

BONNIE BRANCH MIDDLE SCHOOL ORCHESTRA

Hi, and welcome to the 2011-2012 school year!

We have a lot of exciting events planned for this year and I'm looking forward to getting started. The following pages have necessary information about the orchestra program, concerts, grading, and the Bonnie Branch Music Boosters. Also attached is a calendar of music events for the entire school year.

If you have any questions feel free to email me at elizabeth_haight@hcpss.org or give me a call here at Bonnie Branch.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

There are two orchestras at Bonnie Branch, the **7th and 8th Grade Chamber Orchestra**, and the **6th Grade Concert Orchestra**. Both ensembles meet during CORE+ every other day. For 7th and 8th graders this is during **period 5** and for 6th graders, **period 7**.

In addition, orchestra students will be pulled-out of one of their regularly scheduled classes once every week and a half for a 45-minute sectional. This is a time where students meet in small groups of like instruments. Every effort has been made to have students miss as little of the same class as possible. Each student will miss the same class only once or twice in an entire quarter.

Students are responsible for all work missed while in sectionals.

Seating Auditions

Auditions will be used to place students into sections and chairs. Several re-seating auditions may take place throughout the year. **Seating is not based purely on playing ability.** The goal in auditioning and seating the students is to make the orchestra sound its best. For example, some of the orchestra's more advanced players may be seated in the second violin section.

*Now a few **Orchestra Room Rules***

- Arrive to class on time prepared with instrument, music, and accessories
- Place gum in the trash can ☺
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself
- Demonstrate appropriate audience behavior
- Follow teacher instructions carefully

~AND~

Make sure that your name is on your instrument case at all times.

CONCERTS

Each of the Orchestras will perform in at least two concerts annually. The Chamber Orchestra will also appear at the Howard County Orchestra Assessment as well as the *Music Showcase Festival* competition at Hershey Park.

In the event an after-school rehearsal is needed before a concert or adjudication, it will be announced far in advance in writing.

Concerts are an integral part of a music education. At these events students are able to showcase what they have learned in class, demonstrate how they have developed as a team, and also take part in a final culminating experience of everything they have accomplished. Performing in a concert is often a very powerful and musical experience for students. EVERY member influences the sound and dynamic of the group. If an individual is not in attendance the entire ensemble suffers. For this reason **attendance at all concerts and events of the ensemble is mandatory**. Concerts are worth 20% of the student's grade for the quarter (see *Grades and Grading*). The Howard County Public School System recognizes only the following as excused absences: 1.) Serious Illness, 2.) Death in the Family, and 3.) Required Court Appearance. If there are any conflicts please let me know as soon as they arise.

Students should expect to arrive as early as one hour prior to the beginning of a concert.

Part of being a good musician includes viewing and supporting other performers. We try our best to make performances a reasonable length. We ask that you **please plan to stay for the entire concert!**

Concert Dress

In an effort to create a unified image, students will be required to wear an orchestra uniform at all concert performances.

- * White dress shirt.
- * Black pants (no jeans) or a long (to the knee or below) black skirt.
- * Black socks or stockings.
- * Black dress shoes (no sneakers).

GRADES & GRADING

Orchestra grades are determined by:

Classwork – 45%

*** Rehearsal Participation, and Effort - 30%**

Students are expected to follow all rehearsal procedures and expectations and to come with a positive attitude. Points will be awarded at every rehearsal for following rules and directions, arriving on time, being prepared, playing to the best of your ability and exhibiting appropriate rehearsal behavior.

*** Sectional Participation and Effort – 15%**

Sectionals are a time where students can receive more individualized attention. Sectional attendance is essential. Points will be awarded at every sectional for following rules and directions, arriving on time, being prepared, playing to the best of your ability and exhibiting appropriate behavior. If a student is not able to attend a sectional for any reason, they must notify me **in advance** so that I can determine whether the student would be excused for that sectional.

Summative Assessment – 40%

*** Concerts and Adjudications – 20%**

Students will be graded on their effort and participation in the concerts.

*** Performance Assessments - 20%**

Students are expected to make continuous improvement throughout the quarter. In addition, students will be graded on a performance of assigned material at least once per quarter. Grades for the playing tests are determined by the following categories:

- * Technique (including instrument and hand position)
- * Melodic and Rhythmic Accuracy
- * Intonation (playing in tune)
- * Musicality (including dynamics and expression)
- * Preparation of the material in relation to the student's abilities

*** Written Assignments – 5%**

Students may have some short writing assignments throughout the year and will be notified of these in their regular orchestra class.

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Homework - 10%

Orchestra has homework too! Practice. In an effort to teach students how to practice, there will be one "Practice Chart" per quarter and one "Practice Assignment" per quarter. Each assignment will focus on a different practice technique.

Students should strive to practice at least 25 minutes 5 days a week.

No late homework assignments will be accepted for credit.

The following music is strongly **recommended** (but **not** required) to supplement at-home practice for those who do not take private lessons:

- Essential Elements Book 2 (6th grade)
- Essential Elements Book 3 (7th and 8th grade)
- Suzuki Book 1 or 2 (all students)
- Something fun to play!

Because of our limited time to prepare for performances we will focus mostly on ensemble music, but we may play selections from these books for warm-ups or to teach key concepts. **Students will never be required to bring these books to class**, but may wish to work through them at home on their own. I will be more than willing to help students with any questions or difficulties they have.

WEBSITE

The Bonnie Branch music department has a website!

www.bonniebranchmusic.org

Check in often for music department and orchestra updates. I will also post extra copies of the orchestra handbook, practice assignments, concert dates and more!

I am very excited to work with your students this year!

Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Please fill out the attached information form and mark the Orchestra dates in your calendar. Thank you,

~MRS. HAIGHT

ORCHESTRA DATES 2011-2012

September 12-18	Howard County GT and Enrichment Orchestra Auditions
November 12	Junior All-State Orchestra Auditions
TBA	BBMS Orchestra Trip to Howard High School (Chamber Orchestra Only) in the morning
December 3	Howard County GT Orchestra/Sinfonia Concert
<u>December 21</u>	<u>Bonnie Branch Winter Concert 7pm at Howard High School</u>
February 4	Howard County Solo & Ensemble Festival
February 11	Solo & Ensemble Snow Date
March 7	BBMS Music with the Sharks Recital Night
March 9-11	Junior All-State Orchestra Weekend
<u>March 27-29 (TBA)</u>	<u>Howard County Orchestra Assessment (Chamber Orchestra Only) in the evening</u>
April 28	Howard County GT Orchestra/Sinfonia Concert
<u>May 2</u>	<u>Bonnie Branch Spring Concert 7pm at Howard High School</u>
May 12	State Solo & Ensemble Festival
May 25	Music in the Parks Competition at Hershey Park (Chamber Orchestra Only)
June 1	BBMS Music Award Picnic

County/State Events Recommended to Students
Optional Bonnie Branch Orchestra Activity
Required Bonnie Branch Orchestra Activity

INFORMATION SHEET

Please return this form to Mrs. Haight

Student Name (as you would like it to appear in the program)

Name you would prefer to be called

Instrument

Home Phone

Parent Work or Cell Phone (optional)

Email

Check here if you **do not** wish to receive correspondence from the Bonnie Branch Music Boosters.

I read and understood the policies presented in this handout and have made note of important Orchestra dates.

Student Signature

Parent Signature