

2007-2008 Grading for High School and Junior High Strings

Quarterly and Semester grades in High School Advanced, Junior High Advanced and Junior High Beginning & Intermediate Strings will be based on the following criteria:

1. Attendance and punctuality – 25%
2. Behavior in class – 25%
3. Homework – 10%
4. Effort and improvement – 40%

▶ Attendance and punctuality: Be there and be on time! For the advanced classes, at least 75% of class time will be spent practicing and rehearsing in GROUPS; therefore absences must be as minimal as possible, and tardies should be avoided. The Beginning & Intermediate class will be more individually oriented except when approaching a performance, when the students will spend much more time as a group. Each class is only 49 minutes, and tuning usually takes at least 10 minutes, which leaves only 35 minutes or so for actual practice time. Absences obviously reduce a student's practice time, and tardies delay and can disrupt the ENTIRE class, not just the tardy student.

▶ Behavior in class: This includes staying focused and on task during rehearsing and practicing, as well as paying attention when the teacher talks; it covers areas such as respect to the teacher and other students; care of instrument, bow, other equipment and music; talking only when allowed, not throwing ANYTHING, not eating in class, not leaving the class, playing the instrument when instructed and NOT playing the instrument when instructed; and any other areas which the teacher discusses with each student and/or class.

▶ Strings classes are NOT homework-intensive. I ENCOURAGE taking the instrument home and practicing, and will occasionally require it. Absences and tardies MAY result in extra practicing being required to make up for the lost class time. The practice time away from school will be concentrated on, but not limited to, the repertoire being practiced/rehearsed at during class time.

▶ Effort is essential, and with effort WILL come improvement! The percentage of the grade for these will NOT be based on how "good" a student is compared to another student, but will be based on how each student works and improves based on the teacher's expectations and the mutually-recognized goals for each student. This can mean very different things for different individuals, and I will strive to communicate this to each student and parent. For both of the advanced groups, there will be an individual, graded "playing test" at least once a month.

Observations about the 2007-2008 year

The 2007-2008 school year will see our largest Junior High and High School strings groups ever! At this point, we have a total of 82 students fairly evenly distributed among the three class periods. The room is very full, but that's a nice "problem" to have. Students in all classes will have the opportunity to play in smaller ensembles, or even to play solos, in addition to working with the full group.

It is my hope and prayer that clarifying a few things about Strings will make everyone's Strings experience rewarding and enjoyable!

--Mr. Wilkison