

Good evening, string parents.

Let's talk about practice! Practice is essential to mastering an instrument, and effective practicing is a skill which itself takes some, **ahem** ... practice.

This week's practice challenge

This week, we're focusing on what may be the hardest part of a practice session ... the choice to start! There were so many times growing up when my instrument was sitting right there, but it seemed like so much work to take it out of the case and set it up. Yet whenever I began a practice session, it was fun! I'd get so caught up that time would pass in the blink of an eye. Thus, the first habit kids must develop is the willpower to proactively initiate practice.

Today, kids received a Superstar Practice Chart. It measures **how many days you initiate a practice session**. That practice session can last an hour or it may last 5 minutes, but so long as you've *started* a practice session, mark it down on the chart! Next Monday, we'll see how everyone did and graph the results on our bulletin board. The goal is 5 or more days of practice for every student. Students who practice 6 or 7 days will get special recognition on our chart!



How can I, the parent, help?

You can have a tremendous influence on your child's musical development right now, by helping them establish a practice routine. Designating a consistent time and place for practicing will help it to become a habit.

The ideal practice environment is somewhere quiet, where students can focus without distraction and where they also won't bother the rest of your family. Discuss with your child where and when this can be. Then, have a conversation with the family so everyone knows to keep distractions away.

You may be wondering ... how long should one practice? How often? Please visit <https://www.string-samurai.com/practice-tips> to learn these answers!

*"One good thing about music,
when it hits, you feel no pain."
-Bob Marley*

What should I be practicing? (1st-year students)

The primary objective for the first weeks of home practice is to build finger strength – muscle and callus. Once developed, we'll be able to produce a full sound and play for long durations. **Until we build this strength**, students need to practice *every day for about 5 minutes*. That is the minimum it takes – you may do more if your fingers can handle it. But don't overdo it! When your fingertips hurt, that's your body's way of telling you to take a break. If you practice the White Finger Pattern a little bit every day, it'll only take a week or two for your fingers to acclimate to orchestra and earn your White Belt.

What should I be practicing? (2nd-year students)

Practice for your next belt! We'll continue from where you left off last year. Our class goal is for everyone to complete green belt this quarter, but you can set your individual goal as far as you'd like!

Sixth-graders will also have twice-weekly assignments out of their Essential Elements books. These will help to build note-reading fluency, and students should take as much time as necessary to learn the notes for these exercises in between classes. Gateway's sixth-grade has already received their first of these assignments; Chaparral and HTA will get their first assignment later this week.

Yours in partnership,



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

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