

## NEW TRIER HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA GRADING POLICY

"It is the philosophy of the Music Department that grades should reflect the effort, ability, attitude and visible dedication that each student demonstrates on a consistent daily basis in a particular ensemble."

A positive attitude is the underlying ingredient *necessary* to the success of each ensemble and in turn for each member of that ensemble. In reading the *New Trier High School Music Department Guidelines*, one finds principles that serve as benchmarks for a positive attitude. One must leave one's "ego at the door and become a team player" approaching "all new music" and ideas "with an open mind, seeing each as an opportunity to learn." An individual "acts as a professional when rehearsing and performing, and does not thrive on complaining or finding fault with the direction or leadership of the ensemble, or the efforts of its members," but rather "employs creative thinking skills to solve problems or voice concerns" with respect and care. We must work together to achieve success together, and what better way is there than through music? In a very real way this process of music making is a metaphor for making our way through life.

**What is my role in the ensemble?** The primary driving force behind the continued involvement, for each of us, in the arts and more specifically the instrument on which we choose to perform is the passion for that instrument as a vehicle to express ideas through music. There are many ancillary benefits to this endeavor that may or may not have anything to do specifically with music but enhance the experience such as a sense of purpose and community. It seems to be a fundamental human trait to express ourselves, and many of us are fortunate to learn how to do this through our instrument.

Early on in the development of our craft, we begin to struggle as we understand our role and relationship to others as we hone our skills. The fact is that there will always be someone who is better than us. Why do we continue? We continue because we have a passion for the instrument and music. If our growth in music is motivated by our relative rank amongst our peers or in the greater community, then we do ourselves a great disservice. In fact, we harm ourselves, and lose sight of what motivated us in the first place to become involved in music.

We all have a role to play in a music ensemble. It is the job of the conductor, teacher or director to make decisions on behalf of that ensemble to provide the best possible experience for all participants and to insure that the ensemble realizes its potential so that the ensemble and its participants will grow and be exposed to the best possible repertoire. Furthermore the director of the ensemble has been entrusted with providing a meaningful experience for all members.

In the educational arena for music ensembles, the director needs to balance a plethora of factors. Each member serves a role in the ensemble and no one member can serve all roles nor can all members serve each role. The director must consider appropriate repertoire, individual and group growth, where people sit, and who serves as section leader or principal player. With regard to a section leader or principal player, there are many considerations. Those considerations include skill, need and opportunity. While a driving force for what we do as a developing musician within an ensemble should include what we desire, the greater driving force should be rooted in what is best for the ensemble or the group. Learning to accept and thrive in our role within the group will better equip us to deal with the challenges ahead.

The orchestra grading policy consists of the following:

50%	Assessments
25%	Daily Participation and Effort
20%	Dress Rehearsals and Performances
5%	Patron of the Arts Concert Review

**Please note that your grade is cumulative over the semester, and the final semester grade represents calculations based on the entire semester.** There is no final exam in orchestra. You may make an appointment with the class instructor at any time to check your recorded totals.

# NEW TRIER HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA GRADING POLICY

## I. ASSESSMENTS

The number of assessments will vary each semester. In some cases, assessments can be redone or improved upon. The final date for resubmission of a particular assessment is the Friday before semester exams.

Typical Assessments might include, but are not limited to, any of the following:

- Playing Tests (scales, excerpts from repertoire, etc.)  
*Please note:* most playing tests will require you to submit through your school Google account.
- Placement Evaluations
- Written Concert Reflections
- Exit Slips, Quizzes, or Tests

**Concert Orchestra** members ONLY are required to activate an annual subscription to *Tunelark*, which serves as an online ear-training resource for the course. Students are expected to sign-in and create a password online via the *Tunelark* link that will be sent to you via your school email address. Students are also expected to pay the \$6.50 subscription cost through *RevTrak*, additional instructions regarding this purchase will be discussed in class.

## II. DAILY PARTICIPATION AND EFFORT

Students are expected to participate positively in rehearsals, never hindering the efforts of other students or the conductor, and demonstrating a high regard for preparation and contribution. Please refer to the *Behavioral Expectations* listed in the *Music Department* policies. Students are also required to follow all classroom procedures, including arriving on time, having a pencil in all rehearsals, maintaining their instruments and related accessories, and having music daily. If a student misses three or more consecutive days of school, or accumulates a significant number of absences, additional make-up work may be required to fulfill their participation points. The director will work with the student to determine an appropriate alternative assignment for extended absences. *Each unauthorized absence from class will result in an automatic deduction of 6% from the semester grade.*

## III. DRESS REHEARSALS AND PERFORMANCES

Each performance is a culminating experience that results from many months of preparation. Students are expected to be at concerts, festival performances, and dress rehearsals. For each absence from a dress rehearsal or performance, the final semester grade will be reduced by one letter (i.e. 10 point deduction from the semester grade). Please refer to the Music Department policies for clarification.

- If the absence is *excused*, points to reverse this reduction may be earned by completing make-up work assigned by the director.
- If the absence is *unexcused*, the grade reduction cannot be reversed.

Please consult the *Music Department Policies and Guidelines* regarding what is considered excused or unexcused.

## IV. PATRON OF THE ARTS CONCERT REVIEW

Students are expected to attend one (1) artistic performance per *semester* in which they do not perform and complete a written assignment. (Note: Students in multiple music electives can use one of their own performances.) The performance should be at least 1 hour in length, and should be a band, choir, orchestra, jazz, or musical theater performance. Although performances at New Trier are preferred, off campus performances will also be accepted. Students that are taking the class for major credit are exempt from this requirement since they have music major projects.

Grading Scale:

90-100	= A
80-89	= B
70-79	= C
60-69	= D
0-59	= F

*In this course, you are expected to track your own grade through each quarter and semester.*