

VIRGIL I. GRISSOM HIGH SCHOOL
CHORAL DEPARTMENT

GRISSOM CHOIR

“STATE OF THE CHOIRS” FALL ‘24 REPORT

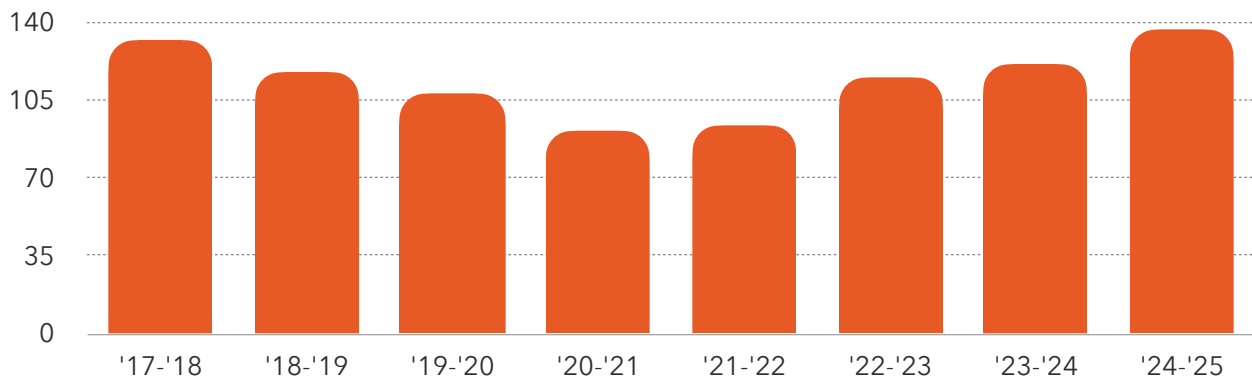
Introduction

Grissom Choir is a thriving, dynamic program that represents the school positively in our local community, state, country, and internationally. As part of the Huntsville City School's School System, it's mission is to provide an all-inclusive choral music education, and provide it's stakeholders with choral music opportunities of the highest calibre. Grissom Choir has held a standard of excellence for the vast majority of its active years at Grissom High School. The program is consistently known for its dedication to classical choral singing, as well as its inclusion of more modern repertoire. The program has been directed by Mr. Tucker Ratcliff since the Fall of 2017. The choir program features an active, authentic student leadership structure through our Leadership Team, as well as it's Booster Organization, The Grissom Choral Parents Association.

Enrollments

137 students are enrolled in Grissom Choir as of August 2024, with **128** being enrolled in 1 of our 4 curricular choirs: The Women's Choir, The Men's Choir, The Concert Choir, & The Chamber Choir, and 9 being enrolled in one of our extra-curricular Vocal Lab classes. Student enrollments dipped in 2020 due to COVID-19, but has shown significant growth year to year since. While membership enrollment has fluctuated, the quality of musicianship has risen each year. Our long-term enrollment goal is 200+ students, representing at least 10% of Grissom High School's student body (a common benchmark for strong high school choir programs). Challenges towards reaching that goal include student required courses (ex. Career Preparedness), & prior lack of student engagement at 1 feeder middle school.

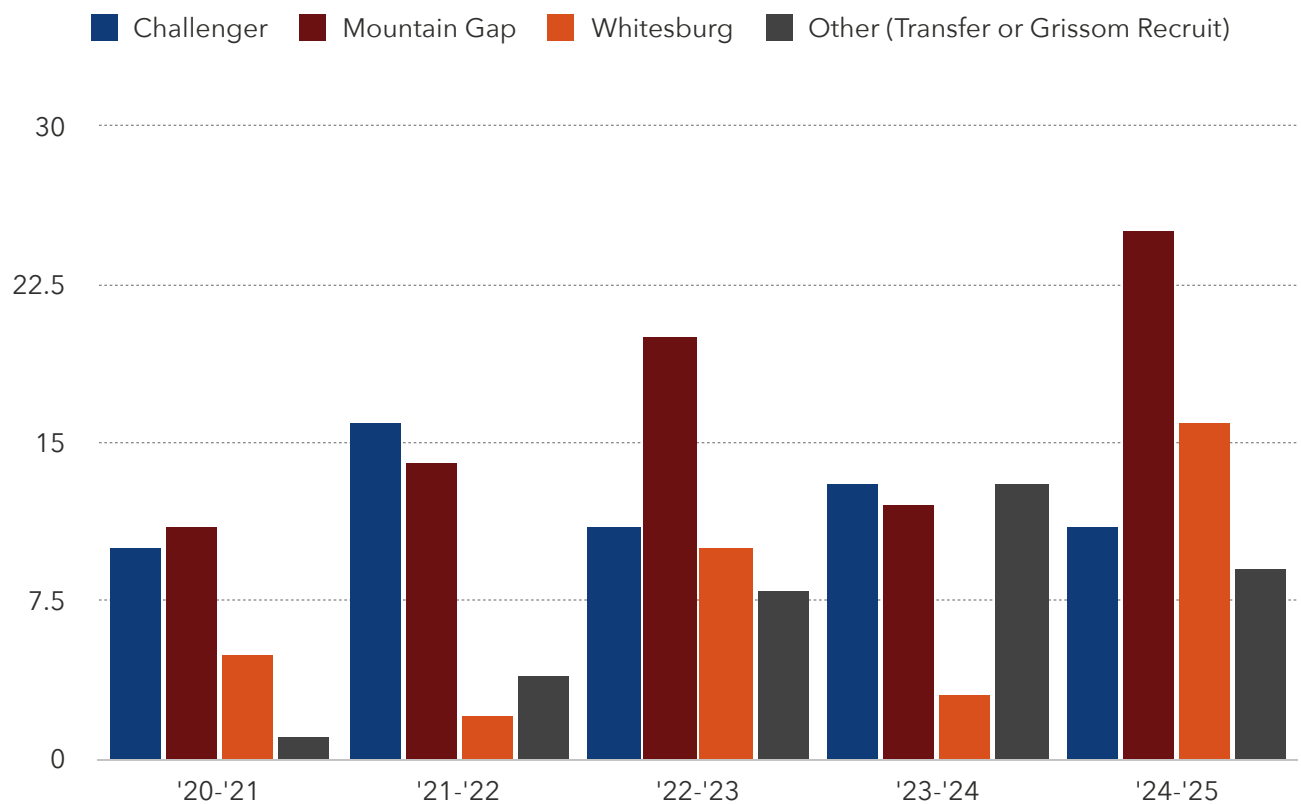
Grissom Choir Yearly Enrollments



Recruitment & Retention

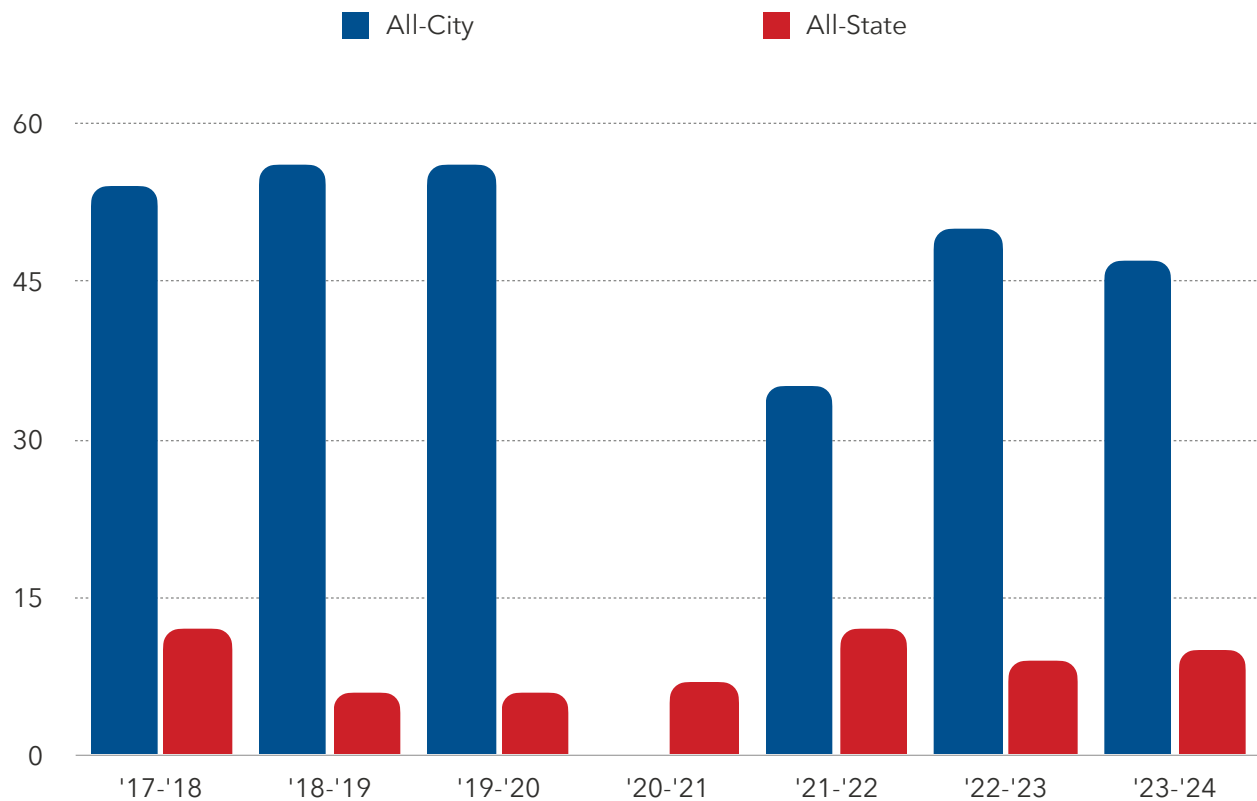
61 beginning level students are enrolled in either The Women’s Choir or The Men’s Choir as of August, 2024, 45% of the department’s curricular choir enrollment. Major recruitment efforts are made every year to reach the 200+ student membership goal, the main of which is Grissom Choir’s “Grissom Choral Festival”. This festival, founded in 2019, is an opportunity for current middle school students, grades 7th-8th, to sing and perform alongside current high school choir members to see what being in Grissom Choir is all about. It’s goal is to inspire middle school students through choral singing so they will continue to participate in choir throughout middle school and high school in Grissom Choir. The “Winter Tour” acts as a supplemental recruitment push, to help get students excited about the festival itself. This annual event consists of the Chamber Choir members traveling to our feeder middle schools (Challenger, Mountain Gap, & Whitesburg) in hopes of recruiting future members of the Grissom Choral Festival & Grissom Choir through song and current students sharing personal experiences. Each year, the director also travels to each individual 8th grade choir class in the feeder pattern to discuss being a member Grissom Choir and how they can continue to pursue each of their interests while in high school.

Grissom Choir Beginner Demographics



Student Honors

Grissom Choir students have auditioned for All-City & All-State Choral Festivals with increased success. Last school year, **47** students were selected to participated in the All-City Choral Festival in Huntsville, AL, with **74** currently registered to audition this year. **10** students were selected to participate in the All-State Choral Festival in Birmingham, AL as well. In the past 7 years, **5** students from Grissom Choir were awarded our city's "Outstanding Choral Student Award", the highest honor a choral student can be given in our city.



Last school year, seniors Seth Smith & Sophia Zajac were both selected as the Alabama Vocal Association's **District V Outstanding Male & Female Choral Students** across Huntsville City, Madison County, & Madison City Schools. They each compiled an extensive application, consisting of a video interview, video audition, 3 letters of recommendation, and a resume detailing 7th-12th grade choral experiences. They then went on to be interviewed and considered for the State OCS, of which both Sophia & Seth are selected as **the State of Alabama's Outstanding Male & Female Choral Students**. This is the utmost highest honor a student can receive in our state, and to have both the Male & Female students for our state be members of Grissom Choir is a blessing and honor for the program & HCS. They will now go onto be acknowledge as District V & State OCS winners at our aVA All-State Choral Festival in March. Sophia was also accepted into the Advanced Treble (SSAA) Honor Choir for the ACDA (American Choral Director's Association) Southern Division Conference in Louisville, KY in February, of which over 1,700 students from across the Southeastern Region of the U.S. auditioned for.

Community Outreach, Invitations, & Achievements

Over the past 7 years, Grissom Choir has risen to be one of Alabama's premier high-school choral programs, receiving invitations to perform across the state, nation, and globe. Under Mr. Ratcliff's direction, Grissom Choir has performed alongside the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra ('19), on the Carnegie Hall Stage ('18), in the Alabama Music Educators Association In-Service Conference ('22), at the ACDA Collegiate Choral Festival ('23) and at the State Capitol ('23, '24). After years of preparation, Grissom Choir made its international, Costa-Rican debut last summer ('23), sharing music with the citizens of San José and Arenal.

State Choral Performance Assessment

Every year, each choir in the department is consistently earned **Overall Superior & Excellent Ratings** at State Choral Performance Assessment, as well as individual Superior & Excellent Ratings at the Alabama Solo & Ensemble Festival. This past school year, the Chamber Choir, Concert Choir, & Women's Choir were awarded the "**Distinguished Musicianship Award**" by earning **Straight Superior Ratings**, with the Men's Choir receiving an **Overall Superior Rating**, with a Superior Score in Sight-Reading

Grissom Choral Parents Association

Grissom Choir is supported by one of the highest-functioning & active choral booster program in the state. The GCPA is a nonprofit corporation with the purpose of providing financial, physical, and educational support for the students enrolled in the Choral Department Program of Grissom High School, as well as any faculty, coaches, or other personnel employed or engaged by the Huntsville City Board of Education in an instructional capacity in the Choral Department of Grissom High School. The purpose shall be further stated to be the promotion of, and the encouragement of participation in, activities sponsored by the Huntsville Choral Directors Association, the Alabama Choral Directors Association, and the Alabama Music Educators Association by such individuals, ensembles, and choruses as the Director of the Grissom High School Choral Department deems appropriate.

President: Amy Boyle

Vice President: Kenneth Newton

Fundraising: Amanda Magonigal

Treasurer: Amanda Francis

Uniforms: Brett Palmer

Secretary: Jennifer Rice

Events: Erica Cottingham & Jessica Spinoso

Fundraisers

Grissom Choir programs 4 main fundraisers throughout the year to off-set it's Basic Support Fee, amongst others. We offer a Bed-Set Sheet Fundraiser, a Coffee & Tea Fundraiser, as well a BELK Sale & Car Wash Ticket Sale for our students to participate in. Other supplemental fundraisers include Spirit Nights & Online Campaigns for various departmental needs.