



2018-2019

Frequently Asked Questions

Starlight Theatre
4600 Starlight Road
Kansas City, MO 64132

For More Information:
kcstarlight.com/education

Or contact:

Andy Pierce, Education and Outreach Manager
E-mail: andy.pierce@kcstarlight.com

What exactly are the Blue Star Awards?

Starlight Theatre's Blue Star Awards is a program that recognizes outstanding achievement in musical theatre among high school students. The program's goal is to bring together high school theatrical programs in and around metropolitan Kansas City to recognize the tremendous talent of area youth.

Starlight Theatre invites all metro area high schools located within 50 miles of Starlight Theatre to participate. With professional adjudicators and presenters, the annual Blue Star Awards Ceremony recognizes outstanding achievement in 23 areas of musical theatre. At the ceremony, Rising Star Scholarships are presented to one male and one female high school senior who made great contributions to their high school's musical theatre program. Additionally, the Technical Achievement Award and Community Impact Award are presented at the ceremony.

Blue Star Awards adjudicators – theatre professionals, performing artists, designers, and theatre arts educators – attend high school performances. They provide commentaries on the performance and technical aspects of the show that are then compiled and returned to each school. Their full evaluations are also provided to the Blue Star Awards Nomination Committee for review, along with video recordings of the schools' productions. The committee makes official nominations, and decides upon the program's winners.

In late April/early May, associates of Starlight Theatre spend an exhilarating day making nomination announcements by delivering nomination banners to schools who earned them, sharing the good news during assemblies, drama classes, and cast member meetings.

In May, students from all Blue Star Awards schools gather with the public under the stars at Starlight Theatre for the annual Blue Star Awards Ceremony. It is Kansas City's very own version of the Tony Awards® ceremony! Award and scholarship recipients are announced, and acceptance speeches are given. The schools nominated for Outstanding Overall Production each perform a musical number from their show on Starlight's stage, and the nominees for Outstanding Actor/Actress in a Lead Role perform as part of a medley of numbers from their nominated roles. It is a night to remember!

Who can participate?

Any high school in the Kansas City metro area located within 50 miles of Starlight Theatre may participate. (Participating schools from the 2017-2018 Blue Star Awards are exempt from the mileage requirement.) Schools are officially part of the Blue Star Awards once they submit a completed registration form, a \$75 registration fee, and their acceptance has been confirmed. Registration forms for all 2017-2018 participating schools are due no later than Monday, September 10, 2018. Additionally, certain limitations apply to schools who have November productions. Details regarding these limitations are outlined in the 2018-2019 Rules and Guidelines.

Productions entered must fall into one of the following three categories and be billed accordingly in the program:

1. a published musical, operetta or revue (either currently held by a licensing house or having entered public domain);
2. an original piece of musical theatre that features an original script, music and/or lyrics and is covered under a valid copyright; or

3. an original compilation of material from other sources that is presented as musical theatre with the approval or permission of the original creators or their representatives.

Why do schools have to pay an application fee?

The application fee helps to defray the cost of travel expenses and stipends for adjudicators as well as the video recording of each show.

What are Starlight's thoughts on the aspect of competition in the program?

Starlight Theatre understands and respects concerns voiced by instructors with regard to the competitive aspect of the Blue Star Awards. We at Starlight, however, do not view competition as a negative; rather, a healthy attitude toward competition can encourage and motivate individuals to work harder. We believe students can inspire one another to uplift their own work. Competition is about striving for excellence in our own work.

Each Blue Star Awards participant should take pride in his or her accomplishments. If students want to pursue theatre as a career – and we know many do not – they need to understand that it is a highly competitive business. Competition, no matter what their field of study, is something students will deal with for a lifetime. Students compete for scholarships, for roles in shows, and, later, for jobs, promotions, recognition, and numerous other needs and desires. We believe students will benefit from learning early on how to deal with competition and their own emotions. Whether they get nervous, their hearts race, or they feel anxiety, together we can teach them that these emotions are valid and encourage them to approach competition in a positive manner.

That said, competition is but one aspect of the Blue Star Awards. This program remains a celebration of all high school musical theatre, recognizing the students, teachers, parents/guardians, and schools that help it thrive.

Who are the adjudicators?

The adjudicators are working and retired theatre professionals, as well as members of local arts education organizations. Each evaluator holds a degree in music, theatre, dance, or a related area, has extensive professional or academic work experience in one or more of those disciplines, and/or is a professional artist or educator with broad knowledge of musical theatre. Evaluator performance and compliance are monitored continually to ensure Blue Star Awards schools receive the best adjudication possible.

What is the adjudication process?

Starlight Theatre sends three adjudicators to each Blue Star Awards production. Adjudicators submit a comprehensive written response following each production. Utilizing a scoring rubric, they provide insight on the high points of the production and identify areas for improvement. Once Starlight's Education Department receives all final adjudication per production, the adjudicators' comments are compiled and provided to the schools for their educational use.

How are nominees selected?

Starlight Theatre's Education Department convenes a nomination committee of selected adjudicators that reviews and evaluates adjudicator feedback, along with video recordings of the schools' productions. Please note that in using their experience and accumulated theatre knowledge,

nomination committee members acknowledge the disparity of production requirements among shows and the level of difficulty in mounting certain works.

Will schools have the opportunity to read comments made by adjudicators?

Schools will receive a compilation of the adjudicators' comments. This is intended to provide the schools with as much useful feedback as possible. Starlight strives to send the commentary as soon as possible after each production, but adjudicators have ten days to submit their response forms following the performance. Because of the volume of productions that take place often on the same weekend, commentary can be delayed due to the sheer number of schools performing. On average, schools can expect to receive commentary within six to eight weeks of their closing performance. For schools with performances in late March, it is possible that the commentary will arrive after official nominations are announced.

How are ticket reservations handled?

Each production will be attended by three adjudicators. Once adjudicators are chosen for each show, the Education Department will contact coordinating teachers to request that tickets (two per adjudicator) be set aside at Will Call for adjudicators to pick up at the performance. Participating schools provide the tickets (six total) free of charge.

What happens if there are scheduling conflicts with an adjudicator?

While adjudicators receive a small stipend, they are essentially volunteers with family, work, and other commitments. On occasion, they may be unable to attend a scheduled show for a valid reason or emergency. They know to keep Starlight informed of any delays, or problems they may experience in fulfilling their commitment. If, due to unforeseen circumstances, an adjudicator is unable to attend an assigned performance, he/she will contact the Education Department immediately. Starlight, in turn, will contact the coordinating teacher to either reassign the adjudicator to another of the school's performances, or provide the name of a replacement adjudicator. In extreme cases, the possibility exists that an emergency absence cannot be accommodated, and that adjudication must be obtained by an adjudicator reviewing the video.

If an adjudicator's tickets cannot be located for a performance, as has sometimes occurred in the past, the adjudicator is asked to buy his or her own ticket. Please be aware that in this instance, it may appear to the school as if tickets were not picked up, and an adjudicator did not attend the performance when he/she actually did.

Is there any reason for exclusion in any of the award categories?

In any category, if the majority of work was done by adults, the school will not be considered eligible for that category. That said, we realize that it can be a bonding, team-building experience to include faculty/staff members, or other adults in the cast. While we do not want to discourage this positive teamwork on the part of adults and students, we strive to keep the Blue Star Awards high school student-centered. The complete policy on award eligibility can be found in the 2018-2019 Rules and Guidelines.

What if the school's information in the Registration Form or Production Information Form changes?

Once the Blue Star Awards Registration Form or Production Information Form have been submitted, the school should contact Starlight's Education Department immediately to advise of any

changes to the provided information so that adjudicators and nomination committee members can be properly advised.

What happens at the Blue Star Awards Ceremony when schools win?

Individuals and schools recognized with awards will be invited on stage and allowed to make an acceptance speech. If a group or ensemble wins, the entire group is invited on stage to support the one student (selected by the school) who will make the acceptance speech. Each individual award given out the night of the ceremony will be accepted with an onstage speech by the recipient and will be kept by the winning student. Group awards, such as Outstanding Ensemble, Orchestra, etc., will go to the school itself to be displayed as part of their theatre's history.

How much do tickets cost to the Blue Star Awards Ceremony?

Nothing! In our continuing commitment to making this program accessible to all schools, teachers, students, families, administrative staff, and the public, Starlight offers free admission to the final celebration of the Blue Star Awards. We hope this will encourage more support for our young people who are involved in musical theatre. A parking fee will be charged per vehicle.