



**CURRY M.S. HANDBOOK
FOR**



STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Mrs. Patricia D. Fuentes, M.S., N.B.C.T.
Music Director



Dear Parents,

Greetings and welcome to a brand-new school year! I am delighted to be your child's music teacher and look forward to meeting you soon.

Our music program is one of the best educational opportunities offered at Curry Middle School. **Teamwork, dedication, self-discipline, creativity, leadership, and responsibility** are values taught within the music curriculum. These values are sought out by employers today. Music classes also enable students to expand their minds with knowledge and skills they can transfer to other life experiences. Science has proven that music students are **faster learners** and are often **better able to multi-task** and use **higher-order thinking skills** when compared to non-music students.

Our **communication** is very important. Contact me with any questions or concerns at pfuentes@dadeschools.net. I will reply within 48 hours. My teacher webpage found at www.pfuentes.weebly.com is a useful resource for students and parents.

Student **attendance** is very important, too. Please, use the following link to review the school's attendance policy, explained in my teacher website. Scroll to the bottom of the page: <https://pfuentes.weebly.com/school.html>

Music students participate in **field trips and activities**. You can be a **chaperon** and share memorable experiences with your child. Do not forget to sign up to be a **School Volunteer** in the M-DCPS portal at www.dadeschools.net. Please, select "Curry" as one of your school choices.

Finally, please, encourage your child to **practice** without interruptions for a minimum of **30 minutes every day**. It should be part of their daily home routine.

Your child's success is my mission! Let us work together! ☺

Musically,
Mrs. Patricia D. Fuentes
Master of Science in Music Education
National Board-Certified Teacher

What Is Music?

- I. **Music is a Science:** Written music is a graph with volume changes, melody, and harmony all at once in perfect control of time.
- II. **Music is Mathematical:** It is based on subdivisions of time into fractions which must be done instantaneously, not worked out on paper.
- III. **Music is Language:** Music notation are symbols that represent sounds.
- IV. **Music is Athletics:** It requires gross motor skills to control the diaphragm, back, and chest and fine motor skills to control fingers, hands, lips, cheeks, and vocal chords.
- V. **Music is the Art of Sound:** It combines all its tangible qualities to communicate emotion and elevates us to communicate beyond words.

Why Study Music?

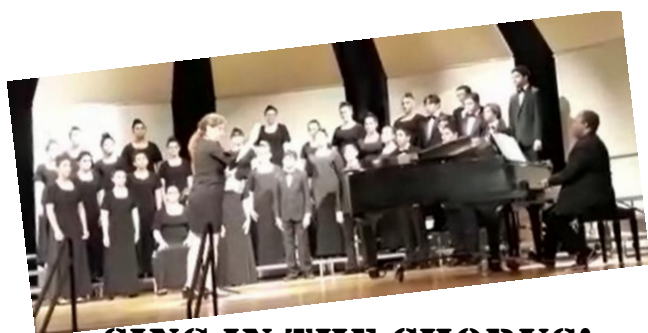


Playing a musical instrument rewires the brain like no other activity. As a result, musicians have larger, more sophisticated neural pathways between the left and right hemispheres of their brains. People who study music for a minimum of three years have been scientifically proven to have higher mathematics and language scores than their non-musical counterparts. Musicians have also been proven to have better memory, better communication skills, are better able to multi-task, and are better able to work collaboratively to reach a common goal with others. Employers love all that!

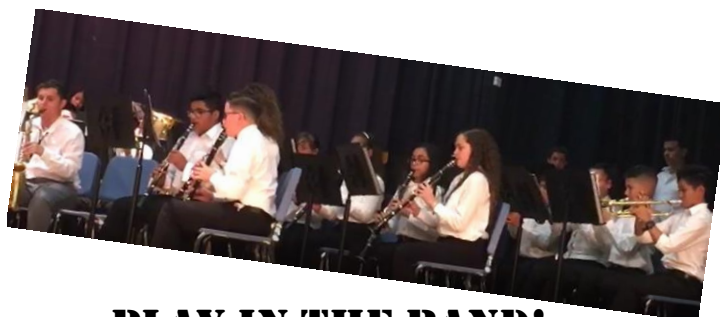


Curry M.S. Music Department Band & Chorus

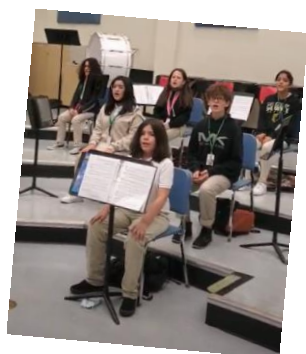
Mrs. Patricia Fuentes, M.S., N.B.C.T.
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SING IN THE CHORUS!



PLAY IN THE BAND!



LEARN NEW SKILLS



MAKE MEMORIES



**PERFORM IN SPECIAL
EVENTS**



**MAKE FRIENDS AND
GO TO UNIVERSAL STUDIOS!**



**RECEIVE AWARDS &
RECOGNITIONS AT
THE BANQUET**



SERVE YOUR COMMUNITY

Music Class Grading

1. **Attendance:** When a student is absent from class, the student misses vital information and much-needed practice during class rehearsal. If a student is absent from school, the student is responsible for bringing an attendance admit provided by their homeroom teacher or the main office excusing the absence. Also, the student is responsible for asking the teacher to provide any missed work or assignment.
 - The academic grade for an **excused** absence from rehearsal will be an "X" (excused from assignment) and will neither raise nor lower the student's academic average in class.
 - The academic grade for an **unexcused** absence from rehearsal will be a "Z" (0 points awarded) and will lower the student's academic average in class.
2. **Academic Grade:** This indicates how much your child has learned. Your child's academic grade will consist of:
 - **Performances:** Your child will participate in at least one public performance. Students are told in advance of required performances so they and their families can plan to attend. Performances are worth 4 academic grades.
 - **Written, Instrument, or Singing Tests:** Students will be given written tests to assess their musical knowledge. They will also play their instrument or use their voice to demonstrate their musical skills. Tests are worth 2 academic grades.
 - If a student earns a C, D, or F in any performance test, the student may re-take the test before the end of grading period. The higher of the two attempts will be the recorded grade earned.
 - **Classwork and Class Participation:** Organization and time management skills are linked to academic success. Students must bring items needed for class and be present with good punctuality. Students who forget their materials, supplies, or instruments at home, or who do not practice their music will receive a "Z" grade. Classwork and Participation are worth 1 academic grade.
 - **Home-learning and Practice:** All students must practice, complete home-learning assignments, and review lessons covered in class daily. Students who do not take their materials, supplies, or instruments home will receive a "Z" grade in home-learning and practice assessments throughout the year.

- If a student fails to submit an assignment by its due date, the student may submit the assignment late without penalty.
 - **After-school Rehearsals:** It is sometimes necessary to schedule after-school rehearsal as we approach concert and ensemble evaluation dates. The rehearsals generally last 1 hour and are scheduled once or twice a week. The after-school rehearsal dates are shared with the students in advance.
 - If a student misses an after-school rehearsal, the student will earn an academic grade of “Z” (0 points awarded).
 - The student may video record a 1-hour practice session at home and submit it in place of the missed rehearsal by uploading the video to OneDrive and sharing the link to the video with the teacher
 - The teacher will review the tape and award the appropriate grade for the work submitted
 - This policy may be suspended pending a parent-teacher conference if the missed rehearsals or video submissions are negatively affecting the student or the ensemble.
3. **Effort Grade:** This indicates how much responsibility your child assumes towards learning. Paying class fees on time and bringing the materials, books, instrument, and instrument supplies regularly to class are factors that will impact your child’s effort grade.
- **Yearly Class Fees:**
 - Band/Chorus Rental: \$6
 - Band/Chorus Fee: \$4
 - **Class Materials:**
 - (1) black 3-ring binder with two pockets (2 inches wide)
 - (at least 30) plastic sheet protectors
 - (at least 10) ruled sheets of paper
 - (2) pencils with erasers
 - (1) colored ink pen (excluding the color “black”)
 - (1) yellow highlighter
 - **Books** may be purchased from any music store or in the music room:
 - All Bands: Standard of Excellence Method Book 1 (Red Book)
 - All Choruses: Sing at First Sight, Level 1 (Blue Book)

4. **Conduct Grade:** This indicates how positively or negatively your child's behavior impacts their learning during class. The Code of Student Conduct will be used to assess a student's conduct grade. It can be found at

http://ehandbooks.dadeschools.net/policies/90/Secondary_Eng.pdf .

In addition, compliance with the following class rules and procedures will also be expected.

- **Music Class Rules and Procedures:**
 - Always attend class/rehearsal and arrive on time or bring written documentation of your absence or tardiness
 - Raise your hand before you speak and do not disrupt the class/rehearsal
 - Follow directions the first time they are given.
 - Keep food, beverages, and gum out of sight. Water is acceptable.
 - Remain in your assigned seat unless told otherwise
 - Electronic devices will be used only under teacher's direction.
 - Be polite and do not disrupt the learning environment.
 - No hazing or bullying. Do not touch people and things that are not yours.
- **Those who follow the rules** will remain with an "A" in conduct and will:
 - fill student leadership roles within the class and music department
 - be given permission to attend special activities and functions
 - be considered for end-of-year awards and recognitions
- **Those who do not follow the rules** will receive a lower conduct grade and will:
 - be given a verbal reprimand
 - be given detentions (not documented in the M-DCPS student file)
 - have their parents called by phone or contacted by email
 - participate in parent-teacher-student conferences (not documented in the M-DCPS student file)
 - be referred to the school administration (**documented** in the M-DCPS student file)

Information about Band Classes

5. **Curry Cubs Band:** Students enrolled in this full year class will have the opportunity to advance in three levels of achievement: Band 1, 2, and 3. Beginning Band (Band 1) introduces instrument technique, individual musicianship, how to create and manipulate music through electronic media, and the opportunity to work with others in a group. Symphonic Band (Band 2 and Band 3) continues building upon the goals of Band 1 while allowing students to play a variety of music, perform during school events, and attend field trips throughout the year.
6. **Band Instrument Selection:** Choosing a band instrument is not something that should be rushed or attempted haphazardly. Every student is unique.
- **Beginning Band:** Students will spend two weeks reviewing how to read music notation, learning about the families of instruments, and selecting their instrument.
Once they make their choice, they must play their chosen instrument for one full year!
 - **Symphonic Band:** Symphonic Band students who wish to learn a new instrument may consider it only after speaking to his/her parents and me. It is not a decision that should be made lightly. Instrument rent and supplies as well as new fingerings and clef differences should be taken into consideration.
 - **Instrument Supplies** (for band students only) may be purchased from any music store or in the music room:
 - Flute: cleaning handkerchief
 - Clarinet/Saxophone: box of reed(s), cork grease
 - Brass Instruments: small hand towel (for spit); oil; slide grease
 - Percussion: drum sticks (size SD1), drum pad
 - **Borrowing an Instrument** (for band students only): Once your child has chosen an instrument, they must practice every day to achieve success. School instruments are available but limited. Some students may not be able to play their first choice of instrument. Instruments are available at the school. If you decide to borrow an instrument from Lamar Louise Curry Middle School, it will be in good condition but will not be brand-new. Any damage that occurs while the student borrows the instrument is the monetary responsibility of the student and their parents. In other words, repairs or maintenance to the instrument must be paid by the student.

- **Instrument Care and Maintenance** (for band students only):
Instruments are delicate and often fragile things. Repairing them can often be costly. Please, note that each student is responsible for his/her own instrument. Students should not allow any other person to borrow or hold their instrument unless the person has been trained to handle the instrument correctly. This includes brothers, sisters, cousins, friends, and relatives.
- **Do**
 - Place the instrument inside its case with the lid closed and latched when not in use.
 - Open the case on the floor. It cannot fall and break.
 - Maintain the instrument free from dust, moisture (spit), and heat.
- **Don't**
 - **Leave the instrument in an extreme temperature environment (hot car, cold weather, rainy porch).**
 - **Leave the instrument unattended on a chair or on the floor.**
 - **Allow anyone to hold or play your instrument without your permission. If it is damaged, you are responsible for it!**

Information about Chorus Classes

7. **Curry Singers Chorus:** Students enrolled in this full year class will have the opportunity to advance in three levels of achievement: Chorus 1, 2, and 3. They will learn how to sing correctly using appropriate vocal technique, how to read music notation, how to create and manipulate music through electronic media, will be taught aspects of music history, individual musicianship, and the opportunity to work with others in a group. They will also sing a variety of music, perform during school events, and attend field trips throughout the year.

Information about Exploring Music Classes

8. **Exploring Music:** Students enrolled in this full year class will learn how to sing correctly, how to play selected musical instruments, how to read music notation, how to create and manipulate music through electronic media, will be taught aspects of music history, perform in a concert, and consequently grow to respect the vital role that music plays in our society. Students in this exploratory class are encouraged to continue their musical training in Band or Chorus after the end of the course.

Events, Awards, and Recognitions

10. **Students who participate and excel in music activities** at Curry Middle School are recognized for their efforts and achievements during class rehearsals, during school-wide announcements, and during the yearly Music Banquet held in May. The **Music Banquet** is the Music Department's culminating activity where we all celebrate a great year of learning new things, improving our skills, and growing as musicians. All students are encouraged to participate or qualify in the following areas of recognition:

- **Participation Certificates:** All students enrolled in a music ensemble are recognized of their hours of practice at home, preparation for rehearsals during and after school, and personal individual growth as musicians.

Solo and Ensemble School Performance Ribbon: Students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade who perform a Solo or Ensemble act during the Winter or Spring Concerts are recognized for their individual efforts and courage in preparing a solo piece or duet, trio, quartet, or small ensemble.

- **Concert MPA Participation Ribbon:** Intermediate and Advanced students who are approved by the director to participate in the District's Concert Music Performance Adjudication evaluation are recognized for their teamwork and commitment to their ensemble. Their extra hours of rehearsal and practice to achieve an overall successful score in their performance is worthy of praise.
- **Solo and Ensemble MPA Participation Pin:** Students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade who are approved by the director to participate in the District's Solo and Ensemble Music Performance Adjudication evaluation are recognized for their individual efforts and courage in preparing a solo piece or duet, trio, quartet, or small ensemble. Their individual commitment to excellence to achieve a successful score in their performance is admirable.
- **District Honor Band or Honor Chorus Audition Ribbon:** Intermediate and Advanced students who audition for the District's Honor Ensembles are recognized with a ribbon for their individual efforts and courage in preparing for their audition all the required scales and a selected piece of music, as well as performing a sight-reading excerpt without prior preparation.
- **District Honor Band or Honor Chorus Audition Ribbon and Participation Pin:** Intermediate and Advanced students who, based

on audition results, are selected to participate in the District's Honor Ensembles are recognized with a ribbon and a pin for their individual efforts and courage. They are also recognized for being selected to participate in the Honor Ensemble by district personnel, learning all the musical selections, attending rehearsals, and participating in the final district concert.

- **Highest Grade Point Average in Music Class Certificate and Trophy:** Students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade who obtain the highest grade-point average in their perspective classes are commended for their study habits and tenacity. During the Music Banquet, they receive a certificate of merit. During the school-wide grade level awards assemblies, they receive a trophy.
- **Outstanding Performer Medals:** Students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade who consistently perform their instrument with the highest caliber of skill and musical ability are honored for their love of their instrument, consistent practice habits, and musical achievement. Medalists fall under the following categories: Outstanding Vocalist, Outstanding Woodwind Player, Outstanding Brass Player, Outstanding Percussion Player, and Outstanding Keyboard Player.
- **Zoltan Kodaly Mentor Trophy Award:** Zoltan Kodaly was a Hungarian composer and music education advocate of the 19th century. He believed that all, not just a select few, should learn music and use music as a form of self-expression. Intermediate and Advanced students who receive this trophy award embody his spirit. They give of themselves to help others achieve greatness, often being the unsung heroes of our music department.
- **Officer Trophy Awards and Perpetual Plaques:** An ensemble is only as strong as its student leaders who represent the best qualities of a Curry Cubs Band and Curry Singers Chorus ensemble member. The 8th grade Advanced students who receive this trophy award demonstrate leadership qualities, great communication skills, empathy, and camaraderie, and steer their peers into positive opportunities and behaviors. Eligible officer positions are "Captain," "Vice-Captain," and "Secretary." The names of the officers are included in the classroom's Perpetual Officer Plaques. It is forever displayed on the wall so future Curry music students will recognize the officers' dedication to their ensemble.
- **Exemplary Musician Trophy Award and Perpetual Plaque:** An exemplary musician is ideally a student who can exemplify every aspect of great musicianship: vocal talent, instrumental talent, desire

to learn new things, ability to grasp musical concepts quickly, ability to learn things on his/her own, ability to teach others with patience and success, ability to play more than one instrument, and desire to seek out musical performance opportunities outside of class norms. The 8th grade Advanced student who receives this trophy award is completely committed to musical excellence in more than one strand. The name of the Exemplary Musician is included in the classroom's Perpetual Honor Plaque. It is forever displayed on the wall so future Curry music students will recognize the musician's exemplary work and commitment to their art form.

Parental Involvement

11. **Volunteers**: Parents are an integral part of the Music Department's mission to promote music at Curry M.S. Concerts, field trips, evaluations, the awards assembly, and the banquet always need a few extra hands in order to become a success. If you would like to be a chaperone in any of these events, please register as a parent volunteer through the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Portal. Please, visit the Parent Portal at www.dadeschools.net to sign up. Once you obtain a parent volunteer number, please let me know so I can count on you for field trips and special events.