

Sara Sulecki

String Education Curriculum 5-12

Standards Categories of Skills and Knowledge

-Executive Skills and Knowledge (physically playing instrument; good posture, bowings, etc.)

-Body Format (*“Students perform with a lengthened and balanced posture; support instrument without tension, demonstrate ease of motion; format is adjusted for physiological changes due to growth; control of weight distribution, unilateral movement, bilateral movement, in sitting and standing position.”*)

-Left Hand Skills and Knowledge (*“Students perform with the correct placement and angle of the left arm-wrist-hand-fingers to the instrument; demonstrate position that is balanced and free of tension; play with independence of fingers, ease of motion and control of finger weight; produce characteristic tone, with vibrato (as appropriate); show understanding and ability to apply fingerings, finger patterns, shifting, extensions.”*)

-Right Hand Skills and Knowledge (*“Students perform with fluent bowing motion, control of variables (weight, angle, speed, and placement), in a variety of bowing techniques and articulations, with characteristic tone.”*)

-Musicianship Skills and Knowledge (understanding rhythms, aural skills, note-reading, etc.)

-Tonal Aural Skills & Ear Training (*“Students demonstrate the following abilities: matching and manipulating pitch, playing with a sense of tonality, tonal—melodic and tonal—harmonic function (horizontal and vertical relationships/functions of tonality), ear-to-hand skills, aural and kinesthetic awareness of pitch accuracy and intonation, including and related to improvisation.”*)

-Rhythmic Aural Skills and Ear Training (*“Students perform simple and complex rhythm patterns/functions, with steady pulse/beat, correct sense of meter, metric organization and phrasing, in a variety of meters.”*)

-Creative Musicianship (*“Students demonstrate creative musicianship skills at all stages of development, including the ability to improvise variations of rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic patterns, within the traditions and standards of a variety of genres and practices; arrange and compose melodies and harmonies according to specific criteria and guidelines.”*)

-Music Literacy (*“Students demonstrate sequential music literacy skills (decoding and comprehension), defined as an association of sound-to-symbol, in a given musical context, which includes: predictive components (understanding of reading based on audiation of written material) and knowledge of symbols and notation related to pitch, rhythm, dynamics, tonality, clef, articulation, etc.), based on the principle that sound comes before sight.”*)

-Ensemble Skills (*“Students perform in an ensemble, demonstrating sensitivity and the ability to adjust and maintain a uniform sense of rhythm, tempo, articulation, tone, blend, balance, and dynamics; understand conducting gestures, follow conductor and section leader, and are able to synchronize bowings.”*)

-Artistic Skills and Knowledge (*creative/expressive side of music making; improvisation, composition, performance with artistic understanding, etc.*)

-Expressive Elements (*“Students employ expressive elements of music to communicate abstract thoughts, ideas, and meaning; to share the depth of the human experience; and for self-expression and understanding.”*)

-Historical and Cultural Elements (*“Students listen to, respond to, and perform music from a wide range of genres in a culturally authentic manner, reflecting the diverse nature of people groups and cultures across the world and in the US; performances demonstrate an understanding of historical and cultural contexts and reflect stylistic traditions and practice.”*)

-Evaluation of Music and Musical Performance (*“Students evaluate and analyze music for executive skill, musicianship, and artistic consideration; evaluate and analyze the individual and group performances based on appropriate criteria.”*)

(Benham, Wagner and Aten)

Outcomes

Year 1 (5th grade) Students will be able to...

- Take instrument out of case and put together/know basic maintenance (rosin, bow hair tension, etc)
- Hold their instrument in proper playing position both sitting/standing and rest position (as applicable)
- Start playing with proper wrist position and with curved/upright fingers (as appropriate)
- Play pizzicato notes with right thumb in proper position
- Hold a pencil with proper bow grip
- Play whole and half bows with either beginner or regular bow grip (depending on the physical needs of student)
- Play bow games (windshield wipers and rocket ships etc.)
- Play without excessive tension (whole body and both hands)
- Play simple patterns and sections of songs by rote
- Identify F# and C#'s
- Play with 'high 2' pattern realizing this only applies to F# and C#
- Play with 'low 2' pattern realizing this produces F and C
- Play a 2, 4, then 8 bar phrases fluently (without excessive or long pauses)
- Recognize Whole, Half, Quarter and Eighth notes and corresponding rests and be able to hold them for the correct amount of time
- Play simple songs in 4/4, 3/4, 2/2, and 6/8 meters
- Compose 4 bar rhythmic pattern using combinations of whole, half and quarter notes notated on middle line of staff

- Compose 4 bar melody (different pitches) using whole notes; another using half notes; another using quarter notes, another using combination of rhythms (notes and rests)
- Play pre-shifting games
- Identify the difference between upbows and downbows
- Play legato and staccato notes
- Recognize and play with dynamic variation piano and forte
- Recognize and follow repeat signs/road map
- Play most of the music in beginning strings method books
- Play one octave D, G and C major scales
- Identify key signatures for D, G and C
- Improvise a rhythm on a repeated note
- Listen and identify different characters within pieces (Peter and the Wolf)
- Listen to a variety of music (folk/fiddle/Latin/Western Classical)
- Repeat sung/clapped rhythms and melodic passages

Year 2 (6th grade) Students will be able to...

- Demonstrate prior knowledge from Year 1 (5th Grade)
- Special care in reviewing posture/playing position and shifting games
- Play the music in the second half of the string method books
- Play Grade 1 level music
- Cello/Bass be able to shift to 4th position with relative accuracy (Bass ½ position)
- Play extensions with proper technique
- Violin/Viola be able to shift to 3rd position with relative accuracy
- Be able to play easier songs (Mary Had a Little Lamb) in 3rd and 4th positions (respectively)
- Play a triplet rhythm
- Play A major scale
- Play a two octave scale of their choice C, G, D or A
- Identify/follow dynamic markings pp, p, mp, mf, f, ff, cresc. and decresc.
- Compose an 8 bar piece of music with a variety of note values/rhythms and a range of a fifth at least.
- Working in partners compose an 8 bar duet
- Introduce forms as they appear in the work (ABA Forms)
- Improvise within a I and IV and V chord as the instructor indicates
- Listen to a variety of musical styles (Baroque/Classical/Romantic) as it relates to the music being played in class and comparing it to music being played
- Identify trouble areas, begin to strategize how to deal with problem areas (practice techniques)
- Be familiar with different types of music (variety of Jazz)
- Bow distribution (as appropriate to student size and development)
- Identify if they are sharp/flat when tuning

- Beginning sightreading skills (roadmap/key/sharps and flats/ dynamics/difficult parts)
- Rhythmic poison (identify rhythm that is clapped out of several choices)
- Identify a phrase as a musical sentence, give it shape and direction
- Play a levels 1 and 1.5 pieces

Year 3 (7th grade) Students will be able to...

- Demonstrate prior knowledge from Years 1 and 2 (5th and 6th grade)
- Special care in reviewing posture/playing position and shifting games
- Introduce vibrato games (waving, knuckle taps on body of instrument)
- Cello/Bass may achieve vibrato by the end of this year
- Violin/Viola Shift to 3rd and 5th position, introduce 2nd and 4th
- Cello/Bass Shift to 4th position, 2nd, 3rd, 5th positions Bass – Half position
- Follow more complex musical markings, including roadmaps with D.C. al Fine etc.
- Compose short pieces (solos/duets/trios) between 8 and 16 bars in length with varying rhythm/tempo/keys and time signatures, use more complicated forms and/or repeats and more complex musical markings
- Play with different bow strokes legato detache, (beginning) staccato, marcato, etc.
- Play with a characteristic sound for the instrument with full bows and good bow distribution.
- Improvise using I, ii, IV, and V and V7 chords
- Take turns solo improvising using chords over repeated notes/patterns in small groups
- Use sightreading skills to sing passages and clap rhythms in a new piece
- Recognize if instrument is in tune/sharp/flat and tune instrument on their own
- Listen to a variety of examples of world music
- Identify Western Music Timeline: Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Modern/20th century music
- Identify 3 composers/musicians from each musical time period
- Compose a 'fun' piece (16 bars) with extended techniques (col legno, taps, alternate tunings, words, etc)
- Identify trouble areas/practice strategies
- Recognize and play in compound meters
- Play 1, 1.5 and easy 2 level pieces

Year 4 (8th grade)

- Demonstrate prior knowledge from Years 1-3 (5th -7th grades)
- Beginning vibrato (arm vibrato) All strings can play
- Play C, G, D, A, E, one octave scale (Pick two to play 2 octaves)
- Compose 16 bar piece for instrument outside of expertise (low strings compose for high strings, high strings for low strings; know limits of instrument and ranges)
- Identify good practice habits
- Bow distribution and unified ensemble bowings
- Easily identify phrases and characters/differences in style within a piece

- Match pitch and tune with ease
- Begin developing overall fluidity of motion while playing the instrument
- Play level 1.5 and 2, harder 2 pieces

Year 5/6 (9th 10th grade) Students will be able to...

- Demonstrate prior knowledge from Years 1-4 (5th -8th grades)
- Play all major scales one octave and 3 minor scales (a, e and b min)
- Practice shifting with arpeggios
- Play a Blues scale
- Improvise on a Blues scale
- Music History group project (students get in small groups and present on dates stylistic/characteristics of musical time period, notable composers/musicians and famous pieces)
- Students will divide into groups and work on chamber music 1 chamber music concert per year
- Demonstrate knowledge of basic music theory including mastery of Circle of Fifths and basic harmonic progressions
- Compose a 16 bar piece that is written for a wind/brass/percussion instrument
- Change strings on their instrument and reset bridge if it falls (basic maintenance)
- Listen, identify and play with appropriate style (bow technique)
Baroque/Classical/Romantic
- Play with solid intonation
- Identify different musical forms (ABA, Rondo, diff. concerto and sonata, etc)
- Play level 2 and level 3 pieces

Year 7/8 (11th 12th grade)

- Demonstrate prior knowledge from Years 1-6 (5th -10th grades)
- Play all major and minor scales one octave (pick 2 major and 2 minor 2 octave)
- Play with intermediate to advanced technique including fluid vibrato, shifting, posture, bow distribution, flexibility in both left and right hands.
- Play without tension
- Identify and play with correct style/character for piece
- Compose a piece of their choosing, must be at least 16 measures.
- Compose a short theme and 3 variations based on the theme.
- Play level 2, level 3, 3.5 and sometimes level 4 pieces (depending on needs of the ensemble)