

Nebraska Thespians Leadership Retreat 2026

Attendance:

9:00- 9:15- Check in and Grab n Go Breakfast

Round Table During Breakfast- Breanna

9:15-9:30 - Introductions and Festival Theme and Merch

9:30-9:45- Get to know your peers - Icebreaker: Breanna

9:45-10:15 - Leadership Workshop - Victoria

10:15- 10:45- Honor Troupe- Erienne

10:45- 11:00-Break

11:00-11:10 - Officer Roles Explained - Victoria

11:10- 11:45- Officer Breakouts- Breanna supervise; Erienne do talking points

- State Reps: STO & Victoria
- Presidents/Vice Presidents: Emily and Brooke
- Secretary/Historian/Publicity: Erienne
- General Office/Leadership/Tech: Caitie and Austyn

11:45- 12:00- Troupe Touch Base time

12:00- 12:45- Lunch Provided

12:45 - 1:00 - Welcome back and Warm up Game - Victoria or Breanna

1:00-1:45 - Workshop #1: Thespy/College Auditions/Resumes/Portfolio making - Victoria and Ryan Kathman

1:45-2:00 - Thespy Information & Updates - Erienne and Victoria

2:00-2:15 - BREAK / Transition Time/ Questions

2:15-3:00 - Workshop #2: From Cast Member to Catalyst - Erienne

3:00-3:15 BREAK - choose what committee to be on.

3:15-3:45 - Committee Break Out Time

- Opening Ceremonies Script Writing - Audrey Haugen - Breanna help!
 - Make it Pop: Theme Building, Script Ideas, and Song
- PR: social media and promoting NE Thespians - Coco Richards
 - Pop up video ideas and make some, make social media schedule and posts
- Outreach: information communicator to schools and teacher - Ryan Hazen
 - How to contact other schools to attend festival - get more people!
- Theatre in our Schools/Advocacy - Madi Marco
 - Song selection, Essay Prompt, TIOS Packet, Monthly Advocacy Challenge
- Teacher time in Victoria's classroom
 - Emily and Brooke come up with itinerary

3:45-4:00 - Final Announcements and Wrap up! Set Action steps/Recap!

Statewide Thespian Officers

- What is one goal you hope we can accomplish at the state level this year?
- How can we best represent ALL schools, including smaller or rural troupes?
What's one creative idea for engaging more students in state-level events or initiatives?
- How can we better communicate across the state and keep energy and engagement high all year?

Troupe Presidents

- What's your leadership style, and how has it helped your troupe?
What's one tradition or event your troupe does that you're really proud of?
How do you handle conflicts or drama *off-stage* within your troupe?
What's your vision for how your troupe can grow this year?

Vice Presidents

- What does supporting your president look like in practice?
- When your troupe is low-energy or disengaged, how do you help lift them up?
- What new responsibilities do you want to take on this year?
- How do you see your role evolving as a leader?

Secretary / Historian / Publicity

- How do you keep records and documentation fun, creative, or meaningful?
- What tools or platforms do you use to stay organized and share info?
- How can publicity help your troupe connect with the broader school community?
- What's a campaign or visual idea you'd love to try this year?

General / Other Officer Positions

- What's a moment from a past show or event that made you feel proud to be part of your troupe?
- How do you stay connected to troupe members who aren't in leadership?
- What's one area of troupe life you'd love to improve or revamp?
- How can you use your specific skills to make a difference this year?

Troupe Time Questions

- What do you think your troupe needs more of this year — and how can you help make that happen?
- In what ways can officers act as a bridge between leadership and troupe members?

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Round Table Questions

Find a table with people not from your troupe! Split up and mingle!

- What do we hope to get from leadership retreat this year?
- If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what food would you choose?
- What does it mean to you to be a leader?
- If you were a kitchen utensil, what kitchen utensil would you be? Why?
- What are you most excited for this school year?
- Where is your favorite place to sit?
- What shows are you doing at your school this year? What are you most excited for?
- If you could make a national holiday, what would it be?
- Why did you want to be on leadership this year?
- If you could live in any fictional universe, where would you want to live?
- What is your dream role/show to work on?
- If you could travel anywhere right now, where would you go?
- What is a piece of advice that you take with you throughout your life?
- Gummy candy or Chocolate candy? Debate.

Workshop: From Cast Member to Catalyst

Developing Self-Starters in Theatre Leadership

Learning Objectives

By the end of this workshop, students will:

- Understand the difference between leadership and initiative.
 - Identify common barriers to being a self-starter.
 - Practice recognizing opportunities for action.
 - Develop strategies for creating momentum in their theatre programs.
 - Create a personal action plan for leading without waiting for permission.
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Opening Activity: The Empty Stage Challenge (5 Minutes)

Ask students:

"Imagine you walk into your theatre and discover that the director is delayed by 30 minutes. Rehearsal is supposed to start now. What happens next?"

Have students brainstorm responses individually for two minutes.

Then ask:

- What would a typical student do?
- What would a leader do?
- What would a self-starter do?

Write responses on a board.

Discuss the key distinction:

A leader helps when asked.

A self-starter identifies what needs to happen and begins moving things forward.

Mini Lesson: The Three Levels of Leadership (5 Minutes)

Draw a staircase with three levels.

Level 1: Waiting

- "Tell me what to do."
- Relies on instructions.
- Avoids responsibility.

Level 2: Responding

- Helps when asked.
- Reliable and supportive.
- Good team member.

Level 3: Initiating

- Notices needs.
- Solves problems.
- Creates opportunities.
- Moves projects forward.

Ask students:

"Which level do most theatre students operate on?"

"Which level creates the strongest theatre culture?"

Activity: Spot the Opportunity (10 Minutes)

Divide students into groups.

Give each group theatre scenarios:

Scenario 1-The green room is always messy after rehearsals.

Scenario 2-Freshmen seem disconnected from the theatre community.

Scenario 3-Social media hasn't been updated in months.

Scenario 4- Cast members arrive late to rehearsal.

For each scenario answer:

1. What is the problem?
2. What would a waiting person do?
3. What would a responding person do?
4. What would a self-starter do?

Groups share out.

Highlight that self-starters ask: *"What can I do right now?"* instead of *"Who should fix this?"*

Discussion: Why Don't People Take Initiative? (5 Minutes)

Ask students to identify reasons.

Common answers:

- Fear of failure
- Fear of looking bossy
- Fear of making mistakes
- Waiting for permission
- Thinking someone else will do it

Introduce this idea:

Initiative requires courage before confidence.

Most people think confidence comes first.

In reality: Action → Experience → Confidence

Activity: The 5-Minute Rule (5 Minutes)

Explain: "If something can be started in five minutes or less, start it."

Examples:

- Sweep the stage.
- Organize props.
- Welcome a new student.
- Send a reminder message.
- Create a rehearsal checklist.
- Draft a publicity idea.

Ask students to create a list of:

Ten Things They Could Start This Week

without permission, funding, or adult involvement.

Share examples.

Discuss how small actions create momentum.

Leadership Exercise: Be the Producer (10 Minutes)

Tell students:

"Imagine your theatre director disappeared for one week."

In small groups answer:

- What would stop immediately?
- What would continue?
- What would you personally take responsibility for?

Then ask:

"What systems could students create so the program keeps moving even without constant adult direction?"

This shifts thinking from participation to ownership.

Personal Action Plan (5 Minutes)

Give each student an index card.

Complete the following:

One problem I see in my theatre program:

One action I can take this week:

One person I can recruit to help:

Date I will begin:

Students share with a partner for accountability.

Closing Reflection (5 Minutes)

Ask students to stand. Read:

"Theatre is full of people waiting for permission. The strongest leaders are not the most talented people in the room. They are the people who notice what needs to happen and begin."

Ask students to complete the sentence:

"This year, I will stop waiting for _____ and start _____."

Invite volunteers to share.

End with:

"Great theatre programs are not built by directors alone. They are built by students who choose to act before they are asked."

Initial Leadership Workshop - sit with your troupe

Opening Activity: "Think About the Best Leader You've Followed" (5 Minutes)

Ask students: Think about a teacher, coach, director, student leader, or even a family member that you respect. What made them a good leader?

Allow students to share responses.

Write answers on a board or chart paper. Common answers might include:

- Trustworthy
- Helpful
- Organized
- Positive
- Fair
- Hard-working
- Good listener
- Encouraging

Discussion Prompt:

"Did anyone say they were the loudest person in the room?"

Usually students will laugh and say no.

Key Point:

Leadership is not about being the boss. Leadership is about helping others succeed and making the group better.

What Does Leadership Look Like in Theatre? (5 Minutes)

Ask: What makes theatre different from other activities?

Possible answers:

- We depend on each other.
- Everyone has a role.
- We spend a lot of time together.
- If one person doesn't do their job, everyone is affected.

Then ask: What happens when leaders are negative, unprepared, or only care about themselves?

Discuss briefly.

Transition:

"Theatre leadership isn't about having a title. It is about creating the culture people experience every day when they walk into our theatre."

Creating Our Leadership Expectations (7 Minutes)

Ask students: What behaviors should every theatre leader demonstrate regardless of title?

Create a list together.

Guide discussion toward: **Theatre Leadership Expectations**

We will:

- Be present and prepared.
- Communicate respectfully.
- Support all members of the company.
- Handle conflicts professionally.
- Follow through on commitments.
- Represent the theatre program positively.
- Encourage others rather than criticize.
- Leave rehearsals and events better than we found them.

Reflection Question

Ask: Which of these expectations do you think will be the hardest for students to consistently uphold?

This often creates meaningful conversation about accountability, communication, and commitment.

Goal Setting for the Year (3–4 Minutes)

Ask: If we were sitting here at the end of the school year saying, "This was the best year our theatre program has had in a long time,"

Establish 3–5 leadership goals based on their responses and Record responses and identify common themes. Then Examples:

- Strong productions
 - Increased membership
 - Better attendance
 - More student involvement
 - Positive culture
 - Stronger community support
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Closing Reflection (2–3 Minutes)

Ask students to answer:

Complete these sentences:

1. "A great theatre leader is someone who..."
2. "One thing I can do this year to improve our theatre program is..."
3. "One thing I hope our leadership team accomplishes is..."

Invite volunteers to share.

Final Message

"This leadership team has the ability to shape what every student experiences in our theatre program this year. Students may not remember every rehearsal or every meeting, but they will remember how they felt when they were part of this company. Our job as leaders is to make sure every student feels welcomed, supported, challenged, and valued."

This format keeps students talking for most of the 30 minutes rather than listening to a lecture, while still covering roles, expectations, and annual goals.

2025

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Attendance:

Blair High School, Lincoln Southwest, Millard South, Benson, Lincoln North Star, Burke High School, Millard West, Kearney High School, Bellevue West, Lincoln Southeast, Gretna High School, Gretna East, Crete High School, Omaha South, Omaha Central, Elkhorn High School, Fremont High School, Westview, Westview High School, Brownell Tablbott.

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9:30-9:45- Introductions and Festival Theme and Merch

9:45-10:15 - Leadership Activity - Victoria

- 9:45-9:55: Get To Know You - y
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\matching clothes buddy w/ silly ice breaker q's (5x)

- 9:55-10:05: Leadership Activity - [Survive the Scenario](#)
- 10:05-10:15: Leadership Activity - [Balloon Train](#)

10:15- 10:45- Honor Troupe- Erienne

10:45- 11:00-Break

11:00- 11:30- Officer Breakouts- Breanna supervise; Erienne do talking points

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- Presidents/Vice Presidents: Emily and Brooke
- Secretary/Historian/Publicity: Erienne
- Advocacy: Caitie Hays
- General Office/Leadership/Tech: Victoria

11:30- 12:00- Troupe Touch Base time

12:00- 1:00- Lunch Provided

1:00 - 1:15 - Welcome back and Warm up Game - Mingle Maker

1:15-2:15 - Workshop #1: New Works - Marie Schuette

2:15-2:30 - Thespy Updates

2:30-2:45 - BREAK / Transition Time/ Questions

2:45-3:45 - Workshop #2: Thespys - 20 min on Perform (Bill and/or Kathy - Auditorium), 20 min on filming (Austyn/STO Josh Carl - Cafeteria) , 20 min on tech (Sally - Emily's room)

Do in rotating stations

3:45-4:00 BREAK - choose what committee to be on.

4:00-5:30 - Committee Break Out Time - **make a description for each committee**

- Opening Ceremonies Script Writing - Avalon Morgan and Josh Shapiro Lead
- PR/Outreach: Thespy Videos, Theme Promo, Show Promo, State Thespian Meetings, Schedule Posts for future things - Josh Carl PR Lead/Spencer Wickwire Outreach Lead
- Theatre in our Schools/Advocacy - Song selection, Essay Prompt, TIOS Packet, Monthly Advocacy Challenge- Madison Marco Lead
- Teacher time in Emily's room

5:30-6:00 - Final Announcements and Wrap up! Set Action steps/Recap!

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- What is one goal you hope we can accomplish at the state level this year?
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- How do you keep records and documentation fun, creative, or meaningful?
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- What's a campaign or visual idea you'd love to try this year?

Advocacy Chairs

- What does "theatre advocacy" mean to you personally?
What issues in the arts are you most passionate about?
- How can we educate others about the importance of theatre in schools?
- What's one advocacy action every troupe should take this year?

General / Other Officer Positions

- What's a moment from a past show or event that made you feel proud to be part of your troupe?
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