



Saxophone  
Curriculum

I would like to thank the following faculty and staff for their assistance in developing the saxophone curriculum:

Louis Kugelman  
Karin Orenstein

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen A. Eaton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Helen Eaton  
Chief Executive Officer  
Settlement Music School

## Objectives

The curriculum is designed to follow a student beginning from grade four through grade twelve. Students starting at a different age, or who transfer from an outside place of study, may enter the curriculum at a level deemed appropriate by the teacher and Branch Director. The projected progress of a student allows him/her to certify each year for a new level. Students may skip a level depending on their rate of progress in any given year if considered appropriate by the teacher and Branch Director.

The objectives of the Settlement Music School Wind Department Curriculum encompass the overall development of a saxophonist throughout his/her musical study.

The curriculum should lead to the development of basic musicianship through saxophone study:

- a. By providing a logical sequence of repertoire from level to level that should represent a full range of styles and periods and including various levels of difficulty
- b. By supporting the building of skills in a logical and sequential way, while simultaneously enhancing musical literacy through the basic understanding of harmony
- c. By developing technical proficiency sequentially per level

## **Concepts**

*All the concepts below should be incorporated from the beginning of study*

**Phrasing** – Phrasing can be directly compared to speech. A clear understanding and execution of a composition's phrasing includes taking into account the harmonic progression and the melodic direction as well as rhythmic accentuations, all of which create the intended shape of the musical line. One must understand the composer's intentions and subsequently learn to execute the phrase through musical comprehension, developed by approaches such as singing of the musical line, understanding the underlying harmonic and rhythmic patterns, and learning to apply technical skills appropriate to the specific phrase. Actively engaging the imagination so as to encourage creative self-expression is also imperative.

**Tempo** – While the use of a metronome is vital in practice, students must develop an internal understanding of rhythmic pulse. The ability to hold a steady tempo and to make adjustments becomes the external manifestation of the internal pulse.

**Dynamics** – In beginning through advanced wind instrument study, dynamic shaping and tone quality should always be a focus. Young wind instrumentalists should begin with a full *mf* dynamic and expand their range only after developing a consistent embouchure and concept of air support. Dynamics should be taught and learned through a combination of air and embouchure, while maintaining steady tone and intonation.

**Stylistic Interpretations** – All music being played must be performed with the understanding of the era, history, and circumstances surrounding the piece.

**Articulation** - The concept and use of articulation should be emphasized and used throughout the student's journey as a musician. The physical mechanics of tonguing notes are learned early on, then must be developed to include a range of articulations (*tenuto, slur, staccato, marcato, accent, etc.*). A wind musician's tone might equate to vowels in texts, while articulations are the consonants. A wind musician must develop articulations in order to express himself/herself clearly and artistically, while not hindering their tone. Special attention must be focused on maintaining a consistent embouchure while learning to articulate.

**Listening** - Students must learn to listen keenly to the sounds they are producing to adequately understand what they are hearing. Strong listening skills will help students to discern texture as illustrated by the interaction of the vertical and horizontal elements of a phrase.

**Practicing** –The mind must always be engaged. Students must be trained to think so that all of the multiple layers of hearing, determining and carrying out physical movements, responding to the results, and changing the approach where necessary, all become a part of the mental concentration which practicing requires. The goal is accuracy and beauty, based on what the composer intends. These values can and must be incorporated from the beginning. Students are taught to view challenges as opportunities with the option of trying different practice techniques. The process of practicing is emphasized rather than only searching for an end result.

## **LEVEL 1**

### **TECHNIQUE**

#### **Scales**

- Pares Scales for Saxophone – Gabriel Parès & Harvey Whistler (rev./ed.)
- Daily Studies for All Saxophones – Trent Kynaston

### **REPERTOIRE**

#### **Methods**

- Essential Elements – Hal Leonard Corp.
- Tradition of Excellence – Bruce Pearson & Ryan Nowlin
- Standard of Excellence: Comprehensive Band Method – Bruce Pearson
- Accent on Achievement – John O'Reilly & Mark Williams
- Measures of Success – Deb Sheldon, Brian Balanges, Tim Loest, Robert Sheldon & David Collier (ed.)

### **CERTIFICATION**

#### **Repertoire**

Three selections of contrasting style and mood to be drawn from methods, repertoire and/or teaching pieces. One of the three must be memorized and one selection should be chosen by the student. The student will be asked to explain why he/she chose the piece. The piece chosen by the student can represent any era or style including contemporary, pop or rock.