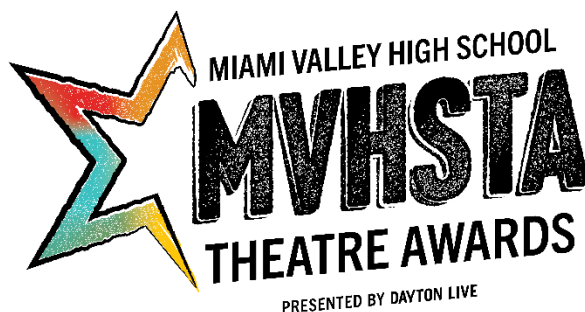




2026-2027 Adjudicator Handbook

Purpose

The Miami Valley High School Theatre Awards (MVHSTAs) and Showcase, presented by Dayton Live, are designed to **celebrate, support, and advocate** for high school theatre education throughout the Miami Valley region. The program celebrates high school plays, musicals, students, and educators by formally recognizing the extraordinary achievements of our community's productions.

Goals

1. To recognize, honor, and encourage excellence in high school theatre through a constructive review process of nominated productions by qualified Adjudicators.
2. To provide educational workshops and advancement in dance, voice, acting, and stagecraft for high school students locally, regionally, and nationally.
3. To provide professional development and networking opportunities for students, directors, and school programs.
4. To give students an opportunity to perform on a Dayton Live stage.

About the Miami Valley High School Theatre Awards

The Miami Valley High School Theatre Awards (MVHSTAs), presented by Dayton Live, celebrate the accomplishments of area high school teachers and students by recognizing achievements in productions by participating Miami Valley area high schools. To participate, schools register to have their productions reviewed by a qualified team of Adjudicators, who then provide directors with valuable feedback. During the spring, the Miami Valley High School Theatre Awards will present an Awards Showcase to recognize the outstanding achievements of high school productions and students. Modeled after the Tony Awards®, the showcase features outstanding performances from participating high schools and celebrates their enthusiasm, dedication, and talent while encouraging participating schools to grow and continue improving their programs. To learn more, go to mvhsta.org.

Adjudication Overview

The Miami Valley High School Theatre Awards provides adjudication for participating high schools located in the Miami Valley. Adjudicators are responsible for evaluating high school play and musical theatre productions. Evaluations must consist of educationally focused feedback and scoring. We know Adjudicators are busy people, and we ask you to commit in advance to adjudicate when you are available. **Our requirement is that each Adjudicator evaluate a minimum of three (3) productions for the 2026-2027 Season, which must include at least one play.** Adjudicators may evaluate more shows based on scheduling, and the number of schools that register for the program.

2026-2027 MVHSTA Adjudicator Eligibility Rules

MVHSTA adjudicators must have/be:

- A background in theatre, theatrical design, dance, music, or related fields
- A passion for musical theatre, plays, and the performing arts as a whole
- At least 4 years removed from graduating high school

MVHSTA adjudicators cannot be:

- A parent or guardian to a student who is currently involved in a participating high school theatre program
- A staff member or creative team member (paid or volunteer) of a participating high school theatre program
 - Examples of this might be, but are not limited to: Director, Stage Manager, Design/Tech Director or Designer, Choreographer, Music Director

Meetings & Important Dates

Adjudicators are **required** to attend an in-person training session at Dayton Live. Multiple sessions are planned, and Adjudicators will be notified of scheduled training sessions in advance.

Adjudicators are also strongly encouraged to attend the MVHSTA Showcase the evening of Thursday, May 27, 2027, at the Schuster Center. Each Adjudicator receives (up to) two comp tickets to the MVHSTA Showcase.

Honorarium for Adjudicators

Adjudicators will be paid an honorarium of **\$40** per show for the first three (3) shows evaluated. If an Adjudicator can and chooses to evaluate more than the minimum number of shows, each additional evaluation will have an honorarium of **\$50**. Adjudicators who adjudicate individual categories like “Student Stage Manager” that do not require travel will be paid an honorarium of **\$25** for each adjudicated student. **Honorarium payments will be issued in June 2027**. Completed tax documentation will be required for payment to be issued.

Adjudicators may also donate their honorarium back to the program and a tax receipt will be issued. Please notify Dayton Live if you wish to donate your honorarium back to the MVHSTAs.

Confidentiality

Adjudicators, and any guests attending performances with adjudicators, **must not discuss their opinions, evaluations, scores, or feedback with anyone in any format**. This includes, but is not limited to students, faculty and staff from participating high schools, other audience members, colleagues, friends and family, other adjudicators, reviewers, or any social media networks. For the protection of the adjudicator, the director, and most importantly the students, it is essential that any opinions or feedback come through their MVHSTA paperwork. Please contact the MVHSTA Team with questions about confidentiality.

Please use the **150-Yard Rule**: do not comment on or mention any of your thoughts on a production you are seeing until you are at least 150 yards away from the doors of the theatre or school.

Conflicts of Interest

Adjudicators must agree to uphold MVHSTAs conflict of interest policy and must not allow personal preferences or bias to influence evaluations. In accordance with this policy, Adjudicators must not adjudicate a performance where there is a personal or professional relationship with a participating high school's theatre production. If an Adjudicator thinks a conflict of interest might exist, the Adjudicator must contact MVHSTA Team immediately. Definitions and examples of potential conflicts of interest include, but are not limited to:

Professional Conflicts of Interest

This includes employment, receiving or providing compensation, gifts, financial support, favors that are substantial in nature, or donations from participating high schools. This also includes board connections, organizational partnerships, volunteer work, business ties, financial investments, or any other professional ties that might positively or negatively influence the evaluation.

Personal Conflicts of Interest

Examples of this type of conflict of interest include alumni status (if evaluating that high school's theatre production), the involvement of immediate family members, spouses, partners, siblings, parents, children in participating high schools' theatre productions, or any other personal ties that might positively or negatively influence the evaluation.

Bias and Preference

Adjudicators must act without bias or an appearance of bias when choosing what productions to sign up to adjudicate, as well as when filling out the evaluation survey. Adjudicators must objectively be considered to have an impartial and unprejudiced view on the production title, the school the production is being performed at, and the cast of the production. Adjudicators should not adjudicate productions where there is a clear bias.

If an Adjudicator has a clear negative bias toward a specific production title, the adjudicator needs to select a different show to adjudicate.

Awards & Awards Showcase

There are two levels of awards given for Individual and Production categories: **Outstanding Awards** and **Awards of Merit**. Recognition is assigned for each award category to a top percentage of all submitted productions. The cutoff percentages will be determined by a review of the ballot results. This is a cutoff for scores to receive recognition – not a determination of who or what school is the best. All awards are distributed at the MVHSTA Showcase held on **Thursday, May 27, 2027, at 7:30 p.m. at the Schuster Center**.

Scheduling with SignUpGenius

High school theatre productions take place between September 2026 and May 2027. Scheduled adjudications will be made online through SignUpGenius. Adjudicators are encouraged to sign up for shows early. *See page 7.*

Production Detail Form

Approximately 1-2 weeks before the show opens, Adjudicators will receive a **Production Detail Form**, which includes cast lists, names and photos of students/characters to be evaluated in lead and supporting roles, show run times, instructions for parking, and other important information pertaining to the production. Please read through the school's Production Detail Form *before* attending the performance.

Tickets

Each participating high school reserves two (2) complimentary tickets for each Adjudicator attending the

production. Schools will hold ticket(s) under “MVHSTA Adjudicator” for Adjudicators to pick up when they arrive at the performance venue. In most cases, seating will be general admission. Adjudicators should contact the MVHSTA Team with any special needs or accessibility requests regarding seating. These tickets should not be used for “special occasions” – a date, a free trip to the theatre with your young child, etc.

Attendance Procedures

The day of the performance, Adjudicators should arrive at least 15 minutes before curtain, and must remain throughout the duration of the performance. Adjudicators will make best efforts to maintain anonymity after the performance, and no oral critique should be provided.

If Adjudicators are unable to attend any of the productions they have selected to evaluate, they must contact Taylor Benjamin immediately at either taylor.benjamin@daytonlive.org or 937-637-8103 for week-of emergencies/conflicts.

Health and Safety Procedures and Policies

School districts may create or change their health & safety policies when it comes to audiences, casts, performances, and rehearsals. Likewise, Adjudicators may have varying comfort levels with health precautions. The MVHSTA Team will do its best to keep track of any changes and alert Adjudicators of updates.

Evaluation Guidelines

Adjudicators will evaluate the overall play and musical theatre production, the ensemble*, performers in lead roles, and performers in supporting roles. Adjudicator evaluations consist of written feedback and scores. Adjudicators are prohibited from sharing feedback or scores with schools directly or providing an oral critique following the performance. Each Adjudicator will be emailed a secure link to an official online ballot form through Survey Monkey where Adjudicators will enter their written feedback and scoring decisions.

Adjudicator evaluations MUST be completed within 72 hours of attending the production.

Reference Materials

When entering feedback/scores, please reference the evaluation rubrics, which provide detailed criteria for evaluating each category and will be available for download in the Adjudicator section at mvhsta.org. The school's Production Detail Form features the names of the characters/students being evaluated in lead/supporting roles, notes on any specific feedback the director might want, and other details. The school's program book (or playbill) is also valuable, as well as any notes you might have taken.

Feedback

The purpose of written feedback is to provide each Theatre Director with detailed notes in the hopes of commending the notable achievements of the production and offering solutions to the aspects where the production could improve. ***This is an educational tool, not strictly a review or critique.*** Please include examples to support comments and be as detailed as possible. Feedback should not mention or allude to scoring decisions and should not focus on areas that are outside of the student's control, including: design/technical aspects, orchestra, director's artistic decisions, etc.

Adjudicator feedback will be reviewed by MVHSTA Team before being forwarded to Theatre Directors.

A reminder to avoid any feedback that compares a production or performance to a film, another “famous” actor, another production of the same show, “your production,” or any other reference to another adaptation of the material.

Scores

Scores will be used to determine “Outstanding” and “Merit” Awardees in each award category for the 2026-2027 Season. On a scale of Emerging to Thriving (with Thriving being the highest score and Emerging being the lowest score), Adjudicators will rank how well the evaluation criteria are executed by students.

The word *Ensemble*

“Ensemble” for the MVHSTAs is defined as the entire company (performers, technicians, crew, etc) working together to tell a story, and NOT a group of individual performers outside of leads, supporting roles, or other identifiable roles.

“Actor” / “Actress” Delineation

For the purposes of the MVHSTAs, students are adjudicated in the category corresponding to their gender identification, not the gender of the role that they played. Students identifying as non-binary or gender-fluid may choose to either select the category in which they wish to be adjudicated (regardless of the gender of the role) OR they may be adjudicated based on the gender of the role they played.

The MVHSTA Team reserves the right to remove any Adjudicator from the program at any time for failure to abide by the rules laid out in this handbook.

How Do I Schedule My Shows?

Adjudicators are required to schedule their productions online through a program called **SignUpGenius**. Here are the steps:

1. Create a SignUpGenius account by going to www.signupgenius.com. Please use the same email you have given to the MVHSTAs. This program also allows you to receive reminders via text if preferred.
2. Once you have an account, Adjudicators will receive a link in their email from SignUpGenius. This link provides access to all participating productions.
3. Please select a minimum of three (3) productions to adjudicate – this must include at least 1 play.
4. **We must have a minimum of three (3) official adjudications per production.**
5. You will receive official confirmations/reminders from SignUpGenius and MVHSTA on which shows you selected.
6. **ALTERNATES (Optional):** In addition to your required (3) productions, we ask that you add two (2) “Alternative Adjudicator” slots in case of an emergency cancellation. To do so, please email the MVHSTA Team what shows and performance times you would like to be listed as an alternate for, and sign up as an alternate on SignUpGenius.



How Do I Fill Out My Online Ballot?

Adjudicators are required to submit their official feedback survey through a secure, online survey managed in Survey Monkey ***within 72 hours of seeing a performance***. Here are the steps:

1. On the opening day of the production, you will receive an email from Survey Monkey with a secured link to a survey for the production you are adjudicating. This link is connected to you and your email, so please do not share. **Survey Monkey ballots are sent to the same email address you used in SignUpGenius.**

Some email security settings prevent links from being sent, so please check your junk folder for the link. Contact the MVHSTA Team if you do not receive a link to the survey.

This survey will have all the elements for adjudication including Overall Production, Acting Categories, Ensemble, and other Specialty Categories.

2. Once you click on the survey, please fill it out in its entirety.
3. Once you have completed your "Director Feedback" section, hit "Done," and the survey will be sent to MVHSTA for tabulation.

Please note, if there is an error on the ballot, or there is some other technical challenge, contact MVHSTA Team as soon as possible.



Everything You Wanted to Know about Adjudication

Before Seeing a Show

- MVHSTA Adjudicators are given two (2) free tickets to performances. ***You are encouraged to bring a notebook, or a clipboard, on which to take notes.*** Please do not bring a guest who may distract you from adjudicating.
- Please make sure you have directions to the school in advance. The performance address is listed on SignUpGenius and on the Production Detail Form. Please arrive at least 15 minutes before the show. Late arrivals can skew scoring. Call Taylor Benjamin if an emergency occurs.
- Report to the box office and introduce yourself as a MVHSTA Adjudicator. The attendant will have your tickets ready for you. ***The tickets will not be under your personal name.***

While at the Show

- Before the show starts, take the time to look over the ballot to see who and what you are adjudicating. Make note of the actors you are to look for, and other aspects of the production you will adjudicate. If you notice any significant name changes or a last-minute substitute for any reason, please make a note of that, and continue to adjudicate the performance.
- ***Enjoy Act 1!*** Make mental notes as you are watching, and do not commit yourself to any final judgment until the conclusion of the performance. You can make some notes during intermission, ***but you should not give any scores until after the show.***
- Immediately after the show, you may have an urge to grab a pen to fill out your Performance Detail Form – **but WAIT!** Do that at home.

After the Show

- Do not offer advice, or critique what was done, in person or on social media. Your ballot from Survey Monkey is the place to add your constructive feedback and praise.
- **As a requirement for being a MVHSTA Adjudicator, you must submit your official ballot online through Survey Monkey within 72 hours of seeing the designated performance.**
- **All shows must be adjudicated on their own merits.** Are you being too critical? Remember high school productions are as good as any shows that are out there, but are you considering all aspects of the show fairly and are you judging based on what you saw onstage or what you personally think is good?
- Every Theatre Director is prepared to receive feedback, and we encourage constructive advice or accolades when completing the online ballot. The MVHSTA Team will read, and possibly edit, comments before forwarding to any participating school.

What to Expect on the Adjudication Survey Forms

Depending on the needs of the nominated performance, the categories will change for each survey. For all surveys, the Ranking Rubric will remain the same. This reference document is meant to shed light on the adjudication process for Theatre Directors.

Ranking Rubric on Survey Monkey:

Emerging: Beginning to demonstrate basic understanding or skills; needs significant support

Emerging +: The *Emerging* category is generally appropriate, with some moments, elements that may fit into a higher category

Progressing: Demonstrates partial understanding or skills; requires some guidance

Progressing +: The *Progressing* category is generally appropriate, with some moments, elements that may fit into a higher category

Achieving: Meets expectations with consistent performance and understanding. Consistent with a strong-but-average high school production.

Achieving +: The *Achieving* category is generally appropriate, with some moments, elements that may fit into a higher category

Exceeding: Exceeds basic expectations with strong performance/execution. *"I would pay money to see this production."*

Exceeding +: The *Exceeding* category is generally appropriate, with some moments, elements that may fit into a higher category

Thriving: Demonstrates exceptional understanding or mastery; surpasses expectations. *"I would travel to see this production."*

Thriving +: This element of the show could not have been better, even at the professional level. *"We could all learn from you."*

Sample Survey Adjudication Categories

Overall Production:

1. Concept (The unifying vision or interpretive approach).
2. Staging (The blocking, movement, and overall use of the stage space).
3. Casting and Coaching (The appropriate casting of each performer and the overall acting execution).
4. Audience Experience (The non-performance and non-technical elements that affect the audience member's overall experience).
5. Production Design (The creativity and execution of production design elements including sets, lights, costumes, sound, props, etc).
6. Music Direction (Coaching and Technique - the performers knowledge of the score and the displayed vocal quality and skill) *MUSICALS ONLY*
7. Choreography (Creativity and Execution - the displayed work of the performed choreography) *MUSICALS ONLY*

Lead/Supporting Actor/Actress:

1. Acting.
2. Voice & Body.
3. Movement.
4. Presence & Focus.
5. Singing Performance. *MUSICALS ONLY*
6. Singing Technique. *MUSICALS ONLY*
7. Dancing. *MUSICALS ONLY*

Student Hair & Makeup Design:

1. Creativity (Choices in hair style and makeup design product & design).
2. Execution (Application of makeup products and execution of hair styles).

Student Lighting Design:

1. Creativity (Choices in intensity, color, texture, movement, aiming, & focus).
2. Execution (Programming and operation).

Student Choreographer:

1. Creativity (The work of the choreographer).
2. Execution (The work of the performers).

Student Orchestra:

1. Conducting (The conductor's knowledge of the score and leadership of musicians).
2. Performance (The musicians' knowledge of the score and skill/technique).

Student Stage Management:

1. Name of student has been nominated for this award and will be adjudicated outside of Survey Monkey. A PDF of the requirements can be found on the MVHSTA website. If you have any additional notes regarding stage management for this production, please type below.

Resource Questions to Help You Evaluate

What was your overall opinion of the entire production?

- a. Was the major idea of the play developed?
- b. What was the style of the production?
- c. Did the elements (production and performance) emphasize/maintain consistency with style?
- d. Would you recommend this show to your friends?

What did you think of the direction?

- a. Did the production seem to have a consistent vision?
- b. Did the director compose the stage pictures to give additional meaning to the moments?
- c. Was the pace of the show appropriate and compelling?
- d. Did the staging make good use of the entire space?
- e. Was there variety in the movement of the show?
- f. Did all the elements (sets, costumes, lights, props, actors) have a consistent message?

What did you think of the scenic (set) design?

- a. Did the environment of the set support the production?
- b. Did it seem appropriate to the style or time period of the play or musical?
- c. Did it either make you react to the play/musical in a specific way, or to focus on something particular in the play/musical?
- d. Was it successful at creating an environment for the characters?
- e. How well were color, line, mass and texture used?
- f. Did the scenery provide a logical and suitable setting for the action of the play or musical?
- g. Did the color, style, and layout create an attractive/effective environment?
- h. Were the scenic changes (if any) handled efficiently without disrupting the action of the production?

What did you think of the lighting design?

- a. Was the lighting effective in moving the attention of the audience to the action?
- b. Was there good visibility?
- c. Was the lighting effective in changing locations and moods?
- d. Were there any exceptional effects?

What did you think of the costume design?

- a. Did the costumes convey the essence of the characters?
- b. Did they help define the time period of the play or musical?
- c. Were the costumes executed well?
- d. Were line, texture, and color used?
- f. Did the makeup and/or hair or wig design contribute to the characterizations and the overall appeal of the show, or was it distracting?

What did you think of the sound design?

- a. If microphones were used, did they help or hinder the performance?
- b. In a musical, was there a balance between the vocal singing and the orchestra?
- c. Were the sound effects well done?
- d. Was recorded music/sound used effectively to help set the mood or tone?
- e. Did recorded music/sound help to establish the time and place?
- f. Did recorded music/sound help to establish transitions between scenes?

What did you think of the properties/set dressing?

- a. Did the props seem appropriate to the style and time period of the play or musical?
- b. Did the props “read well” from the audience?
- c. Did personal props help the actors create their characters?
- d. Were specialty props innovative and well executed?
- e. Did the set props adhere to the color, line, and texture of the scenic design?
- f. Did the set dressing help to create an attractive and effective environment?
- g. Were the props handled effectively without problem, and without disrupting the action of the play or musical?

What did you think of the ensemble?

- a. Did the actors work well on stage with other performers?
- b. Did any actor stand out to the detriment of the other actors?

What did you think of the individual acting?

- a. Is the actor/actress believable as the character?
- b. Was actor/actress spontaneous and consistent?
- c. Was the actor/actress clear vocally, physically and in terms of what their character wanted from others on stage?
- d. Did the actor/actress move and use their body to convey the character?
- e. Did the actor/actress have good stage presence, energy, and poise?
- f. Did the actor/actress fulfill the demands of a specific time period or dialect?
- g. Was the actor/actress loud enough, expressive, and easily understood?

The Importance of Feedback in the Miami Valley High School Theatre Awards

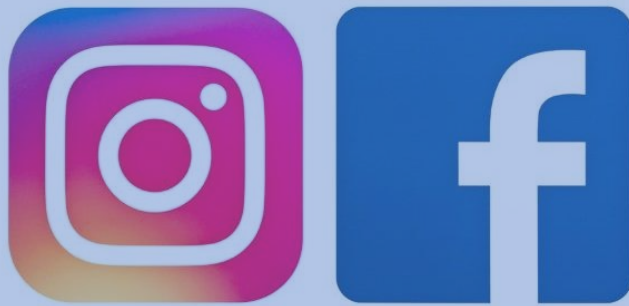
The MVHSTAs are an educational program that offers the opportunity for students to learn and grow from constructive feedback. Feedback, in the form of positive, specific comments, is an important part of the MVHSTA experience.

Research tells us that feedback is a vital component of effective learning that promotes student growth. Therefore, comments are not an optional add-on, they are the heart of the experience for the students.

Follow the MVHSTAs and Dayton Live on Instagram and Facebook!

@MVHSTA

@DAYTONLIVE365





The Jimmy Awards®/The National High School Musical Theatre Awards® (NHSMTA®)

The Jimmy Awards®/The National High School Musical Theatre Awards® (NHSMTA®) program impacts more than 100,000 students who participate in high school musical theatre competitions sponsored by presenters of Touring Broadway productions throughout the United States. Presented by the Broadway League Foundation, the program sends a Best Actress and Best Actor winner from each of these competitions to New York for a week-long theatre intensive of coaching and rehearsals with industry professionals in preparation for a one-night-only talent showcase on Broadway. Named for Broadway impresario James M. Nederlander, the program has been the catalyst for more than \$9,000,000 in educational scholarships. For more information, please visit www.JimmyAwards.com.

The Miami Valley High School Theatre Awards is participating in the 2027 National High School Musical Theatre Awards® in New York City as a Regional Awards Program (RAP). **Although the purpose of the MVHSTAs is to celebrate, support and advocate for high school theatre in our area, the process of selecting two (2) students to send to New York city is competitive and includes an additional selection process.** Rules and regulations for the program may be found at <https://www.jimmyawards.com/participation/rules-and-regulations/>.

You will be adjudicating students who are performing in Jimmys®-eligible roles, and your scores will directly impact their prospects of being invited to the Jimmys® Workshop.

Please note that students will be selected from both the MVHSTA “Lead Actor / Actress In A Musical” or “Supporting Actor / Actress In A Musical” categories, even though the NHSMTA language now uses “Qualifying Role” to denote the category. Some “Qualifying Roles” may fall in our “Supporting Actor / Actress” category.

To be eligible for the NHSMTA® program, student performers must qualify by:

1. Performing a Qualifying Role in an Approved Musical. This list is available at <https://www.jimmyawards.com/participation/qualifying-shows-and-roles/>.
2. Being one of the top scoring performers who receive “Outstanding” scores in either “Actor” or “Actress” in a “Qualifying Role” in their MVHSTA-nominated performance.

3. Attend a MANDATORY workshop with theatre professionals on May 8, 2027.

The MVHSTA Team reserves the right to determine performance readiness of all qualifying students. After the workshop in May 2027, the MVHSTA Team and panel of theatre professionals will use all available information including scores, experience, behavior, investment, and skill to determine who will be selected to attend The Jimmy Awards®.

Adjudicator scores are an essential factor in determining selection.

A student may be selected as a MVHSTA Jimmys® nominee up to (2) times in their high school career.

Previous MVHSTA Jimmy Award Nominees

2021-2022 Season

Zach Ahrens (Versailles High School) and Isabel Rawlins (Versailles High School)

2022-2023 Season

Patrick Comunale (Centerville High School) and Maggie Weckesser (Chaminade Julianne High School)

2023-2024 Season

Connor Egloff (Stivers School for the Arts) and Sydney Korpusik (Centerville High School)

2024-2025 Season

Griffin Greear (Oakwood High School) and Lynn Dauterman (Kettering Fairmont High School)

2025-20256 Season

Griffin Greear (Oakwood High School) and Addison Haines (Springboro High School)

Questions/Comments/Help

If you have any questions or need any help at all throughout the adjudication process, please contact the Dayton Live Staff directly. We are always happy to help!

You can email general inquiries to: mvhsta@daytonlive.org or

Taylor Benjamin

Manager – MVHSTA

937-637-8103 (call/text)

taylor.benjamin@daytonlive.org