

# Reading Public Schools

*Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow*



## Fine and Performing Arts Curriculum Guide

## Course: Introduction to Piano

### Course Description

This introductory music class is for the beginner piano student. Students will learn to play piano in a group setting, with each student having access to his/her own keyboard. Upon completion of the class, students will have a strong grasp of piano technique, a working knowledge of standard music theory, and the ability to interpret popular chord progressions. Playing a musical instrument allows a student to expand his/her musical competency across instruments, ensembles, and styles, making this course particularly beneficial to students currently in chorus, band, or a music group outside of school.

### Standards for Artistic Practice

These practices describe the processes and skills students learn as practitioners throughout the elementary, middle, and high school years in order to achieve artistic literacy.

- ⇒ *Creating art with artistic intent.*
- ⇒ *Presenting, performing, or producing artistic works to evoke, express, or communicate.*
- ⇒ *Responding to art through intellect and emotion.*
- ⇒ *Connecting the arts to the self, society, history, culture, and other disciplines and bodies of knowledge.*

*Source: MA Arts Curriculum Framework 2019, page 20*

### Content Standards for a Novice Solo Performer

#### Creating:

1. Improvise short melodic and rhythmic ideas that reflect characteristics of different genres.
2. Record decisions about accuracy of written music (e.g. adding beat subdivisions for a difficult rhythm).
3. Refine musical interpretations exploring different elements (e.g. dynamics and articulations).

#### Performing:

4. Identify basic strategies musicians use to practice and employ them in readying a musical work for performance.
5. Perform with accuracy and expression works from the instrumental literature with a level of difficulty of 2, on a scale of 1 to 6.
6. Match a musical performance with expressed intent (e.g. wanting the audience to identify with an emotion).

#### Responding:

7. Analyze how cultures are reflected in a diverse range of musical works.
8. Explain how a musical work is connected to a particular cultural, historical context where it was created.
9. Develop criteria for a rubric for evaluating musical works.

#### Connecting:

10. Describe influences of one's personal musical style and preferences.
11. Identify musical ideas from different cultures studied in history and social science (e.g. American native).

*Source: MA Arts Curriculum Framework 2019, page 45*

Units	Essential Questions	Key Activities May Include...
<b>Introduction to Playing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is it important to use proper technique when practicing?</li> <li>• What is the impact of proper technique on performance?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warming-up the hands</li> <li>• Exploring and labeling the parts of the piano keyboard</li> </ul>
<b>C Position</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is reading music reading imperative to playing piano?</li> <li>• How do the notes on the music staff relate to the notes on the piano?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finger numbers and positions</li> <li>• “Ode to Joy” and “Aura Lee”</li> </ul>
<b>The Grand Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is music communicated in written form?</li> <li>• How do composers use markings and symbols to create expression?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student-student duets</li> <li>• YouTube piano tutorials</li> <li>• “Mexican Hat Dance” and “Jingle</li> </ul>
<b>Introduction to Chords</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the relationship between rhythm and beat?</li> <li>• What is the relationship between an arpeggio and a chord?</li> <li>• How do performers interpret musical works?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student-teacher duets</li> <li>• Chord crash course: chords and arpeggios</li> <li>• “Largo” from <i>The New World</i> and “When the Saints Go Marching In”</li> </ul>
<b>G Position</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why are certain chord progressions used most often?</li> <li>• How do we judge the quality of musical works and performances?</li> <li>• How do musicians improve the quality of their performances?</li> <li>• Does a performance have to be public to be meaningful?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensemble playing</li> <li>• First informal concert</li> <li>• Chord crash course: chord progressions</li> <li>• “Liza Jane” and “Alpine Melody”</li> </ul>
<b>Middle C Position</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What emotions can be attributed to the common musical intervals?</li> <li>• How does performing music provide a means for artistic growth?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hanon finger exercises</li> <li>• Chord crash course: intervals</li> <li>• “Happy Birthday” and “Skip to My Lou”</li> </ul>
<b>Expanding the 5-Finger Position</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why would a musician turn a chord into a power chord?</li> <li>• How does the purpose of piano fingerings change as a player advances to more difficult music?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holiday selections</li> <li>• Chord crash course: power chords (fifths)</li> <li>• “Kum-Ba-Yah” and “Michael, Row the Boat Ashore”</li> </ul>
<b>Scales and Chords in the Key of C Major</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are minor scales and chords used in popular music?</li> <li>• How does understanding the structure and context of musical works inform performance?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scale fingerings</li> <li>• Chord crash course: major and minor chords</li> <li>• “Joy to the World” and “On Top of Old Smoky”</li> </ul>
<b>The Keys of G and F Major</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why are finger patterns an important part of progressing as a piano player?</li> <li>• How do we discern musical creators’ and performers’ expressive intent?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Movie theme selections</li> <li>• Chord crash course: arpeggios acrobatics</li> <li>• “The Can-Can,” “The Marines’ Hymn,” and “Auld Lang Syne”</li> </ul>
<b>The Keys of A and D Minor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the modern methods of notating music, and is one better than the others?</li> <li>• How do musicians make meaningful connections to creating, performing, and responding?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final performance</li> <li>• Chord crash course: transposition, timeless styles, and leads sheets</li> <li>• Student-selected repertoire</li> <li>• “Greensleeves” and “Scarborough Fair”</li> </ul>

# Reading Public Schools

*Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow*



## Fine and Performing Arts Curriculum Guide Overview

### Curriculum Guide

Curriculum guides are public documents aligned with the Massachusetts Department of Education Curriculum Frameworks. They outline and highlight the set of standards that students will learn within certain disciplines at each grade level. Curriculum guides are intended for teachers, parents, and the wide school community to provide an overview of the course of study for the year.

### Curriculum Map

Curriculum maps are internal documents utilized as planning tools for teachers and administrators. Curriculum maps keep a focus on the end-of-year standards and chart a course for teaching and learning over the year. They are typically organized by month and/or marking period and may include: genres/topics or units of study, methods of assessment, and major content resources. Maps are fluid documents that are revised and revisited regularly to ensure students' needs are being met.

### Content Standards

The standards used as the foundation of our curriculum come directly from the Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework. State standards may be viewed here: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/>

### Standards for Artistic Practice

The standards for artistic practice describe the processes and skills students learn as practitioners throughout the elementary, middle, and high school years in order to achieve artistic literacy. Based on the processes presented in the 2014 *National Core Arts Standards*, these practices are grouped into four clusters that focus on creating, presenting/performing, responding, and connecting across the five arts disciplines (dance, media arts, music, theater, and visual arts)."  
- *MA Arts Curriculum Framework 2019*, p.20

### Essential Questions

Essential questions are questions that are not answerable with an easy answer or a simple instruction. The purpose of essential questions is to provide opportunities for inquiry into learning and act as an umbrella to anchor the unit/lesson.

### Key Activities

Key activities are examples of the instructional contexts and structures for learning that students and teachers *might* be engaged in during arts instruction. Those listed represent a sampling and the list is in no way exhaustive. The list is not intended to mandate or require certain types of instruction at any given time, merely to suggest best practices.