

April 13, 2009

Dear RHS Orchestra Students and Parents,

What a terrific year this has been. I am very proud of all of the groups this year. It was very exciting for the Symphony Orchestra to win 1st place at the Northwest Orchestra Festival in Gresham Oregon. We also have many students who made All-State Orchestra and All-Northwest Symphony. We have 42 students that will be competing at the All-State Solo & Ensemble Festival at the end of April. This year our music department was also a finalist for the Grammy Music in the Schools program. I look forward to many excellent years ahead.

I do want to let you know that there will be some changes in how the Concert Orchestra, Symphony Orchestra, and Chamber Orchestra will be formed for next year and beyond. These changes are based on my experience and the idea that Concert Orchestra, which has traditionally been a freshman only group, is an extremely important year for all students. It gives students time to work on symphonic bowing and technique skills, as well as leadership and ensemble skills. An ADDITIONAL factor, as of this year, is a physical space limitation that we have at RHS relative to the number of students who want to participate in Orchestra.

- First: **all incoming freshman will be required to be in the Concert Orchestra class** unless I have a need for a specific instrument in the Symphony Orchestra class. This decision will be announced in mid-June of each year. Auditions for incoming freshman are only necessary if a student is interested in an available spot in the Symphony Orchestra. These auditions will be after school on June 8 and 9 with details on the Roosevelt Orchestra website – rooseveltorchestra.org
- Second: all students – unless they are switching schools – will not be able to audition for either Symphony or Chamber Orchestra **unless they have taken Concert Orchestra for a full year.**
- Third: Because it is my job to make sure that each student is prepared for the next level so they can be as successful as possible, there will be **no exceptions to these rules.**

Because of limited physical space, I have to put a **cap on the numbers of students that I am able to put into the Symphony Orchestra.** The maximum instrumentation for Symphony Orchestra will be:

- Violins – 22
- Violas – 8
- Cellos – 8
- Basses – 4
- Woodwinds – Flute – 5, Oboes – 3, Clarinet – 4, Bassoon – 4
- Brass & Percussion – French Horn – 4, Trumpet – 4, Trombone – 3, Tuba – 1, Percussion – 2

This means that Concert Orchestra will also include students from 10th grade. We will be switching the Concert Orchestra class to 6th period which will coincide with the Concert Band – so this will allow us to do some full orchestra repertoire.

The most important part of my teaching is instilling a love for Symphonic and Chamber music for all of my students and having a well-rounded music education so students have a life-time love of music. These changes will allow me to help your students achieve this.

To clarify, below is a brief explanation of each performing group:

Concert Orchestra is made up of 9th and 10th grade students. This class will perform Full Orchestra, String Orchestra, and String Ensemble literature. Students will focus on rehearsal skills including bowing technique, left hand technique, vibrato, counting, and intonation. This class is required before auditioning for Symphony Orchestra or Chamber Orchestra. Students are expected to perform in all scheduled concerts, Monday night rehearsals, festivals, and activities arranged for this class.

Symphony Orchestra is made up of students who have auditioned into this class. The class will focus on Full Symphony Orchestra, String Orchestra, Woodwind Ensemble, and Brass Ensemble literature. Students attending this class **MUST** have prior experience in small chamber ensembles. Students are expected to be proficient with intonation, counting, and bowing skills. Students are expected to perform in all scheduled concerts, Monday night rehearsals, festivals, and activities arranged for this class.

Chamber Orchestra is made up of students who have auditioned for this class. This class will focus on Chamber literature and some String Orchestra repertoire. This class will be made up of pre-arranged ensembles. Students are expected to perform at the highest level. Students are expected to perform in all scheduled concerts, festivals, and activities arranged for this class. In addition, students are expected to perform with the Symphony Orchestra class. Chamber music students will attend all scheduled Monday Night Rehearsals.