



www.permianorchestra.com

2015 – 2016

ORCHESTRA HANDBOOK

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WELCOME, GOALS, DIRECTOR INFO

Welcome and Hello to all students and parents involved in the Permian High School Orchestra Program. **The PHS Orchestras** are a tight-knit family and are dependent upon the participation of the students and their parents. Please consider giving of yourself and your time to help build a strong, quality program of which we all can be proud. The administration, faculty and staff of Permian High School take pride in being able to offer a full and varied instrumental music program.

This handbook will serve as an outline to answer some of the most asked questions as well as provide a few guidelines. It is important that the students and the parents read through this handbook **COMPLETELY** and sign and return the required forms at the back of the handbook. This will indicate your notification and acceptance of the policies of our high school orchestra. Please retain the remainder of the handbook at home so that you may refer to it when necessary.

PHS Orchestra Program Goals

- To create an atmosphere that will promote self-esteem and pride in each student through a creative environment.
- To promote student involvement in extra-curricular activities by encouraging participation in voluntary audition and performances such as All-Region, All-State, UIL Solo & Ensemble, UIL Contest & Sightreading and Community Performances.
- Musical excellence
- Dependability
- Responsible behavior
- Dedication

About The Directors

Todd Berridge – Head Orchestra Director

I am a 1990 Graduate of Permian High School and a 1996 Graduate of Texas Tech University with a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education. My main instrument is the viola. This is my 19th year to teach and my 8th year to teach at PHS. I am married to a wonderful woman named Jessica. She is a graduate of Texas Tech & UTA with a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education. She is a 1st grade teacher at Buice Elementary School. Finally, we have a daughter, Natalie, who is 14 years old and we have a son, Luke, who is just about to turn 10.

Kathryn Sabrsula – Associate Orchestra Director

Ms. Sabrsula is a native of Austin, Texas and proud to begin her teaching career at Permian High School. Originally a horn player for twelve years, Ms. Sabrsula discovered her love for orchestra through playing in symphony orchestras beginning at a young age. Ms. Sabrsula earned her Bachelors of Music Degree graduating Summa Cum Laude from The University of Texas at Arlington in 2015.

How to reach us:	Mr. Berridge	Office Phone: (432) 456-2286
		E-Mail: todd.berridge@ectorcountyisd.org
	Ms. Sabrsula	Office Phone: (432) 456-2287
		E-Mail: kathryn.sabrsula@ectorcountyisd.org

PHILOSOPHY AND ORCHESTRAS

Philosophy

Music offers enough intrinsic values to demand its teaching. Additional skills that may be gained from a musical experience are teamwork, group belonging and self-confidence. All students have an aptitude for music, and some students have a higher aptitude for music than any other subject. Therefore, ALL students are equally important to a musical ensemble. It is the goal of the Orchestra Department at PHS to facilitate the individual needs of students in order to promote personal and ensemble achievement.

Students will develop the following skills and concepts:

- A high level of performance encompassing rhythm, intonation, dynamics, tone and technique.
- Knowledge of a wide variety of orchestral and chamber literature.
- A functional knowledge of music history, theory and terminology.

Freshmen Orchestra (Non Varsity Strings)

The Permian High School Freshmen Orchestra meets each day for 50 minutes during 2nd period. All Freshmen Orchestra students **are required** to perform at each concert and **encouraged** prepare a solo or ensemble for the UIL Solo and Ensemble Contest and audition for All Region. The Freshmen Orchestra performs music from a variety of musical periods and styles. All members **are encouraged** to take private lessons.

Philharmonic Orchestra (Sub Non Varsity Strings)

The Permian High School Philharmonic Orchestra meets each day for 65 minutes during 3rd period. All Philharmonic Orchestra students **are required** to perform at each concert and **encouraged** prepare a solo or ensemble for the UIL Solo and Ensemble Contest and audition for All Region. The Philharmonic Orchestra performs music from a variety of musical periods and styles. All members **are encouraged** to take private lessons.

Satin Strings (Auxiliary Ensemble & Varsity Strings)

The Satin Strings is an audition only “strolling” ensemble that meets every day during 5th period for 65 minutes. The Satin Strings is world famous for its own blend of traditional fiddle songs, popular instrumental music, Irish jigs and reels and anything else we can throw into the mix. The Satin Strings performs at public and private functions during the lunch hour or after school. Membership in the Satin Strings is very competitive, so there is a yearly audition for membership in the ensemble. The members of Satin Strings are also automatically in the Symphony Orchestra.

Symphony Orchestra (Varsity Full Orchestra)

The Permian High School Symphony Orchestra is an audition only ensemble and meets each day during 6th period for 45 minutes. The PHS Symphony Orchestra is one of the only Full Orchestras in the entire state of Texas that meets daily during the school day. This award-winning ensemble has won the prestigious TMEA Honor Orchestra twice (1980 & 1984) under Charles Nail. The Symphony was also invited to perform at the world-renowned Midwest Clinic in Chicago, Illinois in 1985. Students interested in auditioning for the Symphony Orchestra will need to place orchestra as a high priority, and be willing to commit extra time and effort. Members of the Symphony Orchestra are **required to audition** for the All-Region Orchestra and **highly encouraged to audition** for All-State and are **strongly recommended** to take private lessons on their instrument. All Symphony Orchestra students **are also required** to perform at each concert and prepare a solo or ensemble for the UIL Solo and Ensemble Contest.

RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

Rehearsals

- Be prepared.
- Practice outside of rehearsal time.
- **Be on time. Students are expected to be in their seats with their instruments, music and pencil each day by the time the tardy bell rings!**
- Bring your instrument, orchestra folder, music, pencil and all required equipment.
- No talking or disruptions.
- Represent yourself and your school with pride.
- **PARTICIPATE FULLY.**

The orchestras rehearse daily during their scheduled class period. Occasionally, extra rehearsals held before and after school hours will be required for upcoming performance events and auditions. Sufficient advance notice of these extra rehearsals will be given.

Rehearsal Facilities

- Food, drinks, gum and candy are not allowed in the orchestra room, practice rooms, storage rooms or orchestra library at any time.
- Instrument lockers are to be kept clean at all times.
- Keep the rehearsal areas clean. If you see trash, PICK IT UP.
- Chairs and stands will be properly stored when not in use.
- Practice rooms are for MUSIC practice only.
- Only authorized students are allowed in the storage rooms, my office and the music library.
- Non-orchestra members are not allowed in the Orchestra Room UNLESS they have the consent of the directors.

Music

- Music will be passed out at one time. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to pick it up outside of rehearsal time.
- All music needs to be at **every rehearsal** with its owner at all times. Do not leave your music at home and expect your stand partner to bring it. Assume they will be absent.
- Always write bowings, fingerings and so on in **pencil, not in pen or with highlighters.**
- Always write bowings, fingerings and so on in your music the second you get the information. **DO NOT ASSUME** you will remember.
- A black school folder will be issued for concerts **ONLY**. Replacement cost: **\$20**
- Missing or damaged originals must be replaced or you will pay a **\$5.00 fine.**
- All music is to be kept in the original condition in which it was handed out.

EQUIPMENT, UNIFORMS AND LETTERING

Equipment

- All instruments are to be in good working condition. Proper maintenance is **REQUIRED**. You are responsible for all repairs. If an instrument is in need of repair during the school year, the student may use a school instrument, provided one is available, during class for a period of not more than 3 class days. If a longer time is needed the directors must receive a note from the parent or repair person doing work on the student's instrument.
- You are not to play on anyone's instrument other than your own.
- Students will be provided with a black school folder for music. These folders will be used for concerts **ONLY**. They are to be returned in good condition at the end of the concert. Replacement cost: **\$20**
- Students are expected to have mutes, shoulder pads (violins and violas), rock stops (cellos and basses), rosin, **MUSIC** and instrument at each rehearsal and performance.
- School instruments are available for rental (see *SCHOOL INSTRUMENT USAGE*), but a home instrument is preferred.
- **ALL** students are expected take their instruments home daily for home practice.
- Students are required to have a **PENCIL** on their stand at every rehearsal.
- Stands and chairs are to be used for their designated purposes.

Uniforms

The PHS Orchestras will have two uniforms that will be used for various concerts.

- The **formal concert uniforms** will be issued to each individual student. This uniform includes a black top and skirt for the ladies. The gentlemen are issued and a black tuxedo coat and slacks and a black formal vest. **Black hose, black socks, black shoes, bow-ties and tuxedo shirts are not provided and are the responsibility of the student.**
- A **spirit T-shirt** will be included in your Orchestra Fee at the beginning of the year. This will be used year round.
- School issued uniforms are to be kept clean and pressed. There will be a uniform check before every concert/event. An unkempt, wrinkled uniform will keep you from performing.
- You are allowed to alter the uniform to fit you. However, if the uniform is damaged or lost, the student will pay to replace the missing or damaged uniform. Replacement Cost: **\$80**

Lettering

All students in the PHS Orchestras have the opportunity to earn a letter award. To earn this letter, each student must be a member of the orchestra and achieve a certain number of points. For a letter, a student must accumulate ten points in one school year. Points are awarded for the following:

4 pts All-Region Orchestra **3 pts** All-Area Orchestra **2 pts** All-State Orchestra
3 pts 1st Division on a Class 1 Solo or Ensemble (*No more than 6 points can be earned*)

GRADING, ATTENDANCE POLICY

Grades

6 weeks grades are figured as follows:

Major Grades	60%	(Solo & Ensemble, All-Region, UIL C&SR Contest, etc...)
Minor Grades	35%	(Chair tests, student participation, attitude, posture & playing position, knowledge of the music and the presence of proper equipment, etc...)
Student Planner	5%	(graded once a week)

- If a student missed a concert/chair test due to an absence, that test must be made up within five school days or a grade of “0” will be recorded and averaged into the final 6 weeks grade.
- A calendar is online and updated frequently. Therefore, it is the student’s and parent’s responsibility to notify the director of ANY conflicts immediately. Not all conflicts will be excused.
- All material must be mastered. Therefore, if a student fails any part of a test, he/she is given five school days to master that portion of the test and must retest in order to remove the failing grade. **It is the student’s responsibility to arrange for re-testing.** A maximum grade of 70 may be achieved by any student on a make-up test.
- The “*No-Pass-No-Play*” rule affects all Fine Arts classes, including orchestra. If a student fails any course in any given six weeks they will NOT be eligible to participate in any orchestral activities for the next three week period. These participation-type activities include: All- Region/All-State auditions and/or performances, UIL Solo and Ensemble Contests, UIL Concert and Sight-reading Contest, music festivals and spring trips.

Attendance

Each member of the orchestra is important to the success of the overall group. Because of this, attendance is required at all performing events and rehearsals by all members of the orchestra regardless if the concerts and rehearsals are during or outside of the school day. These include regular class rehearsals, sectionals, after school rehearsals and clinics. Attendance is also required at every concert throughout the entire year. Students will receive a test grade for each concert. Because a performance cannot be made up, an unexcused absence at a performance will result in a “0”.

If a conflict should arise, the directors should be notified in advance of the conflict. A written note or email of explanation from parents will be required for excused absences at least TWO WEEKS in advance. In case of illness or emergency, parents or guardians should contact the directors immediately.

WORK IS NEVER AN EXCUSED ABSENCE FOR A REHEARSAL OR PERFORMANCE.

SECTIONALS & EVENING REHEARSALS

Attendance Policy

Before school/after school sectionals and all evening rehearsals are **REQUIRED**. Student job commitments and 'select sports' are **NOT** a reason for an excused absence. Please take a copy of the sectional/rehearsal calendar to your employee and/or coach and clear all orchestra performances and rehearsals. 99% of employers are very understanding and are flexible if they know of orchestra commitments well in advance, and they understand that **ALL** orchestra events are required and a vital part of the course work. Work with employers to clear the evening rehearsals.

An excused absence/tardy will only be granted if the student has notified the orchestra directors at least **TWO WEEKS** in advance. In the case of illness or a sudden emergency, a student should notify the orchestra directors as soon as possible. Contact should be from the parent/guardian by e-mail or written note:

Mr. Berridge: todd.berridge@ectorcountysd.org

Ms. Sabrsula: kathryn.sabrsula@ectorcountysd.org

Telling another student/texting the directors IS NOT proper notification.

Examples of **EXCUSED ABSENCES/TARDIES**:

- Medical emergency or personal sickness
- Death in the immediate family
- Religious holiday
- Approved school functions (UIL, TMEA, ETC.)
- Special circumstances that are pre-approved at least **2 weeks** in advance by email

Examples of **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES/TARDIES**:

- Work
- Oversleeping
- Transportation not arranged
- Appointments, such as doctor, dentist, orthodontist (**UNLESS** unavoidable or necessary)
- Family trip
- Church functions
- Scouts
- Non-school athletic events
- Tutorials (Students are expected to use non-rehearsal days or times)
- Testing including SAT, ACT, etc. (**UNLESS** unavoidable)

Repercussions for **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES/TARDIES**:

- Missed time must be made-up within 1 **WEEK** during other sectionals or grade will suffer
- The directors may reassign the chair of the student in the ensemble
- The student may be dropped from the orchestra ensemble
- The student may be removed from the orchestra program

SCHOOL INSTRUMENT USAGE, EXPENDITURES – ORCHESTRA FEE, PRIVATE INSTRUCTION, ORCHESTRA OFFICERS

School Instrument Usage

Basses, cellos, bass & cello bows and a few violins and violas are available for student use. An instrument rental agreement must be signed, by both the parent and student, and returned to the director within one week of the day the instrument was issued. The ECISD requires this loan contract to be filled out COMPLETELY. By signing this contract, the parents/students agree to give the loaner instrument the best of care. The parents are also to assume the financial responsibility of repairing or replacing the instrument should it become damaged, lost or stolen (Even personal instruments). All orchestra students are not required to use school instruments, but are required to have an instrument in class each day. In other words, students are encouraged to bring their instruments from home, but they are not to leave their instruments at school overnight.

Expenditures – Orchestra Fee

Each student pays an "orchestra fee" at the beginning of every school year. This money is used for a variety of expenditures benefiting ALL members of the PHS Orchestra. Here is a partial list of what this "orchestra fee" is used for: food for after concerts, Orchestra Banquet, Orchestra t-shirt, meals for UIL Contest, snacks at clinics, payment for clinicians, and other musical expenses. We charge a blanket amount at the beginning of the year to avoid nickel and dime-ing you every other week when the kids have to bring a check for their t-shirt, then snacks at their UIL clinic...you get the idea. Even though not everyone will participate in ALL activities for which these fees are being collected, the amount of the orchestra fee takes that into consideration (otherwise, the amount would be higher). This fee MUST be paid for before any money is applied to any other orchestra activity, even trips. Please use the fee breakdown at the end of this handbook to plan your payments.

Private Lessons

Individual private lessons are highly encouraged for students of all levels. The individual attention you receive in private lessons cannot be duplicated in the classroom. Each private teacher gears the lesson to your individual abilities and allows you to experience all that can be offered in a one-on-one teaching environment. A list of recommended private lesson teachers in the area is attached to this handout.

Orchestra Officers

Orchestra officers will be elected by the orchestra members and confirmed by the directors. Officers should set an example with their actions and assist with the planning and organization of the orchestra. They will assist the orchestra by helping to select fundraisers, planning social activities, aiding with uniform checkout and assisting the director and chaperones on trips. All officers are expected to be leaders in the orchestra by attending all social events and trips.

ALL-REGION AND ALL-STATE ORCHESTRAS, UIL SOLO & ENSEMBLE CONTEST, PHS ORCHESTRA BOOSTER CLUB

All-Region

It is strongly suggested that each member of the orchestra audition for the Region 6 Orchestra. **However, if you are a member of the Symphony Orchestra, it is required.** This orchestra is comprised of students in the Odessa/Midland/San Angelo area high schools who have been chosen to participate due to their performing abilities. Participation in the Region 6 Orchestra is a wonderful musical experience for every student, and provides the opportunity to perform in a very high caliber ensemble.

All-State

The Texas All-State Orchestra audition is available to all orchestra students who participate in the Region 6 Orchestra. These orchestras are comprised of the best high school orchestra students in Texas. Selection to one of these orchestras provides a free trip for the student to San Antonio where the All-State Orchestras perform each February.

UIL Solo & Ensemble Contest

All students in the PHS Orchestra program are **encouraged** to participate in the Solo and Ensemble Contest each year. This opportunity allows students the chance to perform solo pieces and/or chamber music pieces for an adjudicator, who provides a performance rating as well as constructive feedback to better the individual performer's ability. **Accompanists are required for all solo pieces that have accompaniment parts available. The students are responsible for all finding and paying for accompanists and purchasing all original music needed for the contest.**

Permian Orchestra Booster Club

The mission of the Permian Orchestra Booster Club is to fully cooperate with the Ector County ISD Board of Trustees, the Superintendent, The PHS administration and the orchestra directors in supporting and furthering the interests and activities of the students in the PHS Orchestras. Anyone interested in supporting the orchestra program is invited to join the PHS Orchestra Booster Club. This organization assists the orchestra with office work, fund raising, chaperones, planning social events and any other area where assistance is needed.

Membership in the PHS Orchestra Booster Club (*Fees go to fund OBC's activities. Your membership will help us reach fundraising goals!*)

- \$10.00** Individual Booster Level OR
- \$20.00** Family Booster Level OR
- \$30.00** Directors' Circle Level OR
- \$ _____** Benefactor Level (*any amount*)

CHAIR TESTS, FUNDRAISERS

Chair Tests

Auditions for chair placement within a section are a part of the orchestral experience. These auditions can be both emotional and stressful to the student, parents and directors if it is not thoroughly understood.

Please read the information below:

A chair test is when a student performs selected portions of music for the directors in front of the class. The students are given a grade and are then seated in each section according to the rank assigned by the directors. Please remember that every student is important to the success of the orchestra. Competition should be viewed as an isolated event, not an overall value judgment of the student as a person. A chair audition evaluates a student's performance at one specific time under one specific set of circumstances. Each student responds differently. Some perform easily under stress, others poorly. The directors has their own interpretation of how the student plays at any given moment. Therefore, it is essential that competition be viewed only as a part of the learning process and not an end in itself. Audition material will always include the literature currently being taught.

Please do not place a great deal of importance over the chair your student receives. Students who are well prepared and work hard sometimes move lower. This may happen because of a set of circumstances that day or it could be that others performed better at that particular time. The ranking order does not indicate the success or failure of a student.

The chair audition process is an important part of the development of the students as musicians. In addition, it prepares them for other situations in life where they must perform under pressure or "sell" themselves in a short amount of time and accept the results. They must learn how to handle both success and disappointment.

Chair tests will take place on a regular basis throughout the year in class. All chair tests will be recorded LIVE in class. If a chair audition is missed, the student has one week to make it up.

Fundraising

Each student will be asked to raise a certain amount of money each year they are in orchestra. This amount will be as small as necessary to incorporate items that enrich the students' experiences in orchestra. Monies raised will be used for social activities, to bring in clinicians and for spring trip.

In order to go on the Orchestra Spring Trip or participate in an event where fundraising money is used, you must participate in these fundraisers. So many times we had the same 10% of students and parents show up to all fundraisers. We will not have the same 10% of students and parents do the work for the remaining 90% of students and parents.

This year and for the foreseeable future, you will need to participate in 75% of all fundraisers to be eligible to participate in the Spring Trip. For example, if the orchestra has 4 fundraisers planned for the year, you MUST be present at least 3 of these fundraisers. You will sign in when you arrive at the fundraiser and sign out when it is time to leave. If you forget to sign in or out, that will count as an absence. Your totals will be tallied throughout the year by the Fundraising VP of the PHS Orchestra Booster Club. The fundraisers will be run by the Fundraising VP of the PHS Orchestra Booster Club. This person will set the dates and collect the money. Please adhere to these deadlines because they will be held responsible for any monies due, regardless of the circumstances.

SPRING TRIP, CALENDAR, WEB SITE

Spring Trip

Each year the orchestras will take a spring trip. The purpose of the trip is to enhance the students' educational experience by comparing our orchestra to other ensembles from around the state and nation. It is also a reward to the students for their hard work during the school year. All students are encouraged to attend this trip because every person is an important part of the team and is needed and wanted for the spring trip concert.

Each student is responsible for paying for their part of the spring trip. This includes all funds raised through fund raising, donations and personal payments. No refunds will be made once the monies have been spent. For this reason, it is important that the students plan ahead to ensure that they are academically eligible to attend the spring trip. Students and parents are asked to sign a "STATEMENT OF INTENET" early in the year. This shows that the student is serious about going and the parents will support the student and uphold the bylaws set forth.

Calendar

The calendar provided is for your information and should be used in scheduling events throughout the school year. Conflicts should be avoided. If a conflict arises that cannot be resolved, please contact the director as soon as possible so we can work out a solution. *Please note* that there are dates and time that will change and disappear throughout the year. Times will be adjusted and concerts and added rehearsals will come out of thin air. **BE FLEXIBLE.**

The calendar will be updated on the website weekly. Please refer to this calendar for accurate information about concerts, rehearsals and special events.

Web Site, Facebook Page and Twitter Feed

The Permian Orchestra has a web page: www.permianorchestra.com or www.satinstrings.com . School concerts, orchestra calendars, travel permission forms, and this handbook will all be readily available on the internet.

We also have a Facebook page: search for "*The Permian High School Orchestra*". The web site and Facebook page are for the students, parents and the general public so they can know what is going on with the PHS Orchestras.

The Orchestra's Twitter handle is: @Mojo_Orchestra. Follow us!

We will monitor and adjust the website, Facebook page and Twitter feed periodically. There are several rules and regulations concerning the web page that will need to be followed. Only students who have parental permission to be on the web page will be allowed. No last names and no pictures of less than 3 people will be allowed. If you have a question, please contact the directors.

Tell your friends and family members to follow us and get involved with the Permian Orchestra!

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRINCIPAL PLAYERS, SOCIAL MEDIA AND TEXTING

Responsibilities of Principal Players

In each of the Permian High School orchestras, there are five principal players, or section leaders: Concertmaster/mistress, Principal Second, Principal Viola, Principal Cello, and Principal Bass.

There is a reason they are called principal players. They have been chosen by me to *lead* their sections. They are chosen for their musical ability as well as their leadership capabilities. It is the expectation of the directors that the principal players assume the role of the directors in helping to provide information during their own private sectionals away from class. It is the responsibility of the section leaders to call their own individual rehearsals, in addition to the ones required by the directors, in order to *fully* prepare their sections.

It is the expectation of the director that during orchestra rehearsals the principal players conduct themselves in a responsible and serious manner as the student role models for their sections.

The directors will expect all students in the sections to respond in a favorable and positive manner and show respect toward their section leaders as the representative of the director. Conversely, it is the expectation of the directors that the section leaders will listen to suggestions provided by their sections, and *all* students will work in a **cooperative, team spirit**. Some of the types of technical assistance that the section leaders must provide to their sections are fingerings, bowings, dynamics, and repetitive work on difficult technical passages, rhythm and tempo problems, and any other item that will enable the sections to be better prepared for the next rehearsal.

These five principal players sit in the “hot seats” of the orchestra. Their responsibilities are great--to the director, to their sections, to the orchestra and, ultimately, to our audiences. Hard work by *all* players within the sections will contribute greatly toward our final musical product.

To all who serve as section leaders during the 2015-2016 school-year, I express my most sincere gratitude.

Social Media and Texting

In this day and age, our lives are lived out loud on social media sites and on our cellphones and tablets. These various technologies bring about wonderful creation and make communication very easy. On the flipside, however, it can also be a terrific way to damage relationships and destroy programs. PLEASE use self-control when commenting, liking, or texting your friends and classmates. A poorly chosen phrase or comment could cause a ripple effect that could lead to a very bad situation in class. If you can, DO NOT respond or comment. Remember: once you hit send, it is out on the web forever. Please act responsibly for the sake of the program and for yourself.