



Prodigy Program

Westwood Performing Arts

Winter 2023 Newsletter

Welcome and Introduction

I hope you have been having a great year of music so far! With the holiday season rapidly approaching, I wanted to take a moment to introduce myself and thank you all for being so welcoming and understanding as I have been acclimating to my new role. I also wanted to provide you with a few updates, notifications, and reminders about the Prodigy Program as we settle into the 2023-2024 school year. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me via email with any questions or concerns. I am here to help with anything Prodigy Program related. Wishing you and your families a safe and happy holiday season and new year and thank you for all being an important part of the Prodigy Program.

Brianna Creamer
Prodigy Program Director



Brianna is originally from Philadelphia, PA. Growing up she studied with Patricia Licetti, Julian Meyer, and Davyd Booth on violin; she also studied with Che-Hun Chen on viola. Brianna received her BM in Viola Performance from Boston University in 2011, where she studied with Edward Gazouleas. She then went on to receive her MM in Music Education from Boston University in 2012 and completed a CAGS in Educational Administration from the University of Massachusetts: Boston in 2016. Brianna is currently the strings teacher for grades 4 and 5 and the High School Orchestra Director in the Bedford Public Schools. She is also the Past-Chair for the Massachusetts Music Educators Association: Eastern District.

Prodigy Student Spotlight

The MMEA Eastern District Auditions were held virtually in November. Congratulations to the following Prodigy Program students for acceptance into Senior Districts. Bravo students and instructors!



Conor Tsang, Tenor Sax, Band- All State Recommendation
Deepak Viswalingam, Clarinet, Orchestra, All-State Recommendation
Jonathan Ferraro, Clarinet, Band
Jason Guo, Clarinet, Band
Michael Mansour, Bass Voice, Chorus
Anthony Yang, Violin, Orchestra
Melissa Yang, Clarinet, Band

Registration Statements/Tuition Payments

In early January, I plan to send out invoices to families to confirm their account balances. My intention in doing so is to provide families with important account information and to identify and resolve any account discrepancies that may exist.

- **If you have already paid your family's tuition in full** you will not receive a statement. Thank you for your payment!
- **If you have already issued a partial payment** for the current school year, this should be reflected on the statement you receive. All remaining tuition balances will be due on February 1, 2024.
- **Families participating in the Monthly Payment** will continue to have payments applied through the remainder of the school year. No additional payments are necessary at this time and you do not need to take any further actions with respect to payment.
- **If you have a past-due balance on your account**, please contact me immediately to make payment. If you believe your past-due balance is an error, kindly let me know.

To make a payment or change your family's billing/account information, please click this link:
<https://app.jackrabbitclass.com/jr3.0/ParentPortal/Login?orgId=506099>

Prodigy Faculty Updates

This Fall, we welcomed three new faculty members to the Prodigy Program: Erica Kelley (flute) and Rebecca Gruenfeld (piano).



Erica started her musical journey in 5th grade on the flute. She is a recent graduate from The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth where she earned her Bachelors in Music Education. While there she studied flute with Mariellen Sears and played in various ensembles.

She is excited to begin teaching flute lessons in Westwood with the Prodigy Program.

Rebecca ran her own private piano and voice studio in NY for twenty years, starting in the Fall of 2001, and has worked with students of all ages and levels, from three to 83! Rebecca is especially passionate about her work with young students of varying abilities and disabilities. After teaching for six years, in 2007, she went on to obtain her Masters degree and license in Education, (M.A.T.) which she feels is quite a fitting pairing with her musical skills. She often applies theories and principles of differentiated instruction when teaching piano to her students, both those who are gifted and those who may have mental health or academic challenges.



A Friendly Reminder About Attendance Policies

In the interest of student progress, and with an effort to maintain a degree of fairness for both families and lesson instructors, the Prodigy Program previously established policies regarding lesson attendance, cancellations, and make-up lessons.

Established weekly lesson times are bound to flex at various points throughout the year due to illness, school holidays, weather cancellations, etc. Since both students/families and instructors have a mutual investment in their music lessons and classes together, the Prodigy Program has asked families and instructors to agree to certain guidelines in the event of a missed lesson or class.

Our **current Absence and Makeup Policy** is set forth below. Please click [here](#) to read all of the Program's policies.

1. **Private Lessons:** Students are entitled to make up lessons for **two excused** absences. Excused absences are those in which (i) the student has provided at least 24 hours advance notice to the instructor (not the Prodigy Program Director), or (ii) the student is ill and cannot attend the lesson (whether or not 24 hours notice is provided). Absences for **any other reason** are not excused and are forfeited.

More than two absences of any kind are forfeited.

2. **Semi-Private Lessons:** Because semi-private lessons involve other students, lessons are **not** made up when a student is absent.
3. **Classes:** Because classes involve other students, lessons are **not** made up when a student is absent.
4. **Teacher Absence:** A teacher's absence from a lesson or class will be made up by the end of the school year.
5. **School Closings and Holidays:** All lessons missed because of school closings for religious holidays or inclement weather will be made up.
6. **Credits and Refunds:** Tuition credits or refunds will be provided for long-term illness or injury.

© PRODIGY PROGRAM
Westwood Public Schools
200 Nahatan Street
Westwood, MA 02090

Brianna Creamer
Prodigy Program Director
prodigyprogram@westwood.k12.ma.us
www.prodigy-program.org