



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

Gwen Witten Upchurch, Director  
(812) 330-7714

Spring 2025

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 the week before spring break; contact Ms. Witten Upchurch at [gwitten@mccsc.edu](mailto:gwitten@mccsc.edu) to schedule an audition. The list of new Sounds of South members for the 2025–2026 school year will be posted on March 14, 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 27, 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 23–27, 2024 (leads)  
June 30–July 4, 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](mailto: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. While not required, 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 parent 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](mailto:gwitten@mccsc.edu).

## **Costs for SOS Members**

### **Membership Fees**

**\$500.** Payable in three installments July 1, Sept. 1, and Nov. 1. Need-based scholarships are available.

### **SOS Attire**

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

### **Musical Costume**

Students may be 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. Approximately \$16 per event.

### **Spring Trip**

No cost to students. Only money for incidentals and meals will be needed.

## **Fundraising**

### **Program Book**

Each student is required to raise at least **\$850** in ad sales or donations. This is in addition to membership fees.