

Gregory Middle School Song

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Gregory Music Handbook

2019-2020

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK



you and

the test.



Soon you'll see that Gre - go - rys a cut a - bove the rest, Oh,



Gre - go - ry stu - dents share and Gre - go - ry stu - dents care.

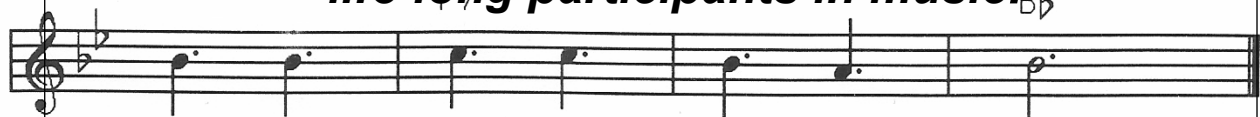


We're a school that's friend - ly fun and al - ways will be fair.



Our Music Education Mission...

To enable each student to develop
and share his or her unique talents and become
life-long participants in music.



near at Gre - 'gry Mid - dle School



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Welcome to the Music Department at Gregory Middle School. The instrumental music experience is a very significant offering of our school curriculum. Your student's participation in music enhances many areas of his/her personal growth and adds variety and color to his/her general education. The music program at Gregory Middle School is designed to help meet the emotional, social, and cultural needs of every band, chorus, and orchestra student.

Our goals for each student include:

1. To discover, appreciate, and value his/her talents, the talents of others, and the beauty of all types of music
2. To improve his/her skills in the areas of tone production, music theory, composition, and improvisation
3. To gain a desire to continually improve upon past performance and to be the best he/she can be
4. To experience self-fulfillment as he/she communicates with others through music
5. To prepare your musician for all of the outstanding musical opportunities that await him/her at Neuqua Valley High School
6. To instill a life-long enjoyment and appreciation of music long after leaving Gregory Middle School

It is to these ends that we ask each student to give his/her best effort in cooperation with your involvement at home. With all of us working together as a team, we are confident that your child will have a positive and rewarding year.

Thank you, in advance, for your support of your child's music education!

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Musicians are made, not born.

Were Mozart and Michael Jordan “born with it”?



Many people are lulled into thinking that good musicians and athletes are just born with natural talents and are destined to excel. There is no denying that these individuals were given many talents, however, their surroundings and upbringing had more to do with their success than any other factor. Mozart’s father happened to be the premier piano instructor in Europe and saw to it that from a very young age, Mozart had daily instruction and practice. Michael

Jordan’s parents also insisted on daily practice and training. The results? Experts in the field of music and basketball.

We are all familiar with the discussion of nature versus nurture. Nature refers to the talents we are born with in relation to what we become. Nurture refers to how our upbringing and environment play a role in what we become. Research shows that a student’s success in their schooling is largely dependent on parent involvement and the environment in the home. As parents, it is easy to hear the sounds of young musicians and think to ourselves that our kids either “have it” or they don’t. The truth is, a student’s success in band is not determined at birth. Honestly, success for your student may not happen immediately, but occur years into their musical journey. We firmly believe that students can learn musical skills, foster them through consistent practice, and, with support from home, have a rich experience in music regardless of what they may have been “born with”.

Musical skills are learned just as math or reading skills. With repetition and practice, they become second nature and empower the students to grow and succeed. Music has repeatedly been proven to use more of the brain simultaneously than any other activity. It creates well-rounded, critically thinking, sensitive people who are able to work well with others while pursuing an art form that defines culture.

Music is for life. Your belief in your student’s ability to participate in music will have a lasting impact.

Large Group/Ensemble

The middle school music experience in District 204 involves daily large group instruction in an ensemble. It is the place where the individual skills and talents of each musician are brought together to form a larger and even greater work of art. The development of *group* or *ensemble* performance skills such as balance, blend, tuning, and rhythmic precision are pursued during the daily band/chorus/orchestra rehearsal. Music history with composer backgrounds and compositional devices are also explored during the full group experience. Cross-curricular connections are made frequently. The students experience the similarities between the study of music (band/chorus/orchestra) and other subject areas by participating in the special units that are studied in the core end of each grade level.

Band, Chorus, and Orchestra classes also emphasize skills beyond music such as organization, collaboration with others, goal-setting, self-evaluation and self-expression. We are proud to know that these skills will transfer into every area of life in and beyond Gregory Middle School.

Technique Class (Band/Orchestra Only)

What is *Technique Class*? *Technique Class* is where students learn instrument-specific skills. *Technique Class* is the small group lesson that all band and orchestra students participate in several times per semester during their regular ensemble class period. Full ensembles, on the other hand, are where students take their individual skills and learn concepts such as balance, blend, intonation, and more!

My student is in band/orchestra five days a week. Why do they need a separate class to learn how to play? In a given class period, there are as many as 11 different instruments. Every instrument requires different skills and techniques to be played successfully. Teaching students to play their individual instruments in a full band or orchestra setting would be like teaching a large math class with 45-70 students. That might sound slightly reasonable, but what if within that math class you had to teach 5 students fractions, 10 students geometry, 15 students statistics, 3 students calculus, 2 students multiplication, and 13 students trigonometry all within the same period? Fortunately, we are able to deliver individualized, instrument-specific instruction to your students in technique class so that they are able to enjoy the expressive and emotional fulfillment that comes from playing in and contributing to an ensemble performance. As students grow, we are able to continue to expand on their instrument-specific skills throughout their middle school years.

How does *Technique Class* work? Band and orchestra students are excused from their regular ensemble class to participate in a small group technique class. This schedule will be available in the classrooms and online so that all parents, students and teachers are aware of when technique assignments are due.

How does my student know when their *Technique Class* is? This schedule will be available in the classrooms and online so that all parents, students and teachers are aware of when technique assignments are due. Students will also receive a hard copy to keep in their binder.

Please see the Grading Guidelines for a more specific description of our grading policies.

Combo

Students enrolled in the Gregory Music Department have the privilege and opportunity to be *Combo Students*. *Combo Students* or *Combos* are students who are in band/orchestra and chorus. To facilitate participation in both, the following schedule is used on a regular five day week:

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
C	B/O	This day alternates between B/O and C	C	B/O

B/O= BAND/ORCHESTRA DAY C=CHORUS DAY

A schedule similar to this is hung outside of the music rooms and posted online so that all *Combo Students* can be aware of the schedule and plan accordingly.

Being a *Combo Student* requires extra responsibility and dedication. *Combo* folks will not get the same amount of performance time or repetition as their full-time band/chorus/orchestra peers who are in class five days a week. To stay caught-up and to feel successful in band, chorus, and orchestra, we ask that all *Combos* do the following:

- Check in with their band/orchestra teacher on their way to chorus for any announcements, handouts, or reminders
- Check the *Combo Schedule* to make sure they know what ensemble to attend
- Check the *Technique Schedule* in case they need to bring their instrument for *Technique* on a non-B/O day
- Practice all of their chorus and band/orchestra music so that they are able to contribute musically to both ensembles
- Sign out on the sheet located in the Chorus room one school day in advance if technique falls on a Chorus day. We kindly ask you do not email Mr. Pfenninger to sign out. Students will attend technique as indicated on the calendar. Failure to attend technique (because of forgotten instrument, failure to sign out, etc.) on the assigned day will result in the loss of the attendance portion of the technique grade. Absences from school will be excused.

It is the goal of the Music Department to have our musicians succeed and feel comfortable with their participation in all ensembles. Should a student be struggling with the extra responsibilities of being a *Combo Student*, the chorus and instrumental teachers will have conversation with that student and their parents about increasing success. In the best interest of the student, a recommendation may be made to select one full-time ensemble in lieu of being a *Combo Student*.

Combo Students will receive their quarter grade based upon their performance in chorus (50%) and in band/orchestra (50%).

Philosophy of Assessment

Focus on musician growth-not grades

- The Band, Chorus, and Orchestra Curriculum is assessed in a variety of informal and formal ways that allow for individual learning styles and abilities
- Musicians will be given continual feedback from their teachers and fellow students throughout the entire learning process
- Criteria for success will be clearly articulated for each assignment

Guide to Grading

Band, Chorus, and Orchestra Grades Are Based On the Following:

- **Daily Class Participation**

Each student will receive points for having proper supplies, timely turn-in of permission slips, written work, and preparation. Band classes and orchestra classes have one combined rehearsal outside of the school day per quarter. The dress rehearsal is the one opportunity for students to meet as a full grade level prior to performing. Attendance is mandatory.

- **Performances**

Performances are culminating events of each quarter's curriculum in addition to being an assessment. Every student provides a valuable contribution to the ensemble and an absence impacts the whole group. Points for performances will be based on attendance, concert etiquette, having supplies, being on-time, wearing the proper uniform, and reflecting on the performance experience.

Absences from performances

Performances are culminating curricular event, so it is expected that the concert has precedence. Absences will only be excused if approved by the teacher at least two weeks prior to the performance. Family emergencies and illness will be excused.

Excused absences may involve an alternate assignment (commonly a 1-2 page type-written assignment related to the concert). Calendars should be marked carefully at the beginning of the year to avoid conflicts with performances.

- **Technique Class Assignment Performance—Band/Orchestra Only (Point totals vary)**

Students will be assessed on their *Technique Class* performance of assignments. Students receive a hard copy of these assignments each quarter.

Continued on next page...

Performances

All musicians perform at least four times a year: the Demonstration Concert (October), Triptych Concert (December), Spring Concert (March), Fine Arts Festival (May), and Memorial Day Parade (May—Band Students Only). Performances are the culminating event to our daily class. Please mark your calendar with the performance dates. See the Band/Chorus/Orchestra Calendar Sheet for a complete listing of all events for the entire year.

Instrumental Private Lessons

One-to-one instruction is encouraged to ensure attention and success as an instrumentalist. Private teachers of the highest caliber work closely with the teachers. Selected high school students will be available to 6th and 7th grade band and orchestra students as Guided Practice Teachers. A list of all private lesson instructors who teach at Neuqua Valley High School will be available beginning in October. You may contact a private instructor at any time during the school year. Visit the websites for a list of private professional and High School Guided Practice teachers.

Fundraiser

The Gregory Middle School Music Department has one fundraiser each year. Its success is necessary to provide the musicians with extra funds for transportation costs and fees for special clinics, guest conductors, and summer camp scholarships. Participation is optional and greatly appreciated.

Music Uniform

The Gregory Music Department feels very strongly about creating unity and professionalism through the use of a uniform for performances. All music department students will wear the following for performances-no exceptions:

- long black dress pants (no leggings, jeans, or athletic pants)
- long black socks
- all black dress shoes
- Music Department polo shirt TUCKED IN (no ties or folding, please)

Uniform expectations:

All students need to wear the uniform outlined above at performances. Students not in full uniform (i.e. wearing white socks or blue pants) can expect an invitation to change and/or loss of some concert participation points.

Neuqua Valley Music Department Information

The Neuqua Valley Music Department celebrates a nationally-renowned reputation for excellence. We strongly encourage our students to attend the many incredible concerts and musical events at Neuqua Valley

For a complete listing of upcoming events, freshman information and opportunities at Neuqua Valley High School, please visit



www.neuquamusic.org

How can parents further support their musician's musical experience?

Attend Live Performances

One of the best ways to promote musical growth in your son/daughter is to listen to recordings of professional musicians or take them to live performances. Our area, especially Chicago, is rich with live concerts in all styles of music. We are also very fortunate to have outstanding performances available through the Neuqua Valley High School Music Department. Taking your musician to Neuqua concerts will provide your musician with excellent musical examples to imitate while allowing them to see what great musical opportunities await them in high school.

Provide Instrumental Music Private Lessons

Private lessons provide students with the enrichment and personalized instruction necessary to excel in music.

Consider an Instrument/Equipment Upgrade

Better equipment makes it easier to play!

Purchase Recordings of Professional Musicians

Students who imitate more accomplished performers succeed!

Become a part of the ARTSpeaks movement

The Naperville community has a group to support the arts, for more information please see:
<http://artspeaks204.org/>