

Hello Orchestra Families!

Welcome to the 2016-17 School Year! We have an action-packed year planned in orchestra. Included in this letter will be information about concert dates, auditions, and other important items. It is PACKED with information. PLEASE read through this ENTIRE letter. Some of the information is time-sensitive. This is a general letter for all orchestras. For orchestra specific information, you will receive a second letter, detailing more information on music, concerts, and travel.

When you have finished reading this letter, please **reply to the email** with the following by **Friday September 2, 2016**:

"My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and my student's name is \_\_\_\_\_. I verify I have read the 2016-17 Orchestra Letter, and am responsible for the information contained therein. I understand that there are required concerts and have listed these dates on my calendar."

First, let me introduce myself and the program to all who are new to the high school or district... I am Sarah Finn-Sommerfeld, high school orchestra director. This will be my 12th year in the district, and my fifteenth year of teaching overall. I have taught at both middle schools and the high school in the past, but with the program growth, now I am only teaching at the high school. I have a Bachelors in Music Education with a string emphasis (my main instrument is violin/viola), and I have a Masters in Education, and I am currently working on a Educational Specialist Degree in Administration. I am married, have 2 little boys, one little girl, and two very naughty orange cats. ☺

We have four levels of orchestra at the high school: Varsity, String, Concert and Symphony. Minnetonka Orchestra is, in a word, Awesome. We are a strong family, and a growing program. All orchestras perform music of all types, although an emphasis is placed on "classical music." The reason behind this is simply because most students will be exposed to a wide variety of popular and "movie" music on their own. Unless exposed to classical music here, many students will never get the chance to see how fantastic and moving this type of music can be. We do, however, explore all types of music. We have performed anything from the Beatles to the soundtrack for Lord of the Rings.

Basic Information: All orchestra class "paperwork" is on Schoology and sent home via email. More information to come on this as I get it set-up for the year. Email will be my primary method to send home updates and time sensitive information. Please be sure your email address is updated in Skyward!

Contact: The easiest (and fastest) way to get a hold of me is via email. My school email is [sarah.finnsommerfeld@minnetonka.k12.mn.us](mailto:sarah.finnsommerfeld@minnetonka.k12.mn.us) My office phone is 952-401-5803. Please do not contact me on my cell phone (if you have the number) with school-related questions, unless I specifically request so.

Lessons: All students in **Symphony** Orchestra will be required to take private lessons. This is to ensure they all receive one-on-one instruction on proper technique, support for music that is difficult, and have a chance to play solo music instead of always working on large group music. I will provide an updated private teacher list prior to the start of school. In the event that lessons are financially difficult for your family, there are scholarships available through our boosters, and/or I will provide lessons to students at school free of charge. All students will have a lesson form that will need to be filled out by their lesson teacher (or me) during each lesson. This is so I know what items students are working on, and I can better gauge what I need to work on with them in class. Students will need to have at least four, 30 minute lessons in a quarter. The lesson forms for the entire year (all 4 quarters) will be posted on Schoology by the start of school. **IT IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO PRINT THE FORM, HAVE IT FILLED OUT, AND TURN IT IN BY THE END OF THE QUARTER. I will give a reminder close to the end of each quarter. NO LATE FORMS (after the quarter has ended) WILL BE ALLOWED.** Please plan ahead (If you know your teacher will be gone, have them fill it out before they go!). **Students may hand the form in once they have finished their four lessons... there is no need to wait until the end of the quarter.** One final item – in the event your teacher takes a hiatus, or you need to stop lessons for any part of a grading period, please let Ms Finn-Sommerfeld know ASAP. We can schedule lessons at school for you so your grade is not impacted by any changes.

Students in **String, Concert and Varsity Orchestra** will not be required to take lessons; however, **it is highly encouraged**. The same policy will hold – I will give you a recommended teacher list, or I can provide lessons if they are desired but not financially viable for your family. All students who take lessons in these two classes will receive additional (extra) credit in orchestra, as this is directly related to improvement in the curricular area. Students who take lessons should print the lesson form on Schoology and hand in by the end of each quarter.

Start of year assessment: All students will submit a recording at the start of the school year for a formative assessment. My primary purpose is to establish a baseline of how your student plays so that I can:

1. Gauge the level of playing and be sure the music I have chosen is appropriate to the student level.
2. Divide violins evenly into two sections (both sections will alternate first and second violin parts).
3. Set individual goals for the year for each student with regards to technique, musicality, etc.

This is going in the gradebook only as a check, and will not impact seating.

**See below for what to prepare.** Record this on your iPad in the camera roll... VIDEO. Please record separate videos for each item. **Simply have your items recorded and saved on your iPad and bring them the first week of school. Instructions on how to upload the videos to Google will come during class.**

#### Varsity

Piece: You can play anything you played last year in orchestra or lessons for your song.

Scale: For your scale, you can pick any 2 octave scale, 1 note to a bow, quarter notes.

#### String AND Concert:

Piece: Please play a piece from LAST YEAR in orchestra OR a private lesson piece. You can also choose something from your class lesson book. This is a great option if you are not currently in lessons.

Scale: You should prepare 3 octave scale, 1 note to a bow, quarter notes. You may choose your scale.

#### Symphony:

Scale: 3 octave scale, 2 notes to a bow, slurred, and at least 2 sharps or flats in the key. Major or minor is fine.

Excerpt: You already have this music. Please prepare the Violin Concerto by **Bruch**: 5 measures before rehearsal D up to the 7<sup>th</sup> measure of rehearsal E.

Orchestra Boosters: The Orchestra Boosters is a parent organization dedicated to supporting the students of the Minnetonka Orchestra Program. If you are interested in joining, finding out more, or volunteering some time, there is an informational general meeting that will be held Monday, Sept. 12, 2016, 7PM. Location is the Arts Center Conference Room. More info to come!

#### Concert Dress:

ALL students are required to wear concert blacks to the concert.

##### **9<sup>th</sup> graders**

Black suit, white button-down shirt with a black tie. Black shoes. A tux is fine/encouraged as well.

OR one of the following with black tights/nylons/socks and shoes: a long (to the floor) black dress, OR a black dress shirt and pants, OR a black shirt with a long (to the floor) skirt. **Knee length is NOT acceptable dress for a formal concert. YOU ALSO HAVE THE OPTION TO PURCHASE A CONCERT DRESS. 10-12 graders members wear uniform dresses. If you plan to be in orchestra for 2-4 years, then purchasing a dress now will save you money down the road. The dress is \$84.** (This cost covers the dress, processing fee, and shipping/handling all together). Once you own it, then you have it for all concerts throughout high school! If you are interested in purchasing a dress, please plan to make a dress payment on the 9<sup>th</sup> grade retreat day. Students can have their measurements be taken prior to coming in so they know what size to

order, or they can try on sample dresses that day while here. I will be here all day to help! More details on dresses to come!

**10-12<sup>th</sup> graders**

Black suit, white button-down shirt with a black tie. Black shoes. A tux is fine/encouraged as well.

OR uniform orchestra dresses. The cost per dress is \$84. (This cost covers the dress, processing fee, and shipping/handling all together). This is a one-time fee. Students will keep this dress for all concerts throughout high school. **If you have not already been measured for a dress, more details coming soon.**

**Master Calendar for all performances, booster meetings, banquet, and fundraisers**

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!!!**

ALL	SUNDAY, AUG. 7	CAR WASH, Cub at 101 and 7
ALL	SEPT. 9-23	Coupon book sale
ALL	SEPT. 13 – OCT. 24	Wreath and Greenery Sale
All interested parties	MONDAY, SEPT. 12	Booster Meeting, Arts Center Conference Room, 7PM
ALL	THURS. OCT. 6	Davanni's Restaurant Fundraiser, 4-8PM
All Orchestras:	THURSDAY OCTOBER 6:	Sampler Concert, 7PM, Arts Center Auditorium (AC)
ALL	FRIDAY, OCT. 7 – OCT. 19	Catalogue and Gift Wrap Fundraiser
ALL	NOV. 2 – NOV. 16	Cookie Dough and Cinnabon Fundraiser
ALL	THURSDAY NOV. 17	Potbelly Restaurant Fundraiser, 5-8PM
All interested parties	MONDAY, NOV. 14	Booster Meeting, Arts Center Conference Room, 7PM
ALL	SATURDAY, NOV. 19	Cub Foods Bagging Fundraiser (7 and 101 location) 10-6
ALL	SAT. DEC. 10	Cub Foods Bagging Fundraiser (Shorewood location) 10-6
All Orchestras:	THURSDAY DECEMBER 15:	Concert 7PM, AC
Symphony	TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20:	Symphony and 8 <sup>th</sup> grade Orchestra Combined Concert AC
All interested parties	MONDAY, JAN. 9	Booster Meeting, Arts Center Conference Room, 7PM
Symphony:	MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6:	District Orchestra Festival 7PM (West Gym)
Varsity, Concert and String:	MARCH 10-MARCH 13:	Concert, String and Varsity Orchestras Travel Study to CA.
ALL	SUNDAY, MARCH 12	Maynards Restaurant Fundraiser, 4PM to Midnight
Concert and String Orch:	MARCH (date TBD):	Lake Conference Festival Hopkins High School (school day)
Symphony:	MARCH (date TBD):	Lake Conference Festival Hopkins High School (school day)
All Orchestras:	THURSDAY, MARCH 9	Concert - 7PM, AC

Symphony:	THURSDAY, MARCH 16	Full Orchestra Concert, featuring Wind Ensemble. 7PM AC.
Symphony:	MARCH 22-MARCH 31	Spain Travel Study
All interested parties	MONDAY, APR. 10	Booster Meeting, Arts Center Conference Room, 7PM
ALL	MONDAY, APR. 17	Chipotle Restaurant Fundraiser, 4-8PM
All Orchestras (optional)	WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19:	Solo and Ensemble Festival, Benilde-St. Margaret's High School, 3:30-8:00PM
All Orchestras:	THURSDAY MAY 18:	Concert - 7PM, ALL MHS Orchestras, Arts Center Auditorium
All Orchestras and Family!	MONDAY, MAY 22:	Orchestra Awards and Celebration Banquet, 5:30-8:30PM Minnetonka Community Center
Symphony:	THURSDAY JUNE 8:	Graduation Performance, Grace Church, 5-10PM

#### Instrument storage and rental:

Violins and violas will be provided a locker and school lock in the orchestra room for their instrument. Students may only use a school lock, and are responsible for the cost of that lock should it be lost or stolen. Students MUST keep their locker locked at all times. The orchestra room will be open from 7AM to 3:00PM Monday through Friday (often times it is open later than this, however, unless an arrangement is made in advance, this cannot be guaranteed). In the event a student cannot pick up their instrument at that time, they should try to make alternate arrangements. For those in sports, coaches are usually willing to keep instruments in their office until practice is finished.

Cellos and basses may rent an instrument to use at school. The rental fee for the year is \$100 plus tax. This comes to \$107.28. If there are enough instruments available, students may take one home to practice, but they must bring it back to school to use in class. Students should have an instrument at home, so there is no need for transport. Rental forms along with the link for payment will be emailed out before the start of the year.

#### Materials:

I am sending out this list before school begins so that students have all their materials by the first day of school!! Please make sure you are prepared!

**In all orchestra classes it is encouraged REQUIRED to have a binder.** You can keep all music sorted, notes, lesson sheets, rhythms, etc. There are usually pockets for your books as well. If you put music into page protectors, you can even write on them with dry-erase pens. This makes for easy clean up, and a way to use color. This will also cut down on the number of times I hear "I lost my music..." OR, my favorite, "Someone stole my music." I know the viola part for Brandenburg Concerto is a hot commodity on the black market these days... but... AND speaking of lost items, please make sure EVERYTHING has your name on it! Instrument, binder, music, etc.

All Orchestras: (links to purchase the class books on Amazon have been provided. You may purchase them there, or at a local store. Always call before going in to see if they have what you need in stock.)

1. Orchestra Folder or binder (black) WITH A PENCIL IN IT!

2. Books needed

a. Essential Elements Advanced Technique (light brown book)

[http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb\\_sb\\_ss\\_i\\_1\\_27?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=essential+elements+advanced+technique+for+strings&prefix=essential+elements+advanced+techniq](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_ss_i_1_27?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=essential+elements+advanced+technique+for+strings&prefix=essential+elements+advanced+techniq)

[ue+for+strings%2Caps%2C155&rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3Aessential+elements+advanced+technique+for+strings](#) Be sure to purchase the right book for your instrument!!!

- b. Expressive Techniques for Orchestra (cover has image of a string instrument on it)

[http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb\\_sb\\_ss\\_c\\_0\\_17?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=expressive+techniques+for+orchestra&prefix=expressive+techniques+for+orchestra%2Caps%2C341&rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3Aexpressive+techniques+for+orchestra](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_ss_c_0_17?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=expressive+techniques+for+orchestra&prefix=expressive+techniques+for+orchestra%2Caps%2C341&rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3Aexpressive+techniques+for+orchestra) Be sure to get the correct book for your instrument!!

- c. Sound Innovations Sound Development (green book)

[http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb\\_sb\\_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=Sound+Innovations+for+String+Orchestra+---+Sound+Development](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=Sound+Innovations+for+String+Orchestra+---+Sound+Development) Be sure to get the correct book for your instrument!!!!!!

- d. Sound Innovations Sound Development Advanced (Purple book)

[http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb\\_sb\\_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=Sound+Innovations+for+String+Orchestra+---+Sound+Development+advanced&rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3ASound+Innovations+for+String+Orchestra+---+Sound+Development+advanced](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=Sound+Innovations+for+String+Orchestra+---+Sound+Development+advanced&rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3ASound+Innovations+for+String+Orchestra+---+Sound+Development+advanced) Be sure to get the correct book for your instrument!!

3. Violin/violas: instrument, rosin, bow, SHOULDER REST.
4. Cello/bass: ROSIN (even if you rent from school, you must provide your own rosin), and rockstop. It is also highly recommended that you use your own personal bow. This is not hard to transport back and forth, and it allows for more consistency when practicing between your home instrument and at school.

Finally...

Thank you so much for making your way through this long letter! Please print and save a copy of this letter, or the email, so you can refer back to it if you have any questions throughout the year. If you have any questions, as always, I'm just an email away!

Together we will make this the best year yet for Minnetonka Orchestra!

Sincerely,

*Sarah Finn-Sommerfeld*

Orchestra Director

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952-401-5803

**Orchestra Boosters**

<http://mtkaorchboosters.com/>

