

S T A R L I G H T
Blue Star
◆ A W A R D S ◆

2020-2021

Frequently Asked Questions

Starlight Theatre

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WHAT ARE THE BLUE STAR AWARDS?

Starlight 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.

HOW WILL 2020-2021 DIFFER FROM PAST SEASONS?

Since many high schools are unsure of their ability to present a musical this year, Starlight has adjusted its approach to the Blue Star Awards for the 2020-2021 season only.

Decisions were made, in part, by considering that many schools will be presenting musicals via different platforms, making it difficult to assess them equally. Given that fact, participating schools will not be evaluated on their productions. Instead, award categories have been adjusted to highlight the broader work of schools and students.

Nomination announcements will still be made in late spring, and the Blue Star Awards Ceremony will still take place in mid- to late May.

Starlight will host workshops and events during the 2020-2021 season to help students develop and grow. These noncompetitive offerings are not mandatory but will be presented at a reduced cost to students.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Any high school in the Kansas City metro or a surrounding community located within 60 miles of Starlight may participate. (Participating schools from the 2019-2020 Blue Star Awards are exempt from the mileage limit.) Schools do not need to present a musical in 2020-2021, but they do need to have presented one in 2019-2020 and/or plan to present one during the 2021-2022 school year. Schools officially become part of the Blue Star Awards once they complete a registration form, receive confirmation that it has been accepted, and submit a \$75 registration fee. Only a coordinating teacher or school administrator can register a school to participate. Forms for all schools seeking to participate in 2020-2021 are due by Monday, October 5, 2020.

WHY DO SCHOOLS HAVE TO PAY A REGISTRATION FEE?

The registration fee helps to defray the cost of administrative expenses, stipends for adjudicators and workshop/event guests.

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.

WHAT ARE THE 2020-2021 AWARD CATEGORIES?

Award categories have been adjusted to highlight the broader work of schools and students. Each category requires additional submissions and materials for consideration.

Outstanding Actor and Actress in a Lead Role

The National High School Musical Theatre Awards (NHSMTA) will go virtual in 2021, and Starlight intends to participate. Each school participating in the Blue Star Awards will have the opportunity to submit qualifying roles for consideration in these two categories. Starlight will provide the list of qualifying roles to the coordinating teachers. Schools must declare a musical (whether staged or not) and cast the show with students. Leads interested in competing will then be required to submit a self-taped audition video, which includes a song sung by their character and a 2.5 minutes or less cut of a contrasting musical theatre song. A panel of adjudicators will watch and score all student submissions, and eight nominees will be selected in each category. During the Blue Star Awards Ceremony in May 2021, nominees will perform in medleys. A new set of adjudicators will watch the previously submitted nominee videos and the live ceremony medleys. At intermission, these adjudicators will determine four finalists (two actors and two actresses) who will be announced at the beginning of Act II. Each finalist will take the stage to perform his/her 2.5-minute musical theatre piece. Following all performances, the adjudicators will select the winners to represent Starlight at NHSMTA. Runners-up in each category will receive a \$250 scholarship.

Rising Star Scholarships

Seniors may submit applications and support materials for consideration. Two seniors will receive \$2,500 scholarships as in past seasons.

Technical Achievement Awards

Students may submit applications and portfolios of technical work in any backstage capacity, and up to 16 nominees will be selected. Three student portfolios will be awarded a trophy and \$500 scholarship.

Community Impact Awards

This category will recognize theatre troupes that find ways to connect to their community, whether through productions or troupe initiatives. The winning school will receive \$150 and a trophy, and two runners-up will receive \$75. Starlight will highlight the three nominated schools during the ceremony.

Performance Scholarships

Coordinating teachers may submit up to three students for consideration. Students submitted for Lead Actor/Actress categories, however, may not be submitted for this category. Submitted students must provide a self-taped audition video of two musical theatre 32-bar cuts and a theatre resume. From these submissions, the Blue Star Awards production team will select 48 students to participate in three production numbers at the May ceremony. And, based upon the submissions, rehearsal process and performances, six students will be awarded \$500 scholarships to use toward future training.

NEW Category – Dream Production Award

Students (up to two from each school, submitted individually by coordinating teachers) are invited to participate in this new challenge. This award was designed as an opportunity to highlight the creativity of students working in the areas of design, direction, and/or choreography. A musical will be announced on the Blue Star Awards Facebook Group page. Students will have three weeks to complete a design/creative brief, artist statement and initial design/creative work for this dream production. Eight nominees will be selected; one winner will receive a trophy and \$500 scholarship.

HOW ARE NOMINEES SELECTED?

Starlight's Community Engagement Department convenes a Nomination Committee of selected adjudicators to review and evaluate all submitted materials. Starlight provides oversight but makes no contribution to decisions made by the committee.

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 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.

For our Actor and Actress in a Lead Role and Performance Scholarship categories, additional consideration will be given to their performances during the ceremony, and winners won't be determined until that evening.

WILL SCHOOLS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO RECEIVE PRODUCTION FEEDBACK?

Teachers who are presenting a musical (virtually, in-person or otherwise) may request that an adjudicator attend their production and provide commentary. This commentary, however, will be provided for educational purposes only and will not impact final results.

WHAT IF THE SCHOOL'S INFORMATION IN THE REGISTRATION FORM OR OTHER SUBMISSION FORMS CHANGES?

Once the forms have been submitted, the school should contact Starlight's Community Engagement Department immediately to advise of any changes to the previously provided information.

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. Each individual award given will be accepted with an onstage speech by the recipient and will be kept by the winning student.

HOW MUCH DO TICKETS COST TO THE BLUE STAR AWARDS CEREMONY?

Nothing! However, the 2021 ceremony will be a ticketed event to help accommodate guidelines for reduced seating capacity and social distancing. Tickets will be available in the spring. A nominal parking fee is charged per vehicle.

WHAT ARE STARLIGHT'S THOUGHTS ON THE ASPECT OF COMPETITION IN THE PROGRAM?

We at Starlight do not view competition in this program as a negative; rather, a healthy attitude toward competition may encourage and motivate individuals to work harder. Competition is about striving for excellence in our own work. For students participating in theatre, competition takes on many forms. For instance, the audition process for performers and application process for technical students are forms of competition. Learning how to develop skills through instances of competition helps a student in many aspects of life. Competition, no matter what their field of study, is something students will face throughout their lifetimes. While competition is one aspect of the program, the foundation of the Blue Star Awards is the opportunity for students to learn and grow. It is truly a celebration of all high school musical theatre. Blue Star Awards participants should take pride in their accomplishments.

For more information on the typical program structure, please contact education@kcstarlight.com to receive FAQs and Rules and Guidelines from past seasons.