

JULIUS WEST MIDDLE SCHOOL



MUSIC HANDBOOK 2011-2012

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WELCOME 01

Rehearsing and performing as a member of a musical ensemble can be one of the most exciting and rewarding experiences that any student can have. Playing music with others provides the opportunity to acquire skills and disciplines that you are unable to develop when playing alone.

This handbook is designed to let you know what to expect from the Music Program at JW. Please keep it for review throughout the school year (also available on Edline).

Feel free to email or call with any questions, comments, or concerns. Your input is **always** welcome! I look forward to making some great music with you this year.

Comments/Questions/Concerns/Clarification . . . John_S_Cowan@mcpsmd.org

VISION STATEMENT 02

My vision for the Music Program at Julius West is that each ensemble develop the ability to rehearse and perform together as a team.

My vision is that EVERY member of the Music Program experience continuing growth in each of the three areas listed below.

- Individual Skills (note reading, technical proficiency, musicianship)
 - Developed through Personal Practice
 - Goals - Mastery of Instrumental Technique and Increased Musical Literacy
- Rehearsal Skills (personal responsibility, following direction, listening)
 - Developed during Daily Rehearsals
 - Goals - Adapting Individual Skills to the Entire Ensemble
 - Balance, Blend, Dynamics, Articulations, Intonation, Phrasing, Following Direction, Rehearsal Decorum
- Performance Skills (individual and rehearsal skills combined within the context of a performance)
 - Developed during Scheduled Ensemble Performances (see Calendar)
 - Goals – Transforming the hours of Individual and Rehearsal Preparation into Musical Expression, Breathing Life into the Notes Written on the Page

Weakness in any of these three areas disturbs a delicate balance that affects the success of the overall group.

COURSE OFFERINGS 03

Intermediate Band 06 / Intermediate Orchestra 06

Audience: 6th Grade Students

Prerequisite: Attainment of outcomes for Beginning Strings or Wind/Percussion

- Refine skills and develop more advanced performance techniques
- Develop technical skills necessary to perform Grade 1 Level music
- Emphasis on formal rehearsal decorum, following a conductor, and developing pitch and rhythmic security for performing an independent part
- Begin to develop aesthetic criteria for measuring the quality of instrumental performance
- Students perform in public during the Winter and Spring Concerts

Advanced Band 07 / Advanced Orchestra 07

Audience: 7th Grade and 8th Grade Students

Prerequisite: Attainment of outcomes for Intermediate Band 06/Orchestra 06

- Develop and refine technical skills in order to perform music at the Grade 2 Level
- Emphasis on formal rehearsal decorum, following a conductor, and developing pitch and rhythmic security in preparation for performing an independent part
- Music Theory includes performance of major scales, diatonic and chromatic intervals
- Develop critical listening to help formulate criteria for effectively evaluating personal performance as well as the performance of others
- Exploratory experience may be offered in solo and ensemble performance
- This ensemble performs in public during the Winter and Spring Concerts

Advanced Band 08 / Advanced Orchestra 08

Audience: 7th Grade and 8th Grade Students

Prerequisite: Attainment of outcomes for Advanced Band 07/Orchestra 07

- Develop and refine technical skills in order to perform music at the Grade 2 to 3 Level
- Emphasis on formal rehearsal decorum, following a conductor, and developing pitch and rhythmic security in preparation for performing an independent part
- Discussion of historical performance styles and musical forms
- Music Theory includes performance of major scales, diatonic and chromatic intervals, and simple melodic dictation.
- Critical listening skills are used to help effectively evaluate personal performance as well as the performance of others
- Exploratory experience may be offered in solo and ensemble performance
- This ensemble performs in public during the Winter and Spring Concerts and represents the school at District Level Festivals

OBJECTIVES 04

EVERY lesson, activity, assignment, and assessment in the Music Program at Julius West is designed to tie into specific objectives of the -

- National Music Content Standards (www.menc.org)
- Maryland State Department of Education Outcomes and Indicators for Music (<http://mfaa.msde.state.md.us>)
- MCPS Guide to the Middle School Program (www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org).

If you are unclear about the purpose behind an activity, assignment, or assessment in Instrumental Music - please ASK or email and you will be provided with a clear explanation and rationale tied to the instructional objectives.

GRADING 05

A major component of each student's growth as a musician is the use of assessment and effective (useful) feedback. During each marking period students will be given formative and summative assessments spread over the three areas of instrumental instruction:

- Individual Skills (note reading, technical proficiency, musicianship)
- Rehearsal Skills (personal responsibility, following direction, listening)
- Performance Skills (individual and rehearsal skills within the context of a performance)

Assessment tools include playing tests (individual and small group), seating auditions, written reflections, written tests, folder/music/instrument checks, questioning, analysis worksheets, practice logs, and daily observation.

Please check Edline on a weekly basis to keep updated on your music grade and upcoming assessments. Don't hesitate to email with questions or discrepancies (I do make mistakes from time to time).

Comments/Questions/Concerns/Clarification . . . John_S_Cowan@mcpsmd.org

INDIVIDUAL SKILLS

- Developed through Class Instruction and Personal Practice
- Mastery of Instrumental Technique and Increased Musical Literacy

Assessments (Formative and Summative) Include: Playing Tests and Performances (Method Book, Specific Song Selections, Rhythms, Scales, Specific Techniques)

HOME PRACTICE 06

Practice is crucial to the success of every music student. There are no shortcuts. Your long-term success is a direct result of your commitment to home practice.

Practicing is homework. A student spending 20-30 minutes of practice 3 days a week will probably be able to meet most of the musical challenges faced in class.

Students playing large instruments (tuba, bass) may opt to borrow the instrument over the weekend or come in during R+R, lunch, or after school to practice.

Playing for fun can also accomplish many of the developmental objectives for instrumental music practice. Buy a book and learn some cool tunes ☺

PRACTICE HINTS 07

- 1) The quality of practice is important - it is essential to practice correctly
- 2) Select a time and place that will be free of interruptions, comfortable and relaxed.
- 3) Set a goal for each practice session (a scale, a song, a particular technique).
- 4) Use the suggestions printed on the back of your Practice Log.
- 5) Slow, steady practice will pay off more quickly than trying to play as fast as possible.
- 6) Make sure that each note has a clear and good sound.
- 7) Make sure that each rhythm is counted correctly (hold out full note values).
- 8) Try using a metronome to maintain a steady beat.
- 9) Make sure you play with correct articulation (accents, staccato, legato, slurs, etc.)
- 10) Follow the expressive and dynamic marks (crescendos, diminuendos, etc.)
- 11) Highlight difficult areas with a color that will catch your attention as you play
- 12) If you become frustrated, take a short break and then come back.
- 13) Complete your practice record after each session.
- 14) Spend some time playing for fun!

EXTRA HELP 08

If you are having difficulty with the music or your instrument please seek additional help from the teacher. Frequently five or ten minutes of individual help can go a long way in helping to overcome musical and technical obstacles.

It may be possible to schedule some time before school, after school, during R+R, or during lunch. Please take advantage of this offer – It is no fun being lost – I want to help you enjoy making music.

REHEARSAL SKILLS

- Developed during Class Instruction and Daily Rehearsals
- Adapting Individual Skills to the Entire Ensemble
(Balance, Blend, Dynamics, Articulations, Intonation, Phrasing, Following Direction, Rehearsal Decorum)

Assessments (Formative and Summative) Include: Daily demonstration of SPECIFIC OBSERVABLE Behavioral Expectations listed below – EVERYONE Should Be Able to Receive a Grade of A+ for Rehearsal Skills

DAILY REHEARSALS 09

A Musical Group cannot function without teamwork and cooperation. It's about WE.

Each ensemble meets each day for 47 minutes. Every effort must be made to make the most effective use of this time. Here are some daily expectations.

- 1) Within three minutes of the late bell
 - Get your instrument and music folder / Get a music stand / Be seated
 - Assemble and prepare your instrument (oil valves, rosin bow, prepare reed)
 - Begin to warm up PROPERLY (long tones, lip slurs, scales, rudiments on pads)
- 2) Have your folder, method book, music, and your instrument (in working condition) at EVERY rehearsal.
- 3) Leave books in the storage room. Music cases may be placed under or beside your chair. Cases should NEVER be placed under your feet. Aisles must remain clear.
- 4) When the teacher signals for your attention, all talking and playing should cease.
Music is LISTENING – To Instruction / To Yourself / To Each Other
- 5) When instruction is directed at a small section or group the remaining group members should silently practice fingerings of scales or upcoming passages in the music.
Music is LISTENING – To Instruction / To Yourself / To Each Other
- 6) Use correct playing posture, breath support, and technique. These affect your sound.
- 7) The teacher will dismiss you a few minutes early to give you time to put away your instrument and music stands before you go to your next class.
- 8) Music CASES (and music) MUST be stored in a locker OR on a shelf in the storage room. Cases may NOT be left on the classroom or storage room floor - This is a SAFETY ISSUE
- 9) No food, gum, candy, or drink in the music room without permission.
- 10) Percussion equipment is NEVER to be played without permission.
- 11) Walk at ALL times.

PERFORMANCE SKILLS

- Developed during Scheduled Ensemble Performances (see Calendar)
- Transforming Individual and Rehearsal Preparation into Musical Expression, Breathing Life into the Notes Written on the Page

Assessments (Summative) Include: Demonstration of SPECIFIC Individual and Ensemble Musical Skills worked on during performance preparation. Observation of Performance Etiquette Expectations listed below – EVERYONE Should Be Able to Receive a Grade of A+ for Performance Skills

CONCERT ATTENDANCE 10

Music is a performing art. Performances are an extension of the classroom. Each student must participate in all performances to benefit fully from the instrumental music program.

Since an absence from any performance not only affects your child, but the entire ensemble, a written explanation of an unavoidable absence is requested prior to the scheduled event. If an absence is due to an unplanned emergency situation please send an explanatory note to the teacher as soon as possible. Such absences can be excused, and your student will be able to complete a make up project to receive comparable credit. This is in alignment with MCPS policy.

Please take a moment to mark the Performance Dates on your family calendars.

EVERY student is important for EVERY performance

CONCERT ATTIRE 11

Our tradition at Julius West is to dress like professional musicians - in black and white.

- Ladies: Black Skirt or Pants / White Blouse or Shirt / Black Shoes
- Gentlemen: Black Pants (no jeans) / White (Button-Up) Dress Shirt / Black Dress Shoes / Black Socks

PERFORMER ETIQUETTE 12

- Remain seated during the performance of each selection. If one must leave during a concert, they should quietly exit between musical selections.
- There should be no talking during another groups' performance. Every effort must be made to avoid distractions. Negative comments are never acceptable.
- At the end of each selection, the audience should applaud politely. Shouting or whistling is not acceptable.
- Should there be a problem with any student during a concert, that person may be asked to leave and may not be allowed to perform on the next concert.
- Remember that you represent the ensemble, the school, and your family.

HOMEWORK

Extend learning and/or provide practice in applying concepts initially presented in the classroom

Provide opportunities for independent work

Strengthen concept and skill development

Develop initiative, responsibility, self-direction and organizational skills

GRADED PRACTICE LOGS B

Practice Logs are an important communication tool between student, parent, and teacher. They serve the purpose of monitoring the level of commitment that each student has to personal musical growth and the growth of the instrumental ensemble.

Practice logs are graded as Homework. Information supplied by Practice Logs will be used to help diagnose problems and individualize musical support where needed.

Signed Practice Logs are required to be turned in no later than the final day of each Marking Period. (see calendar for due dates). Practice Logs must include the signature of a parent or guardian.

EXTENDED / ENRICHED LEARNING (EEL) CREDIT 14

In addition to regular classroom grades - each student has the opportunity (once per grading period) to receive additional credit for participating in a musical activity which extends or enriches him/her as a musician. Here are some examples of EEL activities -

- Second Instrument Lessons ~ Participation in a Musical Ensemble (outside of JW)
- Attending a Concert ~ Participation in a Small Ensemble at JW
- District II Solo Festival ~ Auditioning for a Performing Group
- MCPS Honors Ensemble ~ Composing a Song ~ All-State Ensemble
- Arranging a Song for Band or Orchestra
- Individual Competitions ~ Talent Show ~ Other Musical Activities . . .

To receive credit, students must write a paragraph and submit it to the teacher no later than the last day of the grading period. The paragraph must include:

- 1) Include the name and description of the EEL activity
- 2) Describe how this activity relates to (challenges, inspires, motivates) you as a musician?

MUSIC AND FOLDERS 15

- Music is provided for rehearsal and for personal practice. Students are encouraged to take their music home for practice but must return it to school each day.
- When music is handed out each student will receive a copy. Put your name on it.
- Music folders are provided for each student. Put your name on the front cover.
- When taking music home to practice, take the whole folder, so that nothing is lost.
- Students are responsible for the music in their folders. If music is lost, you have the option of borrowing a friend's music and making a copy OR turning in a Replacement Request to the teacher. Each student will be charged \$.25 for each sheet of music replaced.

INSTRUMENT POLICY 16

All students need to have an instrument to play in class. Students are expected to provide their own instrument in good working condition for use in rehearsals. This instrument must be brought to school each day and stored in the Music Room. All cases must be clearly labeled with the student's name on the outside.

At the end of the school day, every instrument must be taken home. There is NEVER an excuse for touching an instrument that does not belong to you (without permission).

LOCKERS 17

There are 108 storage lockers in the music room (with 280 students enrolled in the instrumental music program as we begin the school year). Lockers will be assigned during the first two weeks of school. The music teacher will make every effort to insure that all instruments are secured each day.

Students may put their instruments into the instrument storage room (in an assigned space or on a shelf) before school begins each day. Instruments should be taken home each day and may be picked-up in the Music Room after school.

For additional security students are encouraged to purchase a combination lock.

Any student found touching, moving, damaging, or mishandling an instrument of any sort will receive a phone call home. This is a serious matter with a zero tolerance policy.

FORGOTTEN / BROKEN INSTRUMENTS 18

Occasionally a student may forget to bring his instrument to school. I understand. This is not considered a problem unless it happens more than twice per Quarter

If your instrument is unavailable due to a needed repair your Rehearsal Skills grade will NOT be affected provided you bring a signed explanation from home.

BORROWED / SHARED INSTRUMENTS 19

Julius West Middle School has a VERY LIMITED number of small instruments (flute, clarinet, trumpet, violin, alto sax) to loan to students. Some instruments will be supplied to students to give the ensemble a well-balanced instrumentation (horn, tenor sax, bari sax, baritone, tuba, viola, cello, bass).

Students who borrow a school instrument are responsible to provide all necessary supplies (reeds, valve oil, cleaning cloth, rock stops, bows). Students are responsible for the care and maintenance of school-owned instruments they are using. An instrument use agreement form must be completed and kept on file to protect the rights of the student and the JWMS Music Program.

Once the instrument is checked out to a student, the instrument becomes their responsibility. This also includes theft and destruction of the instrument. If the instrument is damaged while in the possession of the student, the student is responsible for the cost of repairs to put the instrument back into its original condition. Damaged school-owned instruments need to be brought to the immediate attention of the teacher.

Students may forfeit their use of a school-owned instrument for the following reasons

- Negligent treatment of the instrument by the student
- A nine-week Band-Orchestra grade of C or lower

INSTRUMENT INSURANCE 20

You are strongly urged to insure your personal or school-owned instrument. Check with your insurance representative about whether your policy covers personal or school instruments.

Always make sure that you have a written record at home of the make, model and serial number of your instrument (whether personally owned or school-owned). This information will be required if something should happen to the instrument.

METHOD BOOKS 21

An instrumental method book will be checked-out to each student for use in class and at home. A portion of every class period will be spent working through the method book. Students are required to bring their method book to every rehearsal.

Intermediate Band 06 Essential Elements 2000 Comprehensive Band Method Book 1
Intermediate Orchestra 06 Essential Elements 2000 for Strings Volume 1
Advanced Band 07 and 08. Essential Elements 2000 Comprehensive Band Method Book 2
Advanced Orchestra 07 and 08 Essential Elements 2000 for Strings Volume 2

INSTRUMENT SUPPLIES 22

Having the right equipment can make a big difference in your success! Without the proper supplies a student cannot play up to his/her potential. Having the necessary supplies (lubricants, cleaning supplies) can affect the life or death of your instrument!

Below you will find a list of supplies which each student will need throughout the year. These supplies can be purchased through a local music store or online.

Please ask the teacher if you have questions about what supplies to purchase.

REQUIRED SUPPLIES

Every Student

- Music stand 4 home

Violin and Viola

- Rosin / Shoulder Rest

Cello and Bass

- Rock Stop / Bow and Rosin

Flute

- Cleaning Cloth
- Tuning Rod

Oboe

- 3 Medium Jones Reeds
- Silk Oboe Swab

Clarinet

- Reeds (Vandoren 2-1/2)
- Cork Grease
- Cleaning Cloth

Alto Sax

- Reeds (Vandoren 2-1/2)
- Cleaning Cloth

Trumpet

- Valve Oil
- Cleaning Cloth / Brush

French Horn

- Cleaning Cloth / Brush

Trombone

- Slide Oil
- Mouthpiece Brush and Cleaning Snake
- Cleaning Cloth

Baritone and Tuba

- Valve Oil
- Cleaning Cloth / Brush

Percussion

- Sticks (Vic Firth SD1)
- Timpani Mallets (general)

MUSIC DEALERS 23

LOCAL

- L&L Music-Wind Shop (www.lmusicshop.com)
 - 8940 N Westland Ave – Gaithersburg MD 20877 301-948-7273
- Music and Arts
 - Rockville Pike – Federal Plaza (301) 881-6440
- Potters Violins (www.pottersviolins.com)
 - 4706 Highland Ave. - Bethesda, MD 20814 - 1-800-317-9452
- Lashof Violins (www.lashofviolins.com)
 - 1-F East Diamond Ave. - Gaithersburg MD 20877 - 301-330-260
- Washington Music Center (www.wmcworld.com)
 - 11151 Veirs Mill Road, Wheaton / 301-946-8808
- Victor Litz (www.victorlitz.com)
 - 306 East Diamond Avenue – Gaithersburg / 301-948-7478
- Guitar Center (gc.guitarcenter.com)
 - 12401 Twinbrook Parkway – Rockville 301-231-6100

ONLINE

- Woodwind and Brasswind (www.wwbw.com)
- Musicians Friend (www.musiciansfriend.com)
- Johnson Strings (johnsonstring.com)
- Southwest Strings (swstrings.com)

AFTER-SCHOOL JAZZ 24

In addition to the ensembles which meet during the school day there is also the Julius West Jazz Band which meets once a week after school.

The JW Jazz Band will begin in October. Membership in the Jazz Band is by audition and is open to ALL students who are enrolled in the Instrumental Music Program.

Rehearsals are held every Wednesday from 2:50 to 4:00 p.m. Activity Buses are available to participating students. Interested students MUST be able to attend ALL rehearsals.

The Jazz Band usually performs two or three times per school year.

PRIVATE LESSONS 25

Though not required, students are strongly encouraged to take private lessons while in middle school band or orchestra. Nothing can compare with a regular lesson in helping students improve their abilities and enjoy band or orchestra.

It is not possible to adequately address the intricate technical development of each student within the context of a daily middle school Band-Orchestra rehearsal. A list of area teachers is available on Edline or from the Music Teacher.

SEATING BANK 26

Students will be seated in an order that reflects musical experience and leadership skills. Since EVERY section and part in the ensemble is equally important - the strongest players will be evenly distributed throughout the group.

There will be two seating assessments during the school year (at the beginning of each semester). Students will be given advanced notice of seating assessments along with specific requirements for the assessments. The instrumental music teacher has the final say on seating assignments.

The teacher may occasionally move students around based on musical or ensemble needs. Students may be reseated for behavior issues, missing materials, or unexcused absences from rehearsals or performances.

EXPENSES 27

There are many expenses that go along with being an instrumental musician and member of a performing ensemble. You have my word that I will do everything in my power to keep the costs to your family as low as possible. Please - please - please email or send me a confidential note if you are in need of financial assistance with any costs associated with the Instrumental Music Program at Julius West.

I will always try to provide as much lead time as possible to give you an opportunity to budget for upcoming expenses.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS 28

The Music Program at JW is an exciting experience for parents as well as students. With over 250 students involved in the program your involvement is essential and welcome! There are many times during the year when the music program will need the support and help of parent volunteers. Please consider being a volunteer.

- Field Trip Chaperones (6-12 needed)
- Concert Chaperones (12-16 needed)
- Fund Raising Help (everyone needed)
- Music in the Parks Festival (15 needed)

To be added to the volunteer list, please complete and return the bottom portion of the Handbook Form. You WILL BE contacted as needed 😊

My desire is to include parents as much as possible in the music program at Julius West. I literally can't do it without your help. Please feel free to contact me with any ideas of how to utilize your support.

YEARLY CALENDAR 29

During the first week of school I will distribute to EVERY student an Instrumental Music Calendar containing the dates and times for concerts, field trips, festivals, assemblies, honors auditions, and solo auditions. The calendar will also contain due dates for the Practice Logs.

I work very hard to select these dates as early as possible AND to try and avoid schedule conflicts with the other schools in the RM Cluster. This is not always possible (my apologies in advance).

I usually update the calendar at the beginning of each Semester and distribute it to EVERY student. In case the calendar doesn't make it home . . . I also post it on Edline. Please contact me with any questions regarding the calendar.

FINAL WORD 30

There will be occasions during the year when issues will come up. It is important to me that we work to keep a clear line of communication between school and home.

Please feel free to contact me anytime with questions, comments, or concerns that arise. I will make every effort to get back to you as soon as possible.

Please refer to this handbook throughout the year. Many issues can be resolved by referring to this handbook. Effective communication and clear expectations will allow all of us (teacher, parent and student) to work together for the greatest benefit of the student.

This is going to be a great year!

After reading this handbook, please detach and sign the Handbook Form (last page of this Handbook) and return it to the Instrumental Music Teacher.

Comments/Questions/Concerns/Clarification . . . John_S_Cowan@mcpsmd.org

HANDBOOK FORM 31

PLEASE DETACH, SIGN AND RETURN THIS FORM

- We have received and read the Julius West Music Handbook.
- We understand the expectations of students who wish to participate in the Julius West Instrumental Music Program.

STUDENT'S NAME (print) _____

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE _____

??? PARENT VOLUNTEER ???

If you would like to be notified of volunteer opportunities – Please PRINT your email address below and you will hear from me. No pressure 😊

Thank you for considering – Steve Cowan

- Awesome, I'd love to help
- I might be able to help if you really need me.
- I probably won't be available at this time (no worries)

Please add your Email Address below – I'll contact you soon 😊

(Please Print) _____

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