

March 14, 2010  
Location: Lilly Hall, Butler University  
Concert: 3:30 - 5:00 pm (Room 177)  
Philharmonic: 1:00 - 3:00 pm (Room 177)  
Symphony: 1:00 - 4:30 pm (Room 112)

Dear Philharmonic Parents,

We recently held our second seating audition for the string section, and I was quite pleased with the level of the students' preparation. In many cases, new folks are sitting in principal chairs, and in only one rehearsal, they have already begun to embrace their new leadership role by being excellent models for their section.

If your son or daughter is not in a leadership chair for this rotation, please understand that it is no reflection on their value to the orchestra. Everybody has good and bad days in auditions, and if he/she didn't have their best day, it is natural to be disappointed. Please remind him/her that we must all learn to deal with disappointment as well as we deal with success, and that the position of their chair does not in any way factor into their importance to the orchestra. Further, if they truly love playing music, the joy of collaborating with their peers on quality literature should outweigh the positive or negative feelings that come with competition.

As I did last semester, I only sat the first one or two stands in each section. The rest of the students are placed with a permanent stand-mate, and set in an inside (low part) or outside (high part) chair. In each rehearsal, each pair of students will rotate in the section - if they were near the front in the last rehearsal, they'll be in the back, etc. This was obviously a bit disorganized last week, but now that everyone has their stand partner, it shouldn't be a problem in future rehearsals.

Why are we rotating chairs? First, to remind the students that everyone is equally important, regardless of their seating position. Second, because the section sounds completely different depending on where you sit - experiencing this on a weekly basis will broaden your child's ability to listen within a large group. Third, a string section cannot sound truly uniform if each player is not using the same bowing - starting in the same place, using the same stroke, using the same amount of bow, etc. Everyone is responsible for watching and matching the principal players, and I want all of the students to have the opportunity to sit near the front, and also to understand the difficulties of watching and following from every part of the section.