

WESTON HIGH SCHOOL

Orchestra **HANDBOOK**



Christopher Memoli, Director of Music
Concert Orchestra
Chamber Orchestra

Course Descriptions

Concert Orchestra

This course will offer instruction in the development and refinement of advanced performing and ensemble techniques. Emphasis will be on the study of standard orchestra literature. The string orchestra will be a major performing group for the school and community. Additional opportunities will be provided for full symphonic orchestra: strings, woodwinds, brass and percussion. This will require combining band and string students for instruction periodically. Rehearsals and performances outside of regular school hours will be required.

Chamber Orchestra

The course will offer instruction in the development and refinement of advanced performing and ensemble techniques. The Chamber Orchestra will be a major performing group for the school and community. Opportunities for public performances will be provided and attendance will be required. Additional opportunities will be provided for full symphonic orchestra: strings, woodwinds, brass and percussion. This will require combining band and string students for instruction periodically. Admission to this group is by audition only and based on the instrumentation needs of the group. Rehearsals and performances outside of regular school hours will be required.

Note: Class open to students in Grades 10-12

GRADING

Students' grades will be determined as follows:

1. Skill Development

Students will receive a grade each 8 day cycle for the development of the skills inherent in becoming a contributing member of an orchestra. Skills to be assessed will include:

- Participating actively and cooperatively in class.
- Having all necessary equipment and materials.
- Being ready for the start of rehearsal.
- Attending all rehearsals and concerts.
- Preparing daily assignments.

2. Performance

Students will receive grades for playing tests and performances. Playing tests will be on a variety of music literature and fundamentals. A performance grade will equal two test grades. **Obviously, an unexcused absence from one performance could significantly lower a student's grade.**

3. Extra Credit

A student may also earn extra points toward the point average for his/her grade in several ways. Below are three examples. Other extra credit opportunities will be announced throughout the quarter.

- Auditioning for District or All-State Orchestra
- Participation in District or All-State Orchestra
- Youth Orchestra Participation

MAKEMUSIC CLOUD

The Weston Public Schools Instrumental Music Program uses an exciting tool in the band and orchestra curriculum, grades 3-12. MakeMusic Cloud is a web-based software program that helps students receive, practice and submit their school music assignments from home. For example:

- Students practice with background accompaniment and get visual and audio feedback on each assignment, which makes practice more meaningful and productive.
- MakeMusic Cloud motivates students to continue practicing to improve their scores, similar to a video game, which makes practice more fun.
- Teacher can provide more individualized attention for your child with MakeMusic Cloud's assignment features, including notes of encouragement.
- Parents have access to their student's progress 24/7.

MakeMusic Cloud is fully integrated into the Weston band and orchestra curriculum.

What is needed to use MakeMusic Cloud?

MakeMusic Cloud runs on any device that runs google chrome (aka Chromebooks, iPads, computers).

ATTENDANCE

Each individual student's participation affects the group's performance and each student plays a valuable role in the orchestra. Students and parents constantly juggle activity, work and vacation schedules to attend orchestra activities.

Attendance at all rehearsals and performances, during and after school, is mandatory. Personal illness or family emergency is the only excuse for missing a performance. Any such absence must be confirmed by a parent in writing the first day the student returns to school. All prearranged absences, such as a family wedding, must be given to Mr. Memoli as soon as possible, but no later than two weeks in advance. *Personal illness* is defined as being "unable to be up and about." An orchestra member who is mildly indisposed (headache, upset stomach, etc.) is expected to perform to the best of his/her ability, because the absence would directly affect the quality of the group's performance. If any student misses too many rehearsals, excused or unexcused, to the degree that the director feels that student is unable to perform adequately at the concert, that student will be expected to attend the concert, but will not participate in the performance.

CONCERT DRESS - Concert Black

Black Dress (black blouse, skirt or dressy pants are fine), Black Shoes

Black Suit or Tuxedo, White Shirt, Black Bow Tie and Cummerbund, Black Shoes/Socks

INSTRUMENT STORAGE

Each student will be assigned a space in the band room to keep their instrument during the school day. The storage area is only to be used for instruments and instrument accessories. Students should make sure all of their possessions are labeled clearly with their name. School books, gym clothes, etc. are not to be kept in the storage area. Instrument storage spaces do not have individual locks. Instruments are left at own risk.

Student Officers

Band members will elect officers to represent the Weston orchestra. Officers include President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Librarian(s).

Letter Requirements

Letters will be awarded to students in the orchestra on the basis of participation in Music Department and orchestra activities. Each orchestra member will complete an Orchestra Award Record to determine if he/she qualifies for a band letter or bar. The band letter will be earned after a student accumulates 300 points. A bar will be awarded when an additional 200 points have been earned. Letter points may be carried over from one year to the next. Once a student has earned a letter, he/she may start over beginning the next school year and earn a service bar. A student who has an unexcused absence from a performance will not be eligible for a letter or award. Letters and all other awards earned by students during the school year will be presented at the year-end awards ceremony.

PARENT SUPPORT

Parental involvement is an important part of a successful orchestra program. Parents are urged to attend performances, encourage students to practice and become active in the school orchestra program. Parent volunteers are needed to help with after-concert receptions, uniforms, trips, chaperones, etc. Please watch for emails from the *Weston Friends of Music*.

PRIVATE LESSONS

Students can progress at amazing rates while taking private lessons. All band students are strongly encouraged to seek private instruction to further develop technique, sight-reading ability and repertoire. Please find the sign up form on the High School Orchestra Website or by clicking [this link](#).

MMEA MUSIC FESTIVAL AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

Junior District Festival Audition Requirements: www.mmeaeasterndistrict.org/junior.htm

Senior District Festival Audition Requirements: www.mmeaeasterndistrict.org/senior.htm

All-State Festival Audition Requirements: www.massmea.org/newsevents/all-state-festival-concert/auditions