

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome back! It is my immense pleasure to welcome you to the 2015 – 2016 season of the Orchestra Division of NJSMA. My name is Andy Havington and I am the new orchestral chair for Region I. I currently direct the Montville Township High School Orchestra, where I have worked for four years and I am excited to help you have a wonderful school year! This year, the high school orchestra will be celebrating its 51st year of providing our students in grades 9-12 with the opportunity to make music together and to work with professional conductors and sectional coaches! The High School Orchestra concert this year will be on Sunday, February 28th. This year's Junior High School Orchestra concert for students in grades 7-9 will be on Sunday, March 13th.

We will again be holding our High School and Junior High School Festivals this Spring. This is an opportunity to have your students listen to and play in front of other school ensembles as well as receive feedback from our adjudicators (adjudicators in the past have included Sandra Dackow, Helen Cha-Pyo, Jack Rosenberg, Jonathan Spitz and Lou Kosma). This year we have combined the Junior and High School festivals into one event on May 20th, 2016. This is a great opportunity for you and your students to connect with other schools and grow as an ensemble. We look forward to seeing you there!

The Elementary Honors Orchestra Festival will continue this year! This is an all-day event where string students nominated by their school music teachers will rehearse with a conductor in preparation for a concert to be held that afternoon. Last year proved to be a great success thanks to our coordinator, Kim Chiesa from the Randolph School District, and our three conductors Cynthia Kimon, Nate Lienhard, and Loni Bach. If you or a teacher you know are looking for an opportunity for your elementary students to get an idea of what the region experience is like, please consider having your students be a part of this festival!

This year we will be continuing to use the online application process. This system of registering students made the process very easy to work with and was a great success last year. If you have any difficulties please feel free to contact me at orchestra@njmsa.com with any questions. Audition dates for the 2015 – 2016 NJSMA orchestra season are as follows: High School – Saturday, January 9, 2016 (Snow Date: January 10, 2016); Junior HS – Saturday, February 6, 2016 (Snow Date: February 7, 2016). NJSMA Orchestra Division follows the scale and solo repertoire requirements of All-State Orchestra. Please check the region or state website for further details. Final orchestra seating will once again be determined by the culmination of a student's audition score and a reseating score based on preparation of the orchestra music which will be mailed to them prior to the first rehearsal.

Finally, this year is a great time to become involved with the region leadership. Consider becoming involved with the Orchestra Division of NJSMA as a manager, sectional coach, rehearsal host, or even as one of our conductors! It is never too early to have these things set, and it is truly the experience and cohesion of our many string teachers throughout the region that make these events possible. This way you can help guide our region and the experience our students have. I hope you have a great year and I look forward to seeing you at the auditions!

Sincerely,

Andrew Havington

Orchestra Division Chair