

STRING INSTRUMENT PROGRAM

**Mrs. Brittney R. Webster Treczer
Instructor/Conductor
Grades 6-12**

**PUBLIC SCHOOLS of the TARRYTOWNS
SLEEPY HOLLOW MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL**

To Parents and Students:

Playing a string instrument is a wonderful and rewarding accomplishment. It is something you can begin at school and continue for the rest of your life. The purpose of this booklet is to provide you with information about the string instrument program.

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LESSON SCHEDULE:

All students in grades 6-12 are scheduled for one lesson each week. These lessons are on a rotating schedule and each group lesson is 45 minutes long. Each student will be assigned a particular day on which they will always have their lessons. (For example, all 6th grade string lessons will be on Fridays). A lesson schedule will be posted and handed out every two months at S.H.H.S. and S.H.M.S. Students need to make sure to keep track of the lesson schedule in order to insure a good lesson participation grade. Proper advance planning and time management skills are necessary in order to be able to miss an academic class for a lesson. The lesson schedule rotation is designed to limit a lesson pull-out to once a month, per academic class. Students are not allowed to miss an academic exam because of a scheduled lesson, therefore make-up lessons are offered at the end of each quarter. All lessons are required to be attended or made-up by the end of each marking period to insure a good grade. If a student is not available during the scheduled make-up lesson times, (after school), I can always find an alternative time, (during school). Special note: All 6th grade violin lessons will be taught by Ms. Winze. All other 6th through 12 grade lessons will be taught by Mrs. Trenczer as well as all Middle School Orchestras, the High School Orchestra, and all Middle and High School chamber ensembles. **Mrs. Trenczer's rehearsal room is room 514A in the music wing.**

ORCHESTRA REHEARSALS:

Orchestra rehearsals at the Middle School and High School are scheduled into each student's daily class schedule during period one, (except Sixth Grade Junior Orchestra which is after school on Fridays). All 6th grade string players are automatically enrolled in **both** the Junior Orchestra **and** the 6/7/8 grade Intermediate Orchestra. All 7/8 grade string players are automatically enrolled in the Intermediate Orchestra and the 7/8 grade Concert Orchestra. All string players will receive one grade that will reflect their combined participation in each orchestra. **Middle School 6/7/8 grade Intermediate Orchestra meets every CYCLE DAY FIVE during period one in the auditorium.** Middle School 6th grade Junior Orchestra meets after school on FRIDAYS each week from 3:15 - 4:15 PM and the late bus comes at 4:30 PM. Middle School 7/8 grade Concert Orchestra meets cycle days one and three, during first period. High School orchestra meets cycle days 2, 4, and 6 during period one. Since orchestra (period one) is a scheduled class, attendance is mandatory. (Please see the attached attendance policy sheet). Students are asked to arrive each morning by 7:40 AM at the latest, to help with the set up and to get tuned. Middle School **Concert** Orchestra and the High School Orchestra also have **one evening rehearsal** per month on Mondays, excluding September and January. For the Middle School Concert Orchestra the rehearsal is from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM, and the High School's night rehearsal is from 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM. The dates for these rehearsals are listed on the last page of each lesson schedule sheet and on the music link of the district website. The High School Orchestra and the Middle School Concert Orchestra are both

joined in February by chosen band students which enable us to perform full orchestra repertoire each spring. Seating in the orchestras is determined by the seating auditions in late November. The principal chairs are chosen by Mrs. Trenczer. Seating auditions are meant to inspire students to practice so that they are proud of themselves at their concert.

INSTRUMENTS:

Students who play violin, viola, or cello are encouraged to rent their instruments from one of the many instrument dealers listed on one of the following pages. It would be in your best interest to call a few of these instrument dealers to compare prices and ask about their rent to own policies. There are some school-owned instruments that are available to students who may not be able to rent. These will be distributed on a limited basis; first to students who are on the free or reduced lunch programs, and subsequently to other students. A signed instrument loan form is required for these. Bass players will probably not need to rent an instrument.

GRADING POLICIES:

The quarterly orchestra grades are calculated in the following manner:

Effort: This is based on lesson preparation and personal performance during first period rehearsals and after school rehearsals. In addition, the effort grade is also based on a student's performance during seating auditions, and at any playing exams or scale proficiencies. If a string student participates in chamber ensembles, NYSSMA, All-County, All-State, or pit orchestra, these extra efforts are duly noted at grade time. Please see the "attendance policy sheet" for more information on what other factors effect the effort grade.

Lesson Participation: There are normally either 6 or 7 lessons scheduled for each student during each quarter. If a student attends, or makes-up all of their lessons for the quarter, a grade of 100% is averaged into the quarter grade. Five points are subtracted for each lesson not attended or made-up.

The 4 B's: A student's ability to accomplish "The 4 B's" will directly affect both the "Effort" and "Lesson Participation" grades. "The 4 B's" are:
Be Here, Be Prepared, Be Respectful, and Be Positive!

Concert Attendance: Students will receive a grade of 100% averaged into their second and fourth quarter averages when they perform in their Winter and Spring Concerts. The concerts are our midterm and final exams. If a student misses a concert for any reason, they will need to do either a make-up report or a taped solo performance, in order to complete their grade.

Note: Middle School string players will receive ONE combined grade for both orchestras they are in.

Quarters 1 and 3: Lesson Grades + Effort Grade + Lesson Participation Grade = Quarter Grade

**Quarters 2 and 4: Lesson Grades + Effort Grade + Concert Grade + Lesson Participation Grade
= Quarter Grade
(Seating Auditions are also a part of the grade in Quarter 2)**

COMPETITIONS:

The Middle School Concert Orchestra goes on a competition trip each year to Six Flags, New Jersey. The orchestra competes in the morning and spends the rest of the day at the park. The cost of the trip is usually about \$75. The High School Orchestra goes on a competition trip every other year. The trip lasts for four days and includes the competition, the awards ceremony, and various recreational opportunities depending on where we travel to. Virginia Beach, Ocean City Maryland, and Boston are the favorite choices. The cost of these trips can range from \$350 and up. There are a large amount of fund-raising opportunities available. Students are expected to participate in these competitions. Participation of the whole orchestra team is essential when competing. Missing too many rehearsals before a trip can result in a student not being able to choose what bus they are on or what room they are assigned to.

CHAMBER ENSEMBLES:

Any student who is interested can sign up to be a part of a chamber ensemble. Participation in a quartet, trio, or other combination is possible as long as there are enough students interested to create the group. Chamber ensembles will meet after school once weekly (Tuesdays or Thursdays) from 3:05 - 4:00 pm and some of the High School chamber ensembles are scheduled as lessons during school. High School students can obtain a half credit for participation and performance in a chamber ensemble. For those High School students who are taking the course for credit, a grade of Pass/Fail will appear on their report cards. The chamber ensembles have two main performances a year: A Valentine's performance at the Neighborhood House in February, and a performance at the Strawberry Festival in June. Many times, other performances are added. The members of the High School Advanced Quartet are chosen by Mrs. Trenczer and this quartet has many more performances throughout the year.

PRIVATE LESSONS:

Private lessons are the best way for students to excel and develop their skills. When a student feels that they are ready for this step, please have them see me so that I can aid in the search for a private instructor. I have a long list of private instructors available to any student who asks for it.

CARE OF INSTRUMENTS:

A string instrument requires only limited care. Students need a cleaning rag to wipe off the instrument after they play. Rosin for the bow can be purchased at a local music store, or directly from Mrs. Trenczer, who will have a music store deliver the rosin to us. Please keep baby brothers and sisters away from the instruments. If something goes wrong with the instrument, please do not try to fix it at home. Send it to school and let me look at it. (Home repairs almost always must be re-repaired making the entire affair more expensive.) Most violin and viola students will be supplied with "shoulder rests," or "shoulder pads," for the duration of the school year, however students may also purchase a

shoulder rest from a local music store, if they wish. A shoulder rest enables a student to accomplish third, fourth and other positions much easier and also enables a player to create a nice vibrato movement.

HOME PRACTICE:

Students are expected to practice the instrument at home. We hope for half an hour practice daily. Short daily practices are much better than a long session once or twice a week. Students are given practice assignments at each lesson. Mrs. Trenczer keeps an individual log of each student's performance at every lesson which helps her to evaluate students based on their individual effort.

THE PARENTS' ROLE:

Parents play an important role in the success of their children on a string instrument. Here is what you can do:

1. Provide continuous encouragement. Listen discretely to your child's practice sessions. Any support and/or praise helps students to boost their confidence and is conducive to the creation of self expression in their music making.
2. Provide a time and place for practice. Try to help your son or daughter establish a practice routine. It is best if a student practices at about the same time every day. Keep in mind that 20 minutes of practice every other day is better than one three hour, marathon practice session.
3. Remind your child to bring their instrument and the orchestra folder back and forth between home and school for lessons, rehearsals, and individual practice. (Bass students do not need to carry their instruments back and forth, however). If these instruments never come home, **ASK WHY!!**
4. Make sure your child attends all concerts and competitions. These are important to a student's feelings of pride, accomplishment and success. In addition, ensemble and solo competitions are motivational and educational experiences that are vital to any music student's school experience.
5. If you are able to provide your child with the opportunity to attend a live symphony performance or string recital, you will be helping them to become more motivated and inspired
6. Ask your son or daughter how the lesson or rehearsal was. Your child needs to know that you value music as an integral part of their education.

THE PERFORMING ARTS BOOSTERS:

The mission of the Performing Arts Boosters is to help the orchestra, band and chorus at the Middle and High School to raise money towards the many **Middle School and High School competition trips, the Middle School awards ceremony, and the High School awards ceremony**. In addition, the Boosters assist with the Fall Drama and Spring Musical. There are **many fund-raising events** in which your child will be participating in order to raise their own money towards the competition trips. Please volunteer to chaperone at as many of these events as you can. See the District Calendar for the names and dates of these events. Attendance at the monthly Parent Booster meetings will answer many questions you may have about how the money is raised. The Booster Events are: the Fall/Spring Car Washes, Breakfast With Santa, Breakfast With the Easter Bunny, and

the Middle School Variety Show. There are also several Music Department fund raising events such as: the Candy Sale, the Practice-a-thon, and possible bake sales.

THE “PRACTICE-A-THON”

Each February the High School Orchestra visits Washington Irving and spends time rehearsing and teaching the fourth grade beginning string players. Students can ask people to pledge money to them for every half hour they are there. It is a rewarding experience for all!

CONCERT ATTIRE FOR BOTH ORCHESTRAS:

Girls: An all-black dress, or a black blouse with a knee-length (at least) black skirt. (no spaghetti straps or mini skirts) Black dress shoes and black stockings. If a student is also in chorus, a black pullover sweater is suggested.

Boys: An all-black, button down dress shirt, or black polo shirt, with black pants and black dress shoes. (no ties)

COMPETITION ATTIRE:

Middle School: White t-shirts with black jeans, black capris, or black pants
(sneakers are fine)

High School: Same attire requirements as for our regular concerts.

AWARDS:

The Middle School has a Middle School Performing Arts Awards Ceremony at the end of each year, which is held during a weekday morning in June. The High School has a High School Performing Arts Awards Ceremony each year which is held during an evening in June. Students are given pins, ribbons, trophies and scholarships at these ceremonies. In addition, throughout the school year, a “student of the month” is chosen each month in Middle School and three times a year in High School.

STRING INSTRUMENT DEALERS

Rentals:

Ardsley Musical Instrument Service 693-6639

Gines Cano Music Corp. 961-3497

Westchester Strings 923-4966

Bramson Music 666-3308

Sam Ash Music 949-8448

Purchasing your own:

Mail Order Dealer: Southwest Strings 1-800-528-3430

Joe Tannen 212-663-6219

Philip Perret 232-0896

High School and Middle School Orchestra Attendance and Tardiness Policies

High School Orchestra and Middle School Orchestra are scheduled courses for which students receive academic credits that are recorded in their school transcripts. The grade that orchestra students receive is averaged amongst other school courses when computing cumulative averages each quarter. Therefore, attendance policies for both orchestras follow the same guidelines as all other school courses.

Attendance Expectations:

ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY AT FIRST PERIOD REHEARSALS.

Procedures and Consequences for breaking attendance policies:

1. If a student is absent from this first period class, the teacher will record the absence as unexcused and turn in the record of the absence to the school attendance office.

Absence from school: (This is entirely handled by the attendance office).

Cuts: If a student is present in period 2, (but absent from period 1), the first period absence is considered a “cut,” therefore the following procedure takes place:

- a. Students are required to provide a note from a parent or guardian, explaining the nature of the absence to the teacher. Sickness and emergencies are the only excused absences. If the note is provided, the attendance office will change the absence to say “excused absence.” If this note is not provided by or before the next class, a disciplinary action may be taken and the grade will be effected. With chronic absences, this note does *not* release the student from further penalties to their course grade. *Five to nine absences will result in 8 points being subtracted from the “Effort Grade.” Ten or more absences will result in sixteen points being subtracted from the “Effort Grade.”*
- b. Further penalties depend on the frequency of illegal absences; a “chronic,” or frequent absence is defined as the accumulation of **three** absences without a note.

The consequences will occur in the following order:

- 1. A conference with the Principal, your guidance counselor, or the teacher, and you.***
- 2. A phone call/a comment on the progress reports***
- 3. Lowering the course grade***
- 4. Detention***
- 5. Permanent expulsion from the ensemble***

(These consequences are dispensed at the discretion of the Principal and the teacher).

Pull-out-lesson attendance policies:

If a student has to miss a scheduled string lesson, they simply need to attend a make-up lesson before the end of the quarter. One make-up lesson makes up two missed lessons in that quarter.

After-school rehearsal attendance policies:

If a student must miss a scheduled “night rehearsal” or Junior Orchestra, they will need to provide a note from their parent or guardian BEFORE the rehearsal occurs, and they will need to attend a make-up lesson at some point AFTER the rehearsal happens. (There are only 3 night rehearsals before the first concert and 4 night rehearsals before the second concert. The dates for all of these are set in September). 6th grade Junior Orchestra meets once per week after school.

Tardiness Policies:

Orchestra students need to arrive by 7:40 A.M. for first period.

Our Student Handbook states: “If you oversleep or miss the bus, you are considered illegally late. Illegal tardiness will result in your being assigned to detention. Students chronically late may face suspension.”

Since this policy is already a school policy, this course will adhere to the same rule with the following addendums:

1. If students arrive late to orchestra due to a family commitment, or a family transportation problem, they must produce a parental note, ***THAT PERIOD***, explaining the disruption to the rehearsal. After the music director receives the note, the student needs to take it back and bring it to either the HS Attendance Office, or to the MS Main Office. If a student exhibits a chronic abuse of this policy, they will be subject to the same list of consequences detailed in the attendance policies above.
2. Arriving without a note, after the set-up and tuning of the orchestra has been completed, is considered being “illegally late.” *One point will be subtracted from the “Effort Grade” for each day the student is tardy.*

Be a part of the Orchestra “team” where each individual musician is an important ingredient. Good attendance is one way of showing that you care enough to contribute your skills for the good of the orchestra team in each musical experience that we encounter.

I have read the attendance and tardiness policies:

Student Signature:_____

Parent Signature:_____

Sleepy Hollow String Curriculum Grades 6 - 12

Sixth Grade Learning Objectives

- ** All violin and viola players will use sponge/foam pads for support/position development
- ** Violin/Violas will be introduced to the use of 4th finger
- ** Violins/Violas will be introduced to finger extensions like “low 1” and “high three” as well as chromatic finger placement with “low 2” and “low 4.”
- ** Celli/Bassi will be introduced to finger extensions like “low 1” and “high 4” (open and closed positions) as well as a more extensive use of second finger.
- ** Celli/Bassi will become more comfortable with shifting
- ** All instruments will focus on their bow arms and correct bowing techniques
- ** Reinforcement of note reading skills on all strings
- ** New, more advanced rhythms will be introduced
- ** Basic music vocabulary will be covered
- ** One octave scales will continue to be reviewed
- ** Use Lesson Practice Sheets
- ** All County and NYSSMA Preparation

Materials:

1. *Suzuki Solo Repertoire*
2. *String Orchestra Music*
3. *Duet Repertoire*

Seventh Grade Learning Objectives

- ** All violin and viola players will use shoulder rests
- ** Take off 1st finger tapes and any other tapes, other than the highest finger in first pos.
- ** Violinists/Violists will continue growth of fourth finger usage
- ** Celli/Bassi will continue their study of shifting and extension techniques
- ** Reinforce 7 scales with 2 two octaves
- ** Introduce concepts of syncopation, 6/8 time, eighth rests, sixteenth rests
- ** Introduce “tremolo” and initial vibrato exercises
- ** Begin quarterly music vocabulary training and basic music theory training
- ** Introduce spiccato, martele, sforzando, ritardando
- ** create chamber ensembles
- ** continue training in matched pitch tuning with tuner screws
- ** All County and NYSSMA Preparation

Materials:

1. *Suzuki Solo Repertoire*
2. *String and Full Orchestra Music*
3. *Various duet books for sightreading and rhythm practice*

Eighth Grade Learning Objectives

- ** Continue vibrato training (wrist to arm)
- ** Introduce 3rd position to violins/violas
- ** Celli/Bassi will continue their study of shifting into higher positions
- ** Make bow arm adjustments: wrist leads, not elbow
- ** Continue training in matched pitch tuning with tuner screws
- ** Continue study of many of the 7th grade objectives
- ** All County and NYSSMA Preparation
- ** Use "Lesson Practice Sheets"
- ** Continue quarterly music vocabulary instruction and basic music theory training

Materials are the same as above.

Learning Objectives for grades Nine and Ten

- ** Continued development of arm vibrato
- ** Continued training in matched pitch tuning with tuner screws
- ** Focus on more independent sight reading and rhythmic understanding
- ** Continued and more advanced position work for all instruments
- ** Leadership training
- ** Focus on developing a strong, confident tone
- ** Interpreting key signatures and complicated rhythms more independently
- ** Introduction to more Major Scales
- ** All County and NYSSMA preparation

Materials are the same as above

Learning Objectives for grades Eleven and Twelve

- ** Introduction to tuning with pegs in perfect fifths
- ** Continued development of arm vibrato
- ** Removal of third finger tape (fourth finger on cellos)
- ** Reinforcement of number counting (1+2+3+4+) and advanced study of key signatures
- ** Continued position work: Violins/Violas: positions 2-5, Cello/Bass: thumb position
- ** All 15 scales in 2 octaves (see NYSSMA requirements)
- ** Violas learn to read treble clef & Cellos learn to read tenor clef
- ** Position refinement
- ** All County and NYSSMA preparation

Materials are the same as above

