



EastLake Middle School String Orchestra Course Overview

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Benefits of a Six-Year String Program

Students who balance out their daily schedule with an elective class like String Orchestra, usually find themselves enjoying higher academic success and a higher quality of life than those who don't. This is because when people take a break from the usual routine of reading and writing text, they are able to use playing music as a way to take stress out of the day and as a way to REJUVENATE and recharge the mind from the usual academic burdens. Orchestra, just like team sports, teaches people how to work together as a team to make beautiful music. Often, HEALTHY FRIENDSHIPS based on musical involvement are easily formed, keeping kids out of trouble. Furthermore, reading musical notation teaches us about numerical patterns and has been scientifically proven to boost the math achievement scores of students who remain in music programs throughout secondary school. These students receive thousands of dollars worth of music instruction FOR FREE! A student who takes a foreign language as an elective class in lieu of Orchestra misses out on this free music instruction. People can always learn a foreign language for free by living in another country. For example, I learned more German at the age of 16 living in Germany for 2 months than I learned sitting through 4 semesters of middle school German Class. I also learned to read and write fluent Nepalese at the age of 25 in the Peace Corps living in Nepal. Foreign languages are thus available at any age in any country and of course in high school when two electives are available. Music, however, requires students to start early and keep at it in order to learn it well. My unique ability to play cello is what gave me the competitive edge to get into a selective college, not my 3 years of German language. Yes, my cello got me into college! So please consider holding off on foreign language classes until high school so that your student can receive SIX YEARS OF QUALITY MUSIC INSTRUCTION.

Expectations for Student Conduct:

1. Students arrive to class in a quiet, orderly, fashion, putting music folders and pencils on their stands and their backpacks under their seats. Silence is maintained for announcements.
2. Instruments are unpacked in peripheral no-traffic areas and the cases must be labeled with the student's first and last name as well as class period. Rosin is NEVER put on music stands. Students MAY NOT use instruments checked out to other students.
3. Every period, 2nd-year students must bring and maintain a music binder organized by the table of contents with no loose sheets. Pencils must be placed on the stand so that beat patterns, fingerings and bowings can be annotated in the parts. The binder must be returned to Mr. Hagen at the end of the year just like a library book in satisfactory condition in order to prevent a fine or graduation-hold. 1st-year students must bring all supplemental hand-outs and "Essential Elements" Book 1.
4. Side conversations during rehearsal are NOT ACCEPTABLE! While instructions are being given to a specific playing section, other sections should effectively use the time and stay quiet by engaging in silent "mental practice" and/or annotation activities and use time efficiently!



Maximizing Student Achievement

5. Passes to use the restroom or see the nurse are for EMERGENCY USE ONLY! Only two passes for each student will be given PER SEMESTER, medical conditions excepted.
6. All trash, folders, and instruments along with their components are cleared from the rehearsal area and are properly stowed before students are dismissed. Students who lose materials or fail to bring materials tend to lag academically due to lost effective practice time.

If any of these behavior guidelines are broken, then the student will be warned initially. Any subsequent infraction will then result in consecutive lowering of the student's citizenship grade.

String Orchestra Rehearsal Behavior and Participation has a direct Effect on the Academic Grade

Just like team sports, a member of a musical performance group is ultimately evaluated on the degree to which s/he contributes to the success of the entire group. Therefore, the development of each student's playing ability will be measured by conducting periodic playing tests that will include a scale and ANY part of a piece that we are preparing for a concert. Playing tests will count for virtually the entire course grade as long as the student shows up in concert attire for ALL scheduled performances that occur during the school week. Any student who misses a concert for any reason, including illness, must do a make-up performance. If a missed concert is not made up, the academic grade may be lowered by 20%. Concert attire consists of wearing black dress shoes, black pants or long skirts, black socks, and tucked-in white dress shirts. All Orchestra Students will be performing for our WINTER CONCERT on **Thursday, December 11, 2014 at 6:00 pm.** We are asking families to consider obtaining store-bought food and drinks to sell at the Concert for fundraising. We use the money to pay for the non-essential fun things like trips to Disneyland and for Orchestra T-Shirts. We also encourage students to honor their parents and community by collecting and sorting cans and bottles at ELM during TSP to raise money for these fun activities instead of just expecting parents to fork out money. You can check the academic progress and actual test scores of your student by going on jupitergrades.com. Any test score lower than 80% can be retaken outside of regular class time after school for a maximum score of 80%.

Practice Time:

Some students will have to spend more time than others practicing outside of class due to absences or lack of concentration during rehearsals in order to perform well on playing tests and concerts. Time and Space for Practice (TSP) will be made available Thursday afternoons in Room 902 from 3:15 pm to 4:15pm. In addition, bass players can use the practice rooms during regular TSP. All students are encouraged to use this opportunity, especially if they are behind in their playing ability. TSP is fun!!!! Music brings the people together!!!!!!

Sincerely,

Mr. Hagen, ELM Orchestra Director

I, _____, have read and understand the written description above of how my academic course grade in string orchestra will be determined. Because I want to contribute to the orchestra maximizing its performance potential, I promise to follow rehearsal procedures and engage in productive rehearsal conduct habitually.

I, _____, understand what the expectations of my _____ are in orchestra class and how they relate to his/her academic progress in musicianship.

X _____
Student signature

X _____
Parent/Guardian signature



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