

Niu Valley Middle School Band and Orchestra

Course Syllabus/Handbook, 2023-24 School Year

Purposes of this Document

- 1) To provide parents and students with a reference which may be consulted when necessary, so that curriculum, policies, and procedures are clear to everyone involved.
- 2) To ensure fair and equal treatment of all students at all times.
- 3) To consolidate all pertinent information into one handout so that parents and students are not inundated with basic information on a regular basis.
- 4) To establish procedures so that classes and activities will be effective, organized, and productive.

A Note Regarding Literature Selection

There are many historical connections between music and religious services, patriotic events, or holidays. It is necessary to discuss and perform all types of music in order to adequately study music and meet the standards. All literature with references to religion, holidays, or patriotism will be studied for its musical or historical value, and will not be used to impose any beliefs on any student. Examples include *America the Beautiful*, *God Bless America*, *Amazing Grace*, and *Joy to the World*. Any student who is unable to study or perform any type of literature due to beliefs must inform the instructor in writing in order for alternate assignments to be provided.

Educational Resources

All students will use method books as appropriate. This may vary based on the individual needs of the student and the ensemble (e.g. level of proficiency, instrument, etc.). All courses will be supplemented with sheet music, exercises, handouts, written material, field trips, live performances, and guest clinicians.

Grading Policy

Niu Valley Middle School has developed a school-wide grading policy which is based on MYP Assessment Criteria. For music, students may be asked to complete the following tasks:

- * Written or Performance Exams
- * Daily Class Exercises
- * Small Group or Sectional Projects/Masterclasses
- * Written Assignments, including Process Journal and Reflections
- * Research Projects
- * Small or large group performances

These tasks will be part of Units which will in turn provide you with opportunities to demonstrate competency in the following MYP Arts Criteria:

- A. Investigating
- B. Developing
- C. Creating or performing
- D. Evaluating

For each of the four criteria, you can receive a maximum score of 8 on Summative Tasks. Formative tasks will be graded Plus, Check, Delta, or Zero.

Grades are based on the attained achievement level of the selected IBMYP objectives and Common Core State Standards (CCSS)/Hawaii Content and Performance Standards III (HCPSIII) during the grading period. Quarter and Semester letter grades indicate learning achievement progress while the Year letter grade indicates the final achievement level. The DOE report card is used to communicate student achievement. Student progress may be monitored through Google Classroom and Infinite Campus.

Letter Grade Distribution

Grade of A: Achievement exceeds established standards/criteria.

Grade of B: Achievement meets established standards/criteria.

Grade of C: Achievement approaches established standards/criteria.

Grade of D: Achievement is well below established standards/criteria.

Grade of F: Achievement is well below established standards/criteria or was not completed.

Process Journal

All students in MYP Arts must complete a Process Journal. It should contain evidence supporting student development in all four objectives. It is not a diary, nor is it a portfolio of your best work. Instead, it is an evolving record of your intentions, processes, accomplishments, and journey as an artist. This will be reviewed by your instructor on a periodic basis. You can do this online, or as a hard-copy. The format and frequency of entries is up to you, but strive for at least once per week.

Units/Topics to Be Studied

- Instrument Care and Maintenance
- Music Theory
- Rhythm
- Pitch recognition
- Intonation
- Proper instrument carriage, bow grip, embouchure, etc.
- Techniques applicable to each individual instrument (e.g. vibrato, double tonguing, etc.)
- Development of a characteristic tone
- Proper breathing and posture
- Music History/Appreciation of all art forms
- Skills involved in ensemble playing

Individual Practice Outside of Class

Each student is expected to spend at least 15-20 minutes per day practicing outside of class. Although written documentation is not always submitted (practice sheets), in-class progress, Process Journal entries, and performances will show who is practicing and who is not.

Behavioral Guidelines

All students will be expected to abide by the guidelines found in the Niu Valley Student Handbook. In addition, all students are expected to comply with Chapter 19, the DOE's Statewide Discipline Code.

Class Rules

- 1) **Respect yourself, everyone else, all property, and the process of learning.** This means to listen with eye contact when a speaker is talking, refrain from talking or fooling around during class, be on time for everything, take care of all equipment assigned to you, put equipment away neatly, say please and thank you, etc. It is impossible to list every scenario. The bottom line is, use your common sense and the values you learn at home.
- 2) **Follow directions the first time they are given.** This includes directions given by a teacher, parent, chaperone, or an administrator.
- 3) **Be prepared.** This means to practice your part outside of class, have all necessary supplies at all times, turn in forms and assignments on time, be dressed appropriately, etc. Like #1, every scenario cannot be listed. The bottom line is, think ahead.

Consequences

Students who choose not to obey any DOE, school or class rules will be disciplined according to the number and severity of the offense. This may include: warning, time-out, loss of instrument privileges, parent phone call, detention, parent conference, or referral to administration. Any insubordination or severe disruption will result in immediate referral to administration.

Other Class Procedures

- 1) Refrain from eating, drinking, and chewing gum during class.
- 2) Ask permission before leaving your class.
- 3) Excessive use of the restroom will not be allowed unless you have a medical condition.
- 4) Be on time, and do not leave until dismissed.

How Parents and Guardians Can Aid in Their Child's Success in Music

- 1) Encourage your child to practice on a regular basis. A few minutes each day is far more effective than three hours on Sunday evening. Do not use practice as punishment, or it will discourage further participation in music.
- 2) Ask your child to play for you from time to time. An audience is always helpful to aid progress and create additional motivation to do well.
- 3) Check your child's planner, along with email, Google Classroom, and Infinite Campus.
- 4) Encourage your child to continue in music when registering for the next school year.
- 5) Encourage your child to put forth 100% effort in ALL classes.
- 6) Get involved with the music program as a volunteer or chaperone. Research clearly indicates that parent involvement is one of the keys to student's academic success.
- 7) Attend your child's concerts. At least one parent or guardian is required to be present at each performance. One of the purposes of the concert is to show their family what has been studied over the previous months.

- 8) If your child has forms for you to sign, please complete them as promptly as possible. If your child has difficulty remembering, please ask them to show you their planner daily.
- 9) Contact the instructor immediately if you have a question regarding an assignment or your child's progress. Please contact the instructor rather than the school office.

Excelling in a Middle School Music Class

There are many procedures and expectations in music that differ from those in other academic areas. For those who have never taken a music class before, here is a summary. For those who have taken music before, these are provided as a last reminder.

- 1) Do not be afraid of having no experience—you will be fine. What is more important is that you pay attention, ask questions, and follow directions.
- 2) All students are expected to sit up on the front edge of the chair, with two feet flat on the floor. Fooling around or horseplay is never acceptable. Following step-by-step directions is a must. If someone is speaking or playing, everyone else is absolutely silent, remaining as still as possible.
- 3) In a very short time, you will all be holding an instrument that costs between \$500 and \$5,000. Therefore, the level of self-discipline must be extremely high.
- 4) If you need help, we will be glad to help you, but you need to ask for it.
- 5) Treat all classes with equal importance. In the IB curriculum, music is a core class.

Instrument Selection

Students in Beginning Band or Beginning Orchestra will be assigned instruments based on available inventory, various assessments, desired instrumentation, and physical characteristics. Parents and students are advised that this may or may not be the student's first choice instrument. Please be grateful for the chance to play an instrument, as some students are not afforded this opportunity.

How to Practice

- 1) Warm up carefully and slowly, using exercises taught in class. Do not immediately begin playing sheet music without warming up properly.
- 2) Spend the most time practicing passages that you CANNOT play--not those that have been thoroughly learned or are more fun to play. Play each passage as slowly as needed to get all notes and rhythms PERFECT. Once you can play the passage three times perfectly in a row, then gradually increase the tempo, and repeat the process. Do not go faster if it is not perfect three times in a row.
- 3) Do not play with a loud, obnoxious tone, even if it's just for fun. This defeats the purpose of the work we do in class. Always play with the best possible tone.
- 4) Always practice with a specific goal in mind (eg. My goal is to practice until I can play measures 20-28 three times in a row at a slow, medium, and fast tempo.) It is not always necessary to practice the entire piece. Focus on the difficult passages.

Instrument Care Procedures

- 1) Each student and parent/guardian shall assume complete responsibility for all instruments assigned to them, and shall pay for all repair or replacement costs.

- 2) The instrument must be returned immediately upon request by the instructor.
- 3) Refrain from sitting or stepping on cases. Cases must be latched at all times.
- 4) Hold the instrument properly when assembling, playing, carrying, or disassembling it. Do not squeeze or bend rods. If it is hard to assemble, use cork grease (woodwinds).
- 5) All students must have two old-t-shirts to use as a polishing cloth. Wipe the instrument daily. For woodwind and brass players, remove all moisture from the instrument after playing. Do not use treated polishing cloths without consulting the instructor. Using the wrong one can damage the instrument.
- 6) Brass players must apply valve oil at least twice per week and grease tuning slides at least once every other week. Valve caps must be kept clean as well.
- 7) The inside of the case must be kept clean and free of lint and dust.
- 8) Orchestra students loosen their bow before putting it away.
- 9) Do not exchange or share instruments with ANYONE.
- 10) Do not attempt repairs on your own. Report problems to the instructor immediately.
- 11) Do not eat/drink/chew gum while playing. Wash your hands/rinse your mouth before playing.
- 12) Do not leave your instrument unattended, such as the bus stop, basketball courts, in the car, etc. Theft, vandalism, or heat damage may occur.
- 13) Students unable to follow these guidelines will be given restricted use of instruments.

Classroom Housekeeping Procedures

- 1) Eating lunch in the room is allowed if the area is cleaned up.
- 2) Do not mark or destroy furniture, equipment, lockers, stands, etc.
- 3) Before leaving, all chairs, stands, and equipment must be placed neatly in order, and all rubbish must be picked up and disposed of properly.
- 4) Running and horseplay will not be tolerated.
- 5) Take pride in the room. Please keep it clean and neat at all times.
- 6) Non-music students are not allowed in the band room or music room.
- 7) When using the restroom, wash your hands, lock the door after use, and report any problems to the instructor immediately. Please keep it clean at all times.
- 8) Percussion instruments and pianos are off-limits unless given instructor permission.

General Information Regarding Outside of Class Rehearsals

Practice is a necessary component in any subject area. While some practicing is done on your own, some must be done with a group of students which does not meet together during class time. Sometimes this is to isolate a certain concept with a specific instrument group. Upon request in advance, students may demonstrate mastery of the concept(s) in an alternate way. These rehearsals help you to meet all four Criteria and cannot be replaced with individual practice. In general, students in Beginning Band and Beginning Orchestra (Periods 1-4) will have two or three rehearsals in December and two or three rehearsals in May. This is because

these students are in separate periods, and they need to meet together to prepare their combined performance. Concert Strings (Period 5) will rarely have after school rehearsals. Concert Band (Period 6) will have rehearsals approximately once per week.

General Information Regarding Concert Attendance

Performing music is an integral part of learning music, just as writing is an integral part of English and labs are an integral part of science. Performing in concerts gives you opportunities to meet all four Criteria. Students will have two formal concerts per year, and possibly perform for other events as appropriate. Students in the Concert Strings (Period 5) and Concert Band (Period 6) will have a more rigorous performance schedule. Adequate advance notice will always be provided. Students can choose to attend rehearsals and perform in the concert or choose one of following options to demonstrate mastery of IB Criteria:

- 1) Submit a recording of them performing all pieces which were performed at the concert. Full credit is not automatic--the recording will be graded as a performance exam. The student must provide his or her own audio and recording equipment.
- 2) Perform selections in class for peers/instructor instead of recorded.

Concert Procedures

- 1) Report to the designated area five minutes before the scheduled meeting time.
- 2) Remember that you represent the music department and the community at all times.
- 3) When you are not performing, please give the group on stage your UNDIVIDED attention.
- 4) If there are several groups performing, each student is encouraged to stay for the entire program and help with clean up at the end.
- 5) It is already very difficult to concentrate and perform at your best. Please do not make it harder on yourself by acting childish and immaturely.
- 6) Arrive at each concert fully dressed in your uniform, with the shirt completely buttoned. After the concert, do not change clothes or unbutton your shirt until you are at home.
- 7) Do your best at each performance: Concentrate; don't dwell on mistakes, but learn from them; SIT UP or STAND UP STRAIGHT at all times; WATCH the conductor.
- 8) All performer names will be printed in concert programs, unless requested in writing.

Concert Uniforms

Each student shall be assigned a red and white aloha shirt to be used as part of the concert uniform. This shirt is to be kept neat at all times, and is NOT to be worn at any time other than a performance. It must be returned to the instructor upon request. Please wash the shirt in cold water and hang dry to prevent fading and shrinking. Charges will be assessed for loss or damage. Students without the proper uniform may be denied the right to perform in the concert, unless arrangements have been made in advance. Required uniform for all performances is as follows:

- * Red and white aloha shirt (DO NOT TUCK IN)
- * Black dress pants (NO JEANS, SWEATPANTS, LEGGINGS, OR CAPRI PANTS)
- * Long black socks or hose
- * Covered black dress shoes (NO SNEAKERS OR ATHLETIC SHOES)

Concert Etiquette (for audience members, including students)

- 1) Please remain quiet and remain seated during the performance.
- 2) If you must leave the room to use the restroom or drink water, please do so during applause or between groups.
- 3) Please escort young children outside if they are crying or become restless.
- 4) Please turn off or silence all cellular phones and alarms.
- 5) Each student is required to have at least one parent or guardian present in the audience in case of emergency, behavioral problem, and for moral support.
- 6) Please use only applause to show appreciation for a good performance. Refrain from calling out names, yelling, screaming, and booing.
- 7) Please hold your applause until the conductor lowers the baton at the end of the piece. Many pieces are written with slight pauses or transitions, and applause can break the student's concentration.
- 8) Students and/or audience members who are excessively disruptive may be asked to leave.

Collaboration of Concert Performances

When possible, Niu Valley students will collaborate with Kaiser High School to create performances. Since MYP is a five-year curriculum (Grades 6-10), this is a vital part of our course, our examination of student work, as well as a valuable experience for students in all stages of their development. Students will perform side-by-side in a combined ensemble (Kaiser and Niu Valley together) as well as with their individual schools.

A Final Note

Parents and students in previous years worked very hard to lay a strong foundation of excellence. This coupled with the fact that music programs have been greatly compromised and altered due to the pandemic will hopefully lead to a greater appreciation of Band and Orchestra. This class will not look like other classes in terms of assignments, structure, projects, and assessments. We are focusing on skills which will help you become a complete human being and bridge together the learning which occurs in your other classes.

Course Supplies

- 1) Blue or black pen
- 2) Highlighter
- 3) Pencil
- 4) Folder paper
- 5) Non-treated cloth or old t-shirt to wipe instrument (one for home and one for school).
- 6) Small bag or pouch to carry instrument supplies (Items may not be left in school).
- 7) Black dress pants, long black socks, and black dress shoes. These will be used as the bottom half of the concert uniform. The shirt will be loaned to each student.

Please note that for this school year, all music supplies (e.g. reeds, valve oil, replacement strings, drumsticks, music binder, book, etc.) are provided free of charge for each student. Each

student will be issued two instruments; one for home and one for school. Please show gratitude by caring for your equipment so that we can continue this practice for as long as possible. Any student needing financial assistance should contact the instructor immediately. No student will be denied participation in a course activity due to inability to pay for supplies.

Instructor Information

Mr. Wayne Fanning

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Mr. Fanning is a graduate of Hilo High School. He received a Bachelor of Education in Secondary Instrumental Music and a Master of Arts in Music Education from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. In 2006 he was nominated and inducted as a member of the American School Band Directors Association. Mr. Fanning has guest conducted numerous honor bands, the Kaiser High School Band and Orchestra, the University of Hawaii Summer Band, the Maui High School Massed Band, and the Central District Beginning Honor Orchestra. Under Mr. Fanning's direction the ensembles at Niu Valley Middle School have performed locally, as well as in Hilo, Maui, Moloka'i, California, Florida, Colorado, Iowa, New York, and Australia. He also serves as conductor of the Hawaii Youth Symphony's Concert Orchestra and the Pacific Music Institute. As a musician, he has performed with the Hawaii County Band, Royal Hawaiian Band, Honolulu Symphony, Kamuela Philharmonic, Maui Symphony, and the Kona Chamber Orchestra. Mr. Fanning has been teaching at Niu Valley Middle School since 1998.