



Instrumental music instruction is the perfect extension of artistic development in the Westminster curriculum. Children who play instruments learn to express emotional, intellectual, and historical ideas while performing. They learn the “secret language” of music reading, beneficial for general reading and foreign language skills. Learning to play an instrument develops superior listening skills, physical coordination, and problem-solving strategies which support success in other academic disciplines, especially math and science. The students learn to share the limelight, perform with precision, and appreciate beautiful music in orchestra.

The orchestra ensemble class meets on Monday and Wednesday mornings before school, 7:55 a.m. until 8:25 a.m. This large group rehearsal combines instruments and students with varying musical proficiency. The students practice ensemble playing to prepare for performance, while improving their knowledge of technique, composers and styles of music, and musicianship.

All students enrolled in the orchestra program are required to take a weekly lesson, either at the school, or with a teacher outside of Westminster School. Students taking lessons at school receive a weekly 30-minute lesson with a professional specialist in the instrument. Technique lessons meet on a rotating schedule during the school day. Students are taught how to play notes, rhythms, bowings, and the skills unique to his/her particular instrument. Students with an outside teacher are monitored to make sure they have mastered the orchestra music prior to performance.

Students learn at varying speeds, depending on practice habits, musical experience, and sheer determination to master something new. Each child is encouraged, coached, and treated as an individual learner in order to achieve the best results for the student and the ensemble.

The Westminster Orchestra students contribute to the life and the artistic growth of the school. They create joy and inspiration in the people who hear them play, and participation in orchestra encourages a life-long interest in music and musical performance.