

## Music Department Policies

### BAND, ORCHESTRA and CHOIR GRADING SYSTEM

Band, Orchestra and Choir are performance-based classes -- that is, your grade is *mostly* based on the **demonstration** of musical skills. Grades are based on your earned percentage of the total points possible for a marking period.

#### Points

Points are given for most every activity in music class.

#### Re-takes

If you score below a required minimum, we may *require* you to re-take a test. Your grade on **any** written or performance test may be improved by simply re-taking the test. We expect that you practice for the re-take so that you are more prepared the second time around. However, we do not allow re-takes on written tests after the end of a marking period or on performance tests after the concert in which that material is performed. Re-takes will usually take place outside of regular class time. See us to make an appointment or for a re-take.

#### Extra Credit

The best way to improve your grade is by re-taking tests for a better score, but a student, under special circumstances ONLY, may do "extra credit" work to bring up a poor grade.

### PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

Musical performances are the culmination of many weeks of preparation and represent countless man-hours of practice and dedication. They are the aesthetic reward that transforms the study of music and instrumental technique into an art. Practice without a culminating performance has little meaning in the performance-based art of music. No product exists without the final performance. **Performances are a required part of band, orchestra and choir.** They are our final exams and provide purpose and meaning to a musician's existence.

When a member of a performing organization is absent from a performance, it hurts every other member of that organization. We are not like a football team that has players on the bench waiting to take the place of the absent player, nor are we a professional ensemble that can hire replacements. No one else can fill the whole left by an absent student musician. Absences throw off the balance and blend of the entire group and make everyone feel "uncomfortable" with the performance.

In every rehearsal we stress the importance of the individual member. Being a good musician means being reliable, dedicated, responsible, and most importantly, considerate of others. These are values that are important in music, in society, in business, and in family life as well. Missing group performances for all but the most extreme emergencies, certainly does not promote these ideals.

Even though our performance dates and times are set months ahead of time and are well published, we realize that *occasional* conflicts can arise. We expect that students make every effort to eliminate schedule conflicts. We will do everything possible to eliminate the conflicts, we will compromise in any way that we can. We will and have adjusted times, changed program orders and even arranged transportation. We expect that students, who can not make an entire performance, make as much as they can.

*Students who are unexcused from a performance may be asked to resign from the organization. **Being unexcused from a performance will automatically lower your final marking period grade by two (2) letter grades.** Students who regularly miss performances will not receive credit for the course.*

PLEASE help us maintain our high performance standards by doing everything in your power to eliminate performance conflicts. If you MUST miss a performance, please let your

director know as far ahead of time as possible. This way the group can adjust accordingly so your absence will be less of a burden. *Having your parents sign a note does not guarantee that you will be excused from a performance.* The director makes the final excused or not excused decision. If you are not pre-excused from a public performance your marking period grade will suffer.

Working together we may find a solution, let us not fail due to lack of effort.

## **PERSONAL COMMITMENT**

Nobody is "required" to be in band, orchestra or choir -- it is a CHOICE you have made. Therefore, membership must be a "personal commitment". Being in a musical organization should be an enjoyable experience 99% of the time. But, just like every human endeavor that is worth achieving, it's not always fun. For that 1% of the time when it's not fun, your "personal commitment" will get you through.

## **CONCERT BEHAVIOR**

At any live performance, the audience plays a crucial role in what happens on stage. When performers play or sing for an appreciative, well-behaved audience, they perform at their best.

Musicians should be the best audience members. As musicians, we know that when an audience shows its gratitude by applauding after our songs, it makes us feel appreciated and perform our next songs with even greater enthusiasm. That means that the more positively that we as audience members respond, the better the performance we get to hear. It takes many hours of practice to prepare a concert -- our few minutes of applause can make it all worth while for the performers on stage.

Attending a live musical performance can be much more enjoyable than listening to recordings. We get to see the music being made as well as hear it. But any noise, talking, or other distractions can reduce the quality of our live experience. Live performances require the total concentration of the performers on stage and the audience in their seats. Please remember that the musicians can hear the audience as well as the audience can hear the musicians.

Please remember the following when attending a concert:

1. No talking or other noises during the performance.
2. Do not enter or leave the auditorium during a performance.
3. Do not leave your seat, except for emergencies.
4. Show your appreciation with your applause.
5. Applaud at the end of songs, NOT between movements.
6. To get the most from the performance, your total attention is required.
7. As musicians, you should be setting a good example for others to follow.
8. TURN OFF CELL PHONES AND BEEPERS!

## **YOUR OBLIGATIONS**

It is an honor to be a member of a North Muskegon performing ensemble and with this honor comes certain responsibilities. It is your obligation to:

1. Practice and learn your parts to the BEST of your ability, AT HOME, before rehearsal. We don't have enough time to teach everybody the notes in class. Come to rehearsal with the questions and we will have the answers.
2. Participate in ALL official functions, including after-school rehearsals, concerts, half-time shows, pep assemblies, field trips, graduation ceremonies, and festivals.

3. Keep your instrument and sheet music in top condition. You can only be as good as your tools allow you to be.
4. Represent your organization in a favorable manner.
5. Improve musically.

### **SCHOLARSHIPS**

Each year we are asked to distribute scholarships and scholarship money to deserving musicians. The guidelines that we use to determine who will receive these honors are as follows:

- Successful solo performance at Solo & Ensemble Festivals.
- Chair position.
- Seniority.
- Citizenship.
- Auditions may be required.

### **A GOOD MUSICIAN**

1. A good musician is prepared.
2. A good musician is courteous and cooperative.
3. A good musician is constantly striving for improvement.
4. A good musician has self-control.
5. A good musician is dedicated and hard working.
6. A good musician does not make excuses.
7. A good musician accepts a challenge.
8. A good musician is responsible.

### **SCHOOL-OWNED EQUIPMENT**

School-owned materials that are assigned to you are your responsibility. It is your job to make sure that the equipment and materials that are paid for by YOUR taxes are taken care of. Your North Muskegon Music Library is one of the best in the state. We have music dating back to 1920. This is a credit to the directors and students who came before us. Many students have used these materials before you, and many must use it after you. Please remember the following rules:

1. NEVER write on any sheet music in ink.
2. Keep music in your folder when not in use.
3. Do not fold or roll-up sheet music so it will fit in your instrument case, back-pack or locker.
4. Music that is lost or damaged must be replaced by YOU. You will be charged \$.25 per page for music copies that are needed to replace music that you lost or damaged.
5. Store your uniform on a hanger, in a clean, dry place.
6. If your uniform needs alterations, DO NOT cut any material. Simply fold the excess material up.
7. Do not goof-around with school owned instruments.
8. Any damage caused to school equipment must be repaired by you.
9. Do NOT lean on the music stands. This type of abuse bends the tops and loosens the joints. Only music goes on the music stands.
10. Do not write on your music stands.
11. Keep your music room clean and neat.

**Music Boosters**

The North Muskegon Music Boosters is an organization with a long history of musical support. The main function of the Boosters is to raise the money needed to run our music programs. The Boosters provides us with the funds to purchase sheet music, instruments, uniforms and other musical necessities. We encourage the Parents/Guardians of ALL music students to get involved in this worthwhile organization.