

Dear Parents,

August 1, 2018

Welcome back to school! Your child came to orchestra today and indicated that he/she would like to play an instrument. The benefits are immense! Playing an instrument encourages: positive character traits, leadership, teamwork, responsibility, appreciation for the arts, good posture, and finger dexterity. Research has also shown that there are academic benefits for students who participate in music; go to www.musicparentsguide.com to read many articles on the value of music education. I am proud of the priority that....Unified School District places in providing quality music instruction for all of our students.

Orchestra classes meet twice a week. Each class lasts 40 minutes and requires a full year commitment. Students cannot simply quit when the going gets tough. By the end of the year, it will all be worth it! There are 2 concerts per year. Second year students are rewarded with an end of the year field trip to The Phoenix Symphony and Picnic.

Please be sure that your email is updated with the school secretary. Much of my communication will be sent through email.

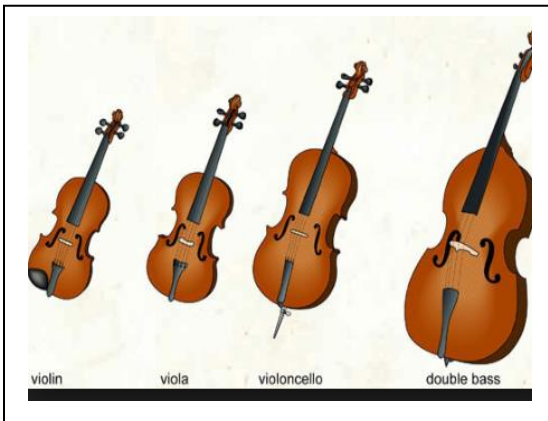
Instruments should be brought to class as soon as possible so that I can examine the playability of the instruments. I will be tuning and putting finger tapes on the fingerboard. Second year students will always bring their instruments to class. However, first year students will leave their instruments at home for about two weeks, while we practice the 1st three songs from our book, “Americana Strings” on wooden dowels (supplied by me and only to be used in class). Here are some of the musical concepts we will learn while using the wooden dowels: Bow Hold, Bow Movement, Bow Directions, Repeat Signs, Fermata, Tutti, Call and Response, Steady Beat, Stopping on a Quarter Rest, Reading notes from left to right, Letter Names, Counting Measures, Time Signature, Harmony and Unison. This preparatory activity for first year students will provide better readiness when transferring to real instruments and real bows. I am a firm believer that: the 3 R’s: Remedial, Repetition, and Review will make learning permanent providing a solid musical foundation.

Please do not have your child play their instruments **UNTIL** both you and your child watch the following instructional videos. Please search “Americana Strings” on Facebook or YouTube and watch the following videos:

- **“String Instrument Care,”** Everyone must watch.
- **“Violin Viola Bow Hold,”** Violin and Viola students must watch.
- **“Cello with Guido Lavorata,”** Cello students must watch.
- **“Bass with Guido Lavorata,”** Bass students must watch.

Please do not have siblings at home touch the bow hair. Oils from hands will damage the horse hair and will cause it to not grip the strings anymore. A replacement bow will cost \$50.00--\$70.00. Brand new bows require lots of rosin to get started. I would recommend that you let me be the first one to apply the rosin to these newer bows. Please be sure that a name tag is attached to the instrument case handle, or write your child's names on masking tape with a permanent marker and affix the masking tape on top of the instrument case. Please label all polish bottles, rosin and shoulder rests with your child's name. For some surfaces, you may choose to write your child's name with finger nail polish, or permanent marker.

You will need to secure a playable instrument. Please DO NOT purchase instruments on the internet for \$50.00. For example, a Violin that costs less than \$250.00 will not sound good, and will not be enjoyable to play.



The String Orchestra has four instruments to choose from:

VOLIN, VIOLA, CELLO, BASS

You can obtain instruments in several different ways:

Rental (There are two different Rental Nights),

Instrument Rental Night, will be on Tuesday, August 14 at 6:00 p.m. located at... There will be several music vendors present at "Instrument Rental Night." If you cannot make it to our rental night, please search directions to the following music stores:

Desert Sounds Rental Night, will be on Wednesday night, August 15, at 6:00 p.m. also at...(This night is only for students who are on the free or reduced lunch program. Parents must bring the free or reduced lunch document with them on this night).

ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED, If you miss the Desert Sounds Meeting, you will be required to attend another meeting at a school outside of our district (Please be aware that Desert Sounds does not offer insurance on their instruments, so parents are responsible for any repairs).

There are Benefits from renting from a Music Store!

- Music stores provide replacement insurance. There have been many times where students have lost or dropped their instruments, and a replacement was issued by the music store free of charge, ALSO
- Instrument rentals earn “Credits.” These credits accumulate and can be later applied towards the purchase of a good quality instrument.

Borrow: If you already have an instrument, or know someone who can loan their instrument to you, that’s great! I recommend that you bring it to “Instrument Rental Night,” and have one of the orchestra teachers check it out and make sure it is in good playing condition. Playing a cheap or damaged instrument is like riding a bike with a flat tire!

Purchase: It is extremely important that students have a positive musical experience. **A good quality instrument will facilitate this.** Please avoid purchasing instruments painted different colors (other than natural wood). Many instruments that are for sale on line for \$50.00 are extremely difficult to tune, do not sound good, the bows are made of very cheap wood and warp, the fine tuners do not hold tension and stop working soon after you purchase the instrument, the tuning pegs have holes drilled in the wrong places, the bridge will be too high or too low, and the end gut under the tail piece will not be set correctly making the strings off center over the fingerboard. These instruments will require repairs, maintenance, and set up that will cost you more money in the long run. If you desire to purchase an instrument online, please send me the link before purchasing, I will be glad to speak to you regarding this.

A quality-beginning instrument must have:

- **4 Fine Tuners** (not applicable to Bass)
- **A “Bridge”** that is not too high.
- **Tuning Pegs** drilled with holes aligned to the middle of the peg box.
- **End Gut** underneath the tailpiece must be centered.

SUPPLIES AND ACCESSORIES NEEDED

EVERYONE WILL NEED:

- **An Instrument** with a **Graphite Bow** and **Real Horse Hair**.
- **Polish & Rosin (different instruments require different rosin):** some music stores will have “Polish Kits” that includes polish and rosin.
 - a) **Violin:** Light Rosin, please purchase a full cake.
 - b) **Viola:** Light Rosin, please purchase a full cake.
 - c) **Cello:** Dark Rosin, please purchase a full cake.
 - d) **Bass:** “Pops” Rosin Type
- **2 Soft Cloths:** one for taking off rosin and one for putting on polish. Look for an old cotton T Shirt, and cut the “T” Shirt in two 8 inch x 4 inch swatches. You may want to cut two different color swatches or use a permanent marker to label one cloth with a “D” for Dusting and the other with a “P” for polishing.
- **Folding Music Stand:** to keep at home so that students can sit upright and read their music at eye level
- **Our Music Book is called “Americana Strings.”** You may purchase the book on Amazon or go to www.AmericanaStrings.org. This book is 3 hole punched so a 1 inch binder will be very useful for other songs as well.
 - a) **One Inch Three Ring Binder** (with pockets that stay open while lying flat on the music stand).
- **Shoulder Rests:** Go to YouTube and search “PSR Shoulder Rests, watch the video, and choose the shoulder rest that is best for you. I prefer the contoured foam shoulder rests, because other shoulder rests that are attached with clamps are often put on incorrectly, fall off, do not fit inside cases, cost too much, require adjustments, push the instrument too far into the student’s neck, are hard and uncomfortable, and often get lost.

SUPPLIES FOR SPECIFIC INSTRUMENTS:

- **CELLO PLAYERS:** will need a “**Cello Strap**” that attaches to one leg of the chair so the end pin does not slip on a tile floor (not needed for carpet).
- **BASS PLAYERS:** will need a “**Rock Stop**” for the end pin to keep from slipping on a tile floor (not needed for carpet).

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Our primary responsibility is to learn about music. Student behavior must be positive and contribute to the learning process. Kind and respectful behavior will be expected at all times. Students are responsible for bringing their instrument, binder/music to every class. Students may be asked to fill out the attached “Reflection Sheet,” which will affect the student’s daily orchestra grade.

REFLECTION WORKSHEET

Today (write today’s date on the line) _____,

I, _____ was given this worksheet because:

I was not on task, I was not participating, and I was distracting others around me from learning.

This will help me remember to follow the “Music Rules” the next time I go to orchestra:

1. Follow the Director
2. Achieve our Goals
3. Cooperate Courteously
4. Everyone Participates

I am rewriting the following sentences on the lines provided so that I can think about how this will not happen again.

1. I realize class time and learning are interrupted every time Mr. Lavorata has to stop and correct me in class.

2. I will make a special effort to follow all the “Music Rules” next time so this does not happen again.

Copy the Definition for the word, “Courteous.”

Courteous: someone who is polite, and has good manners, someone who is considerate and respectful towards others.

Definition: _____

Copy the Definition for the word, "RESPECT."

Respect: someone who shows honor and care towards someone or something that is considered important.

Definition: _____

Come up with some ideas on how that I can become more "Courteous" and "Respectful."

(Student Signature)

(Parent Signature)

(Classroom Teacher Name and Room Number)

Date, Time, Parent Was Called

SAMPLE PRACTICE CALENDAR

New practice calendars will be given on a monthly basis. Please see a sample of the practice calendar attached to this packet. Students are required to practice any 5 days of the week. Students must enter the amount of minutes they practiced inside the box provided for each day. Student must record in minutes (for example 60 min. not 1 hour). At the end of the week, parents must INITIAL in CURSIVE confirming the minutes the student practiced for the week. Monthly minutes will be recorded in “Jupiter” (The District Grading Computer Program). **IF A PARENT DOES NOT INITIAL and sign the monthly calendar, THE STUDENT WILL NOT GET CREDIT FOR PRACTICING.** Second year students will be required to practice at least 20 minutes 5 days a week. First year students will practice 10–15 minutes per day and gradually work their way up to 20 minutes per week by the middle of October.

GRADING

Students will receive an Achievement grade for Orchestra (A, B, C, D, F) This grade is divided into 3 categories:

- **Participation – 55 %**

Each student must be ready to participate in every class. They must bring all of their materials to class. Students receive up to 10 points per day for participation, and will lose a portion of these points for coming to class unprepared.

- Points can also be deducted for the following:
 - Talking or playing their instrument out of turn.
 - Playing someone else’s instrument.
 - Mistreating ANY instrument.

If a student’s instrument is being repaired, a note (signed by a parent) must be sent to the school, so that the student can still earn points through participation.

- **Homework 10 %**

To be successful, students must practice at home. Ideally, students should practice 20 minutes/day, 5 days/week. Students are expected to complete a weekly practice record each week.

- **Group/Individual Playing Tests 35%**

- Individual playing tests, demonstrating each student’s ability to perform his/her assigned music will be given and graded throughout the year.

CONCERTS

This is a performance class. Concerts are considered as final exams.

Orchestra members are required to attend each performance. Many families make concert nights “family nights” in honor of the performer. We only perform two after-school concerts, so please block these nights out on your family calendar and try to avoid planning conflicting activities.

Our Planned 2018--2019 Orchestra Performances for this year are as follows:

PEORIA

Tuesday, January 15

SAN TAN VALLEY

Thursday, January 17

MESA

Thursday, January 24

Mass Orchestra Concert on Thursday, May 2, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.

This combined concert will be a wonderful experience where all orchestra students in theUnified School District will play their final concert together with the High School Orchestra Students.

The last page of this packet is the enrollment contract, to be filled out and signed by both student AND parent. Please return the signed enrollment form to school as soon as possible.

If you require additional information, PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE MESSAGES WITH THE SCHOOL SECRETARY.

You may reach me directly on my cell phone: If I do not answer, please leave a message, and I will call you back, or you may email me at:

Sincerely,

Guido Lavorata or (Mr. L.)
Director of Orchestras:

ORCHESTRA CONTRACT

Please return this page as soon as possible. The rest of the packet is for your reference.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY!

School _____

Student First Name: _____ Student Last Name: _____

Grade Level (circle one): **5th Grade** **6th Grade (2nd year member)** **6th Grade (beginner)**

Instrument **1st choice** _____ **2nd choice** _____
(1st choice is almost always given, but a 2nd choice is good info. Rent/acquire 1st choice. 2nd choice is *not necessary for returning 6th graders*)

CLASSROOM TEACHER _____

Mother or Guardian First & Last Name _____

Father or Guardian First & Last Name _____

Home Phone Number _____

Cell Phone (Mother) _____ **(Father)** _____

E-mail (Mother) _____ **(Father)** _____

What form of contact do you prefer? _____

This contract certifies that the undersigned student and parent/guardian have read the information contained in this packet. We understand its contents and accept the responsibilities of Orchestra Membership. **We also understand and accept that Orchestra Membership requires a commitment for the entire school year.**

Student Signature _____ **Date** _____

Parent Signature _____ **Date** _____

Yes **No** My child can be photographed and the pictures (no names) used on the school or district website.