

Fairfield Public Schools  
Music Department  
Curriculum  
Orchestra Skill Levels

**ORCHESTRA**  
**SKILL LEVEL I**  
**(Grade 4)**

**A. Executive Skills**

1. Exhibits proper posture and playing position
2. Exhibits proper rehearsal and performance procedures in ensemble playing
3. Understands effective practice habits
4. Demonstrates proper care and safety of instrument
5. Demonstrates proper right hand position
6. Demonstrates proper left hand position
7. Identifies parts of the instrument

**B. Tone Quality**

Students should:

1. Draw a straight bow
2. Demonstrate proper contact point between bridge and fingerboard
3. Demonstrate even bow speed
4. Produce a characteristic sound on the instrument
5. Use appropriate articulation techniques.
6. Play dynamics

**C. Bowing**

Demonstrates the following bow strokes and articulations:

1. Detache (legato)
2. Staccato
3. Two-note slur, three-note slurs and ties
4. Bow lifts
5. Right hand pizzicato
6. Left hand pizzicato
7. Imitate bowing patterns

**D. Rhythms and Note Reading**

Read and play music which includes the following:

1. Rhythms using quarter, half, dotted half, whole, pair of eighth notes and corresponding rests
2. Demonstrate the ability to recognize and perform various rhythm patterns.
3. Read music in the following Time Signatures: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4

4. Identify and Perform symbols and terms: Half note, Clef, Time signature, Bar line, Repeat sign, Up bow, Down bow, Whole note, Staff, Quarter note, Eighth notes, Key signature, Quarter rest, Half rest, Whole rest, Dotted half note, Bow lift, Measure, Tie, Slur, Plucking and Bowing

**E. Scales and Scale Patterns**

1.

Scales	Violin	Viola	Cello	Bass
G MA	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave
D MA	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave
Positions	I	I	I	I, (II & III on G string)

**F. Finger Patterns**

	Violin	Viola	Cello	Bass
Finger Patterns	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 3 4	0 1 4 0 1 2
	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 4	-2 4 -1 4

**G. Performance**

Students should:

1. Perform various solos throughout the year.
2. Perform in a Beginners Concert and the Spring Concert
3. Improvise simple melodies on their instrument
4. Compose simple melodies on their instrument in D

**ORCHESTRA**  
**SKILL LEVEL II**  
**(Grade 5)**

**A. Executive Skills**

8. Exhibits proper posture and playing position
9. Exhibits proper rehearsal and performance procedures in ensemble playing
10. Understands effective practice habits
11. Demonstrates proper care and safety of instrument
12. Demonstrates proper right hand position
13. Demonstrates proper left hand position
14. Identifies parts of the instrument

**B. Tone Quality**

Students should:

1. Draw a straight bow
2. Demonstrate and define good tone quality
3. Demonstrate proper contact point between bridge and fingerboard
4. Demonstrate even bow speed
5. Produce a sound that is characteristic of the instrument
6. Use appropriate articulation techniques
7. Play dynamic ranges of piano and forte
8. Adjust bow speed

**C. Bowing**

Students should demonstrate the following bow strokes and articulations:

1. Detaché and Staccato
2. Two, three, and four note slurs
3. Hooked bowing
4. Double stops with open strings
6. Playing in the upper half, lower half, middle of the bow and adjust bow speed
7. Bow lifts
8. Right hand pizzicato
9. Left hand pizzicato
10. Imitate bowing patterns

**D. Rhythms and Note Reading**

Students should:

1. Demonstrate eighth, quarter, half, dotted-half, whole, notes and corresponding rests, in addition to dotted quarter, dotted eighth, four sixteenths, and corresponding rests.
2. Demonstrate the ability to recognize and perform various rhythmic patterns.

3. Demonstrate the ability to read music for the full range of their instrument in first position (Bass includes second and third position).
4. Read music in the following Time Signatures: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8
5. Identify and perform symbols and terms: Half note, Clef, Time signature, Bar line, Repeat sign, Up bow, Down bow, Whole note, staff, Quarter note, Eighth notes, Key signature, Quarter rest, Half rest, Whole rest, Dotted half note, Bow lift, Measure, Tie, Slur, Plucking, Bowing, Staccato, Hooked bow, Sixteenth notes, Dotted eighth note, Piano, Forte, Crescendo, Double stops

#### E. Scales and Scale Patterns

Scales	Violin	Viola	Cello	Bass
G MA	1 octaves	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave
D MA	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave
Positions	I	I	I	I, ½ (II & III on G string)

#### F. Finger Patterns

	Violin	Viola	Cello	Bass
Finger Patterns	0 1 23 4 0 12 3 4	0 1 23 4 0 12 3 4	0 1 3 4 0 12 4	0 1 4 0 12 -24 -1 4

#### G. Performance

Students should:

1. Perform various solos throughout the year
2. Perform in the Winter and Spring concerts
3. Improvise simple melodies on their instrument
4. Compose simple melodies in D or G major for their instrument

**ORCHESTRA**  
**SKILL LEVEL III**  
**Grade 6**

**A. Tone Quality**

1. Demonstrates ability to draw straight bow with even bow speed
2. Demonstrates proper contact point between bridge and fingerboard
3. Produces full resonant sound on all four strings
4. Demonstrates forte and piano

**B. Bowing**

1. Demonstrates martele
2. Demonstrates double stops using one open string (upper strings)

**C. Rhythms and Time Signatures**

Read and play music which includes the following:

1. Note values and corresponding rests:



2. Rhythmic patterns:



3. Time Signatures:

2/4, 3/4, 4/4

#### D. Scales

	<b>Violin</b>	<b>Viola</b>	<b>Cello</b>	<b>Bass</b>
<b>C Major</b>	1 octave	2 octaves	2 octaves	1 octave
<b>G Major</b>	2 octaves	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave
<b>D Major</b>	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave
<b>D Chromatic</b>	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave

#### E. Finger Patterns

	<b>Violin</b>	<b>Viola</b>	<b>Cello</b>	<b>Bass</b>
<b>Finger Patterns</b>	0 1 23 4 0 12 3 4	0 1 23 4 0 12 3 4	0 1 34 0 12 4 backward and forward extension	0 1 4 0 12

#### F. Positions

1. Play natural harmonics on all strings, finding the mid-point of the string length, sounding an octave above the open string. (Rote)
2. Demonstrate basic shifting motion from 1<sup>st</sup> position to the natural harmonic an octave above the open string. (Rote)
3. Introduce and begin work in the following positions:
  - a) violin/viola III
  - b) cello IV
  - c) bass  $\frac{1}{2}$ , II, III

#### G. Solo Performance

Perform an appropriate solo with proper position, characteristic tone quality, accurate pitch, rhythm, and intonation.

**ORCHESTRA**  
**SKILL LEVEL IV**  
**Grade 7**

**A. Tone Quality**

1. Demonstrates the variations in tone that result from changing bow weight, bow speed and bow placement
2. Performs crescendo and diminuendo
3. Demonstrates preliminary vibrato motion

**B. Bowing**

1. Demonstrates left hand pizzicato
2. Demonstrates portato (detached slurs)
3. Demonstrates spiccato at the balance point

**C. Rhythms and Time Signatures**

1. Rhythmic Patterns:



2. Time Signatures: 2/2, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4

**D. Scales and Scale Patterns**

	<b>Violin</b>	<b>Viola</b>	<b>Cello</b>	<b>Bass</b>
D Major	2 octaves	2 octaves	2 octaves	2 octaves
F Major	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave
a minor	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave
d minor	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave
G Chromatic	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave



### E. Finger Patterns

	Violin	Viola	Cello	Bass
Finger Patterns	0 1 2 3 4 01 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4 01 2 3 4	Forward ext. ( 0 1 2 4 )	Reinforce

### F. Positions

1. Demonstrate basic shifting motion from 1<sup>st</sup> position to the positions outlined below
2. Introduce and begin work in the following positions:
  - a) violin/viola continue working in III
  - b) cello  $\frac{1}{2}$ , II, II $\frac{1}{2}$ , III, III $\frac{1}{2}$  - continue working in IV and on open positions
  - c) bass IV, VI - continue working in  $\frac{1}{2}$ , II, III

### G. Solo Performance

Perform an appropriate solo with proper position, characteristic tone quality, accurate pitch, rhythm, and intonation.

**ORCHESTRA  
SKILL LEVEL V  
Grade 8**

**A. Tone Quality**

1. Continues to refine tone production while varying bow weight, bow speed and bow placement
3. Performs pianissimo, mezzo piano, mezzo forte, fortissimo, sforzando, and other dynamic markings
4. Performs with basic vibrato motion

**B. Bowing**

1. Demonstrates tremolo
2. Demonstrates up-bow retake at the balance point

**C. Rhythm and Time Signatures**

1. Rhythmic Patterns



2. Time Signatures: 4/4, 3/4, 2/4, 2/2, 6/8

**D. Scales**

	<b>Violin</b>	<b>Viola</b>	<b>Cello</b>	<b>Bass</b>
A MA	2 octaves	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave
F MA	1 octaves	2 octaves	2 octaves	2 octaves
B $\flat$ MA	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave	1 octave
d mi	2 octaves	2 octaves	2 octaves	2 octaves
a mi	2 octaves	1 octave	2 octaves	1 octave
Chromatic	G (2 oct.)	C (2 oct.)	C (2 oct.)	E (2 oct.)

**D. Finger Patterns**

	<b>Violin</b>	<b>Viola</b>	<b>Cello</b>	<b>Bass</b>
<b>Finger Patterns</b>	0 1 2 3 4 01 2 3 4 01 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4 01 2 3 4 01 2 3 4	Forward ext. ( 0 1 2 4 )	Reinforce

**E. Positions**

1. Demonstrate basic shifting motion from:
  - a) an open string to positions outlined below
  - b) 1<sup>st</sup> position to positions outlined below
  
2. Introduce and begin work in the following positions:
  - a) violin/viola II - continue working in III
  - b) cello  $\frac{1}{2}$ , II, II $\frac{1}{2}$ , III, III $\frac{1}{2}$  - continue working in IV and on open/extended positions
  - c) bass IV - continue working in  $\frac{1}{2}$ , II, III

**F. Solo Performance**

Perform an appropriate solo with proper position, characteristic tone quality, accurate pitch, rhythm, and intonation.

**ORCHESTRA**  
**SKILL LEVEL VI**  
**Concert Orchestra Ensemble**

**A. Tone Quality**

1. Demonstrates even vibrato on notes two beat or longer
2. Plays with a resonant tone through the control of bow and bow arm.
3. Performs dynamic changes by varying the bow speed and bow distribution along with appropriate contact point and bow weight.
4. Broadens dynamic range to include *ppp* and *fff*.

**B. Bowing**

1. Demonstrates tremolo, trill, grace note(s)
2. Demonstrates the ability to perform double stops using one open string
3. Demonstrates sixteenth note spiccato passages at the balance point.
4. Demonstrates hooked bowing, up bow off-the-string retakes, *detache*, and *staccato* used in simple and compound meter in increasing tempo markings.
5. Demonstrates the applications of appropriate bow strokes characteristic in accordance with the current year's Repertoire Cycle Block.
6. Demonstrates separate and slurred string crossings.
7. Demonstrates hooked bowings and slurs with the following rhythms: syncopation, dotted rhythms, eighth note triplets, and sixteenth / eighth note combinations.

**C. Rhythms**

- **simple meter:** eighth/sixteenth note/rest combinations, dotted quarter/eighth note/rest combinations, syncopation, quarter and eighth note triplets
- **compound meter:** eighth, quarter, dotted quarter, triplet notes/rests

**D. Music Reading**

1. Is able to play and enumerate in 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 2/2, 6/8

**E. Scales and Scale Patterns**

1. Reads and plays scales in a quarter/eighth note pattern and triplet arpeggios with accurate intonation
2. \* Scales and arpeggios are memorized.

Scales	Violin	Viola	Cello	Bass
*C	2	2	2	1 octave
*D	2	2	2	1
*G	2	2	2	2 octave
*F	2	2	2	2
A	2	2	2	1 octave
E	2	2	2	2 octave
Bb MA	2	2 octave	2 octave	1 octave
Eb MA	2	2 octave	2 octave	1 octave
a mi	2	2	2	1 octave
d mi	2	2	2	1
g mi	2	2	2	2
Chromat	G (2)	C (2)	C (2)	E (2)

**F. Finger Patterns**

	Violin	Viola	Cello	Bass
<b>Finger Patterns</b>	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4		
	01 2 3 4	01 2 3 4	Forward ext.	0 1 4
	01 2 3 4	01 2 3 4	0 1 x 2 4	0 1 2
	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4		

**G. Positions**

1. Demonstrates shifting from 1<sup>st</sup> position to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> position for all instruments and 4<sup>th</sup> position for cello/ 5<sup>th</sup> position for violins and viola.

**H. Solo Performance**

Perform an appropriate solo with proper position, characteristic tone quality, accurate pitch, rhythm, and intonation.

**ORCHESTRA**  
**SKILL LEVEL VII**  
**Symphonic Orchestra**

**A. Tone Quality**

1. Demonstrates relaxed vibrato throughout the musical phrase.
2. Refines resonant tone production and tonal qualities throughout range of the instrument including sul tasto and ponticello
3. Performs all dynamics by varying the bow speed and bow distribution, along with appropriate contact point, bow length, placement, and weight.
4. Demonstrates all dynamic ranges including subito piano through subito forte.

**B. Bowing and Rhythm**

1. Accurately performs tremolo, trill, grace note(s) and turns within all musical phrases.
2. Accurately performs fingered double stops and chords within all musical phrases.
3. Accurately performs spiccato passages at various tempos within all musical phrases including rapid string crossings.
4. Accurately performs and applies the appropriate stylistic bow strokes within all musical phrases through the literature in the repertoire cycle.
5. Demonstrates complex patterns of up bow spiccato.
6. Accurately performs separate and slurred string crossings at various tempos with minimal motion.
7. Accurately performs all rhythmic combinations with refined bowing articulation in all meters.

**C. Music Reading**

1. Students will be able to play and enumerate in all simple and compound time signatures as well as mixed meters.
2. Violins are able to read "8va"
3. Violas are able to read treble clef
4. Celli are able to read tenor clef.

#### D. Scales

1. Reads and plays scales in a quarter/eighth note pattern and triplet arpeggios with accurate intonation.
2. \*Scales and arpeggios are memorized.

Scales	Violin	Viola	Cello	Bass
*C	2	3	3	1
*D	2	3	3	1
*G	3	2	2	2
*F	2	2	2	2
*A	3	2	2	1
E	2	2	2	2
Bb	2	2	2	1
Eb MA	2	2	2	1
a mi	2	2	2	1
*c mi	2	3	3	1
d mi	2	2	2	1
*g mi	3	2	2	2
*Chro	G (2)	C (2)	C (2)	E (2)

#### E. Positions

1. Demonstrates accurate shifting between all positions from 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> positions including 7<sup>th</sup> position for violins.

#### G. Solo Performance

Perform an appropriate solo with proper position, characteristic tone quality, accurate pitch, rhythm, and intonation.