



LAKE ZURICH MIDDLE SCHOOL NORTH

ORCHESTRA HANDBOOK

2007-2008

LAKE ZURICH MIDDLE SCHOOL NORTH ORCHESTRA PROGRAM

Orchestra offers students an opportunity for personal growth and enrichment through the study of orchestral music literature, string performance, and music history. Studying music is an important part of a student's education as it helps develop creativity, discipline, and appreciation. As an important part of the curriculum, orchestra requires hard work and commitment by the students, parents, and teacher. Students' grades in orchestra effect their GPA (Grade Point Average) throughout their education. The curriculum will emphasize practice of performance techniques, study of music literature and history, and the exploration of musical expression through performance, composition, improvisation, and technology. Expectations will be established to promote maximum potential in both full orchestra rehearsals and in sectionals.

REHEARSALS

Orchestra rehearsals combine the four instruments of the string family in a group ensemble and introduce age appropriate musical literature. The orchestra rehearses everyday with standard rehearsals on most days and on special days students will work on musical projects such as composing, improvising, conducting, writing musical biographies, or rehearsing in small ensembles. These musical projects will be student driven to allow students to explore their personal musical interests which may be different from their fellow orchestra members. For example, some students may be interested in composition while others are interested in performing in an intimate chamber ensemble. A student will be more intrinsically motivated in the orchestra program as they are given the opportunity to explore what interests them musically. After exploration they will gain a better understanding and appreciation for music. When that better understanding is brought back into the full orchestra ensemble the quality of the orchestra will improve.

Students may arrange with the orchestra director to miss rehearsal to make up tests or work with another teacher once per week up to a maximum of five times per quarter. The student must have a pass from the respective teacher prior to lunch for 6th graders and prior to the beginning of the school day for 7th & 8th graders. Usually there will be anywhere from about 3-5 days prior to concerts or contests that students will not be allowed out of rehearsal. If a grade level has scheduled an assembly during rehearsal, students involved will be excused from rehearsal to attend the assembly.

Chamber Orchestra (7th & 8th Grades) 4th Period

Intermezzo Orchestra (6th Grade) 10th Period

Rehearsal and sectional attendance is very important! If a student misses a rehearsal s/he will miss the musical instructions given for a particular piece of music. In some cases a single student could be playing a single part. If that student is not present then an entire part might be missing.

Occasionally, as performances approach, there will be a necessity for extra rehearsals after school, especially when the two orchestras are combined or the Chamber Orchestra adds the wind, brass, and percussion to form the Symphony Orchestra. In the event of extra rehearsals, the students will be notified well in advance. After school rehearsals are mandatory, and the director must be informed in writing of conflicts prior to the day of the rehearsal. Students involved in after school sports or other activities will be excused on game days only. After rehearsal the student will be given a pass to attend the rest of the practice or other activity.



GRADING POLICY

Grades for orchestra will be determined as follows and are elaborated on, below.

Performance Development **Portfolio Development** **Participation & Effort**

Extra credit may be earned by attending out-of-school concerts. Most pop and rock concerts do not count towards receiving extra credit. If you are unsure that what you saw is appropriate for extra credit, ask the director. Students are then required to write a one-page reflective essay on their experience attending the concert. The student may write about what s/he found interesting about the concert, elaborate on an interesting fact about a piece that was performed, or write on an interesting fact about the specific performers of the concert. Students may also receive extra credit by listening to a professional recording of a piece of music that we are currently studying, or listen to a professional recording of a piece of music of their own instrument. Again, ask the director if you are unsure if the music is appropriate for extra credit. Students are then required to write a one-paragraph essay on their experiences in listening to the music. Similar topics as above are suggested.

Another way a student may earn extra credit is through participating in out-of-school music organizations and/or taking private lessons. A piece of paper with your private teacher's signature or other director's signature is proof.

Performance Development – The teacher and student will evaluate the student's progress in regards to development of performance ability. Evaluation will be made based on performance tests and practice journals.

Performance Tests – Tests will be given throughout the school year to assess the performance abilities and musical knowledge of the students.

Practice Journals – Practicing outside of school is essential for the student's development in music. Practice journals will be given to students for the purpose of guiding their practice at home. Students set an attainable challenging goal for a single week of practice, strategize how to obtain that goal, and note their progress towards reaching that goal. For some goals it may take as little as 30 minutes of practice, while other goals may take up to many hours of practice.

Portfolio Development – The teacher and student will evaluate the student’s progress in regards to the development of the student’s portfolio. Evaluation will be made based on the student’s completed and current projects done in sectionals.

Sectionals – Students will survey many different fields of music, giving them a taste for how they can focus their musical studies in the future. Students will explore instrumental study, improvisation, technology in music, conducting, chamber music, music history, and composition. Sectionals are required to develop specific skills on the student’s given instrument as well as develop an overall musical education. They are given during school, and are part of the orchestra program. These sectionals are very important in that each section works with the director away from the rest of the ensemble to master their parts in the music. The sectional schedule is posted in the orchestra room. Sectional schedules will be handed out upon request. Sectionals will occur on the same day of the week for each student but always at different times of the day. This prevents the student from missing the same class every week. Students are required to check in with their regular scheduled classroom teacher before attending the sectional. At that time the student should turn in any assignments due in the regular scheduled class that day, as well as find out what will be due the next day. Students are required to complete all work missed due to sectionals. To be excused from a sectional, students must obtain permission from the director, in person. If a student misses a sectional they will be responsible for scheduling with the director a make-up sectional.

Participation & Effort – The teacher and student will evaluate the student’s sense of participation in the orchestra community and effort towards developing musically. Evaluation will be based on attendance, class participation, and the student’s sense of community. Students will be encouraged to participate and become motivated in rehearsals. Participation includes joining in class discussions, interacting with other students in a professional manner, answering the director’s questions posed during rehearsals, and being ready to play when the director cues. Good effort can be shown by the student’s participation, consistent practicing, focus during rehearsals, and willingness to learn. Points will be deducted for disruptive behavior, and not being prepared (this includes forgetting their instrument).

Concerts – Although no single grade is given for concerts, attendance is **MANDATORY** for all students! Rehearsals, sectionals, and assignments are given to prepare the student for the concert event. The student and parents should look forward to the event as a culmination of the student’s hard work prior to the concert. If a student misses a concert or performance s/he may receive one letter grade lower for that quarter. Of course, in the event of an emergency, a student will be excused.



UNIFORM

Attire for performances will vary. All students will be required to purchase the MSN Orchestra polo to be worn at various times throughout the year. Some performances will be a formal affair where students will be required to dress up as suggested below. Students and parents should assume that the dress is formal, unless stated by the director in advance. Students not adhering to the dress code will be sent home to change.

Ladies

Black Long Skirt or Slacks
White Blouse
Black Dress Shoes
Black Socks or Nylons

Gentlemen

Black Dress Pants (no denim)
White Button Down Shirt (ties optional)
Black Dress Shoes
Black Socks

---GYM SHOES ARE NOT ALLOWED---

During school assemblies or other possible performances throughout the year we will use a more casual uniform. The casual uniform will consist of the MSN Orchestra polo and black pants/skirts. Information for ordering MSN Orchestra polo will be given at the beginning of the year so the students may place orders well in advance of a casual performance.



SUPPLIES

Students are required to have the appropriate supplies.

Violin & Viola

Instrument in good playing condition
Extra set of quality strings
Rosin
Dust cloth
Mute
Shoulder rest
Sharpened pencil

'Cello & Bass

Instrument at home to practice
Extra set of quality strings (vcl)
Rosin
Dust Cloth
Mute
Rock stop or endpin strap
Sharpened pencil

Cello and Bass students do NOT need to bring their instrument to school every day. School instruments will be provided during school rehearsals and sectionals. Students should use their own instruments for all performances.

SOLO AND ENSEMBLE CONTEST

Solo and ensemble contest will be held on February 9th, 2007. Solo and ensemble contest is required for all 7th and 8th grade orchestra members. Sixth grade students may participate in the contest with the director's permission. State rules allow no more than four events for each participant and no more than one solo may be performed on the same instrument. The contest consists of individual accompanied solos and/or small group ensembles as chosen by the director. The director will provide a list of accompanists for the student. Accompanists generally charge \$25 to \$30, depending on the difficulty of the piece. Students taking private lessons are encouraged to have their private teacher select the solo for him or her. The piece must be selected by December 1st, 2006.

At contest students are rated on their performance. Categories used by the judges are intonation, rhythm, dynamics, musicality, and appearance. First and second place ratings are given medals.

Solo and ensemble contest is an important part of the student's education both musically and in general. Through hard work, students build the confidence to perform as a soloist and/or in a small ensemble, and are given the opportunity for individual praise, unlike praise of performing in the bigger setting of an orchestra performance. Year after year it proves to be one of the most memorable events for the student. Please encourage your child to practice diligently for this contest!

IMEA FESTIVAL

Selected students will have the opportunity to participate in the IMEA District 7 Festival on November 3rd. The festival provides an opportunity for students to play with other top string players throughout the North/Northwest suburbs. Students will receive audition music in the spring or early fall and will be able to audition October 2nd. Students with the most successful auditions from all participating schools will be able to attend the Festival on November 3rd. The festival will consist of a rehearsal from 8 am until 2 pm (with a break for lunch), followed by a performance at 3 pm. Family and friends are invited to attend the performance. It is truly an honor for students to participate in this festival as it consists of the best middle school string players in our area of Illinois!

More information about IMEA will be passed out in class.

PARENT VOLUNTEERING

Parents will be needed to assist with supervising students during concerts, receptions, trips, and other activities. Without involved parents, we would not be able to do many of the things we do each year. At parent night, September 10th, you will be given the opportunity to sign up to volunteer.

FUND RAISERS

Every student has an account in which money from fundraisers is kept. Students build their account by participating in orchestra fundraisers. Students will be able to use the money in these accounts for various orchestra events. Events include trips, Solo & Ensemble Contest, and any other occasions where students are required to pay. The student's account will last throughout their middle school and high school education as long as they participate in orchestra. Money can only be used by written parental permission or by the director for that student. If a student leaves the program the money cannot be given to the student but instead will go to further the orchestra program.

The money made from the fundraisers will go towards individual accounts as well as toward the purchase of new instruments and orchestra events. The amount of money going to the individual accounts for those that participate will be announced prior to the fundraiser. These accounts are the best way for students to finance their own trips and activities within the orchestra program. If you would like to know how much money your child has in his/her account call the director at (847) 719-3668.

Parent input and assistance is greatly appreciated when planning fundraisers. If there is a unique fundraiser you think we should be involved in, or would like to help out, please let me know.

ORCHESTRA AWARDS BANQUET

At the end of each year, the band, orchestra, and chorus have a banquet for the students. This is a culminating event for the students in which awards are presented to the students. The cost is around \$25 per student and can be paid for with money from the student's account. In past years, a formal dinner has been followed by a dance with a DJ. After the banquet, parents are invited to join us for an awards ceremony. The awards acknowledge the achievements of individual students.

ORCHESTRA NEWSLETTERS

Throughout the year orchestra newsletters will be sent home. In case these notes are misplaced or never make it home, copies of the most recent letters will be published on the LZMSN Orchestra Web Page found at www.lz95.org/msn/faculty/rbroach. Please bookmark it and check it periodically for upcoming information and events for the orchestra.

ORCHESTRA CLASSROOM RULES

1. All school rules apply during rehearsals, concerts, and on any orchestra trips.
2. Take care of your instrument!
3. Instruments are expensive and are not to be touched unless they belong to you.
4. Rehearsal begins at 9:41 for the Chamber Orchestra and 1:49 for the Intermezzo Orchestra. This means students are seated with their instruments in rest position ready to start.
5. Proper rehearsal etiquette should be used in all rehearsals and sectionals.
6. Cases should be left on the instrument racks, instrument lockers, or underneath your chairs.
7. Instruments are to be kept in the orchestra room during the day. The orchestra room is climate controlled for best care of the instruments.
8. Please take your instruments home on weekends!



Follow these rules and you'll be fine.

I do the right thing not because I want a reward.

I do the right thing because it is right.

I don't do the wrong thing to avoid punishment.

I don't do the wrong thing because it is wrong.

IMPORTANT ORCHESTRA DATES

Date	Time	Event	Location
Sept. 10	7:00 pm	Orchestra Parent Night	Orchestra Room
Oct. 2	4:30 pm	IMEA Auditions	Haven MS
Oct. 30	7:00 pm	Halloween Orchestra Concert	MSN Cafetorium
Nov. 3	All Day	MS IMEA Orchestra Festival	Maine West HS
Nov. ??	TBA	U of I Orchestra Consortium / Festival <i>(Chamber Orchestra Only)</i>	Niles West HS, Skokie
Dec. 11	7:00 pm	Winter Orchestra Concert	MSN Cafetorium
Dec. ??	During School	BOC Assembly	MSN Gym
Feb. 9	All Day	IGSMA Solo & Ensemble Contest	Daniel Wright MS
Feb. 13	6:00 pm	BOC Bistro Night	MSN Cafetorium
Feb. 21	3:00 pm	North Orchestra Festival (6th grade)	TBA
Mar. 8	1:00 pm	IGSMA Organizational Contest	TBA
May 15	7:00 pm	Spring Orchestra Concert	MSN Cafetorium
May ??	During School	BOC Assembly	MSN Gym
May 21	6-9 pm	MSN Music Banquet	Concord Banquets

Put these dates on your calendar today!!!

Concert attendance is mandatory for all students. Missing a concert could result in one letter grade lower for the quarter.

Parent Volunteer Form

If you would like to volunteer to help out in any way please fill out this form and have your child return the form to the orchestra director.

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Student Name _____

Phone Number(s) _____

Email _____

I would like to volunteer to help with...

Baker / Buyer

Data Entry

Decorations

Chaperone

Music Library

Fundraisers

Anything

If you have any questions about volunteering please call me at 719.3668, or send me an email at riley.broach@lz95.org.