

Kell High School Orchestra
Parent/Student Handbook



2025-2026
Jessica Fuchs, Orchestra Director

Kell High School
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Grading Policies

Please see CTLS for all upcoming assignments and deadlines. Playing checks will be submitted in Teams this year---please be sure you have joined your orchestra's Class Team. Synergy is the gradebook program, and you are encouraged to keep up with your grade progress via StudentVue and ParentVue.

The orchestra website has the most up-to-date information as well: www.kellorchestra.org. The orchestra calendar is always up to date on the Kell Orchestra website, and it is linked in CTLS. Students and parents are encouraged to constantly check the calendar for updates. When in doubt about times and dates, the orchestra calendar always supersedes any other calendar.

General Expectations:

- Students come to class on time and prepared with all materials.
- Participate in rehearsal with appropriate effort, attitude, and conduct.
- Practice instrument regularly to make personal improvement each week.
- Complete all assigned playing exams and written work.
- Attend scheduled performances prepared and dressed in the appropriate uniform.
- Keep a positive attitude, be willing to learn, and have fun!

Grading Breakdown & Weights:

20% Formative

Musicianship and Rehearsal Skills

- Musicianship and rehearsal skills will be formatively during each rehearsal. This includes during scales, exercises, and repertoire rehearsal. (Rubric for Musicianship and Rehearsal Skills assessment on page 3).

70% Summative

- Instrument Proficiency, Performance Evaluations, Orchestral Performances
- Theory/History Work and Written Work/Reflections

10% Final Exam

- May be in the form of a Written exam, reflection, audition or performance assessment

Orchestra is a participatory course, therefore, students must be present at all activities, rehearsals, and performances.

Gradebook:

Student gradebooks will reflect placeholder grades for unsubmitted assignments. The placeholder grade is intended to communicate with families and will be replaced once the assignment is submitted or the Assessment Accountability process completed. Placeholder Grades will follow the rules noted below:

- Missing work due to an absence: a placeholder of a .1 will be used to indicate the missing assignment.
- Missing work due to Assessment Accountability: a placeholder of a .3 will be used to indicate the student refused to complete the assignment and will be referred to Assessment Accountability.

Deadlines:

Deadlines are deadlines. This is an important life skill to learn. We give students plenty of time to accomplish tasks and then the deadline is firm. **Technology issues or instrument issues (internet outages, program issues, broken string) must be addressed ahead of the deadline or a have a screenshot of the submission or instrument issue to address the problem. Do not e-mail assignments/documents. All assignments need to be turned into their proper space (Teams/CTLS). See original assignment for that information.**

Concert and Rehearsal Participation:

Participation in public performance is the culmination of the work we do every day in class. Being a member of an orchestra is the same as being a member of a team—if one person is gone, everyone is affected. There are 4 mandatory performances throughout the year, with the addition of Fiddle Fest, as well as a handful of after school/weekend rehearsals that will be scheduled based on need. **All concerts are GRADED EVENTS and are considered co-curricular. Students are required to participate in the entire concert.** A very important part of developing as a musician is listening to and critiquing live performances. Additionally, we are a Kell Orchestra team, and we support each other out of respect for our program and respect for the hard work involved in preparing and performing for our school and community.

Attendance Policy for Rehearsals and Performances

All after-school rehearsals and performances are announced in advance and are **mandatory**. Students are expected to arrive on time and fully prepared. **Unexcused absences or tardiness will significantly impact the student's grade.**

Excused absences must be submitted in writing to the director at least **two weeks in advance**. Emergency absences require a written note **immediately upon return**. Acceptable excused absences include:

- Personal illness
- Death or serious illness in the immediate family
- Religious holidays (approved in advance)

- Medical or dental emergencies (routine appointments are not excused)
- Special cases approved in advance by the director
- Family emergencies (with principal approval)
- School-related field trips or activities (approved in advance)

Any other reason will be marked as **unexcused**. Documentation is required for all absences. A grade of **.1** will be recorded for excused absences until a **make-up assignment** is completed. It is the **student's responsibility** to request and complete the make-up assignment within a **2 weeks** of the missed rehearsal or performance.

Examples of unexcused absences include:

- Job or work conflicts
- Personal business or entertainment
- Forgetting the event
- Not having proper concert attire
- Lack of transportation
- Any unapproved or undocumented reason

Home Practice:

Practice is an integral part of orchestra class and learning to play any instrument. Every student enrolled in the Kell Orchestra program is expected to regularly practice all lessons, skills, techniques, concepts, and concert music taught in class. Students should plan on devoting time for home practice. The required amount of practice time is determined by your level of mastery of the musical material. Every student is different, therefore there is no set "number of minutes" requirement. The musical success any performing ensemble achieves is directly related to the quality practice time the individual member brings to that ensemble.

Musicianship and Rehearsal Skills Assessment

Musicianship and rehearsal skills will be formatively assessed during each rehearsal. The following rubric will be used to assess these skills:

- | | |
|----|---|
| 4 | Follows directions quickly and cheerfully
Always brings all required materials
Is always prepared with trimmed fingernails
Helps others (politely)
Always uses excellent posture/positioning
Plays with a clear, strong characteristic tone
Makes excellent contributions to the musical quality of the orchestra. |
| 3 | Follows directions
Almost always has class materials
Usually prepared with trimmed fingernails
Eyes on the music and always plays with the group
Uses good posture with some reminders
Listens when the director talks
Makes a good contribution to musical quality of the orchestra |
| 2 | Sometimes slow to follow directions
Usually has class materials
Nails sometimes too long
Sometimes not ready to play when directed to do so
Usually uses poor posture unless reminded
Sometimes talks during instructions or distracts others
Contributes minimally to musical quality of the orchestra |
| .1 | Slow to follow directions
Forgets materials
Nails frequently too long, chews gum, or sleeps
Slow to be ready to play when directed to do so
Uses poor posture, even when reminded
Frequently reminded to stay on task or not distract others
Does not contribute to musical quality of the orchestra, or contributes negatively |
| 0 | No effort or does not participate |

Classroom Conduct and Procedures

All members of Kell Orchestra are expected to fully participate in orchestra rehearsal each and every day. This includes bringing your music, instrument, and a pencil to every class. Good rehearsal conduct shall be always observed. The most important rule of conduct is to show **respect** for your peers, teachers, and volunteers. Consideration, courtesy and a positive attitude are contagious. Conduct which affects the learning of others will not be tolerated. Rehearsal time is limited and valuable. Inappropriate talking disrupts a rehearsal, wastes time, and hurts the entire ensemble

“The Kell Orchestra Way”

Respect yourself, others, and the Kell Orchestra

Be Kind

Be a Leader both Inside and Outside of the Orchestra Classroom

Keep an Open Mind and a Positive Attitude

Orchestra Rules & Expectations:

In Orchestra, students are expected to learn and demonstrate a strong work ethic, professional and respectful conduct, and good communication skills. In class, students are expected to:

1. Have a **respectful, responsible, and positive** demeanor toward yourself, each other, members of other music programs and your teachers, parents, and community members. Enforce **your** self-control and **your** self-discipline.
2. Be on time to class and in your assigned seat, warming up, and prepared to play within three minutes after the bell rings
3. Bring the materials you need- your instrument, music and a pencil- and leave the ones you don't: phone, work for another class, food/drink, and other distractions.
4. Stay seated and engaged during the duration of rehearsal.
5. Treat the Orchestra room and equipment with respect.
6. Follow instructions the first time they are given.

Director Expectations:

You can expect your director to:

1. Treat you with respect and fairness
2. Be prepared for rehearsal
3. Listen to you
4. Learn from you
5. Do my best

Phone and Electronic Device Policy:

To keep students engaged and reduce distraction in class, students are required to place their phone in the designated “Phone Lock Box” as they enter class **or** place it in their backpack. Phones will stay there until the teacher gives students permission to retrieve them. Headphones hinder learning in the aural classroom environment and should remain put away in the students’ backpack for the entirety of the class. This policy extends to the practice rooms. Students may take advantage of the “charging station,” but phones must remain plugged in for the entirety of the class period until the teacher gives permission to retrieve them. Students who refuse to give up their phone or have a phone seen during class will incur the following consequences:

- 1st offense: Teacher Warning.
- 2nd Offense: Teacher phone call home.
- 3rd Offense: Teacher detention (assigned detention to be served within one week. 30 minute detention will be served in the morning from 7:30-8:00am).
- 4th Offense: Administrative Referral.

Food and Gum Policy:

Food is not allowed in the Orchestra circle. Students should not eat during rehearsal. Hands should always be clean of food residue when touching an instrument. Students are expected to pick up all food trash. **NO GUM IS ALLOWED.** Gum may not be chewed during the duration of Orchestra class. This is to protect the school instruments and equipment. Please respect the Orchestra room and equipment!

Bathroom Policy:

Students should use the restroom during class changes to avoid disruption. In-class restroom use is allowed for emergencies at the director’s discretion. Frequent requests may be denied. Per Kell policy, students may not leave during the first or last 10 minutes of class. Repeated violations may result in loss of restroom privileges.

Nail Policy:

Short fingernail length is an important aspect of playing a string instrument. Nails that are too long prohibit proper intonation. Posture/position grades on assessments will be impacted by nails that are too long in addition to the intonation grade.

Tuner Responsibility:

Tuners are provided and assigned to stands for violins and violas and on instruments for cellos and basses. Please use the utmost care with the tuners. They should be put back in the assigned location at the end of each class. It is a \$15 replacement fee if you drop/break the tuner.

Instruments:

Students are encouraged to provide their own instrument. Students that do not own their own instrument will be issued a school instrument to use for the school year. The instrument will include a case, bow, shoulder rest or rock stop, and four strings. Students must provide their own rosin. **Loss or damage of any parts of the issued instrument incurred due to student carelessness will be the financial responsibility of the individual student and their parents.** Failure to return the instrument or reimburse Kell Orchestra will lead to failure to walk at Kell Graduation.

Violin & Viola Lockers:

Instruments should be stored in a locker and not randomly in the classroom. Each violinist and violist will be assigned an individual instrument locker. A lock will be issued to each student for the school year and should be used to lock your locker each time you leave the classroom. If the lock is misplaced or lost, a fee of \$10 will be charged for a replacement lock. Only a violin or viola is allowed in your locker. Your locker is subject to examination. All instruments will be kept in a locked locker in the orchestra room while not being played. **It is the student's responsibility to make sure the locker is properly locked at all times. The school is not responsible for items stolen from the lockers.**

Sheet Music:

Students are expected to have their folder, music, and pencil at every rehearsal. It is highly encouraged that the students take their music home to study, however they must be returned for class use.

1. Music will be passed out at one time by the Music Librarians. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to pick up music outside of rehearsal time from the Music Librarian.
2. Always have your individual copy of music with your name labeled at the top. All music needs to be at every rehearsal with its owner at all times. Do not leave your music at home and expect your stand partner to bring it. Assume they will be absent.
3. Always write bowings, fingerings and so on in pencil, not in pen or with highlighters unless given explicit permission.
4. Always write bowings, fingerings and so on in your music the second you get the information. **DO NOT ASSUME** you will remember!
5. Each member will be assigned a Kell Orchestra music folder and assigned their own copies of sheet music. Students will be assigned a slot number in the music filing cabinet where they will store their folder. Folders
6. If you have misplaced your music, see the Music Librarian.

Injuries:

If an injury prevents you from playing, Mrs. Fuchs will need a doctor's note explaining your limitations. You are expected to be in your seat with your music silently participating through your listening. If the injury limitation time is over a week, you will receive an alternate assignment at the teacher's discretion.

Orchestra Practice Rooms and Equipment:

Rehearsal areas should be kept clean. If you see trash, pick it up. If something needs attention, please alert the instructor. **Chairs and stands should be used properly and should be put back in order at the conclusion of class.** Students are not to play or move any instruments or equipment without the orchestra director's approval. Please keep the orchestra room and side rooms neat and orderly by straightening stands and chairs before you leave.

Practice rooms are for MUISC PRACTICE ONLY and available for use before and after school at Mrs. Fuchs' discretion. When a practice room is in use, the light must be on, and the window is free of obstruction. All equipment and lights must be turned off when you leave the room. Chairs, music stands, etc. moved to practice rooms must be returned to their original location in the orchestra room. Inappropriate use of the practice rooms will result in disciplinary action at the director's discretion and banning further use of practice rooms for the year. **NO FOOD, DRINKS, OR GUM ALLOWED IN THE PRACTICE ROOMS.**

Class Attendance & Tardies:

Attendance is taken 3 minutes after the bell. Tardy is defined as one of the following two items 1) not being in the orchestra room when the late bell rings 2) not being in your assigned seat within 3 minutes of the late bell, ready to observe good tuning procedures. Class tardies are handled according to the following steps as outlined in the Kell Student Handbook. Excessive class tardies will affect future auditions.

Class Placements:

Joining the Kell Orchestra Program is by recommendation of the middle school/high school orchestra teacher and by audition. To be enrolled in on-level orchestra (Concert Orchestra & Sinfonia Orchestra), students will be placed at the discretion of the director based on rehearsal skill and competencies. The advanced orchestra (Chamber Orchestra) is by audition only. Rehearsal standards corresponding to your placement are expected; failure to maintain a high standard may result in a lowered orchestra level. Auditions for Chamber Orchestra are typically held in December and April. Audition requirements are posted on the orchestra website. The judge will use a standardized form to score each performance. These scores will be tallied and to determine orchestra placement for the following year. **Orchestra is a year-long class, and mid-year changes will not be accommodated.**

Fall Semester:
1st Period: Concert Orchestra (Intermediate)
2nd Period: Sinfonia Orchestra (Advanced)
3rd Period: Chamber Orchestra (Mastery)

Spring Semester:
2nd Period: Concert Orchestra (Intermediate)
3rd Period: Sinfonia Orchestra (Advanced)
4th Period: Chamber Orchestra (Mastery)

Orchestra Uniforms:

Every orchestra member must have an orchestra uniform available through the school. Two uniform options available to students:

1. Floor length black dress with flutter sleeve, black dress shoes
2. Black tux pants, black button-down shirt, black suit jacket, black dress shoes, black socks

All students are required to provide their own black shoes to wear for performances. The fee to borrow the uniform is included in the dues for KOBA (\$200). All uniforms will be fitted at the beginning of the year and are due back to school after the final concert in May. The uniforms should be returned dry cleaned and ready for the next person to use. Failure to return the uniform or any part of the uniform will lead to a replacement fine. Failure to pay the fine will lead to failure to walk at Kell Graduation.

Communication & Additional Information

Kell Orchestra Booster Association (KOBA)

The Kell Orchestra Booster Association (KOBA) is an integral part of the Kell Orchestra program. It is run by parents of students and handles many of the extra-curricular events associated with orchestra. This includes field trips and fundraisers. KOBA also provides uniforms, clinicians, equipment, repairs, and any additional funding necessary to keep the orchestra program going. Cobb County provides a budget for the Kell orchestra program but that does not cover all of our costs. KOBA uses orchestra-wide fundraisers to raise money for the program but also relies heavily on dues paid by orchestra families. Visit the KOBA page on the website, kellorchestra.org, for more information.

Orchestra Dues:

Orchestra dues are an annual fee of **\$200.00** per student and are collected at the beginning of the school year. For families with multiple students in the program, we ask for **\$100.00** for each additional child. A payment plan option is available. Orchestra dues include:

✓ Supplemental instruction through workshops, clinics, and fall/winter camps ✓ Equipment such as tuners, shoulder rests, batteries, rock stops, rosin, etc. ✓ Yearly purchase of new music ✓ Guest instructors, performers, or clinicians ✓ Bus transportation on some orchestra field trips ✓ Entry fees for performance evaluation or other performances ✓ Fees for performance sites and maintenance ✓ Student recognition awards – certificates, medals, and orchestra letters ✓ Food on competition days, for workshops, and hospitality events ✓ Assist with purchases of new instruments and equipment ✓ The Kell Orchestra T-Shirt!

Fundraising:

Fundraising is an essential part of a non-profit organization. All fundraisers are done to lower the cost of activities for the students, as well as go directly to student dues. Throughout the year, students and parents will be asked to participate in these activities. Specific fundraisers will help to offset the costs of various trips and activities. Any additional fundraising funds will go to benefit the entire orchestra program. Student participation is expected in order to earn an orchestra letter.

Student Money Collection:

All payments **TO THE BOOSTER CLUB** will be made online through the CutTime platform OR in person at one of our Orchestra events throughout the year. Payments should be made payable by check (no cash, if possible) to KOBA (*Kell Orchestra Booster Association*) or Debit/Credit Card. Please include the student's name and reason for payment on the check. Paying by check or card allows better security and accuracy in the massive task of counting and handling money for such a large organization. If a check bounces, the person writing the check will be responsible for the additional bank fees.

Concert Calendar:

The event calendar is given to every student at the beginning of the school year and will also be displayed in the orchestra room and available on our website. It is subject to revision at any time; however, every effort is made to announce additions and changes as early as possible. Students will be informed in class and a message will be sent out through CutTime. Please take the time to place the relevant dates on your personal and family calendars. All events that are in **bold** are mandatory for every orchestra member. Concert invitations that arise with less than two weeks notification will be subject to an orchestra vote prior to accepting the invitation.

Traveling & Social Events:

Throughout the year, the Kell High School Orchestra will have the opportunity to travel to various events. When leaving the school grounds, all school rules remain in effect. This includes travel to and from the event on the bus/plane and at the actual event. It is important that each orchestra member is aware of the Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco guidelines for all extra and co-curricular activities. Specific travel rules will be published at a later date, as the need arises. Rules are created to ensure the safety and well-being of each person who is involved with the trip. **There will be no tolerance for any violation of rules while on an orchestra trip. Failure to comply with school rules will lead to the student being immediately removed from the trip.**

Social events will be scheduled throughout the year to encourage orchestra camaraderie. The same school/county rules and regulations are enforced at these events. The student and booster club officers, with the approval of the orchestra director, will determine these functions.

Communication:

A monthly newsletter will be sent to all orchestra parents via CutTime. E-mail is the easiest way to reach the Orchestra Director for both students and parents. Please contact Mrs. Fuchs at Jessica.Fuchs@cobbk12.org or at kellorchestra@gmail.com. Conferences are scheduled as necessary.

Student Involvement

Private Lessons:

Although not required, private lessons give students the opportunity to get more individualized attention on their instrument. With individualized instruction, a student can build the technical skills necessary to become a very proficient performer both as a soloist and orchestral player. It's amazing to see what students can accomplish with private lessons! Every student in the KHS Orchestra program is encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to study privately. A list of private teachers can be found on our Orchestra website.

Additional Performance Opportunities:

- **Solo and Ensemble Festival:** Every year, orchestra members have the option to participate in a Solo and Ensemble Adjudicated Event. These events provide individual assessment and motivation for many students to perform as a soloist or in a small ensemble. They will perform for a judge, be evaluated on their performance, and receive written comments. Students who are interested in being involved in this activity are strongly encouraged to have the additional help of a private teacher. More information will be made available closer to the event.
- **District Honors Orchestra:** Each year, students may audition to participate in the Honors Orchestra. This event brings together our most advanced students from all CCSD high schools to rehearse and perform challenging music. Additional rehearsals and performances are required. A special guest clinician works with the honors orchestra each year. More information will be made available closer to the event.
- **GMEA All-State Orchestra:** The All-State Orchestra is formed each year to bring the top musicians from the state together to perform a concert. There are four high school orchestras: 9/10 string and full orchestra and the 11/12 string and full orchestra. Auditions are held in two rounds, usually October and January, and the event takes place in March.
- **Youth Orchestras:** The Atlanta metro area is fortunate to have a plethora of additional performing opportunities available for string students. Please see the orchestra website for a list of area youth orchestras.

Section Leaders:

Section Leaders are chosen by the director through an audition and interview process. Each Orchestra class will have five Section Leaders (Concertmaster, Principal Second Violin, Principal Viola, Principal Cello, Principal Bass). While technical ability and musicianship are major considerations, the director will also assess a students' playing experience and leadership abilities when choosing the positions. Responsibilities of a Section Leader includes:

- Model excellent conduct and responsible behavior to the members of their section
- Concertmaster will be responsible for assisting with the tuning process for the class
- Work with director to find the best bowings and fingerings for performance music
- Share bowings and fingerings with the section, ensuring section member parts are marked correctly
- Monitor section to be sure marked bowings and fingerings are followed
- Assist with rehearsal preparations in their section (chairs, stands, materials, etc.) at the beginning of each class period
- Assist in organizing and running sectionals, following instructions given by director
- Help section members succeed by offering assistance and guidance

The director has the right to remove a student from his or her position if the student continues to disregard the above mentioned duties and expectations.

Student Leadership Team:

All orchestra students are invited and encouraged to join the Student Leadership Team! The team will play an important role in being a liaison between the members of the orchestra, Mrs. Fuchs, and KOB. The team will assist Mrs. Fuchs with various tasks throughout the year and coordinate social events for the students.

Not every student will be assigned a specific role, but some of the necessary roles include:

- **President and Vice President:** The President and Vice President of the Kell Orchestra Leadership team presides over all business meetings of the orchestra, leads the orchestra in fundraising events, oversees duties and responsibilities of all other orchestra officers, and represents orchestra membership at officer meetings. The managers must be a senior or junior.
- **Secretary:** The Secretary is responsible for taking minutes at formal Leadership meetings, updating the Orchestra Leadership website, updating the Leadership bulletin board, and keeping the calendar up to date. In addition, the Secretary works with the Student Services team to find and facilitate social events and community service projects for the Kell Orchestra.
- **Historian:** The Historian is responsible for taking digital pictures of rehearsals, trips and other events pertaining to the orchestra. They will print some pictures for posters and give pictures to the webmaster for posting on the KHS Orchestra

website and social media accounts. They will also be responsible for producing and finding help to produce a slide show or video for the Awards Ceremony at the end of the year.

- **Librarians (two per class):** The Librarians are responsible for the issue, collection and filing of all music, accomplishing library work, and keeping the library facilities neat and orderly.
- **Operations (Concert set-up crew, Room clean-up crew):** The operations officers are responsible for the daily set-up of the orchestra room and movement of equipment to and from rehearsals and performances outside the rehearsal room. The operations officers also recruit extra help as needed from within each orchestra.
- **Student Services Team:** The Student Services team works directly with the Secretary and is responsible for setting up social events and community service projects both on and off campus as well as projects that do not include performance with a musical instrument. They are responsible for establishing students into individual, small group performance ensembles for campus service and community service events. Finally, they are responsible for finding student volunteers to participate in on and off campus volunteer projects that do not require a performance ensemble.

Orchestra Letters

Participation in any quality organization requires commitment, hard work, sacrifice, and responsibility. Students who exemplify such qualities form the backbone of the Kell Orchestra program and deserve to be recognized. Each student will have the opportunity to earn a varsity letter by using a merit system. Students who qualify for a letter in subsequent years will receive a bar to attach to the letter. Letters will be awarded at the awards ceremony in May.

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A student must earn a total of points in order to receive a letter. Remember that regardless of how many points a student acquires, they must not have any absences from a concert throughout the school year.

Chamber Orchestra 400

Sinfonia Orchestra 350

Concert Orchestra 300

Point System

- Concerts (30 points each)
- Sectional Leader (10 points)
- LGPE (40 points)
- Invited Performances such as GMEA (40 points)
- Orchestra Trip (overnight) (40 points)
- Orchestra One-day Trips (15 points)
- All-State Orchestra
 - 1st Audition (10 points)
 - 2nd Audition (20 points)
 - Participation (50 points)
- District XII Honor Orchestra
 - Audition (20 points)
 - Participation (50 points)
- Governor's Honor Program
 - Each audition 10 points
 - Participation 50 points
- Solo in Concert (10 points)

- Musical Pit Member (50 points)
- Summer Music Camps (proof of participation) (20 points)
- Fundraising (per fundraiser) (15 points)
- Member of Student Leadership Team (50 points)
- Other Music Concerts (program or ticket required) (2 points each)
- Member of another music organization (10 points)
- Private Music Lessons (all year) (30 points)
- Kell Orchestra Social Events (per event) (5 points)
- Kell Orchestra Volunteer Hours (10 points per hour)

Point Deductions

- Concert Absence- ineligible for letter jacket
- Concert Tardy (5 points minimum)
- Inappropriate Rehearsal Behavior (5 points minimum)
 - (talking, unprepared, chewing gum, disrespect, etc.)

Fine Arts Diploma Seal

The Kell Fine Arts Department was selected by the Georgia State Board of Education to be awarded the Fine Arts Diploma Seal Pathway. Music students who select this distinctive pathway AND meet the criteria may apply for this honor in the spring of their senior year. Students will be awarded the Fine Arts Diploma Seal at graduation. Students must complete four years (8 semesters) of Orchestra to be eligible.