

SOUTH JERSEY BAND AND ORCHESTRA DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION
New Jersey Music Educators Association Region III
Elementary Honors String Ensembles
May 9, 2026

The 2026 Elementary and Intermediate Honors String Ensemble Festival will take place at Egg Harbor Township HS on Saturday, May 9, 2026. All the information you need to nominate your students is in this packet.

The coordinator for the Honors String Ensembles is Christine Macaulay (cmacaulay@chclc.org). Questions regarding the festival and program may be directed to her. Selection of students will be decided by the auditions committee and questions regarding the selection process, online application, and nominations should be directed to our auditions email: sjauditions@gmail.com.

Student Eligibility: Elementary Honors Ensembles - students in grades 5 and 6 are eligible for recommendation. Advanced 4th grade students may be nominated but will only be considered if there is a need to fill a section. **Intermediate Honors Ensemble** – students in grades 7 and 8 who were NOT accepted into the Junior High String Ensemble are eligible for nomination.

Participation Requirements: Students must be sponsored by a participating director; sponsoring directors must be members of NAFME and are required to attend the meeting and assist with the rehearsal and concert on May 9th. If you cannot be available or provide another director as a substitute you should not nominate students. Your NAFME information and current membership will be required when you submit your nominations. If you are sending a substitute to the rehearsal, that person must be a member as well. Due to the new background checking required by NJMEA, you must have current membership to nominate students and your membership must remain current through the festival date. If your district is paying through a PO and payment is not completed before registration you may send a copy of the PO to expedite approval.

Selection: We will accept at least three students from each school for each ensemble. We will take your first nominee, but due to instrumentation constraints, additional students may not be invited in the order in which you nominated them, but to fill sections, we may need to take students further down the list. We hope to fill two Elementary and one Intermediate Ensemble.

Festival Schedule: Report time at Egg Harbor Twp. HS is 8:45AM in concert dress and rehearsal is from 9:00am to 12:30pm. There will be a lunch break at 12:30. Lunch will be available for purchase or students may bring their own lunch. The concerts will begin at 2:00 pm; specific ticket and performance information will be sent with the confirmation letters.

Deadlines: A payment voucher is at the end of this letter and the fee is \$20 per school. Separate registrations and payments are required for Elementary and Intermediate participation. **All online registration and mailing of fees must be completed by Feb. 10th.** There is no provision for late registration or late mailing.

Please do not assume your office will complete the mailing on time. It is your responsibility to meet the mailing deadline.

On-line Registration and Recommendation Form:

All registration must be completed on-line for you to register your school and recommend students. *An individual online registration form must be completed for you as the director and one for each student you recommend.* This must be done separately for Elementary and Intermediate ensembles. The links to the director forms are at the bottom of this letter. When you submit your director form you will be redirected directly to the student form which you must complete. There is also a link to the student registration form in this letter so you can easily go back to the student form. You as director must complete a director registration for each school from which you are recommending students. You must also complete a form for each of your students, beginning with your #1 recommendation, then #2, etc. You do not have to indicate their number as the forms are time and date stamped upon submission and we

will sort them that way. Once you start a form you must complete that form before leaving the program. You may, however, submit your forms at different times as long as you have submitted them in the order in which you want them considered. The criteria have not changed, but new comments have been added for the Intermediate Ensemble. Comments will appear on each form as you make your recommendations.

Upon form submission, you will receive a confirming email listing everything you submitted on your form. If you find that you have made an error or need to change something, you will need to submit a new recommendation form. We cannot make changes to your submissions once you complete the form. You may NOT change the ranking of your students once your forms are submitted unless you resubmit all your forms. Note: submitting a replacement form will change your final ranking order.

Notification of Acceptance:

We will email you links to the ensemble assignments, information letters, acceptance letters, confirmation forms, and scanned copies of the music for each student accepted. These links will be sent to the email address provided by you on the on-line nomination form. You will need to print the music and forms for your students.

With only one rehearsal it is imperative that students arrive the morning of the concert already being able to play through the music. It is the directors' responsibility to ensure that is the case. Instructions will be included regarding the completion and return of the confirmation forms. **REMINDER: DO NOT mail the original signed forms - they must be sorted by school and scanned and emailed to sjuditions@gmail.com by March 16th.**

Instructions for Student Recommendation

Elementary Guidelines: The ensemble will be performing grade 1-1.5 literature. All students should feel comfortable on all strings in first position in the keys of D, G and C (Basses should be able to shift up to high D). They should also be comfortable slurring up to four notes on a bow if needed. If they need assistance with the music, remember that it is the teacher's responsibility to prepare the student for the concert.

Intermediate Guidelines: The ensemble will be performing grade 1.5-2 literature. All students should feel comfortable on all strings in first position in the keys of D, G and C (Basses should be able to shift up to high D). There may be 3rd position for violins. They should also be comfortable slurring up to four notes and hooked bowing. If they need assistance with the music, remember that it is the teacher's responsibility to prepare the student for the concert.

Instrumentation: In order to provide a balanced ensemble, each school may recommend **UP TO TWENTY STUDENTS**. However, **A MAXIMUM OF EIGHT VIOLINS** from each school will be accepted. Students may be recommended on only one instrument. Please pay close attention to the comments as they are the only way we have to ensure the highest caliber ensemble, and the best possible experience for all students. Due to the large number of recommendations, not every student may be accepted but we will attempt to produce the largest ensembles possible given balance and physical limitations.

Order of Recommendation: You should list your strongest player in the first blank, regardless of their instrument; then continue to list your students according to their ability. By accurately listing students in this order, you will be helping us to determine the most qualified choices. You should submit their names in the order in which you are recommending them. We will then sort by date/time to determine your recommended order. Although you have to complete each form in one session, you do not have to submit all your recommendations at one time as each is a separate registration form.

Comment List and Codes:

There is a place to enter comment codes from the list below. You may enter up to 4 codes. The code list will appear on each application for your reference.

ELEMENTARY LEVEL COMMENTS:

- A – Takes private lessons
- B – Is comfortable playing in the keys of D and G
- C – Is comfortable playing in the keys of A, C, F, and d minor
- D – Uses 4th finger comfortably (violin and viola)
- E – Utilizes ideal bow lengths for various expressive techniques
- F – Is comfortable with bowings such as slurs and hooked bows
- G – Has clear and robust tone production
- H – Consistently demonstrates accurate basic rhythms: quarter, eighth, half, and whole notes
- I – Consistently demonstrates accurate dotted rhythms: dotted quarters and eighths
- J – Plays with consistent and reliable intonation
- K – Participated in Elementary Honors Ensemble last year
- L – Auditioned for but not accepted into the Junior High String Ensemble

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL COMMENTS:

- A - Takes private lessons
- B - Is comfortable playing up to 3 sharps and 2 flats
- C - Uses 4th finger comfortably (violin/viola)
- D - Is comfortable playing in 3rd position (violins and violas)
- E - Is able to perform a variety of dynamics
- F - Is comfortable with bowings such as slurs and hooked bows
- G - Consistently demonstrates accurate rhythms such as 16th notes, dotted 8th notes, syncopation
- H - Has experience playing time signatures such as 6/8 or cut time
- I - Consistently demonstrates accurate dotted rhythms: dotted quarter and eighth notes
- J - Auditioned for but not accepted into the Junior High String Ensemble
- K – School orchestra plays level .5-1.5 music
- L – School orchestra plays level 1.5-2.5 music
- M – School orchestra plays above level 2.5 music

REGISTRATION LINKS:

Click this link to begin Elementary director/school registration.

<https://form.jotform.com/253594345830967>

Click this link to access the Elementary student recommendation form.

<https://form.jotform.com/253594634807972>

Click this link to begin Intermediate Honors director/school registration.

<https://form.jotform.com/253594642450965>

Click this link to access the Intermediate student recommendation form.

<https://form.jotform.com/253595044775972>

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Registration fee is \$20 per school. School checks, your personal check, or money orders should be made payable to SJBODA (NO PARENT CHECKS). Purchase orders may be submitted by the registration deadline but payment is required prior to the March acceptance date. The online and postmark deadline is Feb. 10th.

Late registrations will not be accepted. Once your online application has been submitted, please mail your payment using the voucher below.

Please tear off and return this form with your payment by Feb. 10th.

**Rich Beckman
437 Jessup Mill Rd.
Mantua, NJ 08051**

SJBODA 2026 HONORS STRINGS FESTIVAL PAYMENT FORM

SCHOOL NAME: _____

ENSEMBLE LEVEL: ELEMENTARY _____ INTERMEDIATE _____

DIRECTOR'S NAME: _____

DATE: _____ AMOUNT ENCLOSED: _____

Information for Students and Parents

Please distribute this to the parents of each of your participating students.

FESTIVAL DATE: Saturday, May 9, 2026

LOCATION: Egg Harbor Township High School

REPORT TIME: 8:45 AM

DRESS: All participating students must wear dress clothes to the rehearsal. No changing facilities are available. Dress for all is white top, black bottom, and dark shoes. Jewelry should be kept to minimum.

WHAT TO BRING: Students must bring their instrument and **THEIR OWN FOLDING MUSIC STAND LABELED WITH THEIR NAME AND SCHOOL. This is very important as the school cannot supply enough stands for the day.** They should also bring extra strings, rosin, endpin anchors (basses – stools). Students should bring their lunch or bring money to purchase a snack or lunch in the cafeteria.

REHEARSAL TIME: Rehearsal runs from 9:00am to 12:30pm. At 12:30 students will have a break to eat lunch and prepare for the concert.

CONCERT: The concerts begin at 2:00pm. Tickets may be purchased in the lobby on the day of the concert. Detailed ticket and performance information will be included with the acceptance letter.