



## Syllabus Parents Letter

January 2019

Dear Parents of OMTA Syllabus Students,

I commend you on choosing a highly trained teacher and on your dedication to pursuing tangible benchmarks in the performing art of music! You are clearly committed to the importance of music in your child's life and their wholeness as a person. When you chose a teacher, you probably interviewed more than one, choosing with due diligence the teacher who was the best fit for your young student. Your teacher also performs with diligence, preparing skills and selecting repertoire appropriate to the level being tested, as well as staying current on Syllabus rules and policies, and up-to-date with fees and deadlines.

As State Syllabus Chairman, I'm seeing a trend of parents trying to make decisions about students' Syllabus participation instead of the teacher. Teachers who participate in Syllabus are already trained beyond the "average neighborhood teacher" and deserve to be treated with professionalism. Discussion of attainable goals with the teacher is healthy communication. Telling the teacher when you want your student to take their exams is not. Most students test once a year, and keep in mind that these students are the exceptional ones. Average students do not take Syllabus exams which is one of the many good reasons you've chosen this teacher!

Another situation that occurs from time to time is when a teacher determines a student is not ready, it is their prerogative to either pull a student out of the exam or to change the exam from full Evaluation to partial Demonstration or to Creative Audition. Again, this is not the parent's choice, and this is not the place to push your student through a full exam that they are not prepared for. It makes the teacher look unprofessional, it places the adjudicator in the awkward position of having to "police" a student who did not do the work to prepare for the exam, and it runs the real risk of developing performance anxiety for the student.

This Syllabus program is well-thought out from every angle, has been existence for over 50 years, and continues to be fine-tuned as new technologies arise. My hope is that your support will be in cooperation with your student and with your student's teacher. The best possible chain-of-command is student/parent to teacher, teacher to chairmen/adjudicator, and teachers/adjudicators to Syllabus State Chairman. Respecting these professional boundaries keeps the lines of communication professional and untangled.

Wishing you many years of beautiful music with your student,

Heidi Evans, NCTM

OMTA Syllabus Chairman