D200 4th Grade Beginning Orchestra Program



Ms. Jillian Forbes-Rycroft: Dean, Olson,Westwood, Prairiewood
jforbes-rycroft@wcusd200.org
Ms. Grace Valentine: Mary Endres, Greenwood
gvalentine@wcusd200.org
Mrs. Lyndra Tingley: Prairiewood (after school orchestra)
ltingley@wcusd200.org

Please read and keep this handbook for your records, and concert dates.

If you are interested in having your student join Orchestra this year, please fill out and return the last page of this packet to your elementary school, or sign up at this link online (https://forms.gle/hMGkg9inFbXuiFoZ9) by:

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21ST

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The Orchestra instruments are VIOLIN, VIOLA, CELLO, and BASS.

Learning to play an instrument is a wonderful opportunity for students to develop discipline, commitment, responsibility, and teamwork skills, as well as learning more about music. It can be an enjoyable activity that helps to develop self confidence, and an expressive outlet they can carry on through their lives.

The Orchestra program continues in the 5th grade, and the Middle Schools and High Schools.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ORCHESTRA INSTRUMENTS

Recently, your student attended an assembly about the VIOLIN, VIOLA, CELLO, and BASS. Students heard the differences between the instruments, and how to produce sound by either using the bow or plucking the strings (pizzicato) . Your student will have a "hands on" experience with the different Orchestra instruments in the week following the assembly.

ORCHESTRA REGISTRATION AND COST

There is no fee to participate in Orchestra at the Elementary level. Guardians are responsible for renting or obtaining an instrument, a lesson book, and supplies needed to play the instrument.

A good quality instrument in proper working condition is required. It is essential that the instrument is the correct size for the student (1/2, 12", etc.). An instrument that is too large or small makes learning more difficult. All instruments should include a case, bow, rosin, and fine tuners for all 4 strings. Cello and bass students need rock stops, violin and viola students will need shoulder rests.
Essential Elements for Strings, Book 1 for their instrument is the required book to purchase for lessons this year. All other music will be provided.
A collapsible metal music stand is highly recommended for home practice. This promotes the development of proper playing position.

ORCHESTRA LESSONS

Your student will receive a 30-minute weekly group lesson during the school day at their school. When possible, lessons are scheduled on a rotating basis so students will not miss the same time of day each week. The average group size is 5-8 students, usually of like instruments. Students are responsible for making up any class work missed while attending their lesson. Lesson schedules will be distributed to all Orchestra members before lessons start.

AFTER SCHOOL REHEARSALS

After school rehearsals will begin in October and will take place every week for one day after school until 2:50pm with the exception of Prairiewood rehearsals which run until 3:00pm. You will receive a schedule in late September with these dates. Guardians will be expected to provide transportation for their student after each rehearsal. Attendance is highly recommended.

CONCERT DATES

There are two concerts per school scheduled for this year. Attendance is expected at both performances. Please mark your calendars for YOUR elementary school concert dates.

DEAN- (DES)
Monday, December 14, 6 pm at Creekside with Prairiewood 4th and 5th grade Orchestras
Monday, April 19, 6:30 pm at WNHS. D200 Orchestra Festival Concert, all schools gr. 4-12

GREENWOOD- (GWE)
Wednesday, December 16, 6 pm at Northwood with Mary Endres 4th and 5th grade Orchestras
Monday, April 19, 6:30 pm at WNHS. D200 Orchestra Festival Concert, all schools gr. 4-12

MARY ENDRES- (MEES)
Wednesday, December 16, 6 pm at Northwood with Greenwood 4th and 5th grade Orchestras
Monday, April 19, 6:30 pm at WNHS. D200 Orchestra Festival Concert, all schools gr. 4-12

OLSON-(OES)
Tuesday, December 15, 5:30 pm at Creekside with Westwood 4th and 5th grade Orchestras
Monday, April 19, 6:30 pm at WNHS. D200 Orchestra Festival Concert, all schools gr. 4-12

PRAIRIEWOOD- (PWE)
Monday, December 14, 6 pm at Creekside with Dean Street 4th and 5th grade Orchestras
Monday, April 19, 6:30 pm at WNHS. D200 Orchestra Festival Concert, all schools gr. 4-12

WESTWOOD- (WWE)
Tuesday, December 15, 5:30 pm at Creekside with Olson 4th and 5th grade Orchestras
Monday, April 19, 6:30 pm at WNHS. D200 Orchestra Festival Concert, all schools gr. 4-12

ORCHESTRA EXPECTATIONS

1. **Attend lessons, rehearsals, and concerts.**
2. **Remember to bring instrument, music book, and pencil on lesson day.**
3. **Try to practice a minimum of 10 minutes per day, 5-7 days a week.**
4. **Be on your best behavior at all times, respecting others and all the instruments.**
5. **Be patient, cooperative, and keep trying! Learning an instrument takes time and practice.**
6. **Try to make the commitment to play the entire school year.**
7. **Have fun and enjoy learning to play your string Orchestra instrument!**

HOME PRACTICE

Practice requirements start at 10 minutes a day, 5-7 days a week. There will be weekly assignment sheets with practice charts attached. Most students need assistance establishing good practice habits. Families, please provide a quiet place for practice, and remind and encourage your student to practice. Keep the instrument safely in its case when not in use, away from siblings, friends, and pets. **Please remind your child to bring their instrument and music to school on the day of their lesson, encourage them to play for family, and offer encouragement regularly. Help your student to understand the commitment and encourage them to complete a full school year before making any decisions about the instrument.**

ACQUIRING AN INSTRUMENT

It is best to start a student in Orchestra by renting an instrument from a reputable music company. This way your child is ensured a quality instrument that is correctly sized, and can switch to the next size when needed. Instrument purchases are best made when the student is ready for a full size instrument. (Generally, students will make one move up in instrument size during 4th grade.) ***Beware of cheap and synthetically colored instruments for sale! We strongly advise against purchasing instruments from online retailers such as Amazon as they are often very poor quality.*** When the quality of the instrument is poor, it makes it more difficult for your child to properly learn to play their instrument.

Please consider attending one or both of our rental open house nights listed below:

Cassandra Strings
District 200 Rental Open House Night Options

Thursday, August 20th from 5-7:30pm at Creekside Middle School
Friday, August 21st from 5-7:30pm at Northwood Middle School

Store located in Downtown Algonquin
www.cassandrastrings.com
Click on “Rentals”

When choosing the correct size instrument for your student, please scan the QR code on the right and follow the sizing guide!
Please plan to have a rental instrument ordered by Wednesday, August 26th at the latest! This ensures that your student’s instrument will be dropped off and ready for them by the first week of lessons!

Cassandra Strings

Cassandra strings is highly respected and very reputable, and renting an instrument through this company is recommended by the D200 Orchestra Program. A representative from Cassandra Strings comes out to D200 weekly to service instruments at your child's school. Renting through Cassandra Strings is a convenience to families because purchases, instrument switches, repairs, etc. are taken care of for free through the orchestra teacher at each school. Rental cost per month is between $25-$70, depending on the instrument. Please be prepared to make your first payment when you complete the rental process. You will also be able to purchase Essential Elements for Strings Book 1 at this time, as well as a music stand, if desired.

We will be holding two in-person Rental Open House meetings this year, but you can complete the rental process online at your convenience as well. The Rental Open House will be held on Thursday, August 20th from 5-7:30pm at Creekside Middle School and Friday, August 21st from 5-7:30pm at Northwood Middle School.

If you complete the rental process prior to or by Wednesday, August 26th, your student will receive their instrument and book at their first school lesson!

You may also choose to rent elsewhere. If you choose a different store than those above, you will need to go to the store to rent an instrument. Please remember to rent the correct size and get the required book.

If you already own an instrument, please have your child bring it into school for their first lesson so the orchestra teacher can make sure it is in good playing condition, and it is the correct size.

AFTER THE REGISTRATION NIGHTS

The week following the Registration, students will receive lesson times and schedules. The first lesson that your student will need their instrument for will take place the week of August 31st, **weekly lesson days will be as follows:**

WWE: Lessons and after school practice on Mondays with Ms. Forbes-Rycroft

PWE: Lessons on Tuesdays with Ms. Forbes-Rycroft, after school practice on Mondays with Mrs. Tingley

OES: Lessons and after school practice on Wednesdays with Ms. Forbes-Rycroft

DES: Lessons and after school practice on Thursdays with Ms. Forbes-Rycroft

GWE: Lessons and after school practice on Mondays with Ms. Valentine

MEES: Lessons and after school practice on Fridays with Ms. Valentine

Use the next page to sign your student up to participate in the 2026/2027 orchestra! (:

If you intend to participate in the orchestra program this year, please return this page to your elementary school no later than:

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21ST

Please choose one of the below:

____ I will rent an instrument for my student online via the Cassandra Strings' website.

____ I will attend the rental open house at Creekside Middle School on Thursday August 20th sometime between 5:00-7:30 for assistance renting an instrument for my child.

____ I will attend the rental open house at Northwood Middle School on Friday August 21st sometime between 5:00-7:30 for assistance renting an instrument for my child.

____ I am unsure on how to acquire an instrument for my child online, and am unable to attend the in-person registration night. I will email my child's orchestra teacher* to find out what I need to do to acquire an instrument.

(DES/OES/WWE/PWE: jforbes-rycroft@wcusd200.org MEES/GWE: gvalentine@wcusd200.org)

Please circle the elementary school your child attends:

Dean Greenwood Mary Endres Olson Prairiewood Westwood

Elementary classroom teacher name: _____

Please circle the instrument your student is planning on playing:

VIOLIN VIOLA CELLO BASS

We have this instrument: yes____ no____

Student name: _____

Guardian name(s):_____

Primary Phone:_____Alternate Phone:_____

Email:_____