

# A Parent's Guide to Olathe North Theatre

Created by the 2016-17 Thespian Officers

Welcome to Olathe North Theatre! We are so happy to have you and your students as part of this department. This is a home for support, respect, friendship, and quality. As a team, we create moving, educational, and joyous productions. Students learn very valuable lessons including professionalism, a strong work ethic, practical skills, interpersonal skills, and the importance of humanity. Through the Theatre Arts, our department works to educate students in any way possible and create lifelong theatre participants.

*"I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being." – Oscar Wilde*

## Seasons Outline

- 5 shows a year, 3 Seasons (2 Fall plays, 1 Winter Musical, 2 Spring plays) (normally)
- Since the two Fall shows and two Spring shows have the same rehearsal times, students are typically involved in one show each season (1 Fall, 1 Winter, 1 Spring)

## Auditions

- **Fall and Spring Seasons:** The two Fall shows are cast together, meaning everyone auditions together, and the casts for each are chosen from the single audition pool. The same applies for the two Spring shows. There is one day of auditions for Fall and Spring Seasons. Students sign up for a time slot on the Call Board outside of the Little Theater. Auditions run late 95% of the time. Please plan rides accordingly.
- **Winter Musical:** There are two days of auditions: a vocal audition (short monologue and short song piece) and a dance audition. When auditioning for the musical, you are required to attend BOTH audition days. Sign-ups are also on the Call Board. Auditions typically run late.
- The week prior to Musical Auditions is "Conditioning Week". Similar to sports, the theatre department offers days prior to auditions for actors to learn the music, practice some dance steps, and participate in a Mock Dance Audition. It is highly recommended that your student attends; this week is very helpful for Freshmen to Seniors..
- **Procedures:** Two weeks (ish) prior to the audition, packets will be available on the Call Board outside of the Little Theater (room 314). Specific instructions can be found on that packet. Students sign up for a time slot and audition in groups of four in front of the Directorial Team (Mr. Pence, Ms. Gerdel, Mrs. Rabel, the Student Directors and Stage Managers, etc.)

## Callbacks

- A callback is an opportunity for the directors to get another look at an actor.
- After the audition date, the Callback List will be posted on the ON Theatre website: [www.olathenorththeatre.com](http://www.olathenorththeatre.com)
- Fall and Spring season callbacks are the day after the last general audition date.
- Musical callbacks are the day after the Dance Audition.
- The directors try very hard to end callbacks by 5:30, but they also have to make sure they see everything they need to in order to put together a cast. It is not uncommon for callbacks (especially for the musical) to run late.

- It is also not uncommon for groups of people to be released early from a callback. If a student is released early, it simply means the directors have seen what they needed. It does NOT say anything about if a student received a role.
- **IMPORTANT!** Just because a student does *not* receive a callback does not mean they did not make the show. **ALSO!** Just because a student *did* make a callback does not mean they received a role.
- The cast list is typically posted on the Olathe North Theatre website the night of the last callback.

### Technical Theatre

- We are very proud of our Technical Theatre department. Just about everything is student designed, student built, and student run.
- **Tech Leadership** There are interviews for leadership positions prior to every audition. These place positions such as Student Director, Stage Manager, Head Props (and lighting, sound, etc.), Shop Foreman, Master Carpenter, and more. Students are more than welcome to apply for positions. There have often been Freshmen who earn Assistant positions, and many go on to be a head for an area by their Sophomore year. Not only does this offer great leadership opportunities, it looks fantastic on resumes for other events.
- Some of the many areas where student can be involved: Construction, Lights, Sound, Props, Costumes, Rigging, Business Management, and Design
- Students learn valuable interviewing, business, and practical skills.
- Tech Packets are available on the Call Board typically the Monday after Audition Week
- Tech students have rehearsal the same times as the cast.

### Student Leadership

- Positions include: Stage Manager, Student Director, Shop Foreman, Master Carpenter, Head Lights, Head Costumes, Head Props, Head Sound, Dramaturg, Set Designer, Business Manager, among many others (including Assistant positions)
- Anyone is able to apply, but typically Freshmen are encouraged towards Assistant positions.
- These positions are filled each season prior to auditions. Students will attend an interview with a panel consisting of the adult ON Theatre directors. The directors will inform students individually once positions have been given.

### During the Production

- Rehearsals run from 3:10 - 5:30 unless otherwise stated on the rehearsal schedule
- Watch for information about rehearsals on days where there is no school. For example: Winter Break rehearsals are typically 8:00-noon, but your students will be notified the exact times. Rehearsals on a teacher in-service day are typically still 3:10 - 5:30. Again, the directors will let their cast and crew know when to be expected at rehearsal.
- Directors realize that rehearsal ends at 5:30 and try their hardest to get students out on time. It is likely, however, that at some point, students are kept late. This could be because Notes are being given, or a natural stopping point in a dance number or blocking has not been reached.
- **Heading Home** It is expected that ALL students be picked up within 15 minutes of the end of rehearsal so the directors can also head home.
- Upperclassmen are typically more than willing to provide rides to students who cannot drive. Gas money every so often is greatly appreciated, though!

## Tech Week

- Rehearsals this week go later than 5:30. They are typically scheduled to end at 6:00 (6:30 for the musical)
- This is a week for the technicians to polish their work and to blend the technical elements with the cast.
- The directors might change times depending on other events happening at the school or the current state of the production. They will let your student know when to expect to be finished. That being said, do not be surprised if rehearsals go later than stated.

## Show Week

- **Length** The length of rehearsals depends on the state of the production. These rehearsals typically run late.
- **Late Rehearsal** Typically, one night of Show Week is labeled a "Late Rehearsal." This means that the Call Time is around 4:00 (giving time for students to eat dinner). These rehearsals, typically one of the last ones before the show opens, do not have a specific end time. Please be prepared for a late night. These are some of the most productive rehearsals and gives the students opportunities to perfect scenes or transitions.
- **Show Nights** On show nights, students are expected to be ready for warm-ups around 5:00 pm (changes depending on the show). After the performance, actors and techs can greet family and friends in the Blue Room as soon as they are out of costume or immediate end of the show responsibilities are taken care of. After that, they are expected to prep costumes, clean the dressing rooms, put away their technical elements, and check out with their department heads.
- **Grades** Don't be afraid if grades drop a bit during the final two weeks of a show. It is a stressful two weeks, but students can make grades up. Feel free to ask upperclassmen for help in classes! The grades of sports players would also drop if they squished all of their games and meets into a two-week time period. We are an educational department, and we pride ourselves in making grades a priority. The teachers at Olathe North are also, normally, very good about working with students. This is especially true if the student is proactive and has a discussion with the teacher prior to there being a problem.

## Strike/Closing Circle

- **Strike** The last night of a show, students are expected to stay at school after the performance in order to clean up, take down the set, and put costumes and props away. Professional Theaters have the same structure. Everyone – cast, crew, directors – is expected to participate in Strike. This procedure makes for a very late night, but it is necessary as the performance spaces are used for meetings and other events regularly. Most parents head home after the last performance and come back after Strike and Closing Circle (and/or Cast and Crew Parties) to pick up their kids.
- **Closing Circle** This is where the Educational aspects come into play. After Strike, the cast and crew sit in a large circle discussing what we learned throughout the production. It is a beautiful time of closure and reflection and learning from one's peers. This is highly, highly encouraged, but not mandatory.
- Both of these activities happen on the last night of the show and typically make for a very late night. Depending on the size of the show, size of the cast, size of the set, and participation of those involved, Strike and Closing Circle could end anywhere between Midnight and 2:00 am.

### Cast and Crew Parties

- **These are NOT school sponsored.**
- That being said, there are student leaders who are reliable and make sure everyone stays in control. The restaurants we go to quite enjoy having us. (We tip well and are friendly!) We also realize that we are representing the department, and we want the opportunity to continue to do these type of activities.
- **When** These occur (typically) after the Friday night and Saturday night show. Applebees and IHOP are our favorite places! While parents are welcome to eat in the restaurant, students most often coordinate with each other to provide rides. (There is typically a group of parents who come and eat together while their students are celebrating!)
- Students are expected to tip. *Generously*. We are a group of high school theatre kids coming to a restaurant in the middle of the night J
- The Cast and Crew Party after the Saturday Night performance is typically very late. 2:30 or 3:00 is fairly typical.

### Booster Club

- A parent group that is an integral part of the department. They provide scholarships, run the concession stands, and generally help ON Theatre function smoothly.
- The Booster Club (and just the other parents in general) would LOVE to get to know you! Students also like seeing the familiar Booster faces at various events over the year.
- Meets once a month, typically at 7:00 pm in the Little Theater
- GREAT way to connect with other parents!
- You get the chance to get to know Mr. Pence as well
- There are Officer positions for the Booster Club: President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Officers serve a two-year term: one year as President (etc.) Elect, and the next year as President (etc.).
- This section is really much too short for how important it is. *Please* join the Booster Club!

### Thespian Points and Induction

- Olathe North Theatre is home to International Thespian Troupe 3310. Thespians is an honors program (like National Honor Society or French NHS) that recognizes student achievement in educational theatre.
- The time a student works in the department corresponds to a number of Thespian Points they can receive. A good breakdown is 1 Point = 10 Hour of Work
- To be inducted into the Troupe (looks great on college resumes!), a student must be involved in two shows, and they must have earned 10 Thespian Points during their time at Olathe North.
- All new students are inducted at the end of the year Awards Banquet/Celebration (typically one of the last weeks of school)
- To Letter in Theatre, students must earn at least 20 points in a single school year. They must also be a part of at least three shows during the year (typically one per season)
- 60 Points = Honor Thespian (Thespian Society colored ropes at Graduation)
- 120 Points = National Honor Thespian (twisted ropes at Graduation)
- [www.schooltheatre.org](http://www.schooltheatre.org)

### Theatre Awards Banquet/Celebration:

- This is an evening celebration of the accomplishments of theatre students. Everyone who participated in the department over the school year is invited to attend (including parents!). Awards are given, the Booster Club provides refreshments, and it is a very fun night of remembering the past year of Theatre. The student Thespian Officers for the next school year are also presented.

### State Thespian Festival

- **What** A festival celebrating the theatre accomplishments of students across the state of Kansas. There are performances, workshops, and opportunities to compete. IEs (Individual Events which is an acting and tech competition) occur here, as do senior auditions. The department takes a bus down to the festival, and an adult director (or two) is our chaperone.
- **When** First or Second weekend in January (Thursday-Saturday), in Wichita, KS
- **How Much** About \$280
- Open to all students participating in the department.
- [www.kansasthespians.com](http://www.kansasthespians.com)

### International Thespian Festival

- **What** A festival celebrating the National Accomplishments of high-school theatre students. There are workshops, dances, multiple performances, and a great community of theatre students. The department takes a bus up to the University of Nebraska, Lincoln campus.
- **When** A full week in June
- **How Much** About \$750
- Open to all students participating in the department.
- [www.schooltheatre.com](http://www.schooltheatre.com)

### Helpful Hints (from current parents and students)

- The most updated source of dates is the ON Theatre Google Calendar, located on the ON Theatre website: [www.olathenorththeatre.com](http://www.olathenorththeatre.com) If you already use google as a calendar service you can find the calendar under ONHSTheatre@gmail.com
- Join the *closed* Olathe North Theatre Facebook Group. It is very well-updated and is home to many parents as well as students. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/112704092189617/>
- One never knows exactly when Callbacks are going to end. If your student needs to leave early, please have them contact the director. Directors will often work with students. Please understand that callbacks are the directors chance to see the actors again, if an actor but leave early it could hurt their chances for role they want.
- Our department values students. We *love* when they advocate for themselves, and all of our endeavors are for the benefit of our students.
- The Little Theater has notoriously awful cell service, and cell phones are not supposed to be on stage during rehearsal. If you can't get a hold of your student, there's a pretty good chance they are in that space. If there is an emergency, please try emailing Mr. Pence as his email is often open, and it may be able to get the information to your student.
- Make sure your students have water on them at all rehearsals or work days! All Olathe North Theatre Students are given an Olathe North Theatre waterbottle during their first show to help facilitate this.

- Working the show concession stands are wonderful opportunities for parents to connect with other parents. We always appreciate your help!
- Do you have a secret talent (like baking cookies) or a job with interesting benefits (day-old HyVee baked goods or loads of candy)? Please consider donating your talents or extras to the theatre department. Paint, wood supplies, and items for concessions can always be of use. Basically, if you have something, we can find a use for it! J
- You won't be the only parent who knows other students based on what role they played freshman year. (I just graduated, and my mom still does that!)

### Spirit Wear

- Olathe North Theatre has a variety of clothing to purchase and show your support of the department.
- Blue Theatre Shirts: \$10, worn at any full-department event, will get used very often, great purchase
- Blue Theatre Sweatshirt: \$20, very comfortable, great purchase (because the ON building is very temperamental when it comes to temperature)
- Sweatpants: \$20, grey, Style - Boyfriend, beloved by everyone in the department, extremely comfortable
- Tech Polos: \$30, black, high quality, professional (great for working backstage when working shows, concerts, and District events). A very good purchase for anyone wanting to be involved with Technical Theatre
- Water Bottles: \$5, blue, a free water bottle is given to every student at their first Olathe North after-school production.
- Show Shirts: typically around \$10, related to the current show or season. Order forms are sent out during the rehearsal period for each show. They are a great reminder of the show and a fantastic way to advertise. It is highly recommended your student has a Show Shirt.

### Glossary

- **Auditorium:** Our mainstage theater. Seats about 630 people.
- **Backstage Buddies:** Our end-of-a-show "Secret Santa." Each student receives a name and brings a gift (less than \$5; handmade tends to be more meaningful) for their "backstage buddy."
- **Blue Room:** The lobby of the Olathe North performance spaces. It's (currently, we're getting an update at some point) blue, hence the name.
- **BlueStar:** An awards program given by StarLight Theatre recognizing accomplishments of high school musical theatre in the KC area.
- **Call Board:** The board outside of one of the Little Theater doors. Holds valuable information for students.
- **Call Time:** The time that actors and technicians are expected to start rehearsal or preparing for a performance
- **Catwalk:** The area above the House, in the ceiling of the Auditorium. Holds lighting equipment.
- **Closing Circle:** A large educational part of our department. After each show, we circle up and discuss what we remembered and learned from the latest performance. Occurs after Strike.
- **Curtain:** The time a show is expected to begin.
- **ER vs. RE:** TheatRE is the art form (a TheatRE department, etc.) TheatER is the location (Go to the TheatER; the Little Theater, etc.)

- **Hall of Fame:** The hallway behind the Auditorium stage connecting the dressing rooms. Each year, Inducted Thespian (see “Thespian Troupe 3310” above) Seniors can choose a brick to paint however they wish. It is a great visual history of the department!
- **House:** The name the theatre world gives to the area where the audience sits.
- **IEs (Individual Events):** This is the competition aspect of the State and National Thespian Festivals. Students sign up to either perform a scene/song or present a technical portfolio of sorts. Students are scored on a 1-4 point rubric. Any group or individual receiving a 4 (Superior) Rating is invited to compete at the National Thespian Festival. Olathe North has had many groups qualify for the National Conference over the last couple of years. More information can be found with Mr. Pence or one of the Thespian Officers.
- **ITF (International Thespian Festival):** week-long school theatre extravaganza. (See more information above)
- **Little Theater:** Room 314. The smaller theater at ON and one of the best theatre spaces in the district. All theatre classes take place in this location. Really bad cell phone service. Seats about 250 people.
- **Notes:** The critiques given by directors to their cast and crew. Directors prefer to give them face-to-face. In that case, rehearsals might run a little late.
- **State:** The State Thespian Festival (see above, “State Thespian Festival”)
- **Scene Shop:** The area of the department in the back of the Auditorium where our sets are built, painted, and stored.
- **Strike:** After the final performance, the mandatory “clean-up time.” It is a professional tradition that our department follows.
- **Wood Wall:** Where we store our wood for building sets

#### Who’s Who:

- **Mr. Dustin Pence** is the Director of Theatre for Olathe North. He directs two shows a year and produces all five. You will see him pretty often and get to know him quite well! He has taught at ON since 2010 and has built the program to the second largest in Kansas.
- **Ms. Sherrilyn Gerdel** is the Associate Director. She takes two of the five shows a year. In addition to directing, Ms. Gerdel is the QUEST teacher at Olathe North and has been at North since 2005.
- **Mrs. Taylar Rabel** is the assistant Director and takes on directing one show a year. Her contributions during other seasons are much appreciated. During the day, she teaches Eighth Grade English at Indian Trail Middle School. Mrs. Rabel has been a part of the department since 2011
- **Mr. John Lane** is the Technical Director for Olathe North Theatre. He works with students to design and create a variety of sets and scenery. He teaches many of the Digital Media and Film classes at Olathe North, as well as running the A/V Club. Mr. Lane has been at Olathe North since 1992 spending 8 years as the theatre director.
- **Mrs. Verna McMullin** is the department’s director of Costumes and Props. She uses her talents to assist our student leaders in making the actors and sets look beautiful. Verna started her involvement in the program while her children were in the programs, and after their graduation she has chosen to join the theatre staff. Verna and Mr. Pence have worked together since 2006 and she joined the ON Theatre Staff in 2016. In addition to Olathe North, she has and continues to costume for theaters around the community.