



Bloomington High School South
1965 South Walnut Street
Bloomington, Indiana 47401-6598

Gwen Witten Upchurch, Director
(812) 330-7714

Spring 2024 (REVISED)

Dear Parents of Prospective Sounds of South Members:

We are delighted that your son or daughter is interested in auditioning for Sounds of South! SOS is a nationally honored choir under the direction of Gwen Witten Upchurch, with a rich tradition of excellence at Bloomington High School South. However, Sounds of South is much more than a high school choir class, it is a group of talented and highly motivated students, who along with their parents, are committed to the success of the group.

Auditions will be held by appointment March 4–5, 2024; contact Ms. Witten Upchurch at gwitten@mcsc.edu to schedule an audition. The list of new Sounds of South members for the 2024–2025 school year will be posted on March 8, 2024 at the end of the school day. If your student is selected, there will be a **mandatory new member and parent meeting on Thursday, March 21, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.** in the choir room at BHSS.

Sounds of South is a performance-oriented choir and there are certain commitments of time and money of which you and your student should be aware.

Rehearsals and Performances

Sounds of South is a class that students attend during the school day for all three trimesters. Most rehearsing takes place during that time; however, members are required to attend rehearsals and performances outside of the school day. A detailed schedule listing all performances and rehearsals is published at the beginning of each school year. Extra rehearsals not listed on the schedule are rare and will be announced well in advance. (General information is provided at right.)

SOS members participate in a wide variety of activities in addition to their academic work and Sounds of South, including sports teams, student council, cheerleading, Science Olympiad, National Honor Society, and others. Ms. Witten Upchurch is very understanding and encouraging of SOS members who participate in these other activities. She does her very best to accommodate schedule conflicts. In return, she expects members to do their best to make SOS a high priority and plan accordingly.

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Time Commitments

SOS Camp

June 24–June 28, 2024 (leads)
July 1–July 5, 2024 (everyone)
1:00–9:00 p.m. @ BHSS
Attendance is mandatory.

Fall Musical

Monday & Wednesday evening
rehearsals each week from
beginning of school through last
performance.

Winter Concert

Mid-December.

Elementary School Holiday Performance

During the school day in
mid-December.

Additional Holiday Performances

Varies depending on demand.

Fine Arts Night at BHSS

Weeknight in April.

ISSMA Solo & Ensemble

Two Saturdays in January/
February.

ISSMA Choir Contest

Two Saturdays in April/May.

Spring Trip

Three or four days in April.

Spring Concert

Mid-May.

Finale!

Late May.

BHSS Graduation

May/June

Competitions and Travel

Sounds of South members participate in ISSMA solo and ensemble. All members are assigned to at least one large ensemble and many choose to perform a solo. SOS also participates in ISSMA choir competition in the Spring. Sounds of South also takes a performance trip in the Spring to participate in an invitational festival and/or competition. In past years, we have traveled to New York City, Montreal, St. Louis, Washington D.C., Myrtle Beach, Nashville, Orlando, Chicago, and Gatlinburg.

Finances

The financial support we raise is very important to the success of Sounds of South! While the MCCSC provides funds for class room instruction, Sounds of South as an organization must cover its operating expenses including our accompanist and stage director pay, SOS formal attire, the Spring trip, and costs associated with our fall musical. We have established three streams of income to cover these expenses: membership fees, our program book fundraiser, and musical ticket sales.

Membership fees cover SOS general operating expenses.

Need-based scholarships toward membership fees are available and are made possible by generous donations from the community. If you need financial assistance with membership fees, please contact our treasurer Lori Miller at sleepdeprived98@comcast.net. *No student will ever be excluded for financial reasons.*

The program book fundraiser covers the group's travel expenses and other expenditures from time to time as approved by the Board. We are very proud of this book, which not only contains advertisements, but showcases the group's accomplishments, provides formal and informal photographs of the members, and honors our graduating seniors. All SOS members, including those on need-based scholarship, are expected to solicit the specified amount in ads and donations each year.

Parent Involvement

This group is not just for students. We encourage all of our member's parents to get involved by serving on one or more of our committees. It's a great way to be involved in your student's life and your help is crucial to our continued success.

If you would like more information about Sounds of South or have questions, feel free to contact Gwen Witten Upchurch at gwitten@mccsc.edu.

Costs for SOS Members

Membership Fees

\$500. Payable in three installments June 24 (first day of ensemble camp), Sept. 1, and Nov. 1. Need-based scholarships are available and will be discussed at the new member/parent meeting.

SOS Attire

No cost to students for formal attire; except shoes. Guys need black dress shoes; ladies need black character shoes and black pantyhose. Black SOS hoodie will be provided at no cost.

Musical Costume

Students maybe responsible for providing items of payment. This can run from a few dollars to \$100 or more depending on the show and character.

Solo & Ensemble Fees

Varies depending on the number of ensembles or solos in which student participates. \$16 per event.

Spring Trip

No cost to students. Only money for incidentals and some meals will be needed. We suggest \$200 for the 2025 Disney Trip.

Fundraising

Program Book

Each student is required to raise at least **\$750** in ad sales or donations. This is in addition to membership fees.