

ORCHESTRA COURSES

West Career & Tech 2025-2026



BEGINNING

STRINGS ONLY, NO ASSESSMENT REQUIRED

This one-year course is designed for students with no prior experience playing a bowed string instrument. The curriculum introduces fundamental techniques, including posture, bowing, tone production, rhythm, and basic music reading. Students will learn about the role of string music in their cultural and musical heritage while building foundational skills necessary for individual and group performance. Emphasis is placed on consistent practice, developing proper technique, and cultivating an appreciation for ensemble playing.



INTERMEDIATE

STRINGS ONLY, PLACEMENT ASSESSMENT REQUIRED

This one-year course is designed for bowed string students who have advanced skills beyond Middle School Chamber Orchestra or Beginning Orchestra. The curriculum focuses on developing the skills necessary for independent musicianship and includes an exploration of string literature from 1600 to the present. Students will refine techniques such as third position and higher, double-stopping, vibrato, and harmonics while enhancing articulation, dynamics, rhythm, and tone production. Students will engage with repertoire at Grade 2 difficulty and higher, with private instruction strongly recommended to support their growth.



ADVANCED

PHILHARMONIC, PLACEMENT ASSESSMENT REQUIRED

This one-year course is designed for students of string, wind, brass, and percussion instruments. Students will explore the rich heritage of orchestral music, studying its evolution in style and genres, articulation, dynamics, rhythm, and tone production throughout history. Students will participate in a variety of performance opportunities to refine their skills and gain ensemble experience. A basic understanding of music theory is also expected. Pianists with advanced proficiency and strong sight-reading skills, as well as guitar players with exceptional sight-reading ability, may audition for this ensemble.



CHAMBER

STRINGS ONLY, PLACEMENT ASSESSMENT REQUIRED

This one-year course is the highest-level ensemble offered for advanced bowed string students. The ensemble focuses on performing highly stylized chamber orchestra repertoire, including works of significant technical and musical complexity. Students are expected to demonstrate an exceptionally high level of proficiency on their instruments, including mastery of advanced techniques such as shifting to higher positions, double stops, harmonics, and interpreting complex rhythms. A basic understanding of music theory is also required. The repertoire typically includes music at Grade 4, 5, and higher levels of difficulty.