Newsletter 2026-11-01 (6th grade)

Dear string parents,

Concert season is upon us! You can see concert details on our class website at https://www.string-samurai.com/concerts-events; I update it as events are scheduled and details finalized.

Practice
Home practice is vital right now.

Twice each week - Mondays and Thursdays - students have assignments of music to learn on their own in between classes. This must be accomplished to be ready for rehearsal.

In addition to these semi-weekly practice assignments, students should also practice their concert music in general.

I continue to be impressed with our students' work ethic and resultant skill. Still, recently there have been a few cries of "oh no, I forgot to practice!" as students walk into class. Building routines is a common struggle for adolescents … and this is a great chance for parents to help out! Please check in with your student, make sure they have a home practice plan, and remind them to practice when they forget.

Students' needs for total practice time vary. For students who are new to orchestra or have weak note-reading abilities, I recommend 30 minutes per day until you feel confident on all the concert music. Advanced players who learn new music quickly should still plan on practicing concert music at least twice each week to work on their assigned spots.

Concert dress
Concert dress is "Concert Black". See https://www.string-samurai.com/concert-dress-code for the handout.

At our December concert, students can modify the dress code to include holiday accoutrements such as santa hats and Christmas ties or sweaters.

Advanced ensembles
There are two special groups that your child may be interested in joining.

The Mark Wood Trans-Siberian Experience

On Saturday, December 12th, Mark Wood will be in town for a concert, and he's looking for students to join him for a couple of songs. Mark is perhaps best known as the founding violinist for the Trans-Siberian Orchestra. After entering semi-retirement and moving to Arizona, he has partnered with our orchestra several times in recent years. This time it won't be a school concert – rather, it's his show and we're the guests!

I'm extending his invitation to students who have earned black belt in String Samurai.

I'll hold two rehearsals for participating students. We'll also talk through the event at these rehearsals so students know what to expect.

- Wednesday, November 18, 2026; 4:00pm-5:30pm at Chaparral Elementary
- Wednesday, December 2, 2026; 4:00pm-5:30pm at Chaparral Elementary

On the day of the concert (Dec 12th), there will be an afternoon dress rehearsal with Mark and the band. Times TBD. The concert itself begins at 7pm. Both the dress rehearsal and concert will be at the Higley Center for the Performing Arts (the auditorium at Higley High School). Participating students will need a parent to stay during the dress rehearsal.

Participating students are eligible for a complimentary ticket so that they can see the first half of the concert. (They'll be backstage for the second half.) There are no comp tickets for family members - you'll need to buy tickets if you also wish to attend the concert - but there may be a discount available for families of musicians.

If you'd like to sign up your child to participate, let me know by replying to this email! (Steven.Lambert@husd.org)

Elementary Honors Orchestra

This spring will be the third season of the Higley Elementary Honors Orchestra. The honors orchestra is an intensive experience for elementary students with a thirst to perform advanced music. The audition music is equivalent to second-degree black belt.

I am the director-advisor of the honors orchestra, and this year I am opening the group to students from all 9 elementary schools by audition. See https://www.string-samurai.com/honors-orchestra for information and how to sign up for auditions.

Yours in partnership,
Steven Lambert