

WELCOME TO INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC!

Welcome all new and returning students to the Sowers Middle School award winning instrumental music program, which includes our Beginning Orchestra, Wind Ensemble, Concert Orchestra, Beginning Band, Music Industry Technology (M.I.T.), Drumline/ Percussion Ensemble, and Guitar Ensemble. Our goal is to continue a tradition firmly grounded in the pursuit of excellence in the performance of instrumental music. Because of this, each student must assume a responsibility to the music program that goes beyond just being a capable player and musician. Every member contributes additionally through a positive and cooperative attitude. We want this attitude to be based on a justifiable pride as our ensembles gain an excellent reputation on our campus and in our community.

The expectations and procedures explained in these pages are designed to inform students and parents of their responsibility to the instrumental music program at Sowers. Diligent adherence to these standards will lead to the improvement necessary to have a great pride in our organization.

PERFORMING EVENTS

It is expected that all members who have elected to belong to any one of our ensembles realize that our classes are also performing units. Therefore, it is assumed that you will make the necessary effort, and perhaps sacrifice, to attend **all** concerts. As performances draw near, there will be times that extra morning and/or afternoon rehearsals will be held. As a member of this performing group, individual absences affect the entire ensemble. Excessive absences from rehearsals, and missed performances will adversely affect a student's grade. Please schedule routine medical appointments, vacations, etc. around the commitments of the instrumental music program. Hopefully, each family will take time to review this year's performance schedule and put all dates on your yearly calendar. If there is a need to change one of our dates, you will be given as much notice as possible. Always check **School Loop** for information and notification of events.

In view of the fact that the bands are performing organizations, as well as classes, and every member is needed for each performance, the guidelines and grading procedure are set up as described below.

MUSIC AND FOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Each student is to obtain his/her own method book and have it in class every band day. If you are unable to secure a method book, one will be provided. Students will each be given a music folder and they are responsible for all music checked out to them. **There must be a pencil in the folder at all times.**
2. Music folders and method books may be stored in provided slots in the music room, or they may be taken home to practice.
3. All music, instruments (**in good repair!!**), and supplies must be at rehearsal every day.
4. Responsibility for the music is the same as it is for textbooks. Students who lose their music and/or folder will be expected to pay for them.

GRADING POLICY

Instrumental music classes are elected courses in which students are encouraged to develop their individual music skills while, at the same time, contributing to a group effort. While learning to play an instrument, reading music, and rehearsing music for public performance are the primary activities in which students will be engaged each day, the actual grades will be arrived at using various criteria. There is a wide range of musical ability in the various ensembles. Obviously, it would not be fair to assess student achievement on the basis of ability alone. Therefore, the grades will be determined by the **quality** of the student's participation. Practice, class participation and effort, good behavior, and proper attire and conduct at performances will be ways of assessing **quality** participation. Results of testing on musical theory taught in class, and projects involving certain composers or videos will also help determine final grades for these classes.

Everyone begins each quarter with an "A" in music. Occasionally, there are a few who find it difficult to conform to the standards that are deemed important to the ensemble's success. Therefore, points can be deducted for the following reasons:

- Instrument or music not brought to rehearsal
- Instrument not practiced at home, (90 minutes per week)
- No pencil at rehearsal
- Not completing theory pages or projects
- Folders or instruments/music stands left out, not put away properly
- Chewing gum or any food during rehearsal
- Excessive tardies or absences
- Excessive disturbance during rehearsal
- Unexcused absence from an extra rehearsal
- Unexcused absence from a performance

It is not possible to anticipate every factor that might subtract from the group effort in our organization. Other indications of a lack of commitment to the process may result in further point reductions.

CLOSING REMARKS

Being a member of an instrumental music group can be an extremely rewarding and satisfying experience. Make no mistake that this can only happen through hard work and dedication. A performing group is at its best when every member works cooperatively in an atmosphere of mutual respect. We look forward to an exciting and rewarding year together as members of the various ensembles at Sowers Middle School.

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