

Laurie Bitters

Laurie Bitters has served as the Director of Orchestras at Winter Park High School for the past 14 years. She oversees the orchestra program consisting of four orchestras, teaches AP Music Theory and IB Music, serves as the advisor for Tri-M Music Honor Society, mentors student interns and first-year teachers, and conducts the pit orchestra for musical productions. Under Laurie's leadership, the orchestra program has grown from 75 to over 200 students and has consistently received superior ratings at FOA district and state music performance assessments. Park Philharmonic, under Laurie's direction, performed at the ASTA National Orchestra Festival in Atlanta and was named the first-ever Orlando Philharmonic High School Orchestra of Distinction.

Laurie's extensive teaching career spans 28 years including five years teaching undergraduate string music education courses and conducting the New Horizons Orchestra at Eastman School of Music and 10 years in the public schools of Orem, Utah, where she taught orchestra, choir, composition, and AP Music Theory. Laurie earned her Bachelor and Master degrees in music education from Brigham Young University where she studied cello with Roger Drinkhall and private conducting with Ronald Staheli. Laurie has also completed doctoral coursework at Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York.

Laurie serves on the Florida Orchestra Association Board as the Music Committee Co-Chair and as the Orange County Public Schools All-County Orchestra Co-Chair. For the past ten years, she has traveled throughout Florida as a certified FOA adjudicator.

Laurie is a passionate educator who invests wholeheartedly in her students and colleagues, making each individual feel seen and heard. She never shies away from the opportunity to help others succeed and enjoy the learning process.

Of her goals for FOA, Laurie states: "Having taught people from age six to 92, I have a solid understanding of the needs of a wide range of skills and abilities as well as a passion for lifelong learning. What we do in our elementary, middle, and high school classrooms everyday has tremendous implications for our students' musical development and contributions to society for the rest of their lives. I am committed to a pedagogically appropriate and diverse repertoire to help students and teachers alike grow in their understanding of and appreciation for our art form. In the spirit of collaboration and service, I am excited about the potential opportunity to help empower other teachers, to serve as a resource within our field, to expand professional development, to grow orchestral offerings in underserved areas, and to promote orchestra programs throughout Florida."