



**2019-2020**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Starlight Theatre**

4600 Starlight Road  
Kansas City, MO 64132

**For more information:**

[kcstarlight.com/education](http://kcstarlight.com/education)

Or contact:

Andy Pierce, Education and Outreach Manager

[andy.pierce@kcstarlight.com](mailto:andy.pierce@kcstarlight.com)

816-997-1134

## **WHAT EXACTLY ARE THE BLUE STAR AWARDS?**

Starlight Theatre launched the Blue Star Awards during the 2002-2003 school year to recognize 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. All high schools located within 60 miles of Starlight are invited to participate.

The Blue Star Awards annually recognize outstanding achievement in 23 areas of high school musical theatre. To do so, Starlight hires adjudicators – theatre professionals, performing artists, designers and theatre arts educators – to attend and evaluate participating high school performances. These adjudicators provide written commentary on the performance and technical elements of each show, and their comments are later compiled and returned to each school. The adjudicators' full evaluations are reviewed by the Blue Star Awards Nomination Committee, along with video recordings of each school's productions. The committee is responsible for making official nominations and determining award winners.

In late April or early May of each year, Starlight associates personally deliver nomination announcements to the schools that earned them. Staff present banners and share the good news during school assemblies, drama classes, cast member meetings and more.

The program culminates in mid- to late May when students from all participating schools gather with the public under the stars at Starlight for the annual Blue Star Awards Ceremony. It's Kansas City's very own version of the Tony Awards®! Award winners are announced from the Starlight stage, scholarships are presented, and acceptance speeches are given. In addition, each school nominated for Outstanding Overall Production performs a musical number from its show on stage. Likewise, all nominees for Outstanding Actor/Actress in a Lead Role perform as part of a medley of numbers from their nominated roles. It is truly a night to remember!

## **WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?**

Any high school in the Kansas City metro area or a surrounding community located within 60 miles of Starlight may participate. (Participating schools from the 2018-2019 Blue Star Awards are exempt from the mileage limit.) Schools officially become part of the Blue Star Awards once they complete a registration form, receive confirmation that their registration has been accepted, and submit a \$75 registration fee. Only a coordinating teacher or school administrator can register a school to participate. Registration forms for all schools seeking to participate in 2019-2020 are due by Monday, September 16, 2019.

*Certain limitations apply to schools with November productions. Details regarding these limitations are fully outlined in the 2019-2020 Rules and Guidelines.*

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

1. published musical, operetta or revue (either currently held by a licensing house or having entered public domain) that is a standard or school edition/version (not Broadway Junior, G2K or Young Performers Edition);
2. original piece of musical theatre that features an original script, music and/or lyrics and is covered under a valid copyright; or
3. 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 A REGISTRATION FEE?**

The registration 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 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 may 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 seek to pursue theatre as a career – and we know many do not – they need to understand it is a highly competitive business. Competition, no matter what their field of study, is something students will face throughout their lifetimes. Students compete for scholarships, for roles in shows and, later, for jobs, promotions, recognition and other needs and desires. We believe students benefit from learning early on how best to deal with competition and their own emotions. Whether they feel nervous, anxious or their hearts race, students benefit from learning that all of their emotions are valid. Through the Blue Star Awards, Starlight encourages students to approach competition in a healthy and positive manner.

While competition is one aspect of the Blue Star Awards, this program is truly a celebration of all high school musical theatre. We recognize and applaud all students, teachers, parents, guardians and high schools that help musical theatre thrive.

### **WHO ARE THE ADJUDICATORS?**

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

## **WHAT IS THE ADJUDICATION PROCESS?**

Starlight 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 and Outreach 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 and Outreach Department convenes a Nomination Committee of selected adjudicators to review and evaluate all adjudicator feedback, as well as video recordings of the schools' productions. The Nomination Committee includes both returning and new adjudicators. Starlight provides oversight but makes no contribution to decisions made by the committee.

After adjudicators attend a show, they complete comprehensive scoring on a multitude of areas per category and provide commentary; Starlight, in turn, uses that information to compute an average score for each award category by individual adjudicator and by the three combined. For each, adjudicators can also flag a technical or performance component, basically making it known that element should be reviewed by the Nomination Committee.

In Nomination Committee meetings, Starlight provides members with the scoring and nominations for each entry in a category, production information forms, and commentary from the attending adjudicators. Starlight facilitates the meetings and establishes a system of review that requires all Nomination Committee members to view students or elements (depending on the category) in a specific order. Following this required review, members then have an opportunity to "elevate" work that may not have made the scoring/flagging threshold but which they feel should be in the mix. This step is in place due to the subjective nature of scoring artistic work.

Once a category has been reviewed, each member of the Nomination Committee completes a top-pick sheet, individually and privately ranking their preferred entries in a given category from 1 to 8, with 1 being their top choice. Starlight then assigns a numeric component to each ranking (first place gets 8 points, second gets 7 and so on). The eight students/elements receiving the highest top-pick totals in a category become our nominees. Once all nominees are determined, the Nomination Committee members complete a final ballot of all categories. Nominees are always listed in alphabetical order on the ballot *without* the point totals they previously received. On this final ballot, members vote for their top choice in each category; the majority vote wins the category. In the event of a tie, the individual with the highest point total heading into the final ballot is declared the winner.

## **WILL SCHOOLS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO READ COMMENTS MADE BY ADJUDICATORS?**

Schools receive a compilation of all adjudicators' comments. This is intended to provide the schools with as much useful feedback as possible. It is the program's hope that teachers share commentary with their students to help them develop their skills.

Adjudicators have 10 days to submit their response forms following the performance, and Starlight strives to compile and send the commentary as soon as possible after each production. Because numerous schools stage their productions on the same weekends, commentary may be delayed due to the sheer volume of commentary being received and processed at Starlight. 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 their commentary will arrive after nominations are announced.

### **HOW ARE TICKET RESERVATIONS HANDLED?**

Three adjudicators will attend each school's production. Once adjudicators are assigned for each show, Starlight's Education and Outreach 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 due to an emergency or other valid reason. They know to keep Starlight informed of 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 Starlight 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 occurred occasionally in the past, the adjudicator is asked to buy his/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 adults did the majority of the work, the school will not be considered eligible for that award. That said, we realize 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 2019-2020 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 has been submitted, the school should contact Starlight's Education and Outreach Department immediately to advise of any changes to the provided information so 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 at the Blue Star Awards Ceremony 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 will be accepted with an onstage speech by the recipient and will be kept by the winning student. Group awards, such as Outstanding Ensemble or Outstanding Orchestra, will go to the school itself to be displayed as part of its 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 nominal parking fee is charged per vehicle.