



PARENT'S GUIDE TO URBANA HIGH SCHOOL DRAMA
Urbana High School
Drama Boosters
2025 - 2026 School Year

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2025 - 2026 Calendar





Welcome to UHS Drama!

We are thrilled that your student is interested in being a part of the Theater Department at Urbana High School. Our students have many theater experiences and develop long-lasting friendships in the process. We have prepared this Guide for you so that you have a quick and easy reference. The Guide includes a snapshot of UHS Drama activities, ways that you can support UHS Drama, and tips on helping your student access the many different offerings. Our goal is to demystify UHS Drama so that parents know what to expect during the school year. Our hopes are that you will find it a helpful resource and you will also see interesting opportunities for your own involvement through the UHS Drama Boosters.

UHS Drama in a Nutshell

The UHS Theater Department provides courses that students may choose to take during their four year high school program – including Theater I through IV, Film Studies, and Technical Theater. Urbana students may decide to take a Theater Department course to meet the Fine Arts credit graduation requirement or as an elective course in their individual schedules.

Students do not need to be enrolled in a Theater course to be a part of the UHS Theater Department, but it does help allow students to advance their skills in preparation for productions. The UHS Theatre Department offers an interesting mix of high quality theater opportunities, including productions and special programs that your student can experience. Thus students have different ways to learn first-hand about theater, developing skills, gaining confidence through performance, and being a part of productions – as an actor, tech, crew, or pit member; playwright; assistant director; choreographer; or by working in make-up, set design, and/or costuming.



A New Arts Pathway is Being Created by MSDE - for FCPS and Surrounding Counties
<https://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Fine-Arts/Comprehensive-Arts-Pathways-Policy-Document-Spring-2025-A.pdf>

UHS Performances

• The **Fall Play** brings a comedy or drama to the Urbana stage for a 3 or 4 performance run (depending upon the show) – Thursday through Saturday – (Three evening performances or Three evening performances and one Saturday Matinee). **Auditions are held the first week of School, with audition packets being available during the summer on UHSdrama.org and the UH Drama Schoology Page.** This year's Upcoming Production will be the classic *Miracle on 34th Street*.

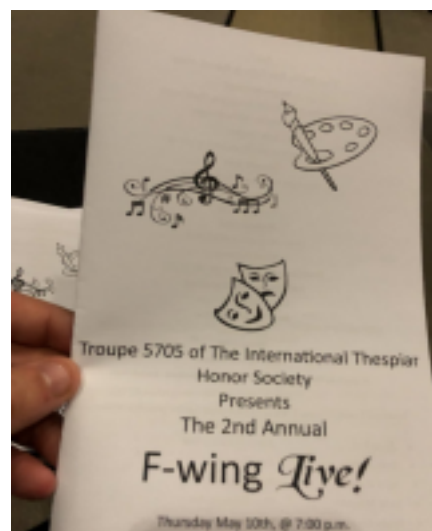


* The **Spring Musical** is a full production Broadway show – with song, dance, and a story that aims to please. The show has a three-day run in late March or early April ***and is cast, by audition in mid-January*** (about auditions, pg. 10). **This year's production will be MAMMA MIA**



OTHER PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES (yearly - bi-yearly, etc)

• **2 Cabaret Events.** Typically our students produce two cabaret events each year. Often called *Best of Broadway* or *Broadway Backwards* and F-Wing Live - these cabaret events offer students a chance to perform beyond the mainstage productions with songs, scenes, and more. *This year's Cabaret events will focus on Magical Movie Moments and a 30th Annual Gala Cabaret Celebration*



* **Cafe Cabaret Series** - A student initiated series is a low key, quaint atmosphere for students to try their hand at showcasing skills they have been working on. Snacks and refreshments are available.

• **Acting Class Showcase** - Students enrolled in an Acting class complete the semester with an end of year scene night showcasing skills learned in class.

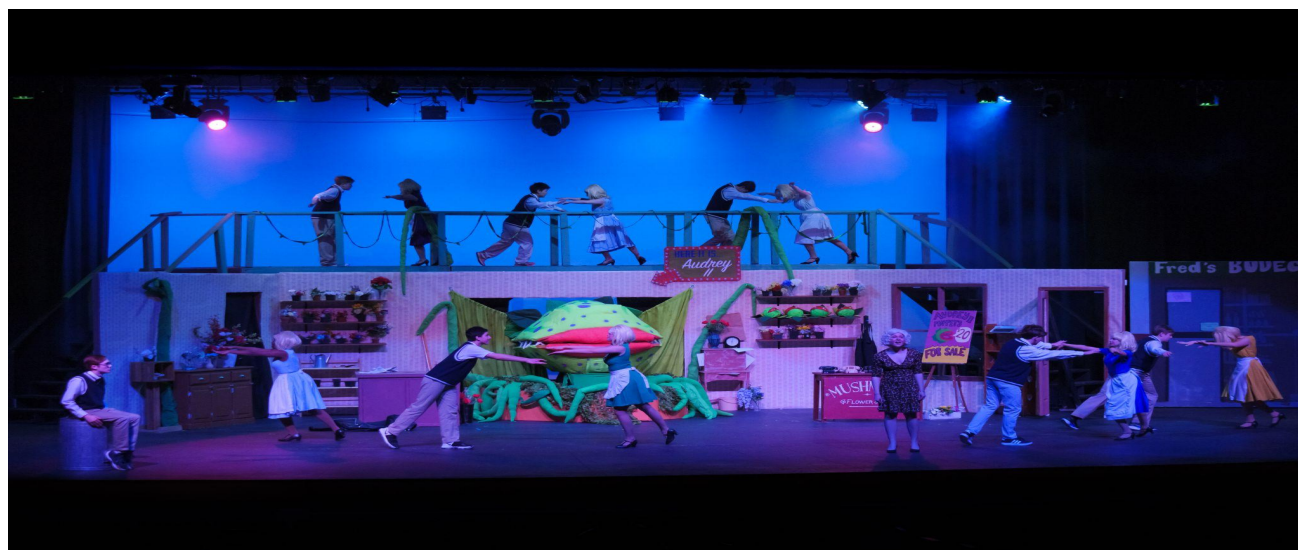
• **Festival Dionysus! Student Directed One Acts!** These are typically student written, student directed, student cast and student lead. Students may audition for these performances. Auditions are open to all students. Students may apply to direct a one act and those forms are due in mid March. Selections are based on the variety of shows, grade level, time, and appropriateness. One Acts are a great way for students to get their feet wet with featured roles.

Other Special Programs

• **High School Drama Adjudication** – Held in March, students enrolled in a theater class during the year have the opportunity to attend the Drama Adjudication with a prepared scene or monologue that will be scored. In addition, each school is given a 25-30 minute time slot on the Main Stage to perform.

• **International Thespian Honor Society** - UHS Drama is Troupe # 5705 of the International Thespian Honor Society. Students earn points throughout their high school career to achieve recognition in the Honor Society. Members of the Honor Society have the opportunity to compete for college scholarships and more.

• **Urbana High School Drama Awards and Banquet** – A spring program, recognizing students for their contributions and accomplishments – preceded by a banquet in honor of the students, organized by the Drama Boosters.



Leading Urbana's Theater Department:

Mr. Stephen Ward is Urbana High School's Theater Director since 2017 - having served as Assistant Director from 2007 - 2016. Mr. Ward teaches the Theater courses and directs Urbana's productions and learning opportunities. Mr. Ward received his undergraduate degree from University of Maryland College Park and his MA in Curriculum and Instruction from Hood College.



Mr. Ward oversees the operations and organization of the Drama department and develops a yearly calendar for the department. This calendar is distributed at the end of the previous school year or during the summer for the upcoming school year, and it is available on the UHSdrama.org website and Schoology

In addition to teaching, Mr. Ward oversees all aspects of UHS Drama – selecting plays for the production, conducting the audition process, creating rehearsal schedules for productions, directing the fall, winter and spring shows from concept to presentation, organizing school sponsored enrichment field trips, and connecting with the Drama Boosters. Mr. Ward works with the Drama Booster board and the Student International Thespian Honor Society Executive Board to take on lead roles within the department – the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. These individuals continue peer-to-peer communication and coordination through the UHS Drama Facebook and Twitter pages, UHS Drama e-mail, Schoology and more.

Spirit Night Events for Students (and families)

The UHS Drama Department, and its International Thespian Honor Society students plan multiple spirit events and outings throughout the year for **BOTH** students and their families. This is a part of our ongoing effort to continue to emphasize the family and belonging of the UHS Department - it is not just about shows & productions. And yes, despite what your students may tell you - Families are encouraged to attend. Here are some of the many events we hold throughout the year.

Not necessarily in order of their occurrence - **Not all events are offered every year**

- **Board Game Night.** In September, students and families gather one evening and have the opportunity to play a variety of different board games or strategy games.
- **Movie Nights** - Especially if there is a copy of our upcoming productions, students use the opportunity to watch films for social purposes or to help with upcoming auditions.
- **Summers Farm Cornmaze and Campfire Night.** While UHS Drama boosters pays for the Campfire, individuals are responsible for their entry tickets. We have an ongoing campfire throughout the night - full of snacks and drinks. Students and families have the opportunity to sit around the campfire and/or do a variety of activities that Summers Farm offers including their corn maze.
- **Halloween Movie Night & Costume Contest.** ITS holds a costume contest for students and with snacks and drinks show a fun Halloween Film fun for the whole family. At the end, students vote on the best costumes in a variety of categories.

- **Holiday Party Potluck.** Held in December, students and their families join us in the Auditorium for a Holiday Potluck celebration prior to winter break. Usual festivities include Ugly Sweater Contests, Karaoke, and More.
- **Family Trivia Night.** This became a hit during Virtual/Hybrid. Thespian Honor Society Officers put together a Night of Trivia with a variety of categories. Students (and families) form their teams and compete against each other.
- **Improv Nights.** Students participate in a variety of improv games and activities. Adults are welcome to join in on the fun as contestants or audience members.
- **Trips to Productions.** We often take trips to see professional productions in New York or Washington D.C. Space is limited to 55 people typically during a trip. Seniors have first change to sign up and then so on. I do look for chaperones.
- **UHS Drama Family Picnic** - Held in May (typically the Saturday of Mother's Day) - join us for an end of year Family Potluck Picnic held Outdoors (unless raining). Lawn games and activities are available for students. Guess next year's production contest! And more! Volleyball is a big hit during this event.
- New for 2025 *The 24 Hour Theater Project* - More info to come.

Other Events May Be Scheduled Throughout the year goes on as time and schedule allows.

Urbana High School Drama Boosters

The Urbana Theater Department is supported by the valuable work of the Urbana Drama Boosters parents and other interested members of the school community. The purpose of this group is to provide special activities for drama students, volunteer support for performances and productions, fundraising, and drama community interest-building – all to benefit Urbana's students' drama experience. Over the years, many Drama Boosters **traditions** have been created – from providing *show meals* for dress rehearsals to hosting an end-of-the-year banquet to sponsoring a trip to see shows in DC and New York, and providing a \$500 scholarship to one senior member of the International Thespian Honor Society. Drama Boosters activities are **very inclusive** – creating a place for students to come together, build friendships and talents, be a caring and supportive student community, and have **fun**. The families involved in Drama Boosters really do get **value added** – interesting activities, appreciation, friendships and more!

• ***UHS Drama Boosters: Nuts and Bolts***

Urbana Drama Boosters, a 501(c)(3) entity, was formed in 2017 to meet the following objectives:

- Stimulate student, parent, community interest, support and participation in UHS Theater
- Engage in fundraising activities to benefit the drama education of students
- Assist the drama instructor & school administration for the harmonious operation of the drama program.

All parents of Urbana High School Drama students are considered members of the Drama Boosters free of charge, but there are multiple levels available for parents to help sponsor the Drama Department. The Urbana Drama Boosters Bylaws specify officers, terms, and duties; the composition, role, and responsibilities of the Board of Directors. Booster Meetings are held once a

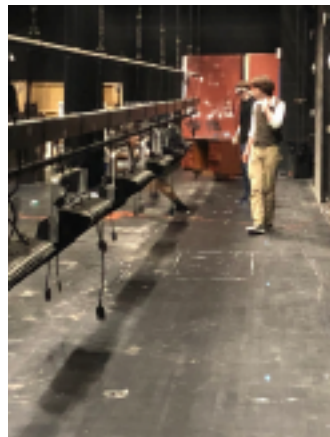
month on a Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. Those dates are listed on the UHSdrama website and on the booster form provided. Any property acquired by this organization belongs to the UHS Theater Department. The Bylaws state that the UHS Drama Boosters may not seek to direct the activities or control the policies of the UHS Drama Program or the selection of productions. Bylaws also state that Participation on the Office Member Board does not determine or guarantee casting in productions for their children. Urbana Drama Boosters serves to support and enhance the UHS Theater Program.

● *Activities and Traditions*

Drama Booster activities support student and drama community development, fundraising, and the delivery of quality productions. While many activities undertaken are Urbana Drama traditions, new activities are introduced each year in response to needs and opportunities. Most Drama Booster activities wrap-around Theater Department activities, but others stand alone.

- **Mainstage Productions.** While Mr. Ward establishes show ticket pricing and procedures, Drama Boosters operates the on-site box office and provides volunteers to usher. Drama Boosters operates a variety of concessions for shows open to the public, including such things as snacks and spirit wear. In the dress rehearsal days leading to the performances, the Drama Boosters coordinates show meals for cast and crew – as well as a pizza fest before the Wednesday matinee. Urbana Drama Boosters helps publicize shows, creating community interest in high school theater, so that students can perform for a full audience.

- **Set Build & Costuming Saturdays** – A tradition of UHS Drama is to hold set building days on Saturdays leading up to the show. From 9-5, students take pride working alongside parent leads to help build sets, make and design props, organize publicity, and help with costuming. Students in shows are required to participate in at least two set build days. Students and parents can come when they can and stay as long as they can. Pizza and drinks are provided. These days help build the UHS Drama community. This is not limited to cast & crew – anyone can participate and earn ITS Points.



- **Drama Picnic** – One Saturday each May, UHS Drama holds its annual family potluck picnic. Featuring music, guessing games, lawn games, food, and fun – this is a great way to connect with other families in the department – and to celebrate the great year.

- **Drama Awards Banquet.** The Drama Boosters organizes a catered dinner for Theater students and their families preceding Urbana High School's annual Drama Awards Ceremony. This makes for a special evening for all involved with reasonable pricing, great conversation, and recognition of students' theater accomplishments. The evening concludes with a reveal of the following school year's productions.

- **Theater Trips.** Each December and April, Drama Boosters organizes a trip to New York City and/or The Kennedy Center / The Hippodrome - to provide students with the opportunity to view a Broadway performance. With comfortable buses and breakfast snacks en route, students and chaperones can get to see an acclaimed Broadway performance and

experience the Big Apple or a show in the Nation's Capital

- **Exam Survival Kits.** Both a major fundraiser and a service for students, Drama Boosters creates gift bags of treats and survival tips – for purchase by parents and delivery to Urbana students before midterm and final exams. *The Exam Survival Kits take the drama out of testing week, by providing brain boosting snacks and messages of encouragement. This is open to all students of Urbana.*
- **Food Fundraisers.** Drama Booster parents organize and promote Food Fundraising nights at local restaurants that provide a percentage of sales that directly benefits the Department - this also helps build Drama Department unity.
- **Show Related Fundraisers** – Drama Booster Organizations help to oversee drama spirit wear sales for productions and candy grams that are delivered to cast and crew members.

Membership in Drama Boosters

Becoming a member of Urbana High School Drama Boosters is important and easy. All parents, community members, and community and business organizations are invited to support Urbana High School Theater through the Patron program which provides different levels of tax deductible contribution – beginning with Individual Members. Patrons are recognized in show playbills and may receive additional “perks” based on level of participation. Patronage choice is made by completing a quick and easy form – along with a voluntary monetary contribution. ***By becoming a Drama Boosters Member/Patron, you voice your support of Urbana Theater and help to make great opportunities for Urbana Theater students possible.*** Any monetary membership goes towards a number of things.





Questions and Answers: Things Parents Want to Know!!!

This guide is designed for those families who are new to Urbana Drama, but we hope that the information is useful to veterans as well. We know that the many activities and traditions may seem overwhelming at first. To help you get through the first year of drama -- ***without any drama*** – we *provide* things you will want to know – in other words, answers to parents' often-asked questions.

Participating in UHS Theater:

Q. How can my teen become a part of the Urbana Theater Department?

There are several ways for students to become a part of Urbana High School Drama. Taking courses through the Department (Theater Arts I – IV, Technical Theater, Film Studies) is one way. Introduction to Theater can fulfill a graduation requirement. Students can apply to work backstage on a major production; or audition for the fall play, winter play, spring musical, student produced plays, or F Wing Live.

If selected for any role, including the ensemble and the tech crew, your student will be a part of Urbana Drama. Major productions, such as the fall play, winter play, spring musical, require a broad range of student talent – from stage crew members, tech crew members, set construction, costuming, make-up, choreography, and the pit (musicians). Students have written and/or directed one-act plays performed during *Student Directed One Acts* and *F-Wing Live*.

Students may also sign up for Drama Club to be held in the auditorium each Club Day, and can apply to work towards being a member of the International Thespian Honor Society.

We offer many drama outings for students to be a part of the Drama Family. As you can see, Urbana Drama affords students many ways to develop and apply creative and technical talents.

I highly recommend students join and be a part of the UHS Drama Schoology Group Page (with notifications turned on) so they can keep up to date with all the happenings in the department.

Q. Must I join Drama Boosters for my child to be cast in a production?

No. All Urbana students are eligible to audition for the cast in an Urbana production. However, being a member/patron of Urbana Theater, through the Drama Boosters, is an important way that you can demonstrate your support of live theater at Urbana and a way that you can help build a strong, vibrant drama program and community – providing enriching experiences for students who enjoy the performing arts.

Q. My student is not the best communicator. How can I stay connected to the department and informed on programs, schedules, and details?

- Mr. Ward publishes a yearly calendar and posts it on the UHSdrama.org Website (there is one at the end of the document, however it is updated periodically).
- Attend Booster Meetings at 7:00 on a Monthly Basis
- Make sure you join Schoology and are a part of the Parents Schoology Page - important info is sent out there
- Make sure you fill out the Google Contact Info Form

Q. Are there any general costs or fees that I need to know about?

There are fees for special activities sponsored by the Theater Department or the Drama Boosters -- such as NYC trips in the spring and the Theater Festival. All theater students are encouraged to attend, but participation is by student choice.

Students in school productions have optional costs – such as purchasing catered tech week meals and purchasing t-shirts. Students are required to have their own Stage make-up kit (Cost is around \$20.00) (Ben Nye is a good option), and students are not allowed to share makeup.

Auditions:

Q. How are lead, support, and ensemble roles cast for Urbana productions?

Auditions are held for the fall play the first week of school, after the conclusion of the Fall Play for the Winter Production, and for the spring musical in December. Students are provided with a production packet for each show so they have all information necessary for a production.. We do occasionally hold interest meetings as well. The exact dates are published in the calendar of Urbana High School Theatre Activities.

Auditioning for the fall play and spring musical, students are expected to do readings from the script. Some other audition requirements may be needed based on the show, but all audition information is spelled out in an Audition Packet. Audition Packets for the Fall are published at the end of the previous school year, and the audition packet for the spring Musical is available in November. Those audition packets are on our school website. For the spring musical, there are three audition dates: one day specific for dance, one day specific for singing, one day specific for acting. Students auditioning must go through all parts of the process.

Audition days are typically followed by a “call back” day which affords the director an additional chance to view talent before making final cast decisions. Students asked to do a “call back” audition, may or may not receive a cast role – and not all students who will be cast in the show are asked to do “call back” auditions. The

cast list is posted on the UHS Drama Website and Schoology Page sometime a day or so after auditions have concluded (specific time frame for each production varies and is included in the beginning audition packet).. A typical notice will go out prior to the cast list being posted. Students sign off accepting their roles.

*Student behavior and accomplishment in class and outside of class also affects casting. Auditions are not like track meets: there isn't an objective winner. It's up to the creative team to make their best guess as to which arrangement of the available students will produce the best possible production. Most of the time, a student will not get his or her preferred role. We encourage those students who don't make the cast to join stage or tech crew, attend set construction, etc because these opportunities all go towards International Thespian Honor Society. **Students must be eligible at the time of the production in order to participate.**

The student produced plays and Cabarets also have audition processes – although less elaborate than the process for the fall play and spring musical. In addition, most of the time these auditions are led by students with teacher supervision. The dates, times, and requirements for auditions are announced to students in the Drama Department as the year progresses.

Q. Are lead roles always given to juniors or seniors?

All cast roles are filled through the audition process—and students selected for specific roles may be freshman, sophomores, juniors, or seniors. There are many elements that contribute to making cast decisions – including such things as how the director interprets the play, character elements, interaction among various roles, talent available, conflict schedule, and experience. Students often seek lead or supporting roles in a production and may be disappointed if selected as an ensemble cast member. However, the ensemble is a vital part of any production and requires the same skills and talents – acting, voice, and dance. Ensemble cast members have the same opportunity and responsibility as students with lead and support roles to provide stand-out performances and contribute to a stellar production. If a student is not cast in a production, or does not get the part they want, it does not mean their audition went poorly, it just simply means they might not have been the right fit for the role or part.

Nearly all high school productions have strong leading actors, but the difference between good shows and great ones is the quality of the ensemble: the dedication, talent, and commitment of the chorus and supporting players. Everything that parents can do to help their students understand and work towards that goal can help.

It is also important to know that lead roles are not always given to the same individual and there is no such thing as Seniority. Freshmen have received lead roles in the past, but Upperclassmen admittedly have a leg up based on their experience within the department. Everyone strives for a lead role, but the majority simply don't receive it because of the nature of the theatrical world, but students should make the most out of every role received. UHS Drama also follows a color-blind casting rule, unless a specific role does dictate it.

Q. My teen would like to audition for a part in the fall play, One Acts, or spring musical. What can he/she do to prepare for the audition process?

There are many ways that your teen can prepare. First, your teen can find out the dates of the productions, and audition dates and times, and calendar to ensure his/her availability. He/she can learn about the play or musical, and perhaps roles of interest, by reading a

script, doing internet research on the play, listening to a CD of the music, seeing the production, if performed locally, and/or watching a DVD of the show, if one exists.

Your teen can download the Audition Packet from UHsdrama.org and look through all the specific requirements and e-mail Mr. Ward if there are questions about what Mr. Ward expects. Your teen can carefully select audition material to reflect the types of roles he/she seeks and to showcase special talents. Your teen can practice cold reading and song -- in character -- independently and for others, using feedback to strengthen his/her performance. Some students seeking lead roles have worked with audition coaches to help them prepare, but this is not a typical practice for high school theater. Many students seek out vocal teachers around the county.

I highly recommend that if a student is interested in theater - they should not wait to take a theater course. Enroll in Intro to Theater their freshmen year - this will make sure they are not behind in their experience.

Preparing for Show Time:

Q. My teen is a cast member in the fall play or spring musical. What can I expect?

This is a big question. Let's work backwards on the answer!

Performances

The fall play and spring musical run four consecutive days beginning with a Wednesday matinee for local elementary and middle school groups, not open to the general public. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday performances are evening performances that are open to the general public and usually start at 7:00 p.m. If a show has a scheduled matinee, it will be on that Saturday at 1:00 p.m. Tickets for all shows are \$10.00. UHS Student tickets are available for \$5.00 at the door. Students involved in the productions need an audience, so come and bring your family and friends! Tear down of the set is on the Sunday following a production from Noon until finished, and all students involved in the show are **required** to help after school. (*We do take into account religious obligations which is why we start at Noon, but we also find it important that a student follows through and participates in all aspects of a production.) Because we are a thriving arts department (dance, music, instrumental) we need to take down the set on Sunday because the auditorium will be in use the following Monday. The entire conflict calendar is in the audition packet. Please account for these requirements.

Dress Rehearsals

Dress rehearsals are held on the Saturday prior to the show from 9:00 a.m. until ??????. This is considered our all day Tech Saturday. Students are fed this day as well as on Monday and Tuesday of show week (called Tech Week). It is part of their catered meals.) Tech Week is where all aspects of the performance are pulled together – set, lighting, sound, pit, costuming, and make-up – the whole enchilada. Tech Week evenings do run late and it's helpful to recognize this in scheduling other activities during this very demanding week.

The Boosters organize catered meals for students the evenings of dress rehearsals. The cast, crew, and pit look forward to these “show meals.” Parents of a child involved in a production will be asked to help out in some way.

Getting Ready for the Production

Cast members are expected to have stage make-up and this can be purchased through the Urbana Drama Department. In addition, a show T-shirt is created for students involved with the play/musical and is available for purchase -- making a wonderful keepsake for students involved in the production. Costumes for lead, support, and ensemble roles may be provided to the extent that unique costuming is needed. A list of costume and hair requirements is created for all cast members indicating those things that cast members need to obtain and those things that will be provided. A good resource to augment what is available in your home closet is the local thrift shop (AMVETS, Salvation Army, Goodwill). Cast members do a “costume walk through” for approval of costume components. Remember, a director has a specific concept for a show – **please do not go out and buy anything specific without prior knowledge and approval from the director and costume manager because those costumes may not end up working out.** If Mr. Ward asks a parent to buy something specific for their child – i.e. specific types of shoes, or specific outfit – you will have two options – 1) You may choose to keep the item or 2) Keep the receipt and Mr. Ward/UHS Drama will reimburse you – however, if UHS Drama does reimburse you, the item in question will become property of UHS Drama. **No items will be reimbursed by UHS Drama if they are bought without proper knowledge or approval.** (UHS Drama does not reimburse individually bought stage make-up or character shoes) Cast members are asked to develop their own “bios” for inclusion in the show program and parents/friends have the opportunity to include one-line blurbs in the program – wishing their actor and the cast a “break a leg” performance.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals are held, after school hours (starting at 3:00, and run until 5:30, then 6:00 as it gets closer and production week goes until ????) for several months preceding each show on multiple days of the week. Rehearsal schedules are a part of the Audition Packet given to students before beginning the production.

Rehearsal will be held on the days indicated, but sometimes it does not mean that every student will be needed – If necessary, a more detailed calendar will be given on the first day of rehearsal. Updates will be given via Schoology and our Production Schoology Group. Scenes are blocked and practiced, as are song and dance routines – **in chunks** – so different parts of the cast will often be called upon to rehearse at different times. Tech sessions are also included on the schedule. The rehearsal schedule is a crucial reference – **and it changes as necessary** – for a variety of reasons. You will want to check this frequently and remind your student to check it frequently. Attendance at rehearsals is mandatory with the expectation that cast members will arrive on time, be attentive and cooperative, and leave when released. There is a deadline for students with speaking parts to memorize all of their lines and dates are set for production

pictures and due dates for bios, tech week food money, etc. Students will have scripts and scores to bring to rehearsal, and will also need to bring pencils and appropriate footwear and clothing.

What is the 3 Strike/Chance Rule for Productions?

Students are given a 3 strike rule for any production – and receive a strike for such things as missing rehearsals not mentioned on their conflict calendar (sickness and extenuating circumstances are considered on a case by case basis) being a disruption during rehearsal, disrespect, not showing productivity, etc. After 3 strikes, a student is put on probation and one more strike will result in the removal of a production. We view being cast or a part of a production as a privilege and acknowledge that several students do not make the show, so we expect respect and integrity from the members of any company regardless of role or position. ***Keep in mind we understand that things happen, unexpected issues arise, and so several students look at these three strikes as a Buffer.** Students may take a strike because of some unexpected activity, etc. **We ask that appointments are made outside of the rehearsal schedule.** If students receive three strikes for any production, they would be removed from the production and may not be considered for the following production depending on the circumstance.

Eligibility

This is non-negotiable. Much like athletes, Performing Arts students must maintain good grades in order to remain a part of the production. Students can still practice while ineligible, but must be eligible in order to perform. If a student becomes ineligible at the end of the term *prior to a production*, they have until interim to be removed from ineligibility. Interims can make a student eligible, but they cannot make a student ineligible. Unfortunately, if a student is ineligible at the end of a term, and there is no interim period between that time and the time of the production, a student will be unable to participate any further. **Please do not wait to get Mr. Ward's help – there is a reason why rehearsals start typically at 3:00.**

First Read and Show Orientation

Once a show is cast, a “first read” of the play/musical is conducted by Mr. Ward for the students. There is an evening parent meeting for each production, approximately a week after the rehearsals have begun. On that day, a general “orientation” meeting of parents and students involved in the show is held. Mr. Ward provides a walk-through of what is expected and each student and parent signs a production contract which relays commitments for participation.

Q. Are there costs involved in having my teen in a show?

There is no “performance cost” to be a member of the cast. However, your cast member will be expected to have a make-up kit and some costume elements provided by the family, if at all possible. Mainstage production shows have specially designed T-shirts that can be purchased, at the student's option (\$20). DVD's of Productions are also sold. Catered Tech Week Food is provided at a

cost for students (ranging from \$35-45 for three-four meals; students have the opportunity to select which meals they want to participate in). Students do not have to purchase them, but Parents should provide their child a meal if not. Parent support of “show” activities, through things like donations to concessions and show meals, are costs that parents can anticipate.

Q. My teen has been cast in a mainstage show. What do I need to do?

As a parent of a student cast in the show, you will need to:

- **Attend the parent-student orientation meeting for the show** and sign the performance contract with your student. This date is in the calendar.
- **Provide your best email address and contact phone numbers** to Mr. Ward and Drama Boosters so that you receive information.
 - Help!. This is the best way to show support. Sell tickets, sell concessions, sign up for a committee, help make costumes, build sets, and more.
- Make sure you are enrolled in Schoology - and are a member of the UHS Drama Schoology Group.
- **Keep abreast of the performance rehearsal schedule** and help your student resolve calendar conflicts, **AND PLEASE DO NOT SCHEDULE ANY DOCTOR APPOINTMENTS, TRIPS, ETC DURING A REHEARSAL SCHEDULED TIME THAT WAS NOT ALREADY MENTIONED IN THE CONFLICT CALENDAR.**
- **Know and encourage your student to adhere to due dates** for make up, photos, blurbs, T-shirt, and ticket purchase and for bios, actor memorization of lines, and costuming
- **Encourage your student to stay “on top” of their schoolwork** and to use “rehearsal down time” to keep up with homework. The rehearsal schedule can be demanding. Rehearsals start at 3:00 to allow students 30 minutes of free time to work on homework.
- **Contribute to the experience** by providing food/drinks for *show meals*; snacks/beverages for concession sales; and by volunteering to help with ticket sales/box office, show meals, or concession sales
- **Celebrate Urbana Theatre!! Come see the show; invite your family and friends.** Help pack the house!
- **Promote!! Promote!! Promote!! Promote!!** Students thrive over a large audience!

Theatre Opportunities:

Q. My teen loves theater, but is not interested in performing. What other opportunities exist for my child?

There are many ways to become involved in Urbana Theatre so students can apply their special talents – whether artistic, technical, or literary. Working on set design, lighting, sound, costuming, make-up or props for the fall play, spring musical, or student produced plays – all are important and necessary. Students can join us at Saturday Set builds as well.

Q. What training is available to help my teen strengthen his/her vocal, dance, and acting performance?

Many Theatre students are interested in further developing their skills and use private lessons and summer conservatory-like programs for this purpose. The Drama Website maintains a list of local coaches, teachers, and programs under the Student Resources Tab. This is not an exhaustive or vetted list, but rather resources identified by parents and/or theater students based on personal experiences. They should also seek out participating in any one of our other wonderful performance programs such as the Choir Program or Dance Program.

Q. What scholarship opportunities are available for students through participation in the Urbana Theater Program?

While it is not possible to include full scholarship information in this Parents Guide, there are a few opportunities that you will want to know about:

- Urbana High School students can compete for Maryland Distinguished Scholars Awards in the Arts (11th grade) with the application process beginning at the school level and further competition at the County and State levels
- The Maryland High School Theater Festival includes an audition component, conducted by specific post-secondary schools during the Festival, to select students for scholarship opportunities
- Membership in the International Thespian Honor Society adds to any student's college application. Taking a leadership role in the high school theater can qualify students for a variety of scholarships. The Drama Boosters awards a scholarship or two each year as well.
- Some students may be interested in majoring in theater. These families should have a conference with Mr. Ward as early as possible to plan, because the entertainment industry is complex and competitive, and success requires planning, dedication, and talent.

Supporting UHS Theater:

Q. What can I do to support the Urbana Theater Department?

There are many ways that parents can support Urbana Drama, but the ***top three*** are:

- Help your student understand the different opportunities available and meet commitments that they make in whatever roles they take on.
- Attend Urbana productions and encourage others to see the shows. Your help in bringing in a “full house” – is very welcome.

Our students play for the audience. Download notices from our websites and feel free to spread them around your personal communities – scout troops, workplaces, and community centers, and the like. Most of our productions are appropriate for children and high school theater provides a way of introducing youngsters to live theater.

- **Volunteer through the Drama Boosters.**

There are many things that you can do – some large, but many small and easy to fit into most busy schedules.

Q. What volunteer opportunities exist with Drama Boosters?

Drama Boosters provides a great way for parents to enjoy and contribute to Urbana Theater. It is a “laid back group” and all help is valued. It is not necessary to be a member/patron to give a helping hand and there are numerous ways to be involved. If you like:

- **Planning and Decision-making** -- You can consider a role on the UHS Drama Boosters Executive Board. Board positions are slated toward the end of the year for the upcoming year. Executive Board members must be members of Drama Boosters. Positions include: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary

During Shows we always need the help with following:

Service Tech Week Meals / Tech Week Dessert Making / Ushering / Concessions
Sales / Ticket Sales / Set Building / Painting / Costuming

In addition to

Spirit Wear / Membership / Fundraising and more

Giving a Helping Hand --You can consider working on a committee, activity, or event. Volunteers are needed to operate the box office and usher at productions, operate concessions at shows, serve food at “show meals,” assemble survival kits, set up the Awards Banquet dinner, and chaperone the New York City trip – just to name a few. You can choose to volunteer during the school day, in the evening, at a performance, or in your own home – since such a wide range of opportunities exist. In all cases, you will be doing something very worthwhile and in a way that works with your schedule and with your talents/interests. Your contribution to Urbana Theater, whether large or small, sends a message to your student that you value their involvement in Theater Department activities. This is a group that accomplishes a lot because so many people pitch in. Drama parents have fun in the “doing”!

Contacts:

Q. Who do I contact when I have questions, concerns, kudos, or ideas?

Questions and issues about your student’s involvement in Urbana Theater Department courses, productions (from auditions to scheduling to requirements), and Theater Department activities, should be provided to Mr. Stephen Ward, director. Many questions and issues can be answered or resolved by taking a moment to browse our website, the Schoology Drama Parents Group and viewing information posted on-line, or by Mr. Ward can be reached via Stephen.Ward@fcps.org (best method of contact), or by Schoology Messaging.

Questions about Drama Boosters, or inquiries about getting involved, including sponsored activities and volunteer opportunities, can be directed to the President of Drama Boosters, currently Katherine Ross Keller, or the Committee Chairperson for a specific activity. Contact information for all booster Board Members can be found on our website



**Meetings will be held the THIRD Thursday of Every Month @ 7:00 p.m.
(except in April)**

September 21	October 19
November 16	December 21
January 18	February 15
Mar 21, 2025	April 25
May 16, 2025	

We do accept donations through Cur8.com



**INTERNATIONALSM
THESPIAN SOCIETY**

HONORING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN THEATRE

FOR STUDENTS

TROUPE 5705 URBANA HIGH SCHOOL 2025 - 2026 SCHOOL YEAR POINTS DUE BY EACH TERM

The International Thespian Society is the only organization to honor secondary school students for outstanding work in theater. The resolution with which the Society approaches this role is evident in its focus on the students; their achievements, involvement, and access to quality theater arts instruction are basic concerns of ITS.

The following are guidelines & overview for ITS

- **Requirements for Induction:**
Obtain 30 points through a variety of events & activities and be involved in at least 1 mainstage productions.
- Students accumulate points each year they participate in ITS and turn them in each school year. There are multiple ranks a student can earn throughout the years. (See the Rank Summary Sheet)

- Students may earn up to 5 points towards membership through participation at the middle school level. Mr. Ward will need to verify with your middle school teacher.
- Even if you do not reach 30 points your freshmen/first year, You should STILL turn in your points sheet so they carry over.
- **Keep in mind - if you choose not to start tracking points your freshmen/first year, and you start a later year -** The only points you can account for previous years are from productions.
- There is a one-time fee for membership of \$30
- Thespian membership will be awarded on a democratic basis to all students who qualify according to the requirements of the point system. **No student will be denied membership.**
- There is an induction ceremony at the Drama Banquet in May.
- When students qualify for membership, they will be given notification they may join the I.T.S.
- In order to remain in the Honor Society, a student **MUST** be involved in either a drama class or drama production each year after induction, and must maintain good academic standing - a 2.0 GPA or Higher. No F's -
 - A probationary period does occur when a child is not in good academic standing.

STAY IN TOUCH WITH UHS DRAMA!

Don't miss a single announcement

1. Join the UHS Drama Parents Schoology Group

*Accept the Schoology Invitation from Mr. Ward or Message him to be a part of it at anytime:

<https://lms.fcps.org/group/3112041552> (Link probably won't work w/o invite)

***Important to be in this to get updated announcements.**

2. Bookmark

<https://sites.google.com/fcps.org/uhsdrama/home>

3. Like Urbana High School's Facebook Page

Urbana High School Drama

<https://www.facebook.com/urbanadrama/>

UHS DRAMA SCHOOLOGY GROUP

***Please encourage your child to be a part of the UHS Drama Schoology Group - if they aren't a part of it - they can message me. In addition, encourage them to have notifications turned on.**