



HEMPFIELD STRINGS

PROGRAM HANDBOOK

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THE DIRECTOR – NILE MENDOZA WILSON

Degrees and Certification

- Bachelor of Music in Music Education, St. Scholastica's College
- Master of Science in Secondary Music Education, Old Dominion University
- Pennsylvania Instructional Certificate I, All-level Music
- Texas Educator Certification, All-Level Music
- Suzuki Book 1 and 2, Violin and Viola Registered Teacher

Born and raised in the Philippines, I began violin lessons at the age of ten in a government-subsidized school for learning how to play string instruments. With a successful career as an educator and orchestral musician, many assume that I took my musical study seriously at a young age, but I was exactly the opposite. Studying the violin was not something I initiated, but the idea of being able to play with other children was my major reason for participating. My lack of interest in practicing made my progress slow, and my teachers quickly dismissed me as a failure. When I was thirteen, I was removed from the string school. Only then did I realize that playing in an orchestra was an important part of my life. After a year without any musical activities, I was introduced to a Filipino Juilliard graduate named Basilio Manalo. In addition to his career as a soloist and concertmaster, he had trained many outstanding orchestra musicians in the Philippines. While under Mr. Manalo's tutelage, I decided to pursue a degree in music performance and received a full scholarship to attend St. Scholastica's College. I encountered many challenges as a performance major, including fierce competition and constant bullying from people who did not think I would succeed in music. At that time, I decided to become a music teacher, but continued performing as an orchestral musician.

With only a box of belongings and my violin, I immigrated to the United States in 2001 to marry my long time love. New challenges awaited me in my new home, including learning how to drive at 24 years of age. I quickly found out that even with a teaching degree, schools were not always interested in someone with a degree from a foreign country. Opportunity came when I was offered a graduate scholarship to Old Dominion University after a successful audition. Perhaps the greatest lesson that my Old Dominion professors provided me was changing my self-perception of being a failure. During my stay at Old Dominion, I became concertmaster of the university orchestra and first violinist of the top quartet. I even won the concerto competition and performed as a soloist with the orchestra. All of these opportunities were things I never thought I could achieve. It was this change of self-perception that changed my life; it permitted me to become a successful musician and educator.

During the 2016-2017 school year, I was hired to join the faculty of the Hempfield School District in Landisville, PA as its new middle school and high school Orchestra Director. Prior to this, I taught high school and middle school orchestras in Northside Independent School District in San Antonio, TX. My teaching has been recognized as a case study for effective teaching practices and exemplary classroom management by the best-selling authors, Dr. Harry and Rosemary Wong. I have been featured in the December 2008, January 2009, and November 2012 issues of their online column, "Effective Teaching," also appearing on the cover of "The First Days of School: How to be an Effective Teacher," and on page 61 of "The Classroom Management Book." I am currently working on my master's degree in orchestral conducting at Messiah College.

In addition to teaching music, I am a seamstress. Together with my daughters, Sophia and Luisa, we enjoy Cosplay (costume play) and often attend comic, anime, and costume conventions. My husband Drew—who is also an educator—and I have been married for more than a decade.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Director	2
Orchestra philosophy	3
Seating and class placement	4 – 5
Rules and procedures	6-7
Assessments and enrichment	8
Instruments and concert attire	8-9
Student leadership	10-11
Music Department awards	11-12
Payment policies	12
The Orchestra online	12

PHILOSOPHY

Like any other program in the Hempfield School District, the orchestra program emphasizes the importance of **QUALITY WORK**.

The orchestra program aims to provide an enjoyable learning environment where students can develop skills that are necessary to become competent and independent musicians.

To contribute to the success of the group, orchestra students experience a professional environment in an educational setting. The director immerses the students in practices, protocol, and etiquette identical to those followed by professional orchestras to drive learning, stage presence, and performance standards to the highest level.

An interdisciplinary approach to music education has been adopted to suit the needs of the orchestra program in educating a "whole musician." To aid students in becoming better musicians, students are educated on issues that are not musical in nature but have a direct effect on the learning process and music performance. These issues include but are not limited to performance anxiety or "stage fright", performance-related injuries, and stress. Awareness of these issues increases students' ability to achieve goals by "working smart" instead of working too hard. Students are also immersed in topics in music theory and music history to further their understanding of the music they perform.

INSTRUMENT TECHNIQUE	ESSENTIAL MUSICAL SKILLS	MUSIC APPRECIATION & MUSICAL EXPRESSION	OTHER IMPORTANT LESSONS
Left and right hand coordination	Musical symbols and their functions	A wide variety of repertoire	Proper social and job etiquette
Finger dexterity through the use of scales and etudes	Accurate sight-reading of notes and rhythms	Stylistic performance of repertoire	A professional work ethic
"Fingerboard geography" (instrument positions) and shifting	Visual and aural recognition of pitch, intervals, and tonality	Music in relation historical and cultural context	Strategies for more efficient and effective individual practice
Vibrato	Elements of music (rhythm, melody, harmony, dynamics, timbre, texture)	Music in relation to the students' lives and experiences	Musician health and the prevention of performance-related injuries
A wide repertoire of bow strokes and when to use them appropriately	Playing and singing in tune	Performing with phrasing and musical expression	Strategies on how to manage performance anxiety
Principles of sound production	Playing alone and with others	Proper audience and stage etiquette	Team work
	Directing a group and teaching other students	Objective evaluation and constructive criticism of performances	Self-discipline
			Time management
			Confidence

SEATING SYSTEM

Every orchestra class is an interesting mix of students varying in ability. In this program, every student is important to the success of the orchestra.

Competition creates a situation “where many persons must lose in order for a few to win a prized status.” The orchestra program aims to continue its tradition of replacing hostile competition between peers with teamwork. For this purpose, Advanced Placement Seating (APS) will be used.

APS is a system followed by many college and professional orchestras. This system allows the orchestra to sound at its maximum efficiency by placing strong players all around the orchestra, not just in stands closest to the conductor. APS satisfies both the competitive and the non-competitive student. Strong players who want to play leadership roles in the orchestra are given the opportunity to audition for section leader positions. Students who are happy just to be a part of the orchestra are seated in NON-HIERARCHAL order in complementary pairs. Seating in complimentary pairs allows students to learn from each other. This seating system also makes use of rotational seating. ALL STUDENTS will rotate at the beginning of the week and keep that same seating assignment until for two rehearsals. This rotation will allow students to experience the different challenges of sitting in different areas in their section. Section violinists rotate between the 1st and 2nd violin sections to experience the unique challenges in each part.

Every student is given the opportunity to give a significant contribution to their group because their importance is not attached to a chair. Because our students understand that the success of each individual contributes to the success of the group, the students themselves foster an environment where they help each other succeed.

Students with advanced playing skills are encouraged to audition and interview for a section leader position. Keep in mind, that as a section leader, students are not only assessed on playing skills; maturity and leadership skills are also considered in the selection process.

CLASS ASSIGNMENT - HIGH SCHOOL

0923 Concert Strings (Grade 9)

1.0 Credits Full-year - Alternating cycle days

Prerequisite: Students must have previous string experience and must complete a successful audition for the director.

This ensemble is for 9th grade students who play bowed string instruments. Concert Strings rehearses every other day and performs in annual scheduled concerts and other performances as announced. Students are required to perform in all concerts, which provide the basis for summative assessments during each grading period. During rehearsals, the emphasis is on ensemble skills, including tone quality, intonation, balance, rhythmic precision, articulation, emotional expression, and musical interpretation. In order to further develop these skills on an individual basis, students are strongly encouraged to study with a private teacher outside of the school day. Select members of Concert Strings have the opportunity to audition for County and District Orchestra Festivals, and may be chosen to play in the pit orchestra for the Spring Musical.

CLASS ASSIGNMENT – HIGH SCHOOL (continued)0923 Symphony Strings (Grades 10-12)

1.0 Credits Full-year - Alternating cycle days

Prerequisite: Students must have previous string experience and must complete a successful audition for the director.

This ensemble is for 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students who play bowed string instruments. Symphony Strings rehearses every other day and performs in annual scheduled concerts and other performances as announced. Students are required to perform in all concerts, which provide the basis for summative assessments during each grading period. During rehearsals, the emphasis is on ensemble skills, including tone quality, intonation, balance, rhythmic precision, articulation, emotional expression, and musical interpretation. In order to further develop these skills on an individual basis, students are strongly encouraged to study with a private teacher outside of the school day. Select members of Symphony Strings have the opportunity to audition for County and District Orchestra Festivals, and may be chosen to play in the pit orchestra for the Spring Musical.

CLASS ASSIGNMENT – MIDDLE SCHOOL7th Grade String Techniques

Semester, with the option of enrollment in an additional marking period

Prerequisite: Students must have previous string experience and must be recommended by their elementary string teacher

Students will hone techniques that will further develop skills on their instruments through the big and small group instruction. During small group instruction time, students will be grouped in chamber music ensembles of similar playing ability and be given the opportunity to perform ensemble music in a recital at the end of each quarter. While this course is not required to be in middle school orchestra, enrolling in this class will help improve your skills and better your contribution to the orchestra.

8th Grade String Techniques

Semester, with the option of enrollment in an additional marking period

Prerequisite: Students must have previous string experience and must be recommended by their previous strings teacher or qualify through audition with the director.

This course is a continuation of techniques learned during 7th Grade String Techniques. While this course is not required to be in middle school orchestra, enrolling in this class will help improve your skills and better your contribution to the orchestra.

7th and 8th Grade Orchestra

Full year, once every cycle

Prerequisite: Students must have previous string experience and must be recommended by their previous strings teacher or qualify through audition with the director.

7th and 8th grade students work together to perform orchestral music and perform during the winter and spring concerts. Students meet once every six-day cycle during FLEX.

ORCHESTRA STUDENTS WILL...

1. Be punctual to class.
2. Follow all procedures and class routines.
3. Stay on task.
4. Have all required materials in class every day.
5. Treat themselves and others with respect and kindness.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- A good quality instrument (see your director for recommended vendors) made of NATURAL-colored wood
- Rosin – recommended brands include (arranged from lowest to highest price) Hidersine, Hill, Gustav Bernardel, Jade (hypoallergenic formula), Pirastro, Melos, Andrea Soloist for violin, viola, and cello. For bass, Pops is recommended.
- Assigned music folder and sheet music
- A number 2 pencil with eraser that must always be in your music folder
- An extra set of strings if you use a personal instrument (see your director for recommended brands)
- Your school issued iPad and the following apps:
1) Guitartuna 2) Schoology 3) PDF Cabinet 4) Camera
- Violins and violas – a shoulder rest if you use one.
- Cello and bass – an endpin anchor or rockstop (if you use a school instrument, this will be provided for you).

PROCEDURESAt the beginning of class:

1. Spit out gum or candy before you enter the classroom.
2. Make sure you keep food and drinks (with the exception of water) out of the classroom.
3. Be in the classroom in your designated area as soon as the bell rings.
4. *Violins and violas:* keep your instruments in their cases until after warm-ups and stretching.
5. *Cellos and basses:* you may take instruments off the racks and out of their cases before warm-ups, but make sure you have them positioned safely with you.
6. After warm-ups and stretching, you will be given a couple of minutes to get your instruments ready. You may get your music and rosin your bows at this time. Refrain from playing at this time.
7. Wait for the A to play before tuning. Follow the tuning procedure as led by your director or concertmaster.

Tuning:

1. Director will play A on the speaker. Tune to this pitch at a mezzo piano dynamic.
2. Tune your strings in fifths (if you are comfortable doing so) on your own.
3. The director will do a final tuning check of each string. Your director will use hand signals for each string. Only play the string that is currently being tuned.
4. If you are having problem tunings by the end of this procedure, raise your hand so that your director may help you.

If you are late:

1. Give your late pass to the director.
2. Quickly get ready for class.

During class:

1. You do not need to ask permission to go to the water fountain, trash can, or pencil sharpener.
2. Restroom use will be limited to emergencies during the first and last 10 minutes of class.
3. You do not need to ask permission to go to the restroom, BUT you must sign-out and have a hall pass with you before you leave the classroom. REMEMBER: using the restroom is a privilege. Abuse of this privilege (such as loitering instead of using the restroom, being gone from the classroom for an excessive amount of time, etc.) will result in suspension of this privilege. Do not give your director a reason to suspect that you are misusing this privilege.
4. If you need to go to the nurse, see your director for a pass. If you return to the classroom after seeing the nurse, this pass must be signed by the nurse.

At the end of class:

1. Keep your instruments and music accessible until the director dismisses you.
2. You will be given 3-5 minutes before the bell to pack-up instruments and get ready for your next class.
3. Before you leave your seat:
 - Put all your music and pencils inside the folder.
 - Always clean rosin off your instrument and the stick of your before you put them back in the case/rack.
 - Loosen your bow hair before you put your bow back in the case/rack.
 - Pick up trash in your area and make sure you have all of your belongings.
4. Basses and cellos must put their folders in the folio cabinet in the Orchestra Room. Violins and violas must put their folders in their instrument cubby.
5. Cellos must put endpin anchors back in the case. Basses must pick-up rockstops and put to the instrument rack with their instrument.
6. Cellos and basses must remain in the Orchestra Room. Violins and violas may go to the Ensemble Room to put instruments in their assigned cubbies.
7. All students must stay in their assigned instrument storage areas until the bell rings to dismiss the class. No one should be waiting in the hallways or leaving class early.

If you were absent:

1. Tests are usually posted on Schoology. Check the Materials section.
2. Ask your section leader what you missed and what you need to do to catch up.
3. If your section leader does not know the answer to your question, ask your director.

TYPES OF ASSESSMENTS

Formative(30%)

- Provide opportunities for students to assess their performance with the goal of understanding their strengths and determining what they need to improve
- Allows students to practice and receive feedback from the director
- Allows students to become more proficient in a skill or understand a concept better before a summative assessment
- Includes (but are not limited to) etudes, scales, and concert music excerpts

Grades

- Short performance tests (such as scales and repertoire excerpts) are Pass or Fail, with a passing grade being a 10 and a failing grade being a 0. This is because MASTERY is the goal of instruction.
- Because the goal is MASTERY, the student will be allowed opportunities to retest after a conference with the director.
- Students who retake formative assessments will be given full credit if he or she satisfies all criteria in the performance rubric.
- Most written tests and longer performance tests (such as etudes) and will be scored based on the number of points earned by the student (anywhere from 50-100).
- Mrs. Wilson may call for a parent conference if a student follows a pattern of frequent retesting.

Summative (70%)

- Designed to provide information about a student's achievement at the END of a sequence of instruction
- Include the concert performance and the performance evaluation following the performance.

Grades.

- The Individual Performance Rubric is used as a guide for assigning concert grades. A copy of this document will be made available in the Schoology Resources folder for your course.
- Students who do not perform at a concert for any reason must submit a digital video recording that shows the student performing all concert selections. Multiple measures of rests must be counted out loud and may not be skipped.
- Students may be asked to dress in appropriate concert wear (see guidelines in this handbook) for the make-up performance.
- A student may not retake a summative assessment unless his or her grade is below an 85.

IMPORTANT: Students are required to attend all performances. Students who choose not to perform in a scheduled event, lacking a credible excuse as determined by the director will be subject to disciplinary action, a lowered grade, and/or be removed from the orchestra.

YOUR CONCERT GRADE RESTS ON HOW WELL YOU PRACTICE ON YOUR OWN AND REHEARSE WITH THE GROUP.

Remember that your performance during the concert is reflective of how you CONSISTENTLY perform during rehearsals and the preparation that you put into learning your individual part. A student who sits with poor posture during rehearsals will not suddenly be sitting with perfect posture at the concert. It is highly unlikely that you will perform well at a concert if you do not practice or rehearse properly and efficiently.

DISTRICT, REGION, AND ALL-STATE ORCHESTRA FESTIVAL

While participation in these events is optional, the director highly encourages it. These activities are excellent vehicles for musical growth. To support students who are interested in pursuing these activities, the director will schedule individual or group coaching sessions upon request. Full-year enrollment in Orchestra is required to be eligible for these activities.

FINGERNAIL LENGTH

Fingernails—particularly on the left hand—must be kept short enough so that only the skin of the fingertips touch the string. Long fingernails significantly impair proper technique. While your grade will not be docked for having long fingernails, it WILL affect proper playing technique and in turn, lower your grade during tests. If you need to sport long nails for special occasions such as prom, talk to your director.

INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE

It goes without saying that all orchestra students must be prepared with their individual parts BEFORE coming to rehearsals even if the director does not require students to turn in practice logs. How much practice is necessary? However long it takes to play the music up to standard! Your director will show you strategies that will allow you to make the most out of your practice time. Just remember to observe healthy musician habits (such as warming up and stretching before you play; taking substantial breaks during long practice sessions; and avoiding too much repetition of the same musical passages) when you practice to keep yourself injury-free.

PRIVATE LESSONS

Private lessons are not required but HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. The individual and specialized training that a student receives during private instruction allows a student to improve performance skills by leaps and bounds. The director will maintain a list of recommended private instructors and assist students in selecting a teacher.

PERSONAL INSTRUMENTS

All personal instruments must be in labeled with the student's name. Students who own personal instruments will be provided with a cubby for storage in school. Students are responsible for care and maintenance of personal instruments. The orchestra or the school assumes no responsibility for loss or damage of personal instruments.

SCHOOL-OWNED INSTRUMENTS

Students and their parents/guardians are not responsible for normal service and maintenance repairs on school instruments. Students and their parents/guardians, are responsible for paying for damage caused by the student's neglect, abuse, or carelessness. In such cases, the student will be sent an invoice after the damaged instrument has been sent for repairs in a district-approved facility.

REQUIRED CONCERT ATTIRE

Appearance and grooming are noticed by the audience before a performer is even given the opportunity to showcase his or her skill, so it is always important to make a good first impression. The following is required attire for all Orchestra classes:

Attire must be plain black. Embellishments are acceptable if minimal and inconspicuous. Make sure that your outfit allows you to sit, move, and play your instrument comfortably.

Gentlemen's "Concert Black"

- Dress pants
- Long-sleeved button down shirt (jacket is not required)
- Neck tie or bow tie (black is preferred but black with red accents is acceptable)
- Black dress shoes
- Black dress/trouser socks

Ladies' "Concert Black"

- Dress with $\frac{3}{4}$ or long sleeves – no sleeveless dresses OR
- LEGGINGS ARE NOT PANTS.
- Dress pants (no capris or Gaucho pants) or skirt that goes past the knees when seated (through full-length skirts are preferred and give the most polished look
- Black dress shoes (preferably closed-toed shoes); simple embellishments on the shoes are acceptable

Because there is so much variety in outfits available to ladies, please make sure that whatever you choose to wear—whether it is a dress or a two-piece ensemble—you are following the $\frac{3}{4}$ or long sleeves and below the skirt/pants length requirement.

IMPORTANT: You are not graded based on your attire, but as a musician you are responsible for projecting an image of professionalism, and this includes the way you dress for a performance.

STUDENT LEADERS: ONLINE APPLICATION AND/OR AUDITION REQUIRED

These positions require applicants to fill out the online Leadership Application.

Section Leaders

While technical ability and good musicianship—as determined by performance during a section leader audition—is a major consideration when the director appoints section leaders, the director will also assess a student's orchestra playing experience and leadership abilities. Students who are interested in applying for this position must refer to instructions on page 6 of this handbook.

Section leaders are responsible for the following:

- Copy bowings from the conductor's score if not already marked in their parts.
- Ensure that all their section members have copied the CORRECT bowings, fingerings, and other important markings in their individual parts.
- Assist the director in organizing and running sectional rehearsals
- Serve as a liaison between the director and their respective sections
- Help section members succeed by offering help and guidance
- Model good conduct and responsible behavior to the members of their section
- The director has the right to remove a student from his or her position if the student continues to disregard the abovementioned duties and expectations.

Audition requirements:

- Complete the Section Leader Application Form online
- Successfully play all required scales
- Perform excerpts from orchestral repertoire and sight-reading material during live audition
- Demonstrate exemplary character and leadership qualities throughout the entire school year
- Attend a leadership session that may be scheduled before auditions

Students who are selected as section leaders under these guidelines cannot be challenged and will keep their positions for the entire school year. The Director has the prerogative, however, to remove a student from a position if the student is not carrying out his or her duties or shows conduct unbecoming of a section leader.

If there are no students who apply for leadership positions or none of the applicants qualify for the positions, the Director will hold auditions at the beginning of the preparation time for each concert. In this case, the leadership position is effective only for that concert. A new set of leaders will be appointed for subsequent concerts.

Stage Manager and Assistant Stage Managers

There will be one stage manager (must be a enrolled in Symphony Strings) and one assistant stage manager (may be chosen from Concert or Symphony Strings). The stage manager and assistant stage manager are responsible for:

- Preparing a venue for a rehearsal or performance with the help of the stage crew; ensuring that all ready rooms, rehearsal and performance spaces are cleaned up after use
- Reading and understanding set-up charts; direct stage crew in setting up the stage or rehearsal space as indicated on the charts
- Assisting the director in planning and executing quick and smooth set-up changes

- Assisting the director in rehearsing stage movement and set-up changes in preparation for a performance
- Supervising stage crew when striking the set-up
- Accounting for school-owned equipment and ensuring that equipment is stored properly after the performance
- Running emergency errands whenever necessary

STUDENT LEADERS: ONLINE APPLICATION AND/OR AUDITION NOT REQUIRED

Librarians

Each orchestra class will have a two librarians.

The librarians are responsible for assisting the director with the following:

- Inspect , inventory, and file school music folders and parts
- Make sure that the conductor's scores are complete, in the correct order of performance, and placed on the director's stand before the concert venue is opened to the public

Rehearsal Managers

Rehearsal Managers serve as the director's assistants in the performance of daily classroom tasks. Tasks include leading warm-ups, tuning, checking attendance, distributing and collecting papers, music, and class sets, and making sure that the rehearsal set-up is in order. Rehearsal Managers also assist students in acquiring information about an assignment they missed while they were absent. Two Rehearsal Managers will be appointed for each class. Online application is not required.

Historians

Historians are responsible for documenting orchestra events through photographs, videos and the end-of-year slideshows. Historians must be present at all orchestra events. Online application is not required.

Stage Crew

Students will be given the opportunity to volunteer for stage crew during each orchestra event. Volunteers are responsible for setting up and taking down performance venues and must be able to do lift chairs, music stands, and equipment.

MUSIC DEPARTMENT AWARDS (HIGH SCHOOL)

Students participating in the orchestra program may earn departmental honors as they pursue the curricular offerings and as they become involved in extracurricular opportunities—LLMEA Festival, PMEA Festivals, etc.— offered through the program. Beginning in 9th grade, students earn points for participating in extracurricular offerings and/or through their service to the program. The director employs an established point system, by which students may earn the following awards:

Hempfield Orchestra Letter (3 points)

Bronze Pin (3 points) Silver Pin (9 points)

Gold Pin (12 points) Year Guard Pin (15+ points)

The director may nominate selected students for membership in the Hempfield Chapter of the Tri-M Music Honor Society, based on their distinguished service and achievement in the Music Department.

Distinguished students also may be nominated for a variety of departmental graduation awards, including the following:

National School Orchestra Award For contributing the most service to the orchestra

Lancaster-Lebanon Music Educators Association Award For service to the orchestra and for representing Hempfield at LLMEA Orchestra Festivals

Richard L. Kline Award For demonstrating the highest level of musicianship, leadership, and dedication to the Music Department

Annual Music Department Award For being outstanding within the Music Department through service, musicianship, responsibility, and attitude

GENERAL PAYMENT POLICIES

There will be very few instances when the director will collect money from students (e.g. spirit shirts, strings, banquet admission, etc.). All money collected will be deposited into the Hempfield Music Department's account.

- Financial transactions may be paid with cash and personal checks. When paying with checks, please write the student's name and ID number.
- Printed receipts will be provided for all financial transactions only upon request. Electronic receipts will be emailed. You may access your financial information through your personal Orchestra portal located at <http://www.charmsoffice.com>. Fundraising activities, folder assignments, and payments can also be accessed through this account management service.

THE ORCHESTRA ONLINE

Charms Office Assistant – Orchestra Account Manager for Current Students

Each Orchestra student has an account through Charms Office Assistant that they can view and access online at any time. To access this account, go to <http://www.charmsoffice.com> and do the following:

- At the top menu bar, hover your mouse pointer over ENTER button and click "Parents/Students/Members."
- Enter the school code: hempfieldstrings
- Enter your default password, which is the student's ID number. You may later change this password.
- Once you are in the system, you may do things such as update your personal and contact information, view payment information and fundraising credits, download forms, access the event calendar, and so much more!
- If you forget your password or are having problems accessing your account, please contact the director.

Schoology

Schoology is like a Facebook page for your child's courses. Here you will find information about your child's courses and teachers. You will even find documents, assignments, announcements, and event calendars. Our written and performances tests will all be submitted through Schoology.