

Dear string parents,

**The orchestra is focused on four things this quarter:**

- ✓ Review previous skills and get first-year students caught up
- Improve our note-reading ability
- Study the art of practice
- Learn the notes of the G-string and earn Green Belt

**Time - Putting First Things First**

One of the things we are studying is the art of practice. Effective practice involves 2 components – how much time you spend, and what you do during that time. Let's examine the first component.

Just how much time should one dedicate to practice? There's only so much time in a week, and how one allocates their time depends on one's goals and values. I know there are things which I prioritize first in my life, such as family, food, and sleep. And I also wish to strike a balance between lesser priorities such as practice, hobbies, and free time.

I trust that each of my students and their families have their own priorities as well.

So how does one divide one's time between priorities? How does one find a good balance?

In class, we're using a tool called a **visual schedule**. On their schedule, students reserve time for each of their Big Rocks, and then they can see an overall picture of how they spend their time. Some students participate in a lot of activities, while others prefer a more relaxed approach. There are no rights or wrongs in this! Your visual schedule is a personal tool; it won't be graded and everyone's schedule will look different. Once they visualize their full schedule, students can more easily decide when they'd like to practice.

There is a side benefit with this activity: students get to reflect on which things are important to them and then practice time management. Do their personal goals align with their use of time? When I was introduced to this tool, I realized at the time that my schedule did not support my Big Rocks. I was inspired to make changes, and I've experienced greater satisfaction in my life since then. I hope that your child also finds this project to be valuable.

What can you do to help as a parent? **I'd like you to collaborate with your child** as they create their practice routine. Look over their schedule with them. Is their practice routine realistic? Is it a plan they'll actually want to follow? Will it allow them to achieve success?

And then, **please support your child as they work to establish their practice routine**. Will they need help remembering when to practice? Do they have a quiet space free from distraction?

This will be the first draft of a practice schedule. If all goes well, it could last all year. More likely, as they implement it, kids may find they wish to improve it. Or perhaps they start a new activity and need to adjust their practice schedule. I encourage students to adapt their plan as the need arises.

Would you like to see examples of practice schedules for different personalities? Or learn how musicians structure an effective practice session? Visit <https://www.string-samurai.com/practice-tips> to learn more!

Yours in partnership,



**Steven Lambert**

*Orchestra Director*

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**Chaparral Elementary, Gateway Pointe Elementary,  
& Higley Traditional Academy  
HIGLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #60**

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