

HS Music Lab

Course Syllabus & Family Handbook — 2026–27

Trout Lake School Mr. Tony Fuentes

Email: t.fuentes@tlschool.net Room: 155 – Music Room

Welcome to Music Lab

Music Lab is a hands-on, band-based music class open to all students, regardless of prior musical experience. Students form small bands, learn live instruments together, and build toward real performances across the year — starting with a cover song, then an original composition, then a genre of their choosing, and finishing with a capstone project they design themselves.

Course Overview — Year at a Glance

The year is organized into four quarters, each building toward its own performance touchpoint. Across the year, students can also expect 4 guest-musician visits (one per quarter) and 4 choice points where they help shape what they're working on.

Quarter	Focus	Signature Event
Q1 — Foundations & Ensemble Chops	Meet instruments, form bands, learn live-instrument fundamentals, and rehearse a first cover song. BandLab (our music software) joins mid-quarter as a complementary tool.	“Q1 Jam” — informal in-class share
Q2 — Songwriting & Winter Concert	Students write and refine an original song from scratch, using melody, harmony, and lyric-writing tools, culminating in the Final Song Project.	Winter Concert — Dec 10
Q3 — Genre Exploration & Spring Concert	A rotation through different musical genres (blues, hip-hop/R&B, electronic, world music, classic rock/soul), pairing listening with hands-on arranging.	Spring Concert — Mar 16
Q4 — Capstone, Ensemble & Showcase	Students choose their own capstone format — a new original song, a BandLab production, or a polished cover — then join a full-band ensemble unit.	Year-End Showcase / Senior Send-Off

What Students Need

- No personal instrument or purchase is required — instruments are provided and assigned in class.
- Chromebooks are issued school-wide and used for BandLab as well as accessing Google Classroom.
- Folder for keeping handouts and sheet music.
- Notebook or composition book for reflections and writing assignments
- Pencils, highlighters, and pens for writing, reviewing, and musical notation.
- Earbuds that are compatible with their school-issued Chromebook for listening assignments

Classroom Expectations

These are the standing expectations for every class period this year:

- Arrive on time — a note from the office is needed if a student is late.
- No cellphones — phones stay away for the full period, no exceptions.
- Check email and Google Classroom — students are expected to read their email fully and check Google Classroom regularly.
- Respect classmates and equipment — treat the people and the instruments in this room with care.

Instruments Are Tools, Not Toys.

They are silent until the cue — every single day. Instruments are expensive, shared, and fragile, and this expectation is what makes it possible for students to make music in the same room.

Mistakes Are Part of Learning Music.

We practice a growth mindset here — no student is expected to sound like a professional on day one. The class is graded on effort, thinking, and growth, not on raw talent.

How Grades Work

The academic grade is made up of five categories:

Category	Weight	What it measures
Performance Assessments	30%	Band performances scored on tone, pitch accuracy, rhythm, and technique — each student is scored individually on their own role within the band's performance.
Applied Projects & Composition	30%	The Final Song Project, the Q4 capstone project, and cover-song arranging work — scored on structure, musical craft, and use of the concepts taught that unit.
Musical Discourse & Reflection	15%	The quality of a student's contributions to daily discussion, peer feedback, and written reflection — scored on musical substance, never on attendance. See the rubric below.
Music Literacy & Aural Skills	15%	Vocabulary checks, listening and ear-training work, and analysis of the songs studied in class.
Formative Skill Checks	10%	Short, low-stakes rehearsal or technique checks used to guide instruction ahead of a performance or project deadline.

Total: 100% of the course grade.

How Individual Grades Are Determined

This class is not graded on talent or perfection — it's graded on effort, thinking, and growth. A student who has never touched an instrument before Day 1 can absolutely earn an “A” by consistently exceeding what's asked of them, at their own level.

Every project, performance, and assessment is scored using the same scale:

- A — Exceeds Expectations: goes beyond what was asked — extra creativity, polish, or effort beyond the requirements.
- B — Meets All Expectations: every requirement is fully met with solid effort and quality. This is a strong, complete grade.
- C — Meets Most Expectations: most requirements are met; some parts are incomplete or underdeveloped.
- D — Meets Some Expectations: significant gaps — several major requirements are missing or incomplete.
- F — Does Not Meet Expectations: little to no attempt was made to meet the assignment's requirements.

Musical Discourse & Reflection — Scoring Rubric

This category is scored on the musical substance of what a student contributes to class discussion and reflection. It is not based on whether they were present, spoke first, or spoke often. However, an absent student may earn a low score here for lack of evidence, the same as on any assessment with no submission. A make-up option will be provided for excused absences.

Level	Evidence of musical engagement
4 — Exceeds	Uses vocabulary/concepts from the unit accurately; gives specific, actionable feedback to bandmates; connects comments to a rehearsal or learning goal; builds on another student's idea.
3 — Meets	Uses vocabulary/concepts correctly; offers relevant feedback or reflection connected to that day's content.
2 — Approaching	Contributes, but comments are vague, off-topic, or don't use content-specific language.
1 — Beginning	No exit-ticket or discussion contribution submitted, or the contribution shows no engagement with that day's content.

Performance & Event Calendar

Event	When	Notes
"Q1 Jam"	Late Q1 (in class)	Informal, low-stakes share of each band's first cover song.
Guest Musician Visits (4)	One per quarter	Dates announced as they're confirmed; open Q&A with a working musician.
Winter Concert	December 10	Required evening performance — see attendance policy above.
Spring Concert	March 16	Required evening performance — see attendance policy above.
Song-Share Day	Q4 (in class)	Informal share of capstone work in progress.
Year-End Showcase / Senior Send-Off	End of Q4 (in class) — date TBD	Required — the year's culminating performance.

Assignment Deadlines and Make-Up Work

An absent student may earn a low score for lack of evidence, it is never a direct deduction for the absence itself. Make-Up work and late submissions are accepted for excused absences as follows:

- **Musical Discourse & Reflection:** A student with an excused absence may submit make-up evidence (a written response to that day's prompt, or a written reflection on a rehearsal recording) within two school days of returning.
- **Winter and Spring Concerts:** Attendance at the two required concerts is treated as part of that specific assessment — a missed required performance affects only the grade for that event, not a general deduction. A student with an excused absence completes an alternate demonstration (such as a recorded run-through of their part) within one week of returning.
- **Other Assignments:** For all other assignment deadlines missed due to an excused absence, the assignment must be submitted within one week of returning.

For unexcused absences, there is no make-up or late submission opportunity.

Communication

Google Classroom is the primary hub for daily posts, assignments, and updates. Questions or concerns are always welcome by email or through Google Classroom. Please reach out anytime.

NOTE: This course aligns with Washington State's 2017 Arts K–12 Learning Standards for Music at the High School Proficient level across four strands (Harmonizing Instruments, Traditional & Emerging Ensembles, Composition & Theory, and Music Technology). Grading follows OSPI's Student Learning and Grading Guidance (April 21, 2020).

Acknowledgment – HS Music Lab 2026-27

Please review this syllabus together and sign below to confirm that you've read and discussed the course expectations and grading policy. Return this page to Mr. Fuentes by Tuesday, September 8, 2026.

Student Name (printed)

Student Signature

Date

Parent / Guardian Name (printed)

Parent / Guardian Signature

Date

Questions or comments for Mr. Fuentes:
