



**SOUTH COUNTY
STALLION
ORCHESTRA
HANDBOOK
2009-2010**

Please visit our website at
<http://www.scssorchestra.org>
for additional information!

Welcome to the Stallion Orchestra Family!

Dear Orchestra Families,

Welcome to a new school year at South County Secondary School! I am honored to be here as your new orchestra director. I have heard nothing but terrific things about you and your children, and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to work with you this year.

I am originally from Greenville, South Carolina, where I began playing the violin in our public school system. I majored in Music Education at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, and after teaching for a few years I went back for my Masters degree at the College-Conservatory of Music in Cincinnati, Ohio.

I have had several teaching positions in the past, but I have never before lived in such a culturally rich environment that shows such great respect for the arts. Northern Virginia and D.C. are full of musical opportunities, and I look forward to sharing many of them with your children. We have a pretty busy calendar of performances and activities, but I assure you that these experiences will be educational and musically rewarding.

I am excited about the coming year and I look forward to getting to know you and your children. Thanks for your support of the arts,

Sarah Lancaster
South County Secondary School
Director of Orchestras
Sarah.Lancaster@fcps.edu
703-446-1985

Orchestra Manual

The primary goal of the orchestra is to work together to produce a superior performing ensemble. My personal goal is to provide each student with a comprehensive instrumental music education by teaching the skills and attitudes needed to succeed as a musician and young adult. These skills include building a strong work ethic, discipline, and a commitment to excellence.



Rehearsal Expectations

- Proud Take pride in yourself and your ensemble.
- Disciplined Understand the need for practice and make time for it daily.
- Punctual Be on time for class and rehearsals.
- Behavior Be in control of your actions at all times; think before acting.
- Positive Smile and understand that learning takes time.
- Honest Admit your limitations and mistakes; take full responsibility for your actions.
- Committed Realize the impact your individual attitudes and actions may have on the group.
- Polite Be respectful to teachers, administrators, and peers.
- Prepared **Bring the following materials to class each day.**
- ☺ Instrument (Good Quality Strings and bow with full hair, Shoulder Rest)
 - ☺ Rosin
 - ☺ **Tuner/Metronome (KorgKT30)** (See catalog stores below)
 - ☺ Pencil (Daily – NO PEN)
 - ☺ Polishing Cloth
 - ☺ Music Folder and music in good condition
 - ☺ Enthusiasm for music

INSTRUMENTS

Each student must have an instrument. Instruments can be rented or purchased from a local music store. Please do not purchase an instrument before consulting a professional first - some deals are too good to be true. Please ask me or your private teacher for assistance with your purchase.

Fairfax County Instruments

Students on the **Fairfax County Free-Reduced Lunch Program** may rent an instrument for a fee of **\$20.00** per year. Instrument rental forms/fees are at the end of this packet and must be turned in by **September 5th**. **No instruments** will be distributed before money is received. The county will provide violins and violas but cellos/basses are rented upon availability only. **NO FORM, NO MONEY, NO INSTRUMENT!**

South County Instruments

Cellos and basses are available for rent from the school. Musicians will need two instruments: one for home practice and one for class and rehearsals.

Fees: *\$46 per year if the student uses a cello/bass at school only.
\$92 per year if the student uses two school cellos/basses (one at home and one at school).*

Violins and violas are not available through SCSS. Mrs. Lancaster has information regarding rental plans and local music shops that specialize in selling stringed instruments. Please see her if you're looking into upgrading an instrument or changing your rental program.

Responsibility and Care of Instruments

Students using school-owned and county-owned instruments are responsible for keeping the instruments in good shape. The Instrument Rental contract outlines the responsibility students and parents have in caring for instruments. Instruments needing basic string repairs will be paid for by Fairfax County. Instruments in need of repair due to student neglect or abuse will be the responsibility of the family.

INSTRUMENTS AND HOME PRACTICE

Especially since our classes do not meet each day, skills need to be practiced individually as well as in our ensemble. Students will have individual strengths and weaknesses which are best addressed in home practice and/or private lessons. Like math, reading, or social studies, some concepts in orchestra will come easily while others will be more difficult to grasp.

Because playing a stringed instrument is a physical activity, it is important to practice at home—slowly and carefully—in order for the muscles to master these skills. If conditions make it impossible to practice at home, students should arrange a day with me to stay after school so they can practice at SCSS.

Instrument Locker Rules

1. All students are responsible for keeping the instrument locker area clean and neat.
2. Do not store food or candy in your orchestra locker.
3. Keep track of your own locker combination and LOCK it!
3. If you choose not to put a lock on your locker, you are taking full responsibility for the items left in your locker. **The orchestra or SCSS will not be held responsible for loss, theft, or damage to any items left in an unlocked locker!**

Instrument Accessories

Students may need certain items and accessories for their instruments from time to time such as rosin, strings, shoulder rests, tuners, metronomes, etc. I strongly encourage you to utilize the catalog companies listed below before visiting local music stores unless it is an emergency. The catalog companies are significantly less expensive.

Southwest Strings	1-800-528-3430	www.swstrings.com
Shar Music	1-800-248-SHAR(7427)	www.sharmusic.com

STRING SHOPS

There are a few local string shops to visit for the purpose of purchasing instruments, bows, etc. The catalogs listed above are also great for certain instrument purchases.

Brobst Violin Shop
5584 General Washington Dr.
Alexandria, VA.
703-256-0566

House of Weaver/Potter's Violins
4706 Highland Ave.
Bethesda, Md.
301-672-7070

Bob's House of Basses
12301 Shaefer Ln.
Glenn Dale, MD
(301) 805-9407

Music and Arts Center (rentals)
6810 Bland St.,
Springfield, VA.
703-451-0875

PRIVATE LESSONS

Students who enjoy their instrument and are interested in advancing on their instrument should consider private lessons. Private instructors teach one on one, at the student's pace, and help each student develop technical and musical skills specific to their instrument. A list of private teachers will be available in the classroom and on the Orchestra website.

Attendance

An orchestra performs at its best with all members present. We are a team; everyone is important! Therefore, students are required to participate in all rehearsals and performances unless excused by the director (see "Absence Policy"). A minimal number of rehearsals is being scheduled, which makes attendance to each one very important. **Please plan now.** Conflicts with club or sport activities can be settled between the teachers/coaches, but only when we have plenty of advanced notice.

Tardies – Rehearsals and Performances

Students are expected to be on time to all orchestra activities. "ON TIME" means ready to begin with all necessary items, not rushing to your chair when roll is being taken.

Absence Policy

All rehearsals and concerts are considered part of the class requirement for orchestra. We are a performing group, so it is essential that students participate fully in performances. Please read the following rules and contact me if you have any questions:

1. **Written** notices *from parents* are required for all rehearsal absences and must be received within **five** days of the absence (email is sufficient). Verbal or written excuses from students are not accepted and will be considered unexcused. Concert absences will not be excused with the exception of illness, family emergency, or if it was pre-arranged with the director. Excused concert absences will be made up with a written or recorded assignment.

2. Advance notice is required for any prior commitments in order for it to be excused. A prior commitment means a date already committed to before the orchestra schedule is announced. I need to receive notice as soon as possible after an event is announced...this way I can plan music/seating accordingly.

(Example: You know now that you cannot play our spring concert because your family planned a cruise with your relatives. Do not wait until the week of the concert to announce your plans. Your team depends on you!)

3. In the case of illness and/or family emergency, parents should phone or send a written notice to the orchestra director as soon as they are aware that such a situation exists. If this is an emergency situation (something that happens 30 minutes before a rehearsal/concert), it may be impossible to get in touch with anyone. If this happens, please phone within five days of the student's absence.
4. Religious holidays or conflicts with individual religious beliefs are considered excused provided that the director has been notified in writing by the parent **in advance**.
5. **Needing a ride is not a valid excuse. You have the calendar now; arrange transportation accordingly. Talk to me if you need help organizing a carpool.**
6. **High school students: "I have to work" is not a valid excuse. You have the calendar now; ask your manager not to schedule you on rehearsal or concert dates.**

Please talk to me directly if there are individual or unusual circumstances that may be a problem. Unexcused absences affect the morale of the entire orchestra, not to mention the student's success. We depend upon each other; if a student is unwilling to contribute by attending after school rehearsals and performances, they should explore other activities here at SCSS.

All out of class time rehearsals and performances are considered extensions of the classroom and are therefore laboratory and/or practical applications of the orchestra curriculum. Students are responsible and accountable for their attendance and quality of participation as related to all laboratory and/or practical applications.

Music Rehearsal Procedures

1. All students must be in the orchestra room seated with instrument ready to play 3 minutes after the tardy bell rings.
2. All books and backpacks are to be placed at the **back of the room** during rehearsal.
3. Announcements and rehearsal order will be posted on the board prior to rehearsal.
4. Adequate warm-up time will always be given. Rehearsal begins promptly when the Director/principal player steps on the podium.
5. To receive credit for your daily participation grade, all students must have their instrument, music folder, **a pencil**, and any other material needed to perform. (Pencil, rosin, music, etc.).

DISCIPLINE

Rehearsal techniques are probably the most important parts of performance. What we do in rehearsal often reflects what we do on stage. Therefore, we must make the effort to take our rehearsals seriously and set our goals and expectations high. If one chooses not to follow the correct rehearsal procedures she is not only hurting herself, but most importantly hurting the orchestra. If you decide to go against normal rehearsal procedure, these consequences may follow:

1st Offense: Warning

2nd Offense: Call home/After school Detention

3rd Offense: Office Referral/Call home/Additional graded assignment

Grades

33%: Daily participation

- short nails and good posture
- effort in performance/classwork
- pop quizzes (unannounced)
- maintained equipment, supplies, journal, and music folder
- proper tuning conduct
- being prepared to play on time---tardies to seat will effect participation grade

33%: Tests

- Playing tests (announced)
- Written tests (announced)
- Listening/journal assignments

34%: Concert Performance

- Attendance at rehearsals and concerts
- Students must arrive on time and participate fully
- Students must be properly uniformed

It is important that students understand this grading scale. We do not have the same number of concerts and rehearsals during each 9 week report card period. This means that sometimes journals, playing tests, and daily participation will be weighted more heavily. Orchestra is not an automatic "A." It requires hard work and dedication!

There are also many opportunities for students to receive extra credit. These include but are not limited to taking private lessons, attending community concerts, attending concerts at other schools, performing at church, bringing current events from the newspapers, writing about a televised concert, working in the music library after school, auditioning for Regionals, All-State, or performing in Solo and Ensemble. Mrs. Lancaster will announce coming events on the class bulletin board as well as on the orchestra website.

Care of Music

Students are responsible for all music they receive. Missing or damaged music and folders must be replaced or a fine of up to \$1.00 must be paid. Each student will receive a folder and their own practice copies of concert music. Once music is distributed, the student is then held responsible for all music. Students will be charged \$.25 per page for any replacement copies. This money will go into our school music account.

Equipment

All instruments are expected to be in good playing condition. Proper maintenance is required. All instruments kept at school during the day should have the student's name clearly printed on the outside of the case or on a tag. Instrument lockers and locks are provided and should always be used. Please keep lockers locked—even during class—to deter theft and to avoid lock mix-ups. **Instruments left overnight are the responsibility of the students.**

Students are expected to have their materials in class each day. This is part of the class participation grade. It's an easy way to make a 100, but also an easy way to lower your grade quickly. Points will be deducted when students fail to bring supplies.

-10 points

Rosin
Pencil
Cloth to clean instrument

-20 points

Shoulder rest/pad or rock stop
Long fingernails
Music
Journal (will be announced in advance; students don't need this every day)

-40 points

Instrument/bow
Instrument that is unplayable after more than 3 class periods (broken bridge, string, etc.)

PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

The South County Orchestras will have several performance opportunities within school and outside of the community. Mrs. Lancaster is a member of the Music Educator's National Conference making students eligible to participate in many of the events.

***CHAMBER ORCHESTRA-** SCSS Chamber Orchestra members are the cream of the crop! It is an honor to be a member of this organization; you are essentially the "face of the orchestra." We will rely on your talents and positive attitudes in order to recruit and retain new members, as well as educate the community about what we do as an ensemble. Your membership to Chamber Orchestra will bring you some extra responsibility as well as extra privileges. Some of those responsibilities include participation in the spring musical's pit orchestra, the opportunity to earn trip funds by playing at local community events, performance at Solo and Ensemble Festival, and leading sectionals for the younger students.

Fall Concert - Advanced orchestras perform in October.

Winter Concert - Intermediate and Advanced groups perform in December.

Senior Regional Orchestra - Senior Regional Orchestra of Northern Virginia – Select students perform by auditioned invitation only in November. Students who are in grades 9-12, and are members of their school orchestra are eligible to audition for the Northern Virginia Senior Regional Orchestra. This ensemble is a full symphonic orchestra comprised of students from Districts 10, 11, & 12. Auditions are usually scheduled for late September, and the event is held in early November. The cost of the audition is **\$6.00** and the event ranges between **\$20-\$30**.

VBODA All-State – Senior Regional participants are eligible to audition for the All-State Orchestra. This ensemble is a full symphonic orchestra comprised of students from throughout the state. Auditions are held in late February and the event takes place in April. If funds are available this fee may be covered.

Junior/Senior District Honors Orchestra - These honors orchestras are for students who have achieved certain skills on their instrument. The ensembles are auditioned groups made up of the finest string players from the 14 middle and high schools in district ten. Students will receive audition materials in September. Audition requirements consist of a prepared selection and scales with specific articulations. The festival takes place the second weekend in January (Thurs.-Sat.). Eligible students are strongly encouraged to audition for this event. All students receive reward points for auditioning, participating, and observing. The audition fee ranges from **\$3-\$5**. There is a non-refundable participation fee of **\$25-\$30** if a student is selected for the Honors Orchestra.

PRE-FESTIVAL CONCERT - All SCSS groups perform their concert selections for the community in early March in preparation for the adjudicated State Orchestra Festival that takes place the second weekend in March.

DISTRICT TEN STATE ORCHESTRA FESTIVAL is usually the second weekend in March, and is, from the director's standpoint the most important performance of the year. Orchestras from each school in all districts come together to perform for each other and three well-respected adjudicators. Groups are required to prepare a warm-up selection and three pieces that challenge the performers, and some groups may choose to sight-read an unfamiliar piece as part of the adjudication. The judges will grade three of the four pieces on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being a superior) and all scores are posted statewide in April. Students rehearse intensely on these pieces during the winter months. All rehearsals, workshops, concerts and festival performances are **MANDATORY**.

SOLO & ENSEMBLE FESTIVAL takes place in late April. Students are strongly encouraged to perform a solo or an ensemble piece. The students will be graded by a judge and given a rating of superior, excellent, good, fair, or poor. Students receiving a superior or excellent rating will receive an achievement medal at the end of the year. Participating in the festival includes the following:

1. Buy an appropriate solo. You will need an original of the piece for the judge. No photocopies for the judges! If your piece has an essential piano part, it is your responsibility to arrange for a paid accompanist. Please check with Mrs. Lancaster or your private teacher if you are unsure whether you need an accompanist.
2. Students will need to register and pay a fee for the festival in late February or early March. The fee is non-refundable.

** All Chamber Orchestra students are required to participate in Solo and Ensemble Festival.

MUSIC IN THE PARKS FESTIVAL – The middle school music department will travel to **Pennsylvania's Hershey Park** in June for a music competition. The festival is not required and is contingent upon the behavior and grades of the students throughout the year. Students should maintain a "C" average or better in their music class in order to participate in the trip and have no disciplinary referrals during the second semester; however final attendance is at the discretion of the director.

HIGH SCHOOL SPRING TRIP – The high school orchestras will have the opportunity to travel overnight for our spring trip in April. This trip is not required and is contingent upon the behavior and grades of the students throughout the year. Students must maintain a "C" average or better in their music class and have no disciplinary referrals during the second semester; final attendance is at the discretion of the director.

***All students are encouraged to attend these trips for their musical, educational, and social value. The directors put a great deal of time and preparation into the trips and are committed to making them fun and safe for everyone. Students will have the opportunity to participate in Orchestra fundraising activities throughout the year to help offset the cost of the trip.**

SCSS Concert Attire

A sharp looking ensemble adds to the overall aesthetics of the performance, leaves a positive impression on the audience, and boosts the confidence and morale of the players. It is for these reasons that the SCSS Orchestras require a standard concert uniform. Students who do not wear the complete uniform to concerts will not perform and will be graded accordingly. Students who cannot perform due to injury are required to attend the concert in concert dress.

All Orchestra members are required to purchase a Middle School uniform upon entering 7th grade and a High School uniform upon entering 9th grade. We no longer offer rental uniforms. (Ladies must order through school, gentleman may either purchase their tuxedos through the school or on their own.) Measurements will be obtained and uniforms ordered during late summer and the first few weeks of school.

Students who later outgrow their uniform may be permitted to exchange their uniform for another size **if available**. The returned uniform must be in “like new” condition with all of the pieces, **and must have been drycleaned prior to returning it**.

Parents are welcome to sell their used uniform when their student no longer needs it at any of the scheduled uniform fitting times. **Uniforms may also be donated to the SCSS Orchestra to use for future uniform exchanges. We will provide a receipt for your tax-deductible donation.**

High School Attire (see Orchestra Payment Sheet under the Orchestra Forms link for cost)

HS Women: Formal black dress, black dress shoes, black hose.

HS Men: Black tux, white tux shirt, black bow tie/ cummerbund, black dress shoes, black socks (Replacement fee for cummerbund is \$10, bow tie is \$5)

Middle School Attire (see Orchestra Payment Sheet under the Orchestra Forms link for cost)

MS Women: Black skirt and white blouse, black dress shoes, black hose

MS Men: Black pants, white tux shirt or dress button-down, black socks, black shoes, Long black tie (Replacement fee for tie is \$15)

****Students on the free/reduced lunch program are eligible for financial assistance with uniform expense. Parents must show county acceptance letter ASAP.***

The orchestra uniform is not a “costume.” It is designed to be subtle and understated in order to keep the focus on the *music*. Along with wearing a clean, ironed, properly-altered uniform, here are a few important guidelines to help you dress for a concert:

- Any hair ornaments should be brown, black, or white. Long hair should be tied/pulled back so you can see the conductor and so the audience can see YOU!
- Footwear must be black dress shoes. Open toed and/or backless shoes are not acceptable, even if we are performing at an amusement park. Likewise, athletic shoes are not appropriate for a tuxedo. Don't even think about it.
- Boys must wear black socks. Girls must wear black nylons or tights.
- Jewelry should be minimal and silent. If you wear a necklace or earrings, be sure that it doesn't vibrate on your instrument.
Bracelets are not permitted at SCSS Orchestra concerts.
- Please do not wear perfume or cologne for concerts. Some of our musicians and audience members have allergies.
- **Gum is never, ever part of our uniform.**

Contact

I will be at SCSS each day from 7:00 AM until at least 2:45 PM (Usually much, much later!) Please call me at 703-446-1985. You are also welcome to send a note with your child. E-mail is probably the fastest and most direct way to connect with me, so you may prefer to write me at Sarah.Lancaster@fcps.edu. I will frequently post upcoming events and practice information on our Blackboard pages (24-7 Learning). Please check this site weekly for announcements.

My planning periods are 7th period (12:45-2:10) on green days and 4th period (9:10-10:35) on blue days. Feel free to schedule a conference with me at those times or we can make an appointment for after school.

ELIGIBILITY FOR ORCHESTRA AWARDS

The growth and success of the orchestra depends on the contribution and positive attitudes of its members. All students who contribute by rehearsing **EFFECTIVELY**, helping others, and by being consistently prepared will be acknowledged and rewarded at the end of the year. Hard working students who consistently make the most significant contributions and who accumulate a required number of service points will be **eligible** to receive awards. Some awards include Most Improved Player, Most Outstanding Musician, and Director's Award. **It is the responsibility of the student to complete the form documenting orchestra activities and submit it to the Orchestra Director on or before the deadline.**

Most Improved Award - Student has worked diligently throughout the year and has made great strides in his technical facility on the instrument, overall understanding of musical terms, techniques and musicianship

Outstanding Musicianship Award - Student must have all "A's" and "B's" in orchestra for the year, attend all performances, display outstanding rehearsal and performance etiquette and obtain at least 100 points which must include the district audition.

Director's Award – Awarded to 8th grader or junior/senior who earns an "A" each quarter, attends all performances, obtains 100 service points which must include the district audition/event, and displays outstanding rehearsal and performance etiquette along with good leadership within the section or ensemble.

Stallion Espirit de Corps Award – Awarded by class vote.

National Orchestra Award – Awarded to a SCSS Senior who displays the characteristics of a professional musician (selected by director).

Academic Orchestra Letters (High School students only) –

Each high school orchestra student has the potential to earn a letter before graduation if remaining in the program for four years. If a student attends all concerts and receives all As and Bs in Orchestra, they will receive a letter upon graduation. Students will automatically earn a letter if they have earned eligibility for the Outstanding Musicianship/Director's Award. Once a letter is received a pin will be given to the student each subsequent year that letter status is achieved.

POINT SYSTEM

Private Lessons - One full year = 20 points

Solo and Ensemble - Superior = 10 points

Excellent = 5 points

10+ points will be awarded if a student performs more than one event.

Peer Tutoring = 5 points per 1/2 hour of tutoring- Advanced student adopts and teaches another student in need of help.



Junior/Senior District Honors Orchestra - Audition =10 points

Participation = 15 points

Performance in outside groups - One Year = 10 points

Examples include, but are not limited to, the Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra, McLean Youth Orchestra, Prince William Youth Orchestra, American Youth Philharmonic, or the Levine School of Music.

Extracurricular Concert Attendance =5 points Students who attend arts concerts receive 5 points per concert. Performances include other school concerts, recitals, professional performances, etc. Program must be submitted to director with a parent signature. (Art shows included)
Maximum 20 points

Fundraisers = 5 points Students will receive points for participating in orchestra fundraisers.

Service Hours may include working in music library, music office, storage room, peer tutoring, working at orchestra fundraisers, elementary strings tutoring, etc. These service hours may also count towards Tri-M Music Honor Society.

SCSS Orchestra “Academic” Letter

NAME _____

___ Submitted for Letter

___ Submitted for Pin

An academic letter is awarded to a student who has earned 100 points while a member of an SCSS Orchestra. Once a letter is earned, then pins will be awarded to display on the letter for each additional 100 points earned.

	EVENT	POINTS	'08-'09
*	Weekly private lessons the entire year (violin, viola, cello, or string bass)	20	
	Complete a full year of orchestra in good standing (GPA of A or B)	15	
	Governor’s School for Music	15	
	Participation in honor group (region, district, state)	15	
	AP Music Theory Class	10	
	Ensemble receives Superior rating at Festival	10	
*	Membership in a youth symphony	10	
	Pit Orchestra	10	
	Solo and Ensemble-Superior Rating	10	
	Spring Trip/Field Trip	10	
*	Summer Music Camp	10	
	Audition for honor group (region, district, state)	10	
	Assist director after school (per hour – music library, fund raising, stage set up, etc)	5	
*	Attend a community orchestra/strings concert (20 points max/year-submit program)	5	
	Ensemble receives Excellent rating at Festival	5	
	Perform gratis for a school function (solo or small ensemble)	5	
	Participate in fund raising event	5	
	Serve on the Orchestra Council (each year)	5	
	Solo and Ensemble-Excellent Rating	5	
	Solo and Ensemble – additional events	5	
	Tri M Music Honor Society (each semester)	5	
*	Tutor a younger (MS or ES) orchestra student for ½ hour (20 points max)	5	
*	Weekly private lessons the entire year on a second instrument (i.e. piano)	5	
*	Other (approved by director)	TBD	
	TOTAL POINTS EARNED		

Due to Orchestra Director by **May 1, 2010**

_____ Date Submitted _____

Parent Signature

* Points awarded in these categories require parent signature.



SOUTH COUNTY ORCHESTRA POINTS SHEET

Peer Tutoring (5 points per 1/2 hour)

Student name _____ Date _____ Hour _____
 Student name _____ Date _____ Hour _____
 Student name _____ Date _____ Hour _____
 Student name _____ Date _____ Hour _____
 Student name _____ Date _____ Hour _____

Extracurricular Concert Attendance (Provide programs the week of attendance with your first and last name on the program along with parent signature)

Program title _____ Date _____
 Program title _____ Date _____
 Program title _____ Date _____
 Program title _____ Date _____
 Program title _____ Date _____

Additional Service Hours

Activity _____ Date of Activity _____
 Total Time _____ No. of points _____

Activity _____ Date of Activity _____
 Total Time _____ No. of points _____

Activity _____ Date of Activity _____
 Total Time _____ No. of points _____

By signing below, I verify that my student performed the above service hours.

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Support

You have already provided encouragement for your child by allowing them to participate in our orchestra program. Now that they have been studying a stringed instrument for several years, there are many ways you can continue to provide support for our students:

- Remind your child to bring his or her instrument and music to school on orchestra days.
- Assist your child promptly when he or she needs supplies. A week with a broken string means a week that they're not learning and practicing.
- Be sure your child has short fingernails (this helps students play in tune and with correct posture).
- Encourage your child to practice and perform for family and friends.
- Give compliments and encouraging words when you notice improvement or you like what your child is playing.
- Talk with your child about school and what they're learning in their classes.
- Assist with our concerts, fundraisers, and chaperone our field trips.
- Bring your child to public concerts, recitals, and other schools' concerts. Many of these events can be found in the local newspapers, as well as on the SCSS Orchestra website and bulletin board, and many of them are free!
- Help your child build their own personal music library. Buy them CDs and DVDs as gifts, or take them to a sheet music store and let them pick out their own piece of music.
- Encourage your child to study private lessons.
- **Attend your child's school concerts.** Children perform at a much higher level of quality when they know that an important person in their life took the time to come hear them play. Listening to your child perform is perhaps the strongest way you can encourage them to continue studying their instrument.
- Support the goals, policies and procedures of your orchestra director. Your child benefits when the orchestra is successful.