



**Calm is
Contagious**

**Trauma Informed Tools for
School Operations Staff**

Natassia Perrine | March 3rd, 2026

About me



Executive Director,
Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra

80% audience growth in 3 years

Expanded PreK-12 music education reach
from 641 to over 10,000 students each season

Prioritizes community engagement to make
the symphony accessible and inclusive

Directed elementary-high school music and
theatre programs for 12 years prior to joining
the TSO

**Think of one student or
family interaction
that stayed with you longer
than you expected.**

(No names.)



Practical



Therapy training

Role - appropriate

Venting session

Skill building

“Fixing” trauma



Why this matters.

1 out of 5 children
in Alabama
live in poverty.

Kids Count Data Book, 2025.

1 out of 4 children
in Alabama
face food insecurity.

Alabama Public Health 2024.

Alabama is ranked
49th in access to
mental health care.

Mental Health America, 2025.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs





Until a student feels physically and emotionally safe, it's very hard for them to focus on learning, relationships, growth, or long-term goals.

Behavior Is Communication

Disrespect



Shame

Anger

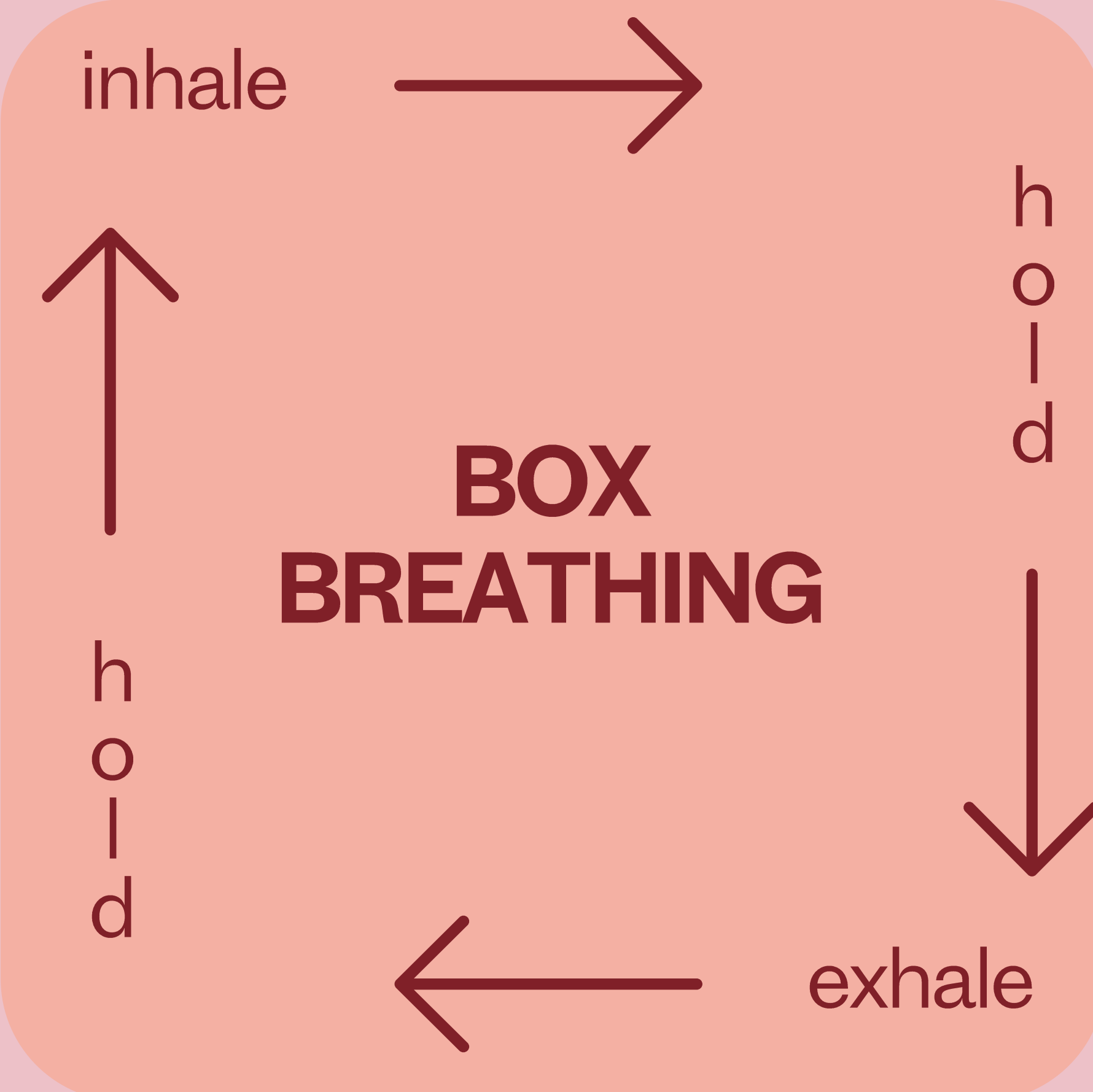


Fear

Withdrawal



Embarrassment



**A dysregulated child
cannot borrow your logic.**

They can borrow your calm.

Predictability is calming.

- Clear steps
- Private conversations
- Consistent tone
- No surprises



Predictability is calming.

How can you make
yourself and your space
more predictable?





Student Scenario

Diploma Hold

A senior storms in:

“They said I can’t get my diploma because I owe money.”

Panic + anger.

What’s your first sentence?

What’s your one next step?

Who do you loop in?



Parent Scenario

You upset my kid

Mom calls you:

“Y’all embarrassed my child over a lunch balance. This is unacceptable.”

Shame + overwhelm.

What are reactive responses?

What are regulated responses?

Protect dignity.

Follow policy.

Lower the temperature.

**Thank you
for all you do
for your
students**

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