

For Immediate Release
April 15, 2019

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Media Release

School of the Arts Invited to Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic



Charleston County School of the Arts

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North Charleston, SC – The Charleston County School of the Arts (SOA) Symphony String Orchestra is the first South Carolina orchestra in 36 years to receive an invitation to attend the 73rd Annual Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic. This prestigious event will take place December 18-21, 2019, at McCormick Place West in Chicago, IL.

Groups from all over the world apply to perform at the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic. Dr. Christopher Selby, Director of High School Orchestras at SOA, found out about the invitation earlier this month.

“This is the highest honor a high school band or orchestra can receive, next to winning a Grammy,” stated Dr. Selby. “SOA has only a fraction of the number of students of most Midwest-level high school orchestra programs. But what we lack in numbers, we make up in talent and extremely hard work. As this is the highest achievement a school orchestra can reach, it's difficult for me to imagine how I could be any more proud of the students than I am.”

There is an extensive application to earn an invitation to the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic. The process requires audio recordings that are judged by a panel of top level educators; this portion is blind which means the panel does not know who is performing. According to Dr. Selby, the performance must be “of professional caliber music,” and it must be performed flawlessly and musically. After a band or orchestra passes this audition round, the panel then reviews video footage of rehearsals of their works, to make sure the director is the master teacher behind the submitted recordings. Band and orchestras are also required to submit three letters of recommendation from nationally recognized music educators.

SOA is only the second school in state history to send their orchestra to this highly esteemed event. Students will begin working in the fall to prepare up to 10 selections to perform.

“The school is exceedingly proud of our gifted, hard-working students as well as the direction, teaching, and support of Dr. Selby,” said Principal Dr. Shannon

Cook. "In addition, thanks go to Susan Mears and Sarah Fitzgerald for the contributions they have made to the history of the SOA orchestra program as well as our entire staff and the wonderful parents who support the orchestra's efforts."

For more information about this accomplishment for SOA's Symphony String Orchestra, please contact the school's publicity representative, Beth Webb Hart, at (843) 529-4990 or elizabeth_hart@charleston.k12.sc.us.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is the second largest school system in South Carolina representing a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools that span 1,000 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 86 schools and specialized programs. With approximately 6,100 employees district-wide, CCSD is the fourth largest employer in the region.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, charter, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), and Montessori schools, and is divided into three Learning Communities. Options include specialized programs in science, engineering and mathematics; liberal arts; music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military and other public service enterprises.