Course Syllabus and Concert Schedule

**Springboro Junior High String Orchestra: 2018-2019**

Director: Sarah Benedict, [sbenedict@springboro.org](mailto:sbenedict@springboro.org)

http://Springborostrings.weebly.com

Welcome back!

Please read this document carefully as it outlines the grading policies, concert dates and other details needed for us to have a successful year in strings! All this important info will also remain available on our site springborostrings.weebly.com

**CONCERT DATES**: mark your calendars now!

Concerts and events are mandatory unless stated otherwise. We share some concert dates with SI, but we will have a different starting time and will perform independently from SI. This was due to limited stage availability. Students at SJH have a CONCERT UNIFORM- a strings logo or plain white polo shirt that is mandatory attire for each concert. More information on uniforms will be sent home soon.

**November 17- Christmas in Springboro TBA** Optional, schedule releasedringboro TBAsections depending on issues that arise.ing test to check on progress at home. These ma, participation will occur in small chamber ensemble format, likely Saturday afternoon.

**December 18- Holiday Concert, SHS stage, 7:30pm.**  Mandatory. (SI will perform starting at 6:30pm)

**January 11/12- Cincinnati Symphony Field Trip.** Optional, to be arranged. (weekend event)

**March 30- JH Solo and Ensemble Contest,** schedule TBA. Optional but strongly encouraged. Keep the entire day free if you plan to participate.

**May 2- Final Strings Concert, SHS Stage, 7:30pm.**  Mandatory. (SI will perform at 6:30 the same night)

**ADDITIONAL DATES:**

\*Keep an eye out for information coming in late September on our Strings Polo Shirts that will be concert uniform this year- students will wear the white polo shirt with black pants/skirts/bottoms for every stage and contest performance.

\*Also, we will have a fall social event for students to help build community and let the students know we care and that they belong!

**CONTACT:**

I will be assigning and grading important homework and uploading video tutorials as needed to Google Classroom. Students will need to sign up to my classroom pages using their school email accounts. The first step is to log in on their student google address, and then add the Google Classroom app to their drive page. Then, they need to enroll in my class. The Google classroom code to sign up for 7th grade strings is **15r085**. The Classroom code to sign up for 8th grade strings is **jdhzpn**. Please take a moment and sign up for this now. Each class is separated out for gradebook purposes on my end. **If you are changing sections from grade 7 to 8, please quit your membership to the “old” classroom page**.

**EXPECTATIONS:**

My expectations of strings students are:

1. Have your instrument, a pencil and your music folder **every** strings class. Even if you share music, both students must have music available in the event your stand partner is absent. Loss of daily points will result from not having supplies.

2. Be on time, be polite and participate. Students are to be in their seat with their instrument unpacked and ready to tune no later than 2 minutes after the bell.

3. If your instrument has a broken string, replace it immediately so you may fully participate and not fall behind in class. Failure to replace a string within a week will result in loss of points (please notify me if you don’t have time to get a string until a certain day). Students will be expected to borrow a school instrument while their own is being repaired so they do not miss participating in class.

4. No food or drink in the strings room unless you have a note from the school nurse.

5. No phones, ipods or other devices out and in use without specific permission. Students who use their device as a tuner may do so with my permission, but MUST put the device completely away/off after tuning. Any use of devices without permission will result in an immediate detention. Office referral will happen on the second or more instance of this happening.

6. Be supportive of your classmates…orchestra is a team effort and every part is important in order to make music. This also means no talking if another section is being rehearsed.

7. Attend all concerts. This is a performing arts class therefore concerts are a vital part of the experience and are part of the Fine Arts Curriculum for Springboro Community Schools. Failure to attend concerts without notifying the teacher (notification if you are sick/out of town for family emergency etc.) will result in a ZERO grade for the concert. Failure to wear concert uniform will impact student’s concert grade by a reduction of 10%. If you are granted an “excused” absence for the concert, you will be given a make up assignment to earn your points- this will be a playing test video of all concert music submitted over google classroom and will be graded for content.

8. **No book bags permitted in the strings room or out in the hallway for 11th period strings unless you have special permission via an IEP. This is a BUILDING RULE and can result in office referral if ignored.**

**BEHAVIOR:**

If there is a particular problem, my first action is to talk with the student after class and/or contact parents. Repeat problems (such as forgotten instrument, unauthorized device use during class, etc) or severe behavior issues (such as verbal disruptions or insubordination) require further action such as detention or office referrals according to severity of offense.

**GRADES:**

Grades are based upon several items. Attitude, participation and having materials for class as listed above in the expectations (instrument, music, pencil) are only part of your grade. Grades will also be determined via practice goal statements, performance tests and concert attendance. Below is a breakdown on grade percentages.

Daily participation and having materials is weighted to 20% of overall grade

Practice goal statements are weighted to 15% of the grade

Concert attendance is 40% of the grade

Playing Tests/music theory assessments is weighted to 25% of the grade

**Practice Goals**: Students are to identify at least 2 specific goals for their practice each week, and log exactly what was practiced to meet that goal and for how long. Students will then summarize briefly after their last practice session if the goal was met or not and why. Students will be graded on the quality of the information on this sheet rather than a prescribed amount of practice time. Goals stated do not need to be just on class music; students in a youth orchestra or in private lessons may opt to target their goals to other music. **IDEALLY, STUDENTS SHOULD REVIEW ALL MATERIAL AT HOME 10-15 MIN DAILY, BUT I WOULD ACCEPT WEEKEND ONLY PRACTICE TIME divided however you choose; your total practice time outside of class should be about 60 minutes per week.**  I may substitute a video playing test at any point in place of a practice card.

**Playing Test Assessments:** Students will be given performance based assessments in class (either announced or unannounced) as needed. The purpose is to make sure students are making good individual progress as well as give students some experience performing alone. These assessments may be as short as demonstrating a new skill, playing a few measures from our class music, or it may be a longer test over an entire section of music.

**SEATING ASSIGNMENTS:** Students will be placed in their sections and be able to sit with whomever to start the year, with Mrs. Benedict selecting section leaders. Based upon continuing effort and class progress, Mrs. B will select stand partners a few weeks into the school year, and also concert seating. Concert seating will be strategic in order to place strong players throughout the section rather than placing students in a strict ranking order.

IF students who opt to sit together become a distraction to each other and the class, Mrs. B will change their seats.

**Long Fingernails:**

Long nails cause poor posture that can lead to wrist/tendon injury, and cause very poor intonation (student will play out of tune), in addition to making tone quality fuzzy (nail will hit the string a ways away from fingertip, causing a buzzing sound). I will take points off your grade if you have long nails.

**Instrument Repair:**

If your instrument needs repair (broken string, bridge fell down, etc) please bring it to me first as I may be able to fix it. However, if it requires repair services that I cannot provide, you will need to take it back to the music store immediately. Students are granted one week to get such repairs completed (most shops will loan you an instrument while yours is being fixed) and after one week, if the instrument is still not repaired or in the shop (with the replacement instrument in your possession), the student will lose all their daily points until they have their instrument in working order. If there are special circumstances at home preventing immediate repair, please contact me and I can extend the window of time before points are lost. Students will be expected to play on a school-owned instrument (as available) while their instrument is being repaired.

**Injury:**

If a student becomes injured in such a way that prevents participation in class, they must supply Mrs. B with a doctor’s note, and they will be given alternate assignments until they are able to play. This alternate work will take the place of daily class points. Injured students must still complete weekly practice assignments in the form of listening to Classical music. Dayton Public Radio is an excellent choice, although students may also listen to Classical stations on Sirius Radio, internet streaming, CD’s or purchases off iTunes, etc. It must be Classical music (not classic rock, but orchestral performances). Piano, vocal, musical theater or classical guitar are also acceptable selections as are live performances. If you are injured for a concert performance, you will be expected to attend the concert as an audience member and write a reflection piece or some other similar assignment for your grade.

**Concert Dress:**

For all concerts, unless otherwise stated, students will wear black on bottom (slacks/skirt, socks/hose and dress shoes) and white strings logo Polo shirt on top. Please follow the school dress code for pants/skirts/shoes. Ladies that play cello need to wear pants or a very long skirt to accommodate the instrument. Failure to wear concert uniform on top or failure to wear black on bottom will result in a lowered grade for the concert, and you may be asked to sit in the very back of the group regardless of your assigned concert seat. \*\*\*\* If you’ve outgrown your strings logo polo and you notice this only weeks before a concert, you are expected to match as best you can with a plain white polo or plain white short sleeved top.

**Concert Absences:**

In the event you must miss a concert due to unavoidable big-item conflicts (like a family trip to India), you must notify me as soon as you are aware of the conflict. It is up to me to determine if an absence is considered an ‘excused absence’ or an ‘unexcused absence’. A playing test or makeup assignment will be given to make up the lost points for missing the concert for an **excused** absence, but an unexcused absence (such as forgetting about the concert or missing it for a weekly dance rehearsal) will result in a 0% grade for the concert. Not having a ride to the concert is considered an unexcused absence as we can arrange a carpool ride for you. Every person is important in the success of our orchestra!

**ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

**Private Lessons:** If your child loves playing, I strongly suggest taking private lessons in addition to our class so your child can learn solo music on their instrument. You can take lessons from any of the area music studios such as That Music Place or McCutcheon's. Lessons are arranged on an individual basis and there is a fee. The benefits of taking lessons are numerous including the opportunity to play solo music we won’t have time for in our strings class, and students who take lessons are typically better at their instruments because of the extra time they spend playing and the one-on-one, tailored attention. The only drawback to taking lessons is the added responsibility of practicing more at home, but it is worth it.

**Youth Orchestras:**

The Lebanon Youth Symphony Orchestra is a great youth orchestra for students to try out (rehearses Tuesday nights). This orchestra is string instruments only and is entered via audition in the fall. Please see [www.musicinlebanon.org](http://www.musicinlebanon.org) for more information. I highly recommend this group and if you want help with your audition prep, I am more than happy to help students individually after school.

There are also competitive youth symphony orchestras associated with the Dayton Philharmonic and the Cincinnati Symphony (Sunday night rehearsals). You must take private lessons and audition to enter these groups, and they are for the dedicated and driven student. Belonging to one of these groups is highly recommended if you plan on making music your college major or career. Please ask if you want more information- auditions are in the spring so start preparing now (use your Solo and Ensemble piece!)

**Springboro Orchestra Association:**

Our strings program is supported by a group of dedicated parents and staff who help to plan fun activities and raise money to pay for music and instruments. We meet monthly and need your talents to help our program be successful! Please plan to attend at least four of our meetings this year and help us make it a great year for your student!

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**Please sign, DETACH and return this page.**

**“I have read and understand this syllabus and am familiar with the grading policy. I have placed the concert dates on my calendar, I have enrolled with both REMIND and GOOGLE CLASSROOM and understand I am completely responsible for knowing these dates and being present at these events. I understand the website springborostrings.weebly.com will have important class information should I need to find something.”**

**Parent/Guardian signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Email(s) for any correspondence\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Students Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES: Mrs. Benedict would be forever grateful if you could help the orchestras with your time or talents for any of the following:

\_\_\_\_ I am willing to assist in recording concert events and posting to Youtube so students can watch their concert.

\_\_\_\_ I am willing to assist with being a concert chaperone\*, helping students get tuned and settled in audience or on stage for events at SHS.

\_\_\_\_I am willing to assist the SOA with fundraising efforts\* (Butterbraids, T-shirts, or other).

\_\_\_\_I am willing to help chaperone\* the annual trip to see the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.

\_\_\_\_\_I am willing to become active with SOA meetings this year and help plan events that financially take care of district-owned instruments and supplies and help plan fun events for students. (Many current SOA board members have students who will soon graduate- please consider helping!)

\_\_\_\_ I am willing to help with the MasterClass dinner in mid-April\*

\_\_\_\_ I am willing to come in and take photographs\* of students during class (one time needed) and during concerts to place in our yearbook (students on do-not-photograph list will be edited out)

\*Parents who help by working directly with students will need to have fingerprints on file with Central Office and be a BOE approved volunteer.