 1993, Northbrook School District 28 originally developed the Winter Sing Curriculum through the guidance, professionalism, and expertise of the following individuals:

Dr. Steven Lake, Ms. Linda Johnson, Mrs. Alison Pearson, Ms. Sue Young, and Ms. Sue Vaughan.

In 2011, this document was updated and revised through the guidance, professionalism, and expertise of the following individuals:

Mrs. Melissa Jacobson, Mrs. Kathryn Finch, Mrs. Abigail Blair, Dr. Larry Hewitt, Dr. Kathy Horvath, Mr. Chris Finch, Ms. Rosanne Scanlan, and Mrs. Jennifer Able.

This document was reviewed by the District 28 Board of Education and adopted on July 26, 2011.

WINTER SING CURRICULUM

INTRODUCTION:

The Winter Sing accomplishes several academic purposes of the District 28 music program. It is an experience that educates students regarding the history, culture, and traditions of the winter holidays in our community. The Winter Sing Curriculum will help students better understand and appreciate the diversity within our District 28 community and world. It will foster mutual respect among students from different backgrounds and provide a safe environment for children to discuss winter customs and traditions. Songs are selected to expand the children's musical knowledge, while creating a performance opportunity that they might not have in other settings.

District 28 values the inclusion of music with religious text for holistic educational purposes. The District agrees with the guideline set forth by the *MENC: The National Association for Music Education*, in regards to song selection, when stating "the study and performance of music with religious texts within an educational context is a vital and appropriate part of a comprehensive music education. The omission of sacred music from the school curriculum would result in an incomplete educational experience. Music educators should demonstrate sensitivity to the diversity of beliefs represented by their students.¹"

All religious song selections will be chosen in accordance with the guidelines established in this document and must be presented in an academic, non-devotional manner.

In addition, the District also believes that secular winter and holiday music is equally as important and necessary as sacred music in creating a holistic educational experience for students. Thus the curriculum incorporates music that acknowledges non-religious winter activities, experiences, and holiday traditions.

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS:

The instructional goals of the Winter Sing are listed below:

¹ National Executive Board of MENC. 1997. "Where We Stand, "Music with Religious Texts."
<http://www.menc.org/resources/view/where-we-stand>.

1. To align with State and National Standards for music education:
 - a. National Standard 1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
 - b. National Standard 2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
 - c. National Standard 5. Reading and notating music.
 - d. National Standard 9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.
 - e. State Fine Arts Standard 27.B. Understand how the arts shape and reflect history, society and everyday life.
 - f. State Fine Arts Standard 27.A. Analyze how the arts function in history, society and everyday life.
 - g. State Fine Arts Standard 26.B. Apply skills and knowledge necessary to create and perform in one or more of the arts.
2. To increase student knowledge and appreciation of the history, culture, and traditions of the winter holidays in the District 28 community.
3. To use the skills students have learned in the classroom in order to prepare for and participate in a public music performance as part of the fulfillment of District 28 General Music Curriculum.
4. To foster mutual respect among students from different backgrounds and provide a safe environment for children to discuss winter customs and traditions from the District 28 community and around the world.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES:

The guidelines presented below will be adhered to in the planning, teaching, and performing of the Winter Sing Program.

1. The primary purpose of the activity must be secular in nature.
2. The primary effect of the activity must be that it neither advances religion nor inhibits it.
3. The activity must not involve an excessive entanglement between the schools and religious groups.
4. The school may sponsor *study* about religions but may not sponsor the *practice* of religion.
5. The school's approach to religions is *academic* not *devotional*.

6. The school may *expose* students to various religious views but may not *impose* any particular view.
7. When referencing religion, the curriculum may include *study* about what people believe but should not *tell* a student what he or she should believe.
8. The school's approach to religion is one of *instruction* not one of *indoctrination*.
9. The school should strive for student *awareness* of religions but should not press for student *acceptance* of any one religion.
10. The school may *educate* about a broad range of religions, but may not *convert* students to any religion.
11. The school should seek to *inform* the student about various beliefs but should not make him/her *conform* to any one belief.

SONG SELECTION GUIDELINES:

District 28 believes it is important to design a program at each grade level and holistically (kindergarten through grade 5) that presents a balanced repertoire of music, representing cultures and traditions that are both sacred and secular. The District recognizes that songs pertaining to specific cultural/religious celebrations are generally categorized as either secular or sacred in nature. While program balance does not mean a strict one-to-one ratio of the various songs to be performed, the District will stay as close to this ideal as possible. As such, the District will strive to incorporate one sacred and one secular song for each cultural/religious celebration being studied at every grade level, first through fifth grades. This balance will also apply to any background information presented with a song as part of the Winter Sing Program.

In regards to contemporary and traditional music, neither one will be viewed as having a higher value than the other, unless one has higher educational utility, meaning it is better suited to advance the educational goals of the General Music Curriculum. Additionally, the District draws no distinction between instrumental and choral music, considering both to be important and carrying equal weight for purposes of creating a balanced program.

Finally, when selecting religious songs, the District will be sensitive to the age of the children. In so doing, older children (third grade and above), because their belief systems are more established than younger children,

may be exposed to more developed sacred text and themes. Due to the limited time available for music instruction in a half-day program, the Kindergarten song selections will not contain sacred music.

During the planning of the Winter Sing, the teachers will be guided by the spirit and intent of this document, including the following statements in order to determine appropriate program content:

1. The music is selected on the basis of its musical and educational value. Music teachers will consider the following categories while selecting music:
 - State, National and District Standards
 - Musical concepts
 - Vocabulary
 - Song origins, customs and traditions
2. Music with religious text neither establishes religion nor prohibits the free exercise of religion in District 28.
3. The programs reflect traditions of the District 28 community.

PROGRAM APPROVAL:

District 28 general music teachers collaborate and plan song selection according to the guidelines listed above. The teachers will create and maintain a list of songs, appropriately categorized, that are aligned to the guidelines established in this document. This list will be reviewed and updated regularly so that consistency in applying these guidelines is maintained between the elementary schools. Music teachers will submit song selections to their building principal prior to starting rehearsals. The Assistant Superintendent will review and approve each prepared program.

A letter will be sent home to parents during Winter Sing preparation to provide an introduction to the Winter Sing Program.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION:

Participating in the Winter Sing is part of the District 28 Music Curriculum. While it is an expectation that all children participate, an underlying principle of the Winter Sing Curriculum is that music and activities will be sensitive to the student population. Parents who have concerns with any aspect of the program should address those concerns with the music teacher and building principal.