



West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District
Orchestra
Grade 8

Unit 1: Full Year

Content Area: Music

Course & Grade Level: Orchestra, Grade 8

Summary & Rationale

Orchestra is an academic subject with its own special body of knowledge and skills, which has its unique way of developing critical thinking. It is an integral part of other curricular areas. Music creates a bridge between the school and the community. Musicianship is knowledge-based and developed through practicing, critical listening, performing, and creating. Orchestra fosters creative growth and cultivates self-confidence and self-discipline. This creative art form allows use of the whole brain and promotes self-expression through performance, composition, and the use of technology.

Orchestra provides many opportunities for all students, at all levels and abilities. In ensemble and small group settings, students explore the mechanics and skills of becoming a musician, a collaborative team member, and a connoisseur of music. The knowledge and experiences acquired serve to broaden their perspective and provide them with skills that encourage lifelong learning.

In this course, students will acquire the critical thinking to assess the music they hear and perform, responding with a music vocabulary and an understanding of the creative process. The skills students learn in orchestra will prepare them for future courses in the visual and performing arts, as well as other content areas.

Instructors, as well as peers when appropriate, will evaluate students' work. Most of the assignments and projects are performance based; therefore, preparation, delivery, and classroom participation are integral to the productivity of the course, and are included in grading and evaluations.

The elements of this curriculum are designed to maintain consistency with other music courses. The learning objectives, questions, and understandings are taught and learned interdependently. Occurring on a regular basis, music education results by connecting all elements.

In middle school, students and teachers will build on the knowledge and experience accumulated from the lower grades' curricula. The 21st century competencies, learned as individuals, will come together to focus on developing the sensitivity to an aesthetic. This is created by the group and is necessary for the orchestral experience which, at this level, constitutes continuation of building technique, ear-training, and exploration of musical expression.

Recommended Pacing

180 Days

National Core Arts Standards

Creating

MU:Cr1.1.E.8a	Compose and improvise ideas for melodies and rhythmic passages based on characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.
MU:Cr2.1.E.8a	Select and develop draft melodies and rhythmic passages that demonstrate understanding of characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.
MU:Cr2.1.E.8b	Preserve draft compositions and improvisations through standard notation and audio recording.
MU:Cr3.1.E.8a	Evaluate and refine draft compositions and improvisations based on knowledge, skill, and collaboratively-developed criteria.

MU:Cr3.2.E.8a	Share personally developed melodies and rhythmic passages – individually or as an ensemble – that demonstrate understanding of characteristics of music or texts studied in rehearsal.
Performing	
MU:Pr4.2.E.8a	Demonstrate, using music reading skills where appropriate, how the setting and formal characteristics of musical works contribute to understanding the context of the music in prepared or improvised performances.
MU:Pr4.3.E.8a	Demonstrate understanding and application of expressive qualities in a varied repertoire of music through prepared and improvised performances.
MU:Pr5.3.E.8a	Develop strategies to address technical challenges in a varied repertoire of music and evaluate their success using feedback from ensemble peers and other sources to refine performances.
MU:Pr6.1.E.8a	Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music representing diverse cultures and styles.
MU:Pr6.1.E.8b	Demonstrate an understanding of the context of the music through prepared and improvised performances.
Responding	
MU:Re7.1.E.8a	Explain reasons for selecting music citing characteristics found in the music and connections to interest, purpose, and context.
MU:Re7.2.E.8a	Describe how understanding context and the way the elements of music are manipulated inform the response to music.
MU:Re8.1.E.8a	Identify and support interpretations of the expressive intent and meaning of musical works, citing as evidence the treatment of the elements of music, contexts, and (when appropriate) the setting of the text.
MU:Re9.1.E.8a	Explain the influence of experiences, analysis, and context on interest in and evaluation of music.
Connecting	
MU:Cn10.0.E.8a	Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.
MU:Cn11.0.E.8a	Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.
Interdisciplinary Standards	
NJSLSA.R7	Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words
21st Century Life & Career Standards	
CRP2	Apply appropriate academic and technical skills
CRP4	Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason
CRP6	Demonstrate creativity and innovation
Technology Standards	
8.2	All students will use digital tools to access, manage, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to solve problems individually and collaborate and to create and communicate knowledge.
Instructional Focus	
Unit Enduring Understandings	

- The creative ideas, concepts, and feelings that influence musicians' work are influenced by their expertise, context, and expressive intent.
- Performers' interest in and knowledge of musical works, understanding of their own technical skill, and the context for a performance influence the selection of repertoire.
- Analyzing creators' context and how they manipulate elements of music provides insight into their intent and informs performance.
- To express their musical ideas, musicians analyze, evaluate, and refine their performance over time through openness to new ideas, persistence, and the application of appropriate criteria.
- Through the use of elements and the way in which structures of music are manipulated, creators and performers provide clues to their expressive intent.
- The personal evaluation of musical work(s) and performance(s) is informed by analysis, interpretation, and established criteria that vary across time, place, and cultures.
- Musicians connect their personal interests, experiences, ideas, and knowledge to creating, performing, and responding.
- Understanding connections to varied contexts (social, cultural, and historical) and daily life enhances musicians' creating, performing, and responding

Unit Essential Questions

- How do musicians generate creative ideas?
- How do musicians improve the quality of their creative work?
- How do performers select repertoire?
- How does the understanding and interpretation of the structure and context of musical works inform and improve the quality of the performance?
- How do we discern the musical creators' and performers' expressive intent?
- How do we judge the quality of musical work(s) and performance(s)?
- How do musicians make meaningful connections to creating, performing, and responding?

Objectives

When CREATING, students will know and be able to:

- Create and imitate rhythmic bowing patterns (i.e. hooked bowings) and execute these bowings on a scale.
- Create and imitate simple melodic ideas based on new notes learned in class (i.e. "high" and "low" fingers, upper position fingerings).
- Compose and improvise measures of notes OR rhythms based on concepts learned in class (i.e. cut time).
- Compose 4-8 measure exercises that combine rhythms, notes, or finger patterns learned in class, utilizing ideas from warm-up patterns, scales, technical exercises, or concert music.
- Demonstrate proper notation (i.e. clefs, time signatures, key signatures, note heads and stems) using pencil and manuscript paper and/or digitally.
- Demonstrate basic knowledge of various digital recording methods utilizing such devices as Chromebooks, tablets, and smartphones.
- Discuss and analyze with peers the next steps to refine and expand compositions.
- Add/Refine expressive markings to existing compositions, as developmentally appropriate.
- Perform compositions in lessons for and/or with peers.
- Share digital recordings with class and/or instructor.

When PRESENTING, students will know and be able to:

- Sight-read, as an ensemble, a variety of repertoire and collectively discuss and select the most appropriate piece(s) based upon individual and ensemble skill level and musical maturity.

- Perform music in a variety of ways (i.e. one section at a time, layered groupings, unison playing of a given line) and analyze how each of the different parts affect and complement the overall composition.
- Identify and perform music utilizing artistic elements such as dynamics, articulations, tempo, musical form, style, and phrasing.
- Create an exercise (i.e. warm-up worksheet) out of a difficult technical excerpt.
- Record a portion of a rehearsal and listen to and reflect on the group performance, offering suggestions for improvement.
- Discuss and evaluate individual and peer performances using appropriate musical terminology.
- Experiment with different stylistic approaches to repertoire based on peer feedback and come to a consensus with teacher guidance about how to perform with the chosen style.
- Perform with proper standing and sitting posture.
- Demonstrate the proper instrument and bow hold.
- Follow a conductor.
- Display proper orchestral protocol.
- Continue to refine tone quality by demonstrating, on all strings, the correct relationship between bow speed, weight, and placement.
- Correctly execute notes, rhythms, and techniques, as developmentally appropriate:
 - Continue to learn, play, and refine 2-octave major scales and arpeggios up to four sharps/flats.
 - Shift to, play, and read in 2nd, 4th, and 5th positions (violins and violas).
 - Shift to, play, and read in 6th and 7th positions (cellos).
 - Shift to, play, and read in 4th position (basses).
 - Play 3-octave scales in the key signatures of G and A (violins) and C and D (violas, cellos).
 - Begin to play two-octave minor scales.
 - Introduce vibrato.
 - Apply special bowing techniques such as *sul tasto*, *ponticello* and *col legno*.
 - Mark appropriate bowings.
 - Play double stops with both notes fingered.
 - Read in treble clef (violas).
 - Read in tenor clef (cellos).
 - Sight-read examples in simple and compound meters.
 - Name the major periods of music history.
 - Identify major composers by historical period.
- Perform expressively by observing dynamic markings, articulations, tempo markings, style, and phrasing.
- Investigate, research, and/or discuss the history (i.e. composer background, time period, etc.) pertaining to a musical selection and apply this knowledge to individual and group performances.

When RESPONDING, students will know and be able to:

- Reflect, through group discussion, on the musical elements that attracted them to a particular composition.
- Follow a conductor's gestures with regard to phrasing, articulation, and interpretation.
- Identify and discuss how expressive markings convey the intent of the composer to create meaningful performances.
- Listen critically to and reflect on performance and rehearsal recordings.
- Describe personal experiences and goals through participating in performances.

When CONNECTING, students will know and be able to:

- Reflect, through group discussion, on the musical elements that attracted them to a particular composition.

Evidence of Learning

Assessment

Teacher observation and performance assessment

Competencies for 21st Century Learners

X	Collaborative Team Member	X	Effective Communicator
X	Globally Aware, Active, & Responsible Student/Citizen	X	Information Literate Researcher
X	Innovative & Practical Problem Solver	X	Self-Directed Learner

Resources

- Concert Music
- Teacher Created Worksheets
- Technique Packets
- *Position Pieces for Cello* by Rick Mooney