

GOHS Orchestra

General Information

Welcome to the Grand Oaks Orchestra Program. Please read through this information sheet for a general overview of your brand-new orchestra program.

DIRECTOR: A little bit about myself... I am Colin Larsen, the Director of Orchestras for Grand Oaks HS. I grew up in The Woodlands and learned cello at CISD schools and with my private lesson teacher, Mikhail Pascu. I attended Oak Ridge HS as a member of the JROTC program and played in the Chamber Orchestra. I am a graduate of Texas A&M University (Bachelor of Arts, Music Composition). I am currently finishing my 5th year of teaching at McCullough Junior High. In addition to teaching, I am a composer/arranger of symphonic music (the students will have the opportunity to play arrangements of mine on occasion) and play as a cellist with the Conroe Symphony and The Woodlands Symphony.

AUDITIONS: As all Grand Oaks orchestras are grouped by skill level, auditions are REQUIRED for accurate placement into the GOHS Orchestra program. Auditions occur at scheduled times after school starting Tuesday, May 1st and continuing through Saturday, May 5th. To sign up for an audition slot, families have been emailed a audition link by their current orchestra director. If you have NOT signed up, please see me immediately to be signed up for an audition time. As of April 30th, only Saturday, May 5th has times still available. Contact me if you have scheduling issues or concerns, in order to find an alternate time to audition.

ORCHESTRAS: For the 2018-2019 school year, the Grand Oaks Orchestra program will be divided into 4 orchestras. They are as follows:

- Chamber Orchestra (*the Varsity group; after-school practice 1x a week*)
- Symphony Orchestra
- Philharmonic Orchestra
- Sinfonietta (*divided by instrument into 2 class periods*)

FEES/SUPPLIES/UNIFORM: In order to limit the amount of time-consuming fundraisers needed to supplement the orchestra program, all students will have an Activity Fee due during the 1st nine weeks. This Activity Fee will help pay for new music, T-shirts, some entry fees, and expenses related to student events, such as socials, concerts, and trips. Students who play cello/bass/harp/piano will also have a district-required Maintenance Fee in order to use the school-owned instruments, instead of transporting their large instruments to school each class day.

A complete list of supplies will be available by August, but at the minimum, students will need to have a black binder for music and other printed information, approved instrument, exercise/method book, and pencils. Other supplies will be detailed in the supply list.

The standard uniform for Grand Oaks Orchestra students will be a Polo uniform consisting of a Orchestra Polo shirt, black slacks, and black dress shoes. A formal uniform will consist of an issued tuxedo/dress. This will be issued (not purchased). More information on uniforms will be available by August.

BOOSTER CLUB/PARENT SUPPORT: As a high school orchestra program, we are in need of a orchestra booster club to assist in growing and supporting the program. I am asking for parent volunteers willing to help found this organization. Please contact me ASAP if you are interested. *Of the information on this sheet, the need for a booster club may be the most important. If you are in any way able to help, please let me know. The more volunteers we have, the easier the workload will be! I am primarily looking for a point of contact between the district and myself. I will arrange for you to be in contact with CISD personnel who will guide you in the necessary paperwork, etc.*

CONCERTS/EVENTS: Some of the many events that we will have next year include the following (more may be added):

Summer

- Orchestra Orientation (sometime in August, prior to school starting; come-and-go event including instrument check, supply list, possible music pick-up, etc)
- Summer Orchestra (TBD in August; Chamber Orchestra practices; in future years, Symphony Orchestra practices as well)

Performances

- Fall Concert
- Winter Concert (themed; TBD)
- Spring Concert
- Final Concert (themed; TBD)

Socials

- “Orchtoberfest” (costume party; late October)
- End-of-Year Banquet (May)

Individual

- Region IX Orchestra Auditions
- Solo/Ensemble Contest

ORCHESTRA STUDENT COUNCIL: The Orchestra Student Council, or “OrchStuCo” for short, is a student leadership organization within the Grand Oaks Orchestra program. Members of this group help plan and facilitate many of our events and performances. Students involved in this group are responsible for the following:

- 1) Stage/concert set-up
- 2) Concert ushering
- 3) Post-concert reception set-up and organization
- 4) Orchestra publicity (poster creation, announcements)
- 5) Library administration (organizing the orchestra music library)
- 6) Updating records on numbers of uniform items
- 7) Volunteering to perform special events (Christmas caroling, etc)
- 8) Brainstorming concert ideas, social/party ideas, etc.
- 9) Running social events

And much more! OrchStuCo applications consist of a short essay detailing your qualifications, why you want to be a member, and any ideas you might have for the year. Applications can be turned in to myself or a current OrchStuCo president by the end of the 3rd week of school. We

have limited space available in the organization. Participation in this organization can contribute to lettering in orchestra.

TRIP: I am currently examining options for an in-state trip in the spring of 2019. This trip would be open to ALL orchestra students. This trip will NOT occur over spring break. More information will be available at the start of the school year.

GRADES:

Activity	%
Major- (performances and concerts include proper concert attire and promptness; some online playing tests on Charms)	60%
Quizzes- (unscheduled playing tests in class, most online playing quizzes on Charms)	20%
Participation- (includes teamwork within the orchestra, having required supplies, and proper rehearsal techniques)	20%

Related to grades: I will be using Charms Office Assistant to communicate to parents and students via email (not set up yet). The calendar for the entire school year will also be available to view. Most importantly...I will often be assigning playing tests through this online portal. Students will be able to record audio playing tests in the comfort of their home (or before/after school in orchestra practice rooms). Students will have the ability to pick their best recording to submit (and can delete whenever they make a mistake!). The MAJORITY of playing tests will be these recorded playing tests. "Pop quiz" playing tests will occur in class to check for student practice (Chamber Orchestra may also have playing tests during after-school sectionals).

I am very much looking forward to working with all of the students next year. It is my firm belief that with hard work, family support, and commitment to excellence, the Grand Oaks Orchestra can become one of the strongest orchestra programs in the Region within the next few years. If you have any questions regarding auditions, requirements, or the Grand Oaks Orchestra in general, please feel free to contact me!

Thank you,

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