

# Welcome

On behalf of the Music Department, I would like to welcome you to the Marcus High School Orchestra Program. I look forward to working with each of you on an individual basis and with the ensemble as a whole. For the past six years we have worked hard to achieve high standards in our musicianship. As a result, you are a member of a superior rated orchestra program! Be proud of that accomplishment.

I want to take this opportunity to share some thoughts with you about being in any orchestra program. Fine orchestras can be developed in a classroom setting provided all members realize their own potential and that of others. Practice is an essential activity that must occur on a regular basis, both at home and in the classroom. A lot of practice is a good thing, but it is better to practice in short, concentrated sessions over several days than to practice one long session on the weekend. Proper technique is important for string players. We will work together to hone our technical skills which will ultimately result in expressive and meaningful performances. As members of the orchestra community, we must all do our part to prepare technically and musically. Every individual and every part is critical to the overall sound of the ensemble. We must function as a team.

I am fully committed to the Marcus High School Orchestra Program. I will do my part in preparation, planning and communicating; I simply ask that you do yours as well. By working together we will grow into a flourishing orchestra community capable of performing music with a high level of musicianship. I look forward to another wonderful school year.

Here are some things you should know about me as a musician.  
My primary instrument is cello; I have taught all four orchestral strings for over 25 years.  
I love to sing.

I love to play my instrument and have played in many venues: symphony orchestra, string orchestra, chamber music, opera, light opera, and musicals.

Here are some things you should know about me as a teacher.

I have high, but realistic expectations of myself and others.

I reflect daily about my teaching effectiveness.

I will never intentionally embarrass you.

I will do everything I can to help you be successful so long as you do your part.

I am a dreamer and a goal setter.

I am practical. I don't like busy work. I don't like to waste time.

Here are some things you should know about me as a person.

I am a doer. I have lots of energy.

I am an optimist. I always find the bright side.

I like to read.

I like to hike in the mountains.

I like animals.

I enjoy life. I like being around people.

I have a good sense of humor, but I grow hair and fangs when provoked ☺

What should you call me? Dr. Goodrich or Dr. G. is my preference.

# Introduction

This handbook is for you, the student, and your parent. The information found in the following pages will equip you to make the most of your experience in the Marcus High School Orchestra Program. Since any performance organization is based on the combined efforts of all participants, it is most important that everyone understands, believes in, and carries out the goals of the group.

## Mission and Goals

The mission of the Marcus High School Orchestra Program is to provide a positive and nurturing environment where all students can develop musical and technical skills, examine historical and current musical styles and practices, work effectively with peers, and develop a positive self-image through participation in musical rehearsals and performances.

Goals of the Marcus High School Orchestra Program will be achieved as a result of positive and active student participation in the following areas:

- Performance – students will perform a varied repertoire of music while focusing on a high level of musicianship
- Technical skills – students will develop technical and musical skills at or above those appropriate for high school level performers
- Ensemble skills – students will develop effective ensemble skills appropriate for large and small performance groups
- Sight Reading – students will develop sight reading skills at or above those appropriate for high school level performers.

## Course Offerings

Currently the Marcus High School Orchestra Program consists of three string orchestras. The orchestras are initially divided by experience, ability, and attitude. First period is the Philharmonic Orchestra made up of freshmen through seniors. Sinfonia Orchestra meets third period and consists primarily of sophomores, juniors and seniors. Concert Orchestra meets fourth period and is currently made up of freshmen and sophomores. All orchestra students are required to attend one after school or before school sectional each week. In addition, occasional combined orchestra rehearsals take place prior to concerts. Throughout the year, as students show interest, small ensembles will be formed. These

ensembles will meet one day each week – before or after school or during a free period, subject to my availability and the students’ schedules. These small ensembles are not required, but are encouraged. Small group ensembles will have performance opportunities on regularly scheduled concerts and special recitals.

# Student Code of Conduct

## Attendance Policies

Unlike other academic classes, it is impossible to “make up” activities that occur during rehearsals. Unexcused absences from class, weekly sectionals, extra rehearsals, and concerts are not permitted. Unexcused absences will have an adverse affect on a student’s rehearsal grade for the reporting period.

## Absences and Tardiness

- Absences and tardiness for rehearsals or concerts will be excused for religious holidays, medical emergencies, or family emergencies ONLY.
- “Work” does not constitute an excused absence.
- In the event of a conflict with another scheduled school activity, it is the responsibility of the **student** to notify the sponsors of both activities. The sponsors will then determine the student’s obligation.
- School tardy policies will be enforced.

## Rehearsals and Sectionals

Students will be given adequate notice of all outside of school rehearsals and activities. These **rehearsals are course requirements** and are vital to the success of the orchestra program. Unexcused absences from extra rehearsals **will have** an adverse effect on a student’s rehearsal grade for the reporting period. All students will have at least one sectional rehearsal every week outside of normal school hours. These are required.

## Concerts

Concerts are the ultimate evaluation of many weeks of preparation and class work. Every performance is mandatory. A performing ensemble requires ALL students to contribute to allow for success. A student not attending a performance affects every performing member of the ensemble.

Religious holidays, medical emergencies, and family emergencies are the only acceptable absences; **all others are unexcused**. Failure to attend a concert will adversely affect the student’s concert grade for the reporting period.

## **Individual Practice**

All students are expected to practice each day for whatever length of time is needed in order to learn the music. Any performance group is only as good as the individuals who make up the organization. Students must prepare assigned parts in a timely manner. Grades are determined in part by playing exams. Students who are unable to perform the music at the necessary performance level may not be allowed to participate in special performances including UIL and trip events.

## **No Pass, No Play**

The No Pass, No Play rule affects all Fine Arts classes, including the orchestra. If a student fails any course in any given nine weeks, they will not be eligible to participate in any orchestral activities for the next three week period. These activities include: All-district, All-region, All-state and UIL competitions and music festivals.

## **Orchestra Classroom Rules and Student Expectations**

1. Come to class as quickly as possible. Rehearsal time is very limited. You may bring your instrument into the orchestra room before school.
2. Bring your instrument, music, pencil and all needed accessories to class each day.
3. Do not talk during rehearsal. Silent practice is encouraged during rehearsal.
4. Do not chew gum or bring food, candy, or beverage into the orchestra room.
5. You are expected to be an active participant in rehearsal both mentally and physically.
6. Fingernails must be short. Instrument and hand positions are critical to performance excellence. Long fingernails make it impossible to play with appropriate and effective hand positions.
7. Do not play the piano or adjust any equipment in the room. Do not play another individual's instrument. Do not fool around with lockers or locks.
8. Follow tuning routine for quick and efficient tuning.
9. The Orchestra Hall is to be kept clean at all times, including instrument lockers and instrument storage rooms.
10. I must be able to see your eyes! Hair must be out of both eyes during all rehearsals.
11. Technology – **Power Down** during all rehearsals unless instructed to do otherwise.

## **Consequences for Breaking Rules:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> time: Warning
- 2<sup>nd</sup> time: Director/student conference after class/phone call to parent
- 3<sup>rd</sup> time: Detention
- 4<sup>th</sup> time: Office referral
- 5<sup>th</sup> time: Conference with student, director, parents, and office administration

## **Music**

Throughout the year, you will be given music that the MHS Music Fund has bought. In addition, it is likely that some music will be borrowed from other organizations. Just as you are expected to return textbooks to school, you are expected to return each piece of music. To avoid fines, please take care of your music and return it on time. You should mark your scores with pencil. ALWAYS write your name on your music folder so that it can be returned if lost. If you lose your music, you will be fined for the cost of the music and any shipping/handling charges.

## **Private Instruction**

Individual private lessons on orchestra instruments is strongly encouraged for students of all levels. Materials used in private lessons include technique studies as well as solo materials. The individual attention you receive in private lessons cannot be duplicated in the classroom. Each private teacher gears the lesson to your individual abilities and allows you to experience all that can be offered in a one-on-one teaching environment. Some private lessons may be available during regular class time, depending on availability of LISD employed string teachers.

## **School Instrument Usage**

Cellos and Basses are available for student use while at school. These instruments must remain at school unless the director has given the student specific permission to take an instrument out of the building. An instrument rental agreement must be signed by both the parent and student and returned to the director within one week of the day the instrument was issued. LISD fee for instrument rental is \$80.00 for the year.

## **Rehearsal Etiquette**

Come to rehearsals with the attitude that hard work does pay off! Excellence is achieved all the more quickly with an open and hard-working mind. Leave other classes and problems outside of the orchestra room so that musical goals can be the focus of the class.

The best music rehearsals move quickly. To accomplish this, each member must be attentive at all times. Even when your section is not playing you must listen and be ready to jump back in when needed.

When many people work closely on a musical project, it is important to maintain respect for each other. This means respect for the director as well as other orchestra members. Quality music performance requires the focus of musicianship as well as emotions. Be sensitive to the feelings of all others in the group. Treat others as you would want to be treated yourself.

### **Concert Etiquette**

Good concert etiquette is behavior that is considered appropriate and polite while enjoying or performing a live musical event. Good concert etiquette shows respect for the conductor, performers, other audience members, and the music that is being performed.

At a concert:

1. Sit quietly and wait for the concert to begin. You may talk softly while waiting.
2. Applaud when the conductor or performing group enters the stage and after each full piece of music is completed.
3. Sit quietly during the performance. When a performing organization presents a concert, they are putting forth their best effort; they should expect the same from those in the audience.
4. Keep programs quiet during the performance.
5. Turn off cell phones and pagers.
6. If you must leave during a concert, do so only at the end of a group's performance or between pieces. It is best not to leave until the end of the concert.
7. While on stage, act as professionally as possible. If mistakes are made, make every attempt not to call attention to them. Do not wave or talk to audience members.
8. Dress appropriately in uniform.

# Grading

The grading procedure is as follows:

At the end of each 9 weeks there will be an assessment. That assessment will be a cumulative means of grading for each quarter. It will demonstrate your knowledge, application, preparedness, understanding, skills, and progress.

The breakdown of your grade is as follows:

- Performance Grade (concerts, contests)= 40%  
You will be graded on your attendance, your participation, and the level of performance demonstrated by the group. This grade will include a student self-assessment of the performance.
- Rehearsal Grade (daily and extra)= 40%  
You will be graded on participation and your ability to demonstrate musical skills and knowledge as outlined in the curriculum. Both formal and informal assessment procedures will be used.
- Weekly Assessment= 20%  
This is a formal assessment of your musical skill growth which may include sight-reading, knowledge of your specific musical part, and your ability to play in tune – alone and with others. This grade may include a student self-assessment.

### **Lettering Policy (LISD)**

A student must earn 10 points in a school year to letter. Points are awarded for the following:

- 4 pts. – Region Band, Orchestra, or Choir
- 3 pts. – Area Band, Orchestra, or Choir
- 2 pts. – All State Band, Orchestra, or Choir
- 2 pts. – First Division on Class Two Solo at **LISD** Solo and Ensemble Contest
- 2 pts. – First Division on Class Two Ensemble at **LISD** Solo and Ensemble Contest
- 3 pts. – First Division on Class One Solo at **LISD** Solo and Ensemble Contest
- 3 pts. – First Division on Class One Ensemble at **LISD** Solo and Ensemble Contest
- 2 pts. – \*\*Member in good standing, awarded at the end of each year and will carry over

\*\*\* Member in good standing is determined by participation in all UIL activities and in all events required for that organization. Excused absences will be determined by the Directors and would only include personal illness and bereavement.

Beginning of year point values:

9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	0 pts
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	2 pts earned from member in good standing from 9 <sup>th</sup> grade
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	4 pts earned from member in good standing from 9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> grade
12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	6 pts earned from member in good standing from 9 <sup>th</sup> , 10 <sup>th</sup> , and 11 <sup>th</sup> grade

**Jackets will be measured only on the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of school and distributed in early November. Seniors earning 10 points during their senior year will be measured whenever they achieve the 10 points. Students must be a current member of the organization to measure and receive letter jackets.**

# Uniforms

Formal concert attire is furnished by the school and is checked out to you at the beginning of the year. Please keep your uniform in good condition. Men will be issued black tuxedos (you must furnish a white tux shirt, black socks and black dress shoes). Women will be furnished a black gown (you must furnish black hose and black dress shoes with closed toes – no sandals).

The idea of a uniform is that the group looks professional. Ladies need to be necklace-free, wear only the smallest earrings, and leave off bracelets. Rings may be worn. Hair accessories need to be small and colorless. Men need to wear their entire tux in public. Come to concerts completely dressed and stay that way until you return home.

When you are dressed in uniform, you are instantly recognizable as a member of the group. You should wear your uniform with pride and dignity. Please be certain that it is neat and clean and that your uniform is completely ready to go well in advance of all performances.

Casual t-shirts with the MHS Orchestra insignia are a required purchase and will be worn for casual concerts with jeans or black slacks, shoes and socks. These shirts may also be worn with jeans on Friday Spirit days. An additional tee shirt and sweat shirt will also be available for purchase.

# Auditions

## **Orchestra and Small Ensembles**

Orchestra students audition informally during regular class time for initial seating placements each fall. Thereafter, seating will be rotated after each performance, allowing everyone to have opportunities to play all parts. Section leaders are selected based on playing ability, leadership ability, and seniority. Seniority is defined as how long the student has continuously been a member of the organization. Section leaders assist the director in teaching the music and making sure everyone has correct fingerings and bowings. Audition dates and requirements will be announced in class. All students audition each spring for placement in the appropriate orchestra for the following year. However, please keep in mind that auditions are a year-long process because only those students who consistently display appropriate skills, good attitudes and work ethic will

progress to the next orchestra level. Furthermore, each orchestra must maintain a balanced instrumentation.

### **District, Region and All-State Orchestra**

Participation in District, Region, and All-State is open to any MHS Orchestra Department member. All audition dates will be announced in advance. You may work on your audition music with your private teacher or with the director. **Every participant will play at least once for the director before the audition.** There will be a sign-up sheet for coaching times with the director posted the first week of school.

### **UIL and LISD Solo and Ensemble Festivals**

All students in the MHS Orchestra program are encouraged to participate in the Solo and Ensemble Festivals each year. Freshmen are required to participate in the district event. This opportunity allows students the chance to perform solo pieces or chamber music pieces for an adjudicator who provides a performance rating as well as constructive feedback to better the individual performer's ability. Accompanists are required for all solo pieces that have accompaniment parts available.

## **Trips**

Trips are an exciting reward for students who participate in good standing in the Orchestra Program. This year, there are tentative plans (meaning we are awaiting approval) to take the Orchestra to Branson, MO. A number of fund raising activities are available for students to help defray their cost. If financial difficulties are present, do NOT hesitate to contact the director.

Trips are a privilege and a reward for a year of diligent work and effort. Students who do not follow the expectations of self-discipline and work ethic during the school year will not be permitted to participate in the trip. Minimum orchestra grade required for trip participation is B.

Participation in the Marcus High School Orchestra trip requires:

1. Regular school attendance
2. Attendance at extra rehearsals and performances
3. Willingness to abide by the rules and procedures established in this handbook
4. No Pass, No Play is in effect.

# MHS Orchestra Council

The MHS Orchestra Program has an elected council of students to help in the planning and administration of the orchestra program. Elections are held in the spring (fall for freshmen). Council representatives will meet monthly with the director to conduct pertinent business. Orchestra members not on the council may be asked to serve on committees as needed.

The MHSO Council will be responsible for maintaining the music library, checking roll in rehearsals and at performances, planning social activities for the orchestra, assisting in concert preparations, and helping to develop strategic plans for the program at large. These members will have many responsibilities that will directly affect the orchestra program. Please make your selections carefully and give council representatives your support.

Should you have a comment or concern about some aspect of the program throughout the year, you may see the Director or a MHSO Council representative. The MHSO Council will consider the issue/suggestion at the next scheduled meeting. Someone from the MHSO Council will report back to you regarding resolution of the concern or suggestion.

## **Student Activity Fee**

All orchestra students are asked to pay an Orchestra Activity Fee in lieu of asking for \$10.00 here and \$25.00 there throughout the year. This fee will cover such items as audition fees for contests, instrument and locker rental and various other expenses. This fee will be collected at the first Parent and Booster Club meeting, August 24, from 6:30 – 8:00 pm in the orchestra room. Please support the young musicians by paying this fee at the appropriate time.

## Tentative Calendar for MHS Orchestras 2011-2012

Aug 20	Swim Party 1-3 pm
Aug 22	First Day of School
Aug 24	Orchestra Parent/Student Night 6:30 - 8:00 pm
Aug 29	MHS Back to School Night – Krispy Kreme Sales
Sept 5	No School
Sept 10	ACT Test, 9 – noon
TBA	Senior Letter Jacket Sizing
Oct 1	LISD – All District/Region Boot Camp – 1:00 – 4:00 pm
Oct 1	SAT Test, 9 – noon
Oct 4	Orchestra Concert, 7:00 pm, MHS Auditorium
Oct 5	Homecoming Carnival 5 – 7 pm
Oct 5	Sinfonia orchestra concert at Downing MS – 6:30 call, concert 7:00
Oct 13	Philharmonic orchestra concert at Briarhill MS – 6:00 call, concert 7:00
Oct 15	HS Region Orchestra Auditions
Oct 19	Dining Out at I-HOP on 407, 5 – 9 pm
Oct 22	MS Region Orchestra Auditions
Oct 22	ACT Test 9 – noon
Oct 29	All-State Taping
Nov 4/5	MS All Region Clinic/Concert
Nov 5	SAT Test
Nov 21-25	Thanksgiving Vacation
Dec 3	SAT Test
Dec 6	Orchestra Concert, 7:00 pm, MHS Auditorium
Dec 9/10	HS Region Orchestra Clinic/Concert
Dec 10	ACT Test 9 – noon
TBA	Robson Ranch Holiday Concert
Dec 22	Winter Break Begins
Jan 16	No school
Jan 28	SAT Test
Jan 30	Spring Open House 7:00 Krispy Kreme Sales
Feb 11	ACT Test 9 – noon
Feb 16	Pre-UIL Orchestra Concert/SR, MHS Cluster
Feb 18	UIL Solo/Ens,
Feb 29/2	HS UIL at Newman Smith HS
Mar 10	SAT Test
Mar 12-16	Spring Break

Mar 24/25	Plant Sale
Mar 26/29	EOC Tests
Mar 29	Marcus Cluster Orchestra Concert
Mar 31/1	Plant Sale
April 3	Ensemble Recital 6:30 pm
April 12-15	Trip Dates
April 14	ACT Test 9 – noon
April 21	District Solo/Ensemble
April 24-27	TAKS
May 4	Orchestra Banquet
May 5	SAT Test
May 7 – 18	AP Tests
May 7 – 11	STAAR Tests
May 19	MHS Prom
May 21	Orchestra Concert, MHS Auditorium 7:00 pm
May 31	Last School Day
June 2	SAT Test
June 9	ACT Test

Plan ahead

Mark dates on your planner/calendar.

Concerts are mandatory – Be sure you are present and on time for the warm-ups. See handbook for expectations.

Schedule your SAT and ACT tests carefully so that you do not have conflicts with orchestra events in which you want to participate.

MARCUS HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA CONTRACT  
2011 - 2012

By signing this form, students and parents acknowledge they have read the handbook and accept the responsibilities as described there-in.

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parents and Students: Please be sure that all information listed on this form is correct as I use email and phones to contact you about events, change of plans, etc.