

COURSE OUTLINE

FOR THE

BERKSHIRE MIDDLE SCHOOL STRING ORCHESTRAS

2019/2020

In this class, there are four major objectives to be achieved by the student:

1. To develop the student's respect and mastery of their chosen instrument.
2. To achieve mastery of certain technical aspects of individual and orchestral playing.
3. To master and perform new repertoire.
4. To gain an understanding and appreciation of music as an art form.

For 6th and 8th Grade Orchestras:

Paul L. Shawver
Director of Orchestras
Groves High School / Berkshire Middle School
pshawver@birmingham.k12.mi.us
Web page: www.birmingham.k12.mi.us/Domain/757

For 7th Grade Orchestra

Sean R. Smith
Assistant to Bands and Orchestras
Groves High School/Berkshire Middle School
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1. Respect for the Instrument

Students will work to develop an appreciation of the qualities and possibilities inherent to their instruments.

2. Technical Training

- Individual skills that should be mastered include:
 - Left-hand facility
 - Vibrato
 - Shifting
 - Trilling
 - Double stops
 - Chords
 - Bowing techniques
 - Detache
 - Marcato
 - Staccato
 - Legato
 - Spiccato
 - Tone quality

- Orchestral skills that will be mastered include:
 - Ensemble playing
 - Balance
 - Dynamics
 - Style and interpretation
 - Phrasing

3. Learning and Performing New Repertoire

We will study and perform many pieces throughout the year. It will be the responsibility of the student to master his or her own part, as well as to familiarize him or her with the piece as a whole in order to present a convincing and artful performance.

4. Music as an Art

In our preparation of pieces, we will approach music from an artistic standpoint, and work to achieve an understanding of the aesthetics of music as it applies to individual pieces and music in general.

Orchestra Requirements

Private Lessons

Private lessons are not required*, but **strongly recommended**. They will **definitely** help the student to progress with their orchestra music. Private lessons will improve the student's technique, musicianship, while increasing their appreciation for all types of music. Attached is a list of local private teachers for all of the stringed instruments.

***ANY STUDENT WHO IS BEGINNING ORCHESTRA FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 6TH GRADE IS EXPECTED TO TAKE PRIVATE LESSONS IN ORDER TO CATCH UP TO THE REST OF THE CLASS.**

Attendance at Performances

Attached is a list containing performance dates, times, and locations. The listed performances are required of all orchestra students. **The only readily acceptable excuses for missing a performance include illness, religious observance, death in the family, or extreme emergency.** In regards to the previous scenarios, the student will be completely excused from the performance and no make-up will be necessary.

Please check the calendar carefully for personal conflicts (vacations, sports games/practices, etc.) well in advance to avoid last minute problems. Please contact me if you have any questions or personal conflicts at least **one month in advance** to avoid having your grade affected, as well as to potentially receive an alternate assignment.

Tardiness

Attendance will be taken as soon as the class bell rings. Any student who is not in the orchestra room when the bell rings will be marked tardy.

Classroom Behavior

Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. The student's name will be written on the board as a warning. If the disrupting behavior continues, a check will be placed next to the name, which will denote a detention with a writing assignment. If the disruptions continue, a second check will be placed next to the student's name. If this happens, the student will be sent to the office and a phone call will be made to the student's parents, in addition to the detention and writing assignment. Food and beverages are not allowed in the orchestra room.

Equipment

Students should have their **instruments, music, rosin, and a pencil** for every class. ****Students will need a 1", three-ring Black binder for their music.** Music must be organized in the binder, and available for every class. **Note: Berkshire Middle School cannot be responsible for lost or damaged student owned instruments (check your homeowners policy for coverage). Make sure that your instruments are clearly labeled, and that you are able to identify your instrument by serial number, or some other means.**

Method Books

6th grade: Essential Elements for Strings, Book II – BLACK/PURPLE (**\$10.58 w/tax incl.**)

7th grade: Essentials for Strings (not Essential Elements!) by Gerald Anderson – DARK BROWN (**\$6.89 w/ tax incl.**)

8th grade: Essential Technique for Strings, Intermediate – GREEN (**\$5.83 w/tax incl.**),

Essentials for Strings (not Essential Elements!) by Gerald Anderson – DARK BROWN (**\$6.89 w/tax incl.**)

***All books can be purchased IN CLASS on Thursday September 5th, or Friday September 6th. Please bring cash or a check made out to Wilson's Fine Violins (NOT Berkshire Middle School).**

****Any student who does not purchase a book will receive a checked-out copy from Berkshire Middle School. The student will be responsible for the book if it is damaged.**

Uniforms

Students are required to wear their Berkshire Orchestra Polo Shirt (order form attached). Girls are to wear black skirts (except cellos, who will wear black pants), optional skin tone tights (not black) with black shoes. Boys are to wear black pants, **BLACK SOCKS**, and black shoes. **NO GYM SHOES ALLOWED!!!**

****Any student who does not purchase an orchestra polo shirt will receive a checked-out copy from Berkshire Middle School. The student will be responsible for the polo if it is damaged.**

Berkshire Orchestra Email List

We need ***ALL PARENTS*** to give us your email address so we can notify you with information regarding upcoming events. There is an area located on the response sheet for your email addresses.

Web Page

All details regarding upcoming activities for orchestra can be found on your director's Fusion page. This page can be accessed through the Berkshire MS website.

Mr. Shawver: www.birmingham.k12.mi.us/Domain/757

Mr. Smith: www.birmingham.k12.mi.us/Domain/917

Honors Orchestra

The Berkshire Honors Orchestra is an advanced voluntary ensemble that meets before school on Thursday mornings. The goal is to give talented and hard-working enrolled orchestra students, from the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, the additional opportunity to perform challenging literature together. The Berkshire Honors Orchestra will perform on both the Winter and Spring Orchestra Concerts. All minutes spent in Honors Orchestra rehearsals will count towards practice logs. **Honors Orchestra will begin on Thursday, October 3rd at 7am sharp for those interested. Please see insert for details.**

Response Sheet

Please complete and return the attached "Response Sheet" to acknowledge your awareness of the orchestra expectations, and to confirm the attached dates. Any major conflicts should be reported at this time. A section of this sheet will be designated to the need of uniforms. Please return the Response Sheet to your director by the date provided.

Orchestra Event Dates for 2019-2020

<u>DATE</u>	<u>CONCERT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>TIME</u>
12/18/19	Winter Concert	Groves Aud.	7:00pm
1/8-10/20	Blue Lake Scholarship Auditions	Berkshire	During Class
2/12/20	Pre-Festival Clinic (7 th &8 th)	Berkshire	During Class
2/29/20	MSBOA Festival (7 th & 8 th)	Groves HS	TBA
4/18/20	Solo & Ensemble (7 th & 8 th)	TBA	All Day
5/TBA/20	Cedar Point Festival (7 th)	Cedar Point	All Day
5/29-30/20	Chicago Festival Trip (8 th)	Chicago	Two Days
6/3/20	Spring Concert	Grove Aud.	7:00pm
6/9/20	Groves Orchestra Orientation (8 th)	Groves Orch. Rm. B10	7:00pm
6/10/20	8 th Grade Graduation (8 th)	Berkshire	6:15pm

Grading Procedures

40% - Participation

This is a course that relies on the active participation of the student. Students will be expected to attend, be prepared for, and actively participate in all rehearsals and performances. As stated on page 3, illness is the only viable excuse. **I understand that there may be scheduling conflicts in the future. If this is ever the case, it is the student's responsibility to let their director know at least one month in advance in order for possible accommodation, as well as to receive an alternate assignment.**

25% - Playing Tests

Playing tests will be given approximately every 2 weeks, depending on the performance schedule. Grading on playing tests will not be easy, but will be fair. Students **do** have the option of retaking the test as many times as they choose before the marking period ends. Test retakes will be given at a time that accommodates both the teacher's and student's schedule.

25% - Practice Logs

Practice sheets will be collected monthly. **Students will have five consecutive school days (one week) to turn in their practice log for full credit. Student WILL NOT receive credit after that point.** Student practice averages will determine their grade as follows:

6th Grade: 15+ minutes per day average = A
12-14 minutes per day average = B range
9-11 minutes per day average = C range

7th Grade: 20+ minutes per day average = A
17-19 minutes per day average = B range
14-16 minutes per day average = C range

8th Grade: 25+ minutes per day average = A
22-24 minutes per day average = B range
19-21 minutes per day average = C range

*****Berkshire Honors Orchestra, private lessons, youth orchestra participation and outside concert attendance will count towards the student's minute accumulation.**

10% - Miscellaneous Assignments

These include any music reports, reflection papers, presentations, and/or theory assignments and quizzes given throughout the year. This may also include the turning-in of important documents, such as the included **Response Sheet** (hint, hint).

Response Sheet- DUE 9/13/19

(FIRST GRADE – PASS/FAIL)

I _____ (student) have read the orchestra packet and clearly understand my responsibilities as a student in orchestra. My parent _____ has also read the orchestra packet and understands the responsibilities of the student. The performance dates have also been observed for future reference.

*Parents' e-mail (please print clearly): _____

* = required field

Student signature date

Parent signature date

Parents Involvement:

PARENTS! WE NEED YOU! If you think that you may be able to donate time to help support and promote the orchestra's growth and development, please provide your name and telephone number below so I may contact you. Come and make this a great year for your child! Thank you very much!

Parent name Phone number E-mail

YES! I WANT TO SUPPORT THE BERKSHIRE ORCHESTRAS!

- () Friend of Haydn \$10
- () Sponsor of Mozart \$25
- () Patron of Beethoven \$50
- () Benefactor of Bach \$100 and up

***All donations help to fund the following:** purchasing of new instruments/supplies, repairs to instruments, bringing in guest conductors/clinicians, paying festival registration costs, etc.

Please make checks payable to BERKSHIRE MIDDLE SCHOOL and return them with this form to your director. Thank you for your support!!!