



THE
ALLEN
HIGH
SCHOOL
ORCHESTRA

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2009 – 2010

www.allenorchestra.org

ORCHESTRA HANDBOOK

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A handbook for the orchestras at

Allen High School
&
Lowery Freshman Center

TEACHING STAFF AND ADMINISTRATION

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Ereckson MS Orchestra: Angie Cimbalo
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Please check for updated information at:
www.allenorchestra.org

PURPOSE

The purposes of the **Allen High School and Lowery Freshman Center Orchestras** are:

- to develop an understanding and appreciation for one of the greatest artistic achievements of mankind - the full 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, able to produce well both individually, and as a member of a group, and possessing the essential characteristics of integrity, dependability, and loyalty.

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 **Allen High School Orchestra and Lowery Freshman Center Orchestra** has traditionally been based on the concept of each student's 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.

Students will contribute to the Allen ISD Orchestra by:

- **CARING** for other students who share a similar dream
- **RESPECTING** self and fellow musicians
- Demonstrating **RESPONSIBILITY** on and off the performance stage
- Manifesting **TRUST** by being dependable and honest
- Role modeling the standards of our musical **FAMILY** to the Allen community

ORCHESTRA MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

Orchestra at Allen High School is both a class and an activity. Instruction on a stringed instrument is available 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 Allen High School Band to form full orchestras for the Winter concert and the Spring semester. Students who are members of the Allen High School Orchestra will be required to participate in ALL activities of the organization, including rehearsals, sectionals, and performances. Students are encouraged to fundraise and participate in the Spring Trip.

Students are placed in orchestra classes based on an audition the previous Spring (or scheduled by the director/parents/student), orchestra grade history, eligibility history, and director recommendation.

STATEMENT ON STUDENT ASSESSMENT

In order to succeed in the orchestra, a student should demonstrate two things:

A willingness to improve their musical skills
A work ethic that will improve the orchestra team

It would not be fair to assess a student's progress based solely upon playing abilities. Those born with higher natural skills would have an unfair advantage over those who really have to work hard at playing their instrument. Instead, several things can come into account, including:

- an *improvement* in overall performance skills
- being *on time* to class and rehearsals
- *success* in all academic courses – understanding that failing courses affects participation in orchestra
- *attitude* toward other students as well as the conductors
- willing to *accept constructive comments*
- willingness to *help* with daily functions of the orchestra
- *a spirit that is positive* toward the image of the orchestra program
- the ability to *represent* the Allen Orchestra, Allen High School, and the city of Allen in a positive manner

TESTS AND EXAMS

Playing tests and exams, generally assigned every other week, consist of an assigned excerpt from the orchestral repertoire of the upcoming concert or other material assigned by your director. Occasionally, it may be necessary to give a written test. If a performance occurs during one of these two-week periods, it usually takes the place of the test or exam. Playing tests may affect chair placement for concerts.

Semester exams are designed to measure the independent musical thought processes and abilities of the student. In other words, class time is not used to specifically review for the final, however students should feel free to ask specific questions regarding the exam.

GRADES

Each student will be awarded points based upon the following scale. At the end of each six weeks grading period, the number of points awarded can be divided into the number of points available to compute the average.

| ACTIVITY | AVERAGE |
|---|----------------|
| Class Participation (This grade includes daily equipment checks for instrument, pencil, music, and other necessary equipment as well as full involvement in rehearsals by the student) | 50% |
| Concerts, Quizzes, and Tests (Unexcused absences from concerts or tests will require make-up work for grade) | 50% |

ATTENDANCE

Orchestra activities are planned so that the least amount of activities will conflict. All students are encouraged to participate in as many activities as they wish, but at the same time, orchestra members are required to participate in all orchestra events, rehearsals and performances, remembering that a **grade is given for each event.**

IMPORTANT: In the event of a conflict, the student has the responsibility of submitting a signed note, email, or phone call from a parent or the appropriate teacher or sponsor stating the reason for the conflict. Notes that have not been submitted prior to two weeks before the orchestra event may not be considered. This note does not automatically excuse an absence. Each case is considered individually and privately according to its circumstances.

All absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be made up and it is the student's responsibility to obtain the makeup assignment with their director. Only excused absences will be given full credit. Last minute excuses cause problems in scheduling and may not be excused. The only exceptions would be a student illness, death in the family, or religious holiday. Not having a ride to an orchestra function does not qualify a student for an excused absence. If this occurs, please try to get a ride from another student. As a last resort, contact your director. Please make efforts to make sure that you have reliable prearranged transportation to all activities. The attendance guidelines do not apply to social events.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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

Examples of excused absences:

- **Death in the family**
- **Medical emergency or illness**
- **Religious holiday**

Examples of unexcused absences:

- **Family trips**
- **Jobs**
- **Personal business or entertainment**

All requests for excused absence from rehearsals, sectionals, chamber music rehearsals and performances are to be **REPORTED IN WRITING, EMAIL, OR PHONE CALL**. If an absence is anticipated, a written request for an excused absence should be submitted at least two weeks 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 or email prior to the rehearsal or performance is appropriate.

ELIGIBILITY

It is very important that each student maintains passing grades in all classes in addition to orchestra. If you are having trouble passing a class, please notify your conductor. We can try to get you extra help, if not from a teacher, maybe from a fellow student. We expect each member of the Allen HS Orchestra to do all the work necessary to pass all his or her classes. School performances (events held at an AISD campus) are required regardless of a student's grades. UIL Contests/Extra-Curricular activities (events not held at an AISD campus) are directly affected by students' eligibility. **All grades must be passing to attend contests and school orchestra trips (events outside of AISD)**

CLASSROOM RULES

Classroom rules are designed to be simple and easy to follow. They are effective in keeping order during classes and rehearsals only when each member of the orchestra chooses to follow them. They are:

- When the bell rings, be in your seat with your instrument ready to play and with your music notebook, pencil and any other necessary equipment on your music stand. **THE SCHOOL TARDY POLICY WILL BE ADHERED TO.**
- Everyone must have **their music** at their seat *every* day.
- Respect the property of other individuals. This includes instruments as well as music. **You do not have the permission to use anyone else's instrument or materials.** Please do not assume that you do.
- **No food, drink or gum is allowed in the orchestra room.**
- Be respectful to everyone in the room - **that includes when and how you talk.**

Most discipline problems can be handled in-house, such as, assignment to orchestra detention hours, for such things as eating in the orchestra room, failure to follow rules, etc... Any behavior problem can (for any reason) result in a call home and completion of the AISD Student Discipline form to their house office. **Poor behavior will not be tolerated and can affect a student's participation in orchestra.**

PRACTICE

Individual home practice is an integral part of any musician's learning process. It is very important to our orchestra that effort is being made by each student for learning individual parts outside of the classroom. **Class meetings and rehearsals are not to be used as a practice session, but as time for working out ensemble concerns.**

The Allen Orchestra is a great orchestra because of the quality teaching you have received in the early years of your musical education. It becomes a superior orchestra when all of its members put hard work into it. Just as in any other class, if there is a problem in the music that you cannot handle, please talk to your orchestra director.

PRIVATE LESSONS

In a program this large, it is impossible for the directors to meet the individual needs of each student. With private lessons, participating students can have the luxury of extra help on a one-to-one basis. Each lesson from the AISD program costs \$17.00 for a half-hour of instruction. It is up to students and parents to coordinate lessons which are off-campus and not a part of instruction during the school day. Applications and further information can be obtained from your orchestra director. Lesson slots and times are honored on a first-come-first-served basis. It would be to your benefit to register early as time slots and studios fill early.

A list of Private Lesson teachers is available at: <http://www.allenorchestra.org>.

COMPETITIONS

All students are encouraged to participate in competitions outside the scope of the orchestra experience. The Allen HS Orchestra has been represented well in these types of contests, and has enjoyed the successes of individual as well as collective performances.

There are several concerto competitions in the area. Many students elect to participate in the AISD solo and ensemble contest each spring (May 8, 2010). TMEA (Texas Music Educators Association) sponsors auditions for the Region XXV and All-State Orchestras (Oct. 17, 2009 for auditions.)

Students do not receive extra grade points for participation in any of these activities and participation in any of these events may not interfere with any work that is required for the class. Students do receive credit in audition placements each Spring for their extra work. Students desiring extra help in preparing for these events should see your director to schedule an appointment.

LETTER AWARDS

A jacket will be presented to senior students who have served the high school orchestra program well. Students must have participated in the orchestra program from the time of his/her enrollment in high school before his/her senior year and must participate through graduation of his/her senior year. Students will attend all performances and U.I.L. activities. Exceptions will be granted at the discretion of the orchestra director (illness, deaths, etc.). Students not adhering to written disciplinary policies of the school and orchestra will forfeit their eligibility for the senior award jacket. Any violation of these rules during their senior year may result in the forfeiture of the jacket. The student must uphold the goals and standards of the orchestra. It is understood that withdrawal or dismissal from the orchestra prior to graduation of his/her senior year results in forfeiture of the jacket. One additional way to earn a letter jacket is to make a TMEA State Orchestra. These students will be eligible to receive a letter jacket the following year regardless of classification.

OUT-OF-TOWN TRIPS

Every year, during the spring, the Allen HS Orchestra sponsors a trip to an out-of-town destination. The conductors and the leadership of the Allen HS Orchestra are committed to pursuing more of these trips each year. Details of the Spring Trip will be shared as soon as the information is available – online at <http://www.allenorchestra.org>.

- Students must meet all local and state eligibility requirements to participate in the Spring Trip
- Students who are ineligible may not travel with the orchestra
- Students must be able to satisfactorily perform the material assigned for the Spring Trip performance
- Students must have attended scheduled rehearsals
- Students must fulfill their financial & trip contract obligations to the organization

MUSIC

All music performed by the Allen HS Orchestra is provided by the school district. Any music used for extra-curricular purposes is usually be provided by the student or the organization (TMEA Region & All-State Orchestra, Solo & Ensemble, etc...). Originals are the property of the Allen HS Orchestra. Students are expected to take good care of the music. Markings should be made in soft lead pencil, only. Originals are collected during the first class following a performance. Photocopied music needs to be kept in a **black three-ring binder, provided by the school**. If music is missing, it is up to the student to obtain a copy of the music from a section member – it is not the director's responsibility! After each performance, all photocopies are destroyed.

Each student is expected to have his or her own personal copy of the music at every class and/or rehearsal. Even when a stand partner's copy of the music is being used, each student needs their personal copy of the music to make markings. Do not assume that if your stand partner's music is marked, yours is as well. Furthermore, don't assume that you will remember them next time. **Everyone needs to mark his or her music.** From time to time, there may be an unannounced grade given for your work in marking your music.

EQUIPMENT:

- Instrument (district provides cellos and basses for class use (\$100 student use fee)
- Electronic Tuner (district provided - \$25 replacement fee for lost tuners)
- Black 1" binder – district provided
- Pencil (**at all times**)
- Mute
- Soft cloth to wipe off instrument after each use
- Shoulder pad (violin/viola)
- Cello Strap or Rock Stop (cello/bass)

Lockers and Combination Locks are provided for each student (lockers are usually shared between 2 students)

ALLEN ORCHESTRA BOOSTER CLUB

The Orchestra Booster Club has one meeting each year in the beginning of the fall semester (Registration) and a meeting in the Spring Semester (Spring Trip Meeting.). At these meetings, it will be possible for parents to volunteer for committees such as chaperones, finance, transportation, etc. More information is available at <http://www.allenorchestra.org>.

UNIFORMS

For all concerts, students wear the appropriate uniform. Part of each performance grade is based upon how you wear your uniform -- neatness, alterations, cleanliness, etc. If there are any alterations needed to make your uniform look better, you may have them done provided that they are *temporary* alterations and no fabric is cut. Informal uniforms need to be purchased by the student. These are t-shirts and are available at the beginning of the school year. The cost per shirt is \$10.00. The formal uniforms are provided by the school district, **except for socks, hose and shoes**. Under no circumstances is anyone allowed to wear boots of any kind with the formal uniform.

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Informal uniform: | orchestra t-shirts, blue jeans or khakis |
| Ladies' formal uniform: | black dress, black hose and black shoes provided by student |
| Men's' formal uniform: | black tuxedos, bow ties and cummerbunds, white tuxedo shirt, black socks, black shoes provided by student |

INSTRUMENTS

A quality school orchestra program requires quality musical instruments. By the time a student is a freshman at the Lowery Freshman Center, they will be expected to be using what is considered a step-up quality instrument and a quality wood (Pernambuco) bow. In most cases, these items will have been purchased during or after the eighth grade year. One advantage of owning such an instrument is that, in contrast to "starter" instruments which can depreciate in value, quality string instruments actually gain value as they age.

Students are responsible for your instrument's care and maintenance. Whether you own or rent an instrument, you are responsible for purchasing replacement strings (Dominant brand or Pro Arte strings recommended.) For your convenience, music representatives from local stores can fill orders from students. To order – sign the order sheet in the AHS or Lowery Orchestra Hall foyer bulletin board. Prices are posted on the bulletin board – students will be responsible for paying for the merchandise when delivered. Payments should be made by check – directly to the music company.

With all personal and school instruments, it is strongly recommended that the instrument be insured through a parent's homeowner's policy or a private company. **The school district will not assume liability for maintenance, repair, or damage of personal instruments on school property.** In addition, students may obtain inexpensive coverage on a school or privately owned instrument from the Music Agency, Inc., Arlington, Texas. Application forms for this insurance are available online at www.musicagencyinc.com.

INSTRUMENT LOAN – Cello/Bass

AISSD and Allen High School owns cellos and basses that can be loaned to a student for a small charge. In order to use these, the student must pay an annual maintenance fee of \$100 per instrument, which includes insurance for the school-owned instrument.

In addition to the annual maintenance fee, it is the students' responsibility to provide general upkeep to maintain the instrument in proper playing condition, including bow rehairing and replacement of strings due to misuse. Please complete and return the AISSD Orchestra Instrument Contract if loaned an instrument from AISSD – form available at <http://www.allenorchestra.org>.

CALENDAR 2009-20010

Efforts have been made to produce a calendar for the entire school year so that conflicts can be resolved in advance. Dates/Times subject to change.

Check: www.allenorchestra.org/calendar.html for updates

Students can work for volunteer hours (such as NHS/NJHS hours) at events *in italics*

- 8/15/2009 (Saturday) Convocation Full Orchestra & Chorus Rehearsal - AHS "H" Hall, 10:00 - 1:00
8/17/2009 (Monday) Convocation Full Orchestra & Chorus Performance - AHS Gym, 7:30 - 10:30 a.m.
8/22/2009 (Saturday) *Orchestra Registration - AHS Orchestra Room, 10:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.*
9/2/2009 (Wednesday) Seniors & All-State Students: Letter Jacket Sizing - AHS Band Hall, 9:00 a.m.
10/5/2009 (Monday) *Orchestra 6th grade concert - AHS Cafeteria, 6:00 p.m.*
10/15/2009 (Thursday) - AHS (Chamber/Sinfonia) & Lowery (Chamber) Concert - Custer Rd. UMC, 7:00
10/17/2009 (Saturday) - TMEA All-Region Auditions - Carpenter MS, All Day
10/20/2009 (Tuesday) AHS (Concert/Camerata)/EMS Orchestra Concert - Lowery FC, 7:00 p.m.
10/24/2009 (Saturday) *MS Honor Orchestra Auditions - AHS H Hall, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.*
10/27/2009 (Tuesday) LFC/FMS Orchestra Concert - Lowery Freshman Center, 7:00 p.m.
10/29/2009 (Thursday) *Curtis MS Orchestra "Hauntcert" - Curtis Middle School, 6:00 p.m.*
10/31/2009 (Saturday) *All-State Taping - AHS H Hall, All Day*
11/7/2009 (Saturday) *MS Honor Orchestra Clinic/Concert, Allen Public Library 12:00 - 6:00 p.m.*
12/3/2009 (Thursday) LFC/EMS Orchestra Concert - Ereckson Middle School, 7:00 p.m.
12/7/2009 (Monday) AHS/FMS Orchestra Concert - Lowery Freshman Center , 7:00 p.m.
12/10/2009 (Thursday) AHS/Curtis Orchestra Concert - Lowery Freshman Center, 7:00 p.m.
1/22 & 1/23 2010 (Fri. & Sat.) *All-Region Orchestra Clinic/Concert - Lowery Freshman Center*
1/25/2010 (Monday) *CMS/FMS Feeders - 6th Grade Orchestra Concert, AHS Cafeteria, 6:00 p.m.*
1/26/2010 (Tuesday) *EMS Feeders - 6th Grade Orchestra Concert, Ereckson Middle School, 6:00 p.m.*
1/28/2010 (Thursday) *Orchestra 8th Grade Orientation - Lowery Freshman Center, 6:00 p.m.*
1/30/2010 (Saturday) APSO Solo Competition Auditions - Lowery Freshman Center
2/27/2010 (Saturday) AHS (Chamber & Sinfonia) Orchestra/APO Concert - Lowery FC, 7:00 p.m.
3/4/2010 (Thursday) AHS/LFC Orchestra Pre-UIL Lowery Freshman Center, 7:00 p.m.
3/10 & 3/11 2010 (Wed. & Thurs.) HS Orchestra UIL - Plano East SHS
3/30/2010 (Tuesday) *MS Orchestra Pre UIL Concert - Lowery Freshman Center, 6:00 p.m.*
4/8/2010 & 4/09/2010 (Thurs. & Fri.) *MS Orchestras UIL - Lowery Freshman Center*
5/3/2010 (Monday) *Orchestra 5th Grade String Drive - AHS Orchestra Hall, 5:30 - 8:00 p.m.*
5/8/2010 (Saturday) *AISD Chamber Orchestra Festival - AHS H Hall, 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.*
5/10/2010 (Monday) *CMS/FMS Orchestra 6th Grade Concert - AHS Cafeteria, 6:00 p.m.*
5/14/2010 (Friday) Orchestra Banquet - Ereckson Middle School, 6:30 p.m.
5/17/2010 (Monday) *Ford MS Orchestra Concert - Lowery Freshman Center, 7:00 p.m.*
5/18/2010 (Tuesday) *Curtis MS Orchestra Concert - Curtis Middle School, 7:00 p.m.*
5/20/2010 (Thursday) *Ereckson MS Orchestra Concert - Ereckson Middle School, 7:00 p.m.*
5/24/2010 & 5/25/2010 (Mon. & Tues.) AHS/LFC Orchestra Concert - Eisemann Center, 7:00 p.m.