

INTRODUCTION

About Us

The Nebraska High School Theater Academy (NHSTA) is an education program produced by Omaha Performing Arts, the largest arts institution in Nebraska. In addition to presenting Broadway, jazz, dance, and other professional touring shows at the Orpheum Theater and the Holland Center, education and community engagement is central to our mission. Our education offerings take the performing arts beyond our venues and into classrooms across Nebraska. To learn more visit O-pa.org/Learn-and-Engage.

Program Mission

The Nebraska High School Theater Academy is designed to:

- *Celebrate* the artistic achievements of teachers and students involved in theater
- *Support* schools by providing high-quality learning, performing and creative experiences for students
- *Advocate* for the importance of theater education in Nebraska middle schools and high schools

History

Omaha Performing Arts launched the Nebraska High School Theater Academy (formerly the Nebraska High School Theatre Awards) in 2013 with an inaugural group of 22 Omaha-area high schools. Over the past several years NHSTA has evolved into a statewide network that connects high schools and middle schools with a wide variety of theater education resources. Last year, the program expanded its reach over 450 miles to serve 85 schools. This season, the NHSTA program will accept up to 75 high schools and 15 middle schools across Nebraska.

How It Works

Schools are invited to register for the program each fall. Once a school is registered, students and teachers receive exclusive access to a catalogue of learning opportunities, including:

- **Master Classes** – register students to participate in classes (digital and/or in-person) focused on acting, dance, audition technique, and technical theatre led by Broadway professionals (reimbursement for busing available for schools in need).
- **In-School Workshops** – request a professional theater artist to visit your classroom and lead a workshop on a topic of your choice.
- **Adjudication** – have a team of performing arts professionals attend your musical, play or one-act to provide written or oral feedback.
- **Broadway Tickets** – be notified when free or discounted tickets to Broadway touring shows are available.
- **Digital Learning** – schedule interactive discussions with industry professionals through the Broadway League’s Broadway Speakers Bureau. Browse our catalog of current digital offerings including past master classes and workshops with Broadway Artists, Wednesday Warmups, Backstage Tours and more at www.o-pa.org/online.
- **Awards** – have your musical considered for awards as a part of the adjudication process and encourage students to apply for awards honoring excellence behind-the-scenes.
- **Showcase** – join us for the annual Tony Awards-style celebration at the Orpheum Theater featuring student performances, awards, and much more (free housing and meals provided to students in need).
- **National High School Musical Theatre Awards** – students can audition to compete at the Broadway League’s national Jimmy Awards in NYC (all expenses paid).

All learning opportunities are optional and included at no additional cost to registered schools. This handbook contains detailed information about the NHSTA program. Please note that all details are subject to change – this handbook is designed for school planning purposes and all details, events, and schedules are subject to change.

REGISTRATION

Eligibility

The Nebraska High School Theater Academy is open to any middle or high school in the state of Nebraska.

Registration

To participate, schools must submit the online registration form. Registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis starting in August each year.

- Registration will open for the 20/21 school year on Monday, August 24, 2020.
- All schools must submit a registration form to participate in the Nebraska High School Theater Academy.
- If you would like a performance adjudicated, register your show here: <https://o-pa.org/learn-and-engage/nebraska-high-school-theater-academy/participate/nhsta-registration>

Registration will open August 24, 2020 and remain open until December 4, 2020 or until we hit max capacity of 75 high schools and 15 middle schools. Spots fill up quickly and schools are encouraged to register early!

Fees

Cost of registration is \$100 for the 2020/2021 school year (this is a one-time payment that covers your school's participation in all NHSTA events for the entire school year). After submitting the online registration form, an O-pa staff member will send you a confirmation email with an invoice. Registration fees are due within 60 days of receiving the invoice. Checks should be made payable to Omaha Performing Arts with a note in the memo section stating the name of your school. Registration fee waivers or discounts are available for schools demonstrating financial need.

COMMUNICATION

Website

Visit o-pa.org/Nebraska-High-School-Theater-Academy to learn more and access all program information.

Program Email

The best way to get in touch with O-pa staff regarding the program is to email NHSTA@o-pa.org. Please note that all required program information and questions should be sent to this email.

Education Staff

Here is contact information if you need to reach O-pa education staff directly:

Taylor Wyatt, *Education Coordinator*
402-661-8559 • TWyatt@o-pa.org

Bill Grennan, *Education Manager & Teaching Artist*
402-661-8447 • BGrennan@o-pa.org

Kathleen Lawler Hustead, *Associate Director of Education*
402-661-8446 • KHustead@o-pa.org

Other Contacts

- Mailing Address – Omaha Performing Arts (Attn: NHSTA), 1200 Douglas Street, Omaha, NE 68102
- Fax – 402-345-0222 (Attn: NHSTA)
- To purchase tickets to our annual NHSTA Showcase or other Omaha Performing Arts shows visit TicketOmaha.com or call the box office at 402-345-0606.

Primary Contact

Each school must identify a primary contact person on the online registration form or invoice. The primary contact should have regular access to phone and email as all major correspondence regarding the program will be directed to this person. It is the primary contact's responsibility to pass on all program information to students, parents and their school community.

Time Commitment

Omaha Performing Arts knows that many hours of hard work go into teachers' days! One of the goals of NHSTA is not to create additional work for teachers, but to provide visibility for the work that is already being produced. During the school year, there is little additional time commitment from teachers other than communicating information from Omaha Performing Arts staff to students and vice versa.

Assessment

Teachers and students will be asked to complete printed or electronic surveys following certain program activities. O-pa may also request letters of support and testimonials. Surveys will evaluate participants' experiences and aid in the development of future program activities. O-pa also hosts an annual feedback meeting and reception for teachers each summer.

Teacher Advisory Committee

The NHSTA teacher advisory committee meets 2-3 times a year to provide feedback and help determine the future of the program. Meetings will take place in-person at the Holland Center and/or via conference call. To become a member of this committee for the 2020/2021 school year and receive more information email us.

Publicity & Social Media

One of the goals of NHSTA is to enhance visibility of participating schools' performing arts programs. Omaha Performing Arts may share post production photos and show information from participating schools on the Nebraska High School Theater Academy website and social media sites. O-pa may also share show information with local media personnel. We want to help promote the great work you're doing with your students!

You can email us stories, photos and videos to for us to share out. Omaha Performing Arts also encourages schools to announce their participation in the Nebraska High School Theater Academy in school newspapers, websites, social media sites, newsletters, and other materials produced or distributed by the school.

We hope you join the NHSTA community and check out the following:

- Like us on Facebook: [facebook.com/NebraskaHSTA.OPA](https://www.facebook.com/NebraskaHSTA.OPA)
- Follow us on Twitter: twitter.com/NebraskaHSTA
- Check out our new Instagram: [@NebraskaHSTA](https://www.instagram.com/NebraskaHSTA)

Media Release

Omaha Performing Arts must have a completed informed consent and photo release form on file for all students who participate in NHSTA activities. **Teachers only need to submit one completed form per student for the 2020/2021 school year.** Teachers are encouraged to submit forms for all students who might participate in NHSTA in any capacity at the beginning of the school year. Completed forms can be submitted via email, fax or mail. Contact us for a copy of the media release form or download a copy on our website.

Participation Statement

All participating schools with adjudicated musicals, plays or one-acts should plan on including the official NHSTA participation statement and logo in their printed program books. Contact us for a copy of the participation statement or download a copy on our website.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The Nebraska High School Theater Academy offers a variety of learning opportunities that are exclusively available to participants. Opportunities run throughout the year – contact us with questions!

Broadway Master Classes

Due to COVID-19, we are in the process of updating the Broadway tour schedule. We will keep all NHSTA participants updated with upcoming master classes and workshops as they become available (in-person and digitally).

Master classes focus on musical theater-style dance, audition techniques, acting, vocal music, stage combat, technical theater and more. These can be held digitally or in-person. Pre-registration is required to participate – we'll notify you once it opens on our website (approx. 1 month prior to the class).

In-School Workshops

To ensure that schools across the state have access to NHSTA learning opportunities we bring Broadway teaching artists on tour to classrooms throughout Greater and Western Nebraska. Information on workshop tour dates coming soon! Contact us at to request a workshop at your school.

Distance Learning

The Broadway Speakers Bureau offers interactive distance learning seminars to share information about non-performance careers in the arts (producing, general management, marketing, press, stage management, etc.) with schools around the country. Speakers include award-winning professionals associated with many of the top Broadway shows such as *WICKED*, *BILLY ELLIOT*, *FOLLIES*, *RENT* and more. Panelists conduct discussions from a New York City studio via distance learning video conferencing. These seminars are live (not taped), and students are encouraged to ask questions of the speakers. The Broadway Speakers Bureau discussions are produced in partnership with The Broadway League. The Broadway League is happy to arrange individual distance learning opportunities on a variety of requested topics for participating NHSTA schools upon request. For more information or to schedule a seminar, please email us!

Free and Discounted Tickets

Free and discounted tickets to touring Broadway shows at the Orpheum Theater are distributed to NHSTA students and teachers before any other group when available. Free tickets are distributed on a first come, first served basis. If free tickets are available, O-pa staff will email participating schools with more details on the ticket reservation process. Discounted tickets are also available through the following programs:

Group Sales

Discounted tickets are available through Omaha Performing Arts Group Sales Department. Contact OPA Group Sales at 402-661-8516 or Groups@o-pa.org to reserve tickets and mention that you're a registered NHSTA school. More information on Group Sales discounts are available on OPA's website at o-pa.org/on-stage/group-sales.

Student Rush

Students of all ages are invited to register for Student Rush discounts. Students who register will receive Student Rush emails and updates about upcoming performances. You'll have the chance to see select events at the Holland Center and Orpheum Theater for as low as \$10. Plus, receive 50% off some shows, including Broadway. Student Rush tickets can only be purchased beginning 90 minutes prior to the performance. Don't forget your student ID! The limit is two per student and all tickets are subject to availability. Tickets may be purchased in person only at the box office of the venue in which the performance will be held. More information on Student Rush discounts is available at o-pa.org/studentrush.

Additional Resources

Broadway study guides, lesson plans, and other resources are available for download on our website.

ADJUDICATION

O-pa has hired performing arts professionals from across the region to serve as NHSTA adjudicators and provide educationally-focused feedback on participating schools' musicals, plays and one-acts. Adjudication (like all of our learning opportunities) is optional, and there are various ways to take advantage of this resource at your school. There are 3 adjudication options to choose from (you can choose one or all 3)!

Option #1: Written Feedback

Receive written feedback from adjudicators on your musical, play and/or one-act. Feedback is designed to function as an educational tool, not strictly a review or critique.

→ HOW IT WORKS:

- 1) Complete Production Information Form:** If you provided show information as a part of your online registration form, O-pa staff will email you a production information form for you to complete/email back to us. Didn't include show information on your registration form, but want to receive written feedback? Please contact us and we'll send you a blank production information form to complete. We will need to receive your completed production information form at least 4 weeks before your show opens to assign adjudicators to your show!
- 2) Reserve Tickets:** Once we receive your form, we'll schedule up to 3 adjudicators to attend your production and email you the dates/time adjudicators plan to attend. Please be prepared to hold up to 6 tickets under the name "O-pa Adjudicator" (2 per adjudicator x up to 3 adjudicators). Please note that the adjudication panel may or may not attend the same performance – tickets should be held for the performance date/time requested by O-pa staff.
- 3) Receive Feedback:** Adjudicators will submit written feedback to O-pa staff within 3 business of attending your show. O-pa staff will proof feedback to ensure quality and consistency. O-pa staff will email you the final, proofed feedback in approx. 1-2 weeks after the show.

Option #2: Written Feedback & Scores

In addition to receiving written feedback, you can request to have your production scored for awards. Scores are confidential and only used to help adjudicators determine winners at the end of the year. A scoring rubric and evaluation criteria are available upon request.

- HOW IT WORKS:** This option is currently only available to middle school and high school musicals that take place between September 18, 2020 and May 2, 2021. To choose this option simply follow the same process for requesting written feedback above. As long as your school meets the eligibility requirements and gone through the process for requesting written feedback your production will be scored and in the running for adjudication-based awards.

Option #3: Preshow Evaluation

Request to have a professional adjudicator provide oral feedback on their musical, play, or one-act at any point in the rehearsal process (please note – preshow evaluations are offered as an additional learning opportunity and are NOT connected to the formal adjudication process, scores or awards).

- HOW IT WORKS:** Schools are responsible for scheduling preshow evaluations. For a full list of preshow evaluators, their contact information and area of expertise please email us.

Confidentiality

Written feedback and scoring will be submitted through a secure online form. Unless you've booked a pre-show evaluation, please note that adjudicators will not provide oral critiques, nor should schools expect to receive scores. Please do not contact adjudicators with questions – all inquiries should be directed to O-pa staff.

Videos

Beginning this year, we are asking that all schools who wish to be considered for awards (i.e. anyone whose musical receives written feedback and scores) make best efforts to submit an archival video for O-pa to keep on hand in case of ties. Omaha Performing Arts will contact Licensing Houses for the rights to record the production. Let us know if you have any questions.

SHOWCASE

Each year, Omaha Performing Arts presents a Tony Awards® inspired showcase to honor and celebrate participating schools and students. **The eighth annual Nebraska High School Theater Academy Showcase will take place at The Orpheum Theater on Monday, June 7, 2021.** Students, faculty and staff from participating high schools are encouraged to attend – stay tuned for information on specific award requirements, showcase week details tickets, this year’s Broadway creative team/host and more!

**In the event that it is not safe for us to gather, we are working on digital showcase opportunities as well.*

Awards

At the showcase, participating schools and students the opportunity to win awards for artistic excellence in several categories. All award winners will receive trophies/special recognition live onstage at the Orpheum Theater! Select winners are also invited perform as a part of that evening’s program. This season’s award categories/expectations include:

- **Outstanding Musical Theater Production**
- **Outstanding Ensemble Performance**
- **Outstanding Performance in a Lead Role**
- **Outstanding Performance in a Supporting Role**
- **Backstage Excellence Award**
- **Outstanding Achievement in Stage Management**
- **Outstanding Achievement in Design**
- **Outstanding Educator Award**
- **NHSTA Spirit Award**
- **National Finalists**
- **National Nominees**
- **Outstanding Student Reporter**

Showcase Ensemble

Each school is invited to select 1-2 students to join the 2020/2021 Showcase Ensemble and perform in the opening and/or closing number at the showcase with our Broadway guest artist/host. Teachers are responsible for selecting students to participate in the Showcase Ensemble. Please email us the names and contact information for the students you’ve selected by Monday, April 12, 2021. This opportunity is not connected to awards and gives ALL participating schools a chance to shine!

Rehearsals

Showcase rehearsals are tentatively scheduled to run **Thursday, June 3, 2021 – Sunday, June 6, 2021** with an afternoon dress rehearsal and evening performance time on **Monday, June 7, 2021**. The showcase performance and rehearsals will take place at the Holland Performing Arts Center (1200 Douglas Street, Omaha, NE 68102) and the Orpheum Theater (409 S 16th St, Omaha, NE 68102). A detailed rehearsal schedule with specific call times will be provided in spring 2021.

NHSTA PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

IMPORTANT DATES	
Please note that all dates are subject to change	
August 24, 2020	2020/2021 NHSTA registration opens
September 18, 2020	Adjudication period begins
November 2020	Broadway Speakers Bureau Distance Learning Sessions period begins
November 2020	NHSTA backstage workshop & Orpheum Tour (virtual)
December 4, 2020	2020/2021 NHSTA registration deadline
January 25, 2021	Application/Nominations open online for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Broadway League’s National Jimmy Awards • Outstanding Achievement in Stage Management • Outstanding Achievement in Design • Backstage Excellence Award • Outstanding Educator Award • Senior of the Year Award
March 2021	TENTATIVE on-sale date for showcase tickets at TicketOmaha.com
March 26, 2021	Deadline for Nationals Submissions
April 9, 2021	Deadline for Jimmy Awards Student Reporter Information
April 12, 2021	Showcase student performer information due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names of Showcase Ensemble students (up to 2 choices plus up to 2 backups) • Interested in free housing during rehearsal week?
April 16, 2021	Application/nomination deadlines for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outstanding Achievement in Stage Management • Outstanding Achievement in Design • Backstage Excellence Award • Outstanding Educator Award • Senior of the Year Award
April 17, 2021	Nationals callback auditions
May 2, 2021	Adjudication period closes
Week of May 10, 2021	Award-winners announced
May 10-14, 2021	In-school workshop tour with Broadway artist
May 14, 2021	T-shirt sizes for all showcase performers due + deadline to RSVP for pre-show teacher reception
May 17, 2021	ALL dietary restrictions/food allergies are due for showcase
May 21, 2021	Showcase bus/van parking information due
June 1, 2021	Showcase comp ticket requests due + deadline to RSVP for teacher feedback meeting/reception
June 3-6, 2021	Days 1-4 of Showcase rehearsals at the Holland Center/Orpheum Theater
June 7, 2021	Showcase dress rehearsal and performance at the Orpheum Theater
June 16, 2021	Teacher feedback meeting and reception at the Holland Center
Late-June 2021	Jimmy Awards in NYC (week-long intensive)

Stay Tuned!

Information about ALL opportunities provided to NHSTA schools will be provided via email throughout the year. Important information, forms, award guidelines, etc. will also be shared on our website and social media pages regularly. Please do not hesitate to contact us anytime – our education team is always here for you and your students!