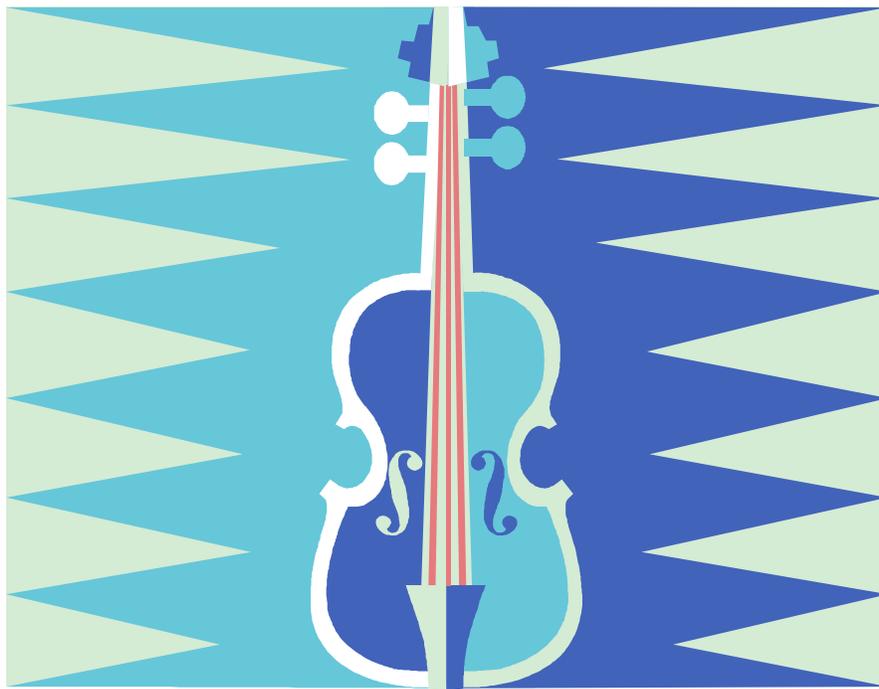


***PLANO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL  
ORCHESTRA***

**Brian Coatney and Chris Tran, DIRECTORS**



**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

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# HANDBOOK

This handbook is provided to help you understand the rules and procedures under which this organization will operate. We hope that it will make your experience in orchestra as beneficial as possible.

Please read this entire handbook carefully and make sure that you understand it in its entirety. If you have any questions, feel free to ask the directors to explain the material.

## INTRODUCTION

As a member of the *Plano Senior High School Orchestra*, you are part of one of the most outstanding high school music programs in America. The orchestra programs in the Plano Independent School District have received consistent recognition as being among the best anywhere. The Plano Senior High Orchestra was selected as the Texas Honor String Orchestra four times (1993, 1995, 1998, and 2000). PSHS has also performed at the prestigious Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago four times (as a full orchestra, 1993 & 2003; as a string orchestra, 1998 & 2017) and has represented our program as a featured performing group at Carnegie Hall in New York. The PSHS Full Orchestra has been named the Honor Full Orchestra for Texas four times (2007, 2009, 2012, 2015). All of the orchestras in the Plano Senior High cluster have been consistent sweepstakes winners at U.I.L. Concert and Sight-reading Festival as well as state and national festivals.

These honors reflect the excellence of the program in which you are now involved. The attainment of these and many other additional honors have come as a direct result of the dedication and work of former members. As a current member of the *Plano Senior High School Orchestra* you are heir to a rich tradition of musical and personal integrity. It is your responsibility to enhance that tradition and pass it to future members.

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## CENTRAL CLUSTER PLANO ORCHESTRA DIRECTORS

### **Plano Senior High School**

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Jennifer Guffey & So Jeong Jo

### **Wilson Middle School**

Sofia Velazquez & Karly Stern

### **Hendrick Middle School**

Dennis Langevin & So Jeong Jo

### **Carpenter Middle School**

Stephanie Jones & Brandie Phillips

## ADMINISTRATION

Superintendent of Schools ..... Brian Binggeli  
Director of Fine Arts..... Kathy Kuddes  
Instrumental Music Coordinator ..... Jeremy Kondrat  
Principal..... Sarah Watkins

## Purpose

The purposes of the *Plano Senior High School Orchestra* are:

- **to develop an understanding and appreciation for one of the greatest artistic achievements, the symphony and string orchestra repertoire**
- **to train students in music to a point where they may participate in the performance of these great works and to enable them to continue making music, whether as an avocation or a profession, after graduation from high school**
- **to assist students in growing into responsible and successful members of society and possessing the essential characteristics of integrity, dependability, and loyalty**

### **That Is Why We Teach Music-**

Not because we expect you to major in music

Not because we expect you to play music all your life

Not so you can relax

Not so you can have fun

Not so you can trot around the football field in a uniform

But

So you will be human

So you will recognize beauty

So you will be sensitive

So you will be closer to an infinite beyond this world

So that you'll have something to cling to

So that you will have more love, more compassion, more gentleness, more

In short, more life

Of what value will it be to make a prosperous living unless you know how to live?

### ***THAT'S WHY I TEACH MUSIC!***

Author unknown

The rules and procedures outlined in this handbook have been developed to accomplish these goals in the most efficient and productive manner, and to provide an accurate method of assessing each student's progress. It is the personal and musical progress of each student which is the ultimate goal of this organization. The success of the *Plano Senior High School Orchestra* has traditionally been based on the concept of each student performing his or her assigned tasks to the best of his or her ability. Each student is capable of making a contribution to the group and growing in knowledge and appreciation.

## **ORCHESTRA MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION**

Orchestra at Plano Senior High School is both a class and an activity. Instruction on a stringed instrument is available to anyone who wishes to enroll, but membership in the *Plano Senior High School Orchestra* is reserved to those who pass the entrance audition, maintain proper standards of conduct, and fulfill their financial obligations. Wind and percussion players will be selected by audition from members of the Plano Senior High School Band to form a full symphony orchestra for the spring semester.

Students who have not passed their audition material may enroll in orchestra class, but will not attend after school rehearsals, perform publicly, participate in fundraising projects and social activities, or travel with the group. Grades will be assigned as an average of weekly playing tests on individually assigned material for these students. Students may re-audition during the year at the discretion of the directors to become a member of the program. Students who are members of the *Plano Senior High School Orchestra* will be expected to participate in ALL activities of the organization, including rehearsals, performances, and trips.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

All Orchestra students must abide by the Plano Senior High School attendance policy. Attendance is required at all rehearsals, sectionals, chamber music rehearsals and performances.

Absences will be excused in the following cases:

- **Death in the family**
- **Medical emergency or illness**
- **Religious holiday**
- **Private music lessons ONLY during orchestra class.**

Absences will be **UNEXCUSED** in the following and/or similar cases:

- **Family trips**
- **Jobs**
- **Personal business or entertainment**
- **Drivers Ed**
- **Private music lessons before or after school**

All requests for excused absence from before or after school rehearsals are to be **REPORTED IN WRITING AND HANDED DIRECTLY TO A DIRECTOR**. If an absence is anticipated, a written request for an excused absence should be submitted at least **two days** in advance. Circumstances may justify an excused absence for reasons other than those listed above. In the case of illness or family emergency, an explanatory telephone call prior to the rehearsal or performance is appropriate. A written notice signed by a legal guardian is expected the following day.

A typical six-week period will have six to ten rehearsal/performances outside the regular school day. Our ability to make the best use of this time will be a very important factor in our success as an ensemble. To do that, we must have everyone present. Full orchestra rehearsal involves wind, brass, and percussion players. Our rehearsal time with these members is very limited so it is imperative that we have every member present.

Unexcused absences will adversely affect your musical progress, the progress of the orchestra, and your orchestra grade. You WILL jeopardize your membership in the group if attendance becomes a persistent problem. Unlike athletic events, there are no bench-warmers in orchestra. Every member is expected to rehearse, practice, and perform.

Rules for absences apply to the entire rehearsal. Being tardy to a rehearsal is the same as being absent (unexcused) for part of that rehearsal. Consequences will be determined by the length and reason for the tardy.

We encourage you to pay careful attention to your attendance in every class. According to the State Education Code, you must attend a specified number of days (usually 80-85 per semester) to pass ANY class. Orchestra performances and travel will involve you missing a maximum of five school days per year. These days WILL NOT count as absences.

## **ORCHESTRA GRADES**

As a member of the *Plano Senior High School Orchestra*, you will be evaluated in two major areas:

- **Musical understanding and growth.**
- **Effectiveness as an orchestra member.**

### **MUSICAL UNDERSTANDING AND GROWTH**

This area is a gauge of your mastery of the musical skills that are taught in the class. These skills will be assessed through written work (tests, quizzes, and homework), work on your instrument (playing tests, auditions, and performances), and ear training done in class. The balance of these areas will be somewhat different each six-weeks. Musical improvement through individual study and practice will always be rewarded regardless of your level of experience at the beginning of the year.

### **EFFECTIVENESS AS AN ORCHESTRA MEMBER**

This area evaluates your contribution as a team member in musical and non-musical areas. Regardless of how well you understand the material presented in class or how well you play your instrument, your effectiveness to the ensemble suffers if you are not present, do not have the materials you need, or choose not to actively participate. Orchestra class differs from many other classes in this area. Learning to operate positively in a group setting is an important component of orchestra class.

## GRADING SYSTEM

A minimum grade of a 70% is required to participate in all extra-curricular activities. If you are not eligible; you do not perform! An incomplete in a course is also deemed ineligible.

Our system is broken down into three categories:

1. Performances and tests = 60%
2. Rehearsals/sectionals and quizzes = 20%
3. Daily grade = 20%

You receive points for each of these categories; then the total assessment is averaged to get a letter grade.

Performances and Tests.....100 points possible

More than 10 minutes late = 10-point deduction

Missing materials = 10-point deduction

Rehearsal/sectional.....100 points possible

More than 10 minutes late = 10-point deduction

Missing materials = 10-point deduction

Daily grade.....100 points possible per week

20 points per day, one weekly grade in grade book

No pencil = 0 points for the day

No music = 0 points for the day

No instrument = 0 points for the day

If you are absent or no school, you still get 20 pts

This breakdown is a reference-guide to help you better understand how we make a very subjective task as objective and concrete as possible. We will keep you informed as to how you are doing as early as possible.

### Late work turn-in policy

**Late work will not be accepted.** Absences and special circumstances will be taken under consideration by the director on an individual basis. If you are in class the day the assignment is made but absent the day it is due, the assignment is due the day you arrive back in class. If you are absent both the days the assignment is made and due, you have the number of days you were absent to get the assignment turned in.

Extra credit: (5 points added to a test grade. You can only receive one extra credit assignment per test.)

1. All-region audition (extra credit given for the grading period that the audition occurs)
2. All-region participation (extra credit given for the grading period of this event)
3. All-State Audition (same as above)
4. All-State Participation (same as above)
5. Solo & Ensemble Festival (same as above)

## Honors Program

Each orchestra student that has been placed in Chamber and Symphony Strings may also elect to enroll in orchestra for honors credit. In order to receive honors credit for orchestra, the student must complete additional assignments for each semester enrolled. These assignments help prepare students for a rigorous music program at the university level. All Students who plan to pursue a degree in music are encouraged to enroll in honors orchestra. See the director for a packet of information containing requirements and an application for honors orchestra if you are interested. Enrollment in honors orchestra will be handled through the orchestra director in the first few weeks of school.

### ORCHESTRA REHEARSALS/CLASS

#### PROCEDURE

Proper rehearsal procedure is the only way any musical group can improve and reach its potential. We attempt to emulate the best example possible in this area: the professional symphony orchestra. At the beginning of each rehearsal (when the tardy bell rings during daily rehearsals, otherwise at the predesignated start time) students should be seated in their proper chairs with their instruments, all required music (check board for rehearsal order), pencils in each folder, calendars (for any possible date changes), and any other equipment required. Instrument cases should be closed and placed beside your seat. Backpacks and purses should be placed in the designated area. Tardiness will be handled according to school policy. **GO TO THE BATHROOM ON YOUR OWN TIME, NOT CLASS TIME!** Failure to meet these criteria will result in the student being counted tardy.

We will attempt to maintain an atmosphere of relaxed concentration. Attention should remain focused on the music and the director at all times. Talking, except for relevant questions (which require hand to be raised), or distracting behavior should be eliminated. **Eating, drinking or chewing gum is not permitted.** Students should remain in their seats unless asked or given permission to move.

Posture should always be that which encourages greatest playing efficiency. Remember, we are playing high level music which demands your best efforts. You should be sitting on the front of the chair with both feet flat on the floor to establish proper body balance. The back should be straight to permit free use of the arms and proper breathing. The instrument should be held properly to allow the easiest playing technique with the least fatigue. Fingernails must be trimmed to permit correct playing position. Proper posture and instrument position have been developed through centuries of experimentation to produce the best results with the fewest problems. It is essential that we use this knowledge to enhance our performance.

## **MUSIC**

**Every person is expected to bring his or her binder and music to EVERY rehearsal. This will be checked periodically. All bowings, fingerings, changes in the music, and major rehearsal suggestions should be marked in these parts. Please handle music carefully and responsibly.**

### **FULL ORCHESTRA REHEARSALS**

Beginning in December, we will have a full orchestra rehearsal each Tuesday evening (symphony and chamber strings only). This schedule will have to be adjusted to accommodate holidays and other school activities. Be aware of what the schedule is at all times. We take great pride in the fact that we are able to have a full symphony orchestra. These rehearsals represent the only time during the week that we may rehearse as such. Full attendance at these rehearsals is critical. Only the most pressing problems will be granted excused absences. Please think ahead about your schedule so that you can avoid putting yourself in an unpleasant situation.

A list of pieces to be rehearsed with approximate times of rehearsal will be posted on the Dry Erase board in the rehearsal room well in advance of the rehearsal. Because we will be playing a variety of literature with different instrumentation requirements, it is important that you check the list to avoid being at rehearsal when you are not needed. Every attempt will be made to follow the rehearsal schedule, but at times this may be impossible. Please arrive in advance of the posted time so you will not risk getting an unexcused absence or tardy. Rehearsals will end on time.

### **EXTRA REHEARSALS**

Extra rehearsals may be necessary from time to time as performance pressures dictate. Every effort will be made to keep these to an absolute minimum. They will be scheduled as conveniently as possible but students are expected to make every effort to change schedules as necessary to accommodate them. Unavoidable conflicts must be discussed and resolved with the director prior to the rehearsal (see grading policy).

### **DRESS REHEARSALS**

Dress rehearsals are scheduled preceding orchestra concerts. All other activities (sectionals, chamber groups, etc.) will be cancelled. Attendance is required.

## **STUDENT FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS**

Student members of the *Plano Senior High School Orchestra* are expected to contribute each year the amount of money which will be spent on them. This obligation may be divided into two general categories: local support (social activities, clinicians, scholarships, etc.) and travel. Students will be advised of the amount required in each of these categories as soon as the budget is set each fall. Obligations may be met through direct donations or through fundraising activities. All fundraising projects are for the convenience of the student.

### **FEES**

An instrument usage fee of \$85 per year will be charged by PISD to each student who uses a school owned instrument. A contract will be sent home with information on the instrument. Payment will need to accompany the form when it is returned with the appropriate signatures.

In addition, a \$75 fee will be charged to each student yearly to pay for uniform cleaning and orchestra shirts. This fee will also help to cover the cost of concerts, clinicians, and supplies needed throughout the year. We realize that by the time students (and parents) reach the Senior High, they are tired of fund raising. No organization fundraiser will be necessary if every student pays this fee.

**Please make checks payable PSHS Orchestra.**

### **PERFORMANCE AND TRAVEL**

In addition to local performances the Plano Senior High Orchestra makes several away from school appearances each year. There is one overnight trip taken every year alternating between a big and small trip. All members of the orchestra are expected to travel with the group. We must have everyone participate to be our best. Requirements for these performances are:

- **Students must meet all local and state eligibility requirements to participate in travel or competitions.**
- **Students must be able to perform satisfactorily the materials assigned for performance.**
- **Students must have attended scheduled rehearsals necessary for the preparation for the performance.**
- **Students must fulfill their financial obligations to the organization.**

## **PRIVATE STUDY**

The Plano Fine Arts Department has a strong private study program which is approved by the Plano I.S.D., supervised by the Director of Fine Arts and managed by the head director in each senior high school attendance area. The teachers who participate in the private study program are highly qualified professionals who are approved by our own staff members.

While private study participation is not a requirement, it should be noted that most students take advantage of this excellent opportunity. The advantages of one-on-one experiences are overwhelming. Additionally, our staff members work very closely with the private teachers in evaluating and monitoring each student's progress. Productive participation in this program by as many students as possible is strongly encouraged. Contact your director at any point in the year if you are interested in participating in this program.

## **EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS**

Our equipment and uniforms represent a large investment on the part of the Plano Independent School District. It is everyone's responsibility to see that they receive proper care. Instruments, equipment and uniforms will be issued to individual students who are expected to care for them as if they were their own. All normal upkeep and maintenance is the responsibility of the student. Students will be responsible for any deductible fees on insurance claims. Instruments will be issued and returned in good playing condition. No one may play on another person's instrument without permission. Instruments are to be properly cased and stored when not in use. Anyone who damages equipment through carelessness or neglect will be required to pay for its repair. There is a small charge for using school owned uniforms, but each student will be required to return the uniform in the condition in which it was issued – complete and undamaged.

### **UNIFORMS:**

The school district provides each student with the following:

#### **MALES**

Jacket

Pants

#### **FEMALES**

Dress

You are responsible for the following items:

#### **MALES:**

Pleated wing tip white tux shirt  
(small pleats and a stand up collar)  
Black Bow-tie and Cumberbund  
Black dress shoes and black socks

#### **FEMALES:**

Black closed-toe dress shoes  
Appropriate Hose

**EQUIPMENT:** (student provided)

Instrument (district provides cellos and basses for class use)  
Black hardback 1” binder.  
Three Sharpened or Mechanical Pencils with lead at all times  
Mute  
Soft cloth to wipe off instrument after each use  
Shoulder pad/rest (violin/viola)  
Rock Stop (cello/bass)  
Rosin  
Tuner

**PRIVATELY OWNED INSTRUMENTS**

The quality of literature and the performance standards held by the *Plano Senior High School Orchestra* demand high quality instruments. Many students find it both musically and financially rewarding to own an investment quality instrument. One distinct advantage of owning an instrument of this type is that in contrast to "starter" instruments which depreciate in value, quality string instruments actually gain value as they age. Instruments of this quality must be chosen carefully. Please ask the staff to assist you in this decision.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **CONCERTS**

In order for these performances to run smoothly, everyone must pitch in. The orchestra is too big for the directors to do everything. It will take everyone's help to set up with a given assignment from the director in class. Please make it a lot easier by contributing to the cause. Remember, you would rather volunteer your services than be told what to do.

### **PLANO SENIOR HIGH ORCHESTRA BOOSTER CLUB**

The PSHS Orchestra Booster Club is a support group for the orchestra. The only requirement for membership is to have a child in the orchestra. The Boosters are our support group that fill the audience and cheer us on no matter what! Not only do they cheer us on at all of our performances, but are chaperone trips, organize fundraisers, and assist with other supportive duties. The main emphasis is to support the directors and help accomplish the goals of the orchestra.

## **CONCLUSION**

Your decision to participate in the *Plano Senior High School Orchestra* represents the opening of a door to tremendous opportunity. You are very fortunate to live in a place that has a tradition of excellent orchestras and a school administration that values and supports this type of study. Please recognize the value of this opportunity and make the most of it.

This handbook is a guideline to make your experience in orchestra as productive and enjoyable as possible. The rules it contains have been developed over many years of experience and refinement. All of the rules are meant to serve one purpose: to promote the learning of the orchestra members. Like any good set of guidelines, it is constantly being changed and improved as changing conditions warrant. If you have any questions about the policies in this handbook, please do not hesitate to discuss it with your directors.

Good luck in your studies and prepare yourself to have some wonderful experiences making music together this year!