

STCE Orchestras

Mr. Daniel Beder: daniel.beder@d303.org

Grading: 20% Playing tests, 30% Performances, 25% In-class rehearsals, 5% Homework, 20% Final Exam

Concerts: Required! See calendar for dates.

Concert attire: All concert black - black long-sleeve dress shirt/top, black dress pants (not yoga pants), black, closed-toe dress shoes (black socks). No t-shirts, jeans, sandals, etc.

Seating: What Mr. Beder think makes the orchestra work best, which usually means seating changes throughout the year. We focus on collaboration, not competition.

Cell phones: Only to be used for tuning and up to Mr. Beder's discretion.

Homework/quizzes/tests: Google Classroom!

Other Opportunities

Take lessons!

Audition for ILMEA Orchestra

Join Tri-M (if you are in an auditioned ensemble)

Join the Mock Audition club

Form a duet/trio/quartet with some friends

Go to a CSO concert

Listen to music

2018-2019 St. Charles East High School Orchestra Syllabus/Handbook



Contact Information

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Description

In the St. Charles East orchestra program, students study, rehearse, and perform music for orchestra, small ensembles, and their solo instrument. We will work on a wide range of music across different eras and styles. Students will also learn music theory and music history, and will learn to think critically about the music we perform.

Goals

Students will

1. Develop skills leading to quality musical performances
2. Acquire a working knowledge of the elements of music
3. Demonstrate a positive attitude as a collaborative member of an instrumental ensemble
4. Develop musicianship and a critical understanding of a variety of musical styles
5. Have fun playing some great music!

Expectations

1. Be respectful of all members of the group (including the teacher)
2. Be prepared: practice your instrument and have all required materials
3. Be on time for all rehearsals, concerts, and related events

Materials needed for class

- Instrument and related items (shoulder rest, etc)
- Pencil (no pens)
- Music

Instrument

All students should rent or own an instrument. Violins and violas must bring their instruments to school for each rehearsal. Cellos and basses will be assigned one school instruments for use during class but should still have a home instrument for practicing. Rental cost for the school cellos and basses is \$75/year. Students will be responsible for the cost of any damages done to school instruments while in their care. Home instruments will be used for all concerts.

Seating

My philosophy for seating emphasizes excellence and preparation over competition. String sections will not be seated front to back/strongest to weakest. It is important to have the experience of sitting in different places in the orchestra, so seating may rotate throughout the school year.

Generally, just the first one or two chairs of each section are the top players in the section. The other stands are usually assigned based on different criteria (but not strongest to weakest) such as musical strengths and weaknesses, leadership in rehearsals, seniority, preparation, etc. For example, a player with strong rhythm may be seated next to a player with weaker rhythm but better pitch. Sometimes seating may be random or even alphabetical. Given the collaborative nature of an orchestra, there will be no chair challenges.

The Good Principal Player or Concertmaster

A good section leader and a good concertmaster share many of the same qualities. Although it is unusual that any one person will possess all these qualities, these are the characteristics of a good section leader or principal player:

- Well-prepared for each rehearsal
- Above average sight-reader
- Strong sense of internal rhythm / good pulse
- Knowledgeable about bowings and able to offer suggestions
- Recognized as a leader by peers; respected and admired
- Leadership and humility in a good mixture
- Takes responsibility for entire section (bowings, fingerings, articulations, etc.)
- Strong work ethic / does not tire quickly
- Physical leadership / strong sense of physical gesture / can lead physically & with breathing
- Good at reading conductor and following / good eye contact
- Strong "chamber music" sense of others / good relationship with other principals

Principal players will be expected to maintain an A in orchestra, audition for ILMEA District 9 Orchestra (required for Chamber, encouraged for Symphonic and Concert), and attend all concerts and after-school rehearsals. This includes concerts that may conflict with other school activities, such as athletic or club events. In general, principal players will be expected to take private lessons on their orchestra instrument, but this is not an absolute requirement.

Principal players will be chosen by a combination of solo audition and teacher observations during the first few weeks of school.

Practicing at home

Consistent practicing is expected. It is much better to practice every day for 10-15 minutes than just once or twice a week for an hour. We will not be using formal practice charts unless a student is struggling in class. Practicing can be fun! Perform for your grandparents, siblings, neighbors, or pets. With consistent practicing, everyone should be able to get an A or B on the tests. We will be learning good practicing habits in class, but if you would like more help, please speak with Mr. Beder.

Grading and evaluation

20% Playing tests

In general, these will be on concert music leading up to each concert, but may be announced other times as well. Unless otherwise announced, these will be done by submitting videos using Google Classroom.

30% Performances

Missed performances must be made up but at most ½ credit will be given for unexcused absences. Everyone is expected to stay for the entire concert.

25% In-class rehearsals

This includes (but is not limited to) proper use of tuning/warm-up time, attention to details, following rehearsal expectations, and having music, instrument, and all required materials at all rehearsals. Students can earn 2 points per day/10 points per week.

5% Homework

20% Final Exam

As orchestra is a performance-based class, the bulk of overall grades are from playing your instrument. Formative assessments will be ongoing and ungraded. Occasional playing tests (some live, some recorded) will be graded. With few exceptions, students will be given a chance to retake playing exams for an improved grade. Being unprepared for class rehearsal (either musically unprepared or missing materials, like **forgetting an instrument**) will lower the rehearsal grade.

Cell phones and technology: Using cell phones at the beginning of class for tuning your instrument is encouraged. Having devices out at any other time or for any other reason is not allowed unless specifically requested by Mr. Beder. Many tuning and metronome apps and websites are available for all platforms. I encourage you to use these when you practice at home!

Having phones out any other time: 1st time=warning. 2nd time=phone in parking lot for a week. 3rd time=phone in parking lot for the rest of the semester.

Rehearsal/Performance Attendance

Attendance at all concerts is mandatory. A calendar of orchestra activities is posted (along with this handbook) on Google Classroom. Please see Mr. Beder as soon as any conflicts arise.

Any student who misses a performance for an excused reason (e.g. death in the family, illness resulting in missing that day of school, etc.) will be expected to make up the grade for full credit by performing their concert music for Mr. Beder at his convenience. Unexcused absences (e.g. work schedule, "I forgot," etc.) must also be made up by an individual playing test and will result in a grade of at most 50%. Please work out all transportation well in advance.

Concert attire/etiquette

All students should wear all concert black - black long-sleeve dress shirt/top, black dress pants (not yoga pants), black, closed-toe dress shoes and for gentlemen, black socks. No t-shirts, jeans, sandals, etc. Part of your concert grade is demonstrating proper attire.

Everyone is expected to be good, respectful audience members for the other groups, and stay for the entire performance.