

FREEMAN

HIGH SCHOOL

ORCHESTRA

Dear Future Golden Eagle Orchestra Students and Families,

Congratulations on three terrific years in your junior high orchestra program. It's hard to believe that you're about to embark upon your high school career and join us at Freeman High School! Not only will you be part of the foundation of this program, but your time in the coming years will have an outstanding impact in our school and community.

Freeman High School will offer you a comprehensive course of study in orchestra (i.e. String Orchestra, Full Orchestra, Region Orchestra, All-State Orchestra, Solo and Ensemble) along with the opportunity to build quality life-long friendships and associations with many of the finest students and teachers/clinicians in our state and beyond. You will have the opportunity to prepare and perform many of the greatest musical works written for your instrument and your level of orchestra. Our students are well-rounded individuals as well as team players.

The FHS Orchestras have competed very successfully in their inaugural year, earning all Superior Ratings at the Solo and Ensemble Contest, multiple Superior ratings at the UIL Concert and Music Literacy Evaluation, and were named Best High School Orchestra at a local festival. Even without a senior class, our orchestras have reached amazing new levels that will continue to grow as you join us!

Outside of music, students can work hard towards being the best students at Freeman with far-ranging achievements in academia and sports. Within the orchestras, students will enjoy performing great repertoire, making new friends, and being part of a hard-working, fun-loving, and musical family.

The incoming freshmen who have joined the Freeman HS Orchestra are an integral part of the rapid growth and tremendous success of our orchestra program. Including orchestra in your four-year plan can require some juggling on the part of the student, but it is definitely possible, and the extra effort is well worth it. If you have any questions and/or concerns in regard to your schedule for high school, please feel free to reach out to me. As an exciting and upcoming orchestra program, we want YOU to be part of making musical history!

If you have any questions about FHS Orchestra, please feel free to reach out! I am more than happy to help.

Jennifer Gingell, *Director of Orchestras*

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Joining the Orchestra

All students who join the Freeman High School Orchestra should submit an audition to be considered for correct placement within the program. Audition material will be released in March 2026. Additionally, I will be asking each campus director to fill out a Director's Recommendation regarding each student's work ethic, response to critique, and responsibility.

The rubric students will be graded with is as follows: Intonation, Bow Control, Rhythm, Tempo, Posture, and Bow Hold.

Students not currently at Freeman HS (i.e. a junior high or other high school) will record a video of themselves performing their audition material and submit it via Google Form.



Events

- Fall, UIL Preview, and Spring Concerts
- Region Orchestra Auditions
 - Area, All-State Auditions (for qualifying students)
- Chamber Music Concert
- Solo and Ensemble Contest
 - State Solo and Ensemble; UIL Chamber Music
- UIL Concert and Music Literacy Evaluation
- Socials
 - Poster and Premieres, S'morchestra Party, Homecoming Potluck and Parade, Main Event, Game Night, Spring Banquet, overnight trips, and more!
- Opportunities for volunteer hours (on campus, field trips, and with junior high programs)

Frequently Asked Questions

How large is the orchestra?

While we started with just 37 members in our first year, we have more than doubled to 78 in our second year! Next year, we anticipate having roughly 100 students, divided into four class periods. There will be four string orchestras and one full orchestra: Arietta, Cambiata, Serenata, Sinfonia, and the Symphony. Each group works towards an advanced level of musicianship and plays great repertoire. No matter what your ability is, there is a home for every player in the Golden Eagle Orchestra!

What can I expect as a member of the high school orchestra program?

You have come from an outstanding middle school orchestra program with terrific directors and an outstanding musical background. Just expect much of the same commitment to excellence and pursuit of knowledge!

Do I have to audition to be part of the Freeman Orchestras?

Students are assigned to orchestras according to ability, attitude, instrumentation, and director's recommendation. To be placed correctly in Orchestra, an audition is necessary to ensure an appropriate level ensemble.



I'm worried about high school credit and my GPA!

Following your freshman year, students enrolled in subsequent years may elect to take orchestra for GPA-exempt status. This means that if you are making an 80 or above for orchestra, that grade will not impact your GPA. You must have completed one full year of orchestra in a KISD HS campus to qualify.

Can a student participate in Athletics and Orchestra?

ABSOLUTELY! It is a misconception that students who are enrolled in Fine Arts must choose between Athletics and Music. Conflicts sometimes happen between these courses, however we will work them out. Good communication between students, families, coaches, and teachers is important in fostering a positive balance between your passions.

Do I bring my cello or bass back and forth to school?

Like your junior high program, students may use a Katy ISD cello or bass for a fee per year. Violinists and violists will transport their instruments back and forth and will be assigned a locker to use on campus.

What expenses are incurred with membership in the orchestras?

Students must pay an Activity Fee at the beginning of the year. Students choosing to participate in our social events and spring trip pay for their admission separately.

How can my parents be involved in the orchestra program?

We are in need of chaperones and volunteers throughout the year! Families can contribute their time towards chaperoning events, contributing baked goods or snacks for receptions, hosting contests, and helping fundraise for various items. We hope that each family can attend all of the concerts and performances to be part of the audience.

What benefits are enjoyed by being a member of the Orchestras?

Members of the Orchestra reap many benefits! Not only will you improve as a musician, but you will also get to explore music theory, music history, and music appreciation. Orchestra has real-world applications such as: teamwork, discipline, dedication, commitment, pride, and integrity. We will work together to serve the community through music and volunteerism. Individual honors, such as Region, Area, and State Orchestra membership, medals at UIL Solo and Ensemble, and a Freeman High School Letter Jacket, are some of the incentives for being a member of this elite organization!



Colleges and universities are seeking out students who have been enrolled in long-term fine arts such as Band, Choir, Theatre, and Orchestra. In participating throughout all of high school, you are part of an organization not for 4, but 7 years!! Consider belonging to this team for more than just the fine arts credit: colleges and universities understand and believe in the dedication, commitment, and responsibility it takes for students to learn an instrument. They are seeking out students who have excelled in fine arts.

