



VOCAL

What is a method you have used for selecting or training incoming choir leadership?

- We always have the outgoing president and one other senior officer serve in an advisory role on a panel to choose the incoming president. They sit in on all interviews (which we do a week or so before the rest of the officer interviews). Once we select the incoming president, that student participates on the interview panel for the rest of the officers, helping us make decisions on selecting the team. We find this gives them more student ownership and results in a core team the president can lead effectively. —*Christopher Fiorini, Bridgeland HS*
- I teach in a small school program and have found that observing students usually reveals natural leaders. In a 12-person choir, I sometimes have only one strong leader per section, and the other members naturally follow them, especially for sightreading. After those leaders are established, I determine where they need support and partner them with other members to help secure their confidence. (If they are stronger in rhythmic accuracy, I might put them next to someone who has a solid ear for intervals so they can work together.) —*Anonymous*
- I routinely assign section leadership throughout the choir to make sure that many students have a chance to lead. At the end of the year, we ask for student nominations for leadership roles for the coming year. Many who are nominated grow in confidence and become stronger leaders and contributors regardless of the election outcome. In this way, I ensure that I always have elected leaders who students will follow and musical leaders who can benefit those around them through their example. —*Robert Draper, Frisco ISD*
- I prefer to have our appointed section leaders (eighth graders I call the Choir Council Leaders) work with the upcoming class section leaders. This not only builds a strong bond within all the choirs but also helps mentor our future Choir Council Leaders (seventh graders). By the time those students take over, they are aware of the expectations. Council Leaders help in many aspects of our organization, from uniforms to fundraisers, socials, and repertoire selection for certain concerts. —*Leticia Laura Perez, BL Garza MS*
- Current leaders write a “will” for next year’s leaders. This includes information on what went well for the year, what they wish they could’ve done better, and how to deal with the director (me). It makes it feel more like it’s the students’ leadership instead of just me dictating things. —*Sean Rodriguez, Southwest Legacy HS*
- I have utilized student-run elections, where nominated candidates need some prior leadership experience (e.g., student council, officer in another school or community group, or captain of a sports team). The nominating individuals and the nominees make statements on why they believe the candidates are good choices for a student leadership position. Then a secret ballot is conducted. Once selected, I conduct a series of meetings with the leadership team to explain my expectations and responsibilities of their roles. Then we meet regularly (once monthly) and I provide feedback as they continue to grow into their roles. —*Jeffrey Tilley, Reed MS*
- In our program, candidates campaign for approximately two weeks. After the campaign period, the program votes. This has been an effective system for building ownership and pride in our program. The kids look forward to campaigning, and they love coming up with running mates and ideas to run on. —*Da’On Boulanger-Chatman, Lakeview Centennial HS*
- What has worked well for us is a combination of formal leadership training, hands-on mentorship, and peer selection. I send students to the TCDA Leadership Day at our local university during the summer, and I encourage them to attend local leadership conferences. We also have a strong student council that organizes leadership workshops and provides guidance on how to recruit and connect with younger students (6th–8th grades). In late April, current students vote for next year’s leadership team. This allows the newly elected leaders to learn from the outgoing leadership the entire month of May. —*Anonymous*
- Depending on the group, I either let the choir nominate and vote on their leaders or I select them myself. Each process has worked well since I began teaching. I find that the best process depends on the group. Training also depends on the role. Some can learn their tasks during class while others, such as the president, uniform clerk, and section leaders, meet with me outside of class. —*Jon P. Starling, The Brook Hill School*
- One selection method we use is having interested candidates complete a two-part application: an online form where they answer questions about the position they seek and a video submission in which they answer a series of questions (e.g., about strengths and areas for improvement). The process is similar to a job interview. A group of choir directors from our cluster meets to review the applications and recommend the best candidate for each position. —*Linda Holkup, Stephen F. Austin HS*

