

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

2023-2024 Rules and Guidelines

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The Blue Star Awards are generously supported by CommunityAmerica Credit Union, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City, and Starlight's community engagement program benefactors.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1. **Participant Eligibility**

Section 2. **Participant Benefits**

Section 3. **School Publicity**

Section 4. **Categories**

Section 5. **Production Adjudication**

Section 6. **Nominations**

Section 7. **Ceremony**

Section 1 – Participant Eligibility

There are two paths to participate in the program: **Path #1** for adjudicated productions and **Path #2** without production adjudication. Path #1 most closely resembles previous seasons of the Blue Star Awards. In the non-adjudicated path (Path #2), schools are only eligible for student-submitted categories (excluding The Jimmy Awards).

A. To be eligible for participation in the Blue Star Awards, a school must:

1. be any public or private high school located within a driving distance of 60 miles from Starlight Theatre (4600 Starlight Road, Kansas City, MO 64132). Participating schools from previous seasons are exempt from the mileage limit.
2. have a teacher or administrator complete and submit all required registration forms, which may be obtained by emailing education@kcstarlight.com.
3. must pay a \$75 registration fee by December 1, 2023 (Only Path #1). Path #2 does not have a registration fee.

B. Path # 1 productions must fit one of the following 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.

Section 2 – Participant Benefits

A. Adjudicator Commentary

Starlight will provide Path #1 schools with adjudicated productions a summary report of adjudicator comments. These reports are intended to give teachers educational feedback to share with their students and to consider for future productions.

B. Noncompetitive Offerings

Students in grades 10-12 are eligible to serve as members of the Blue Star Awards Student Council. Application and submission information will be shared with teachers and posted on our website. Starlight may host workshops and events during the 2023-2024 season. These noncompetitive offerings are not mandatory but will be offered at a free or reduced cost to students.

C. Blue Star Teen Ensemble

When Starlight self-produces a musical requiring a teen ensemble, Blue Star Awards participating students are one of the select pools allowed to audition. Audition notices will be sent to teachers to, in turn, notify students of Starlight audition dates and times.

Section 3 – School Publicity

A. Program Copy (Only Path #1)

All schools with an adjudicated production are required to include the Blue Star Awards Logo Copy in their show programs. Inclusion of this information serves as an endorsement of the school's production and recognition of participation in the Blue Star Awards. The Blue Star Awards Logo Copy will be provided via email.

Section 4 – Categories

A. Adjudicated Production Categories (Only Path #1)

Blue Star Awards are presented, based on the adjudication/nomination process and tiered by production budget, in the following categories:

- Outstanding Orchestra, Tiers I & II
- Outstanding Costume Design, Tiers I & II
- Outstanding Scenic Design, Tiers I & II
- Outstanding Hair and Makeup Design, Tiers I & II
- Outstanding Lighting Design, Tiers I & II
- Outstanding Technical Crew, Tiers I & II
- Outstanding Ensemble, Tiers I & II
- Outstanding Performer in a Featured Role, Tiers I & II
- Outstanding Performer in a Supporting Role, Tiers I & II
- Outstanding Performer in a Lead Role, Tiers I & II
- Outstanding Overall Production, Tiers I & II

B. Eligibility Restrictions (Only Path #1)

1. Although commentary may be provided for youth (8th grade and below) or adult cast members, only high school students are eligible to receive nominations and awards. If adults are used for lead or supporting roles, the production will not be eligible for Outstanding Overall Production. If youth performers (8th grade or below) are used for three or more lead or supporting roles, the production will not be eligible for Outstanding Overall Production.
2. Adults may be used as ensemble members in a production but may only comprise 5% or less of the total ensemble. The ensemble is defined as all cast members that cannot be considered as having lead or supporting roles.
 - a. For the Outstanding Overall Production category, if more than 5% of the ensemble is composed of adults, the school will not be considered.
 - b. For the Outstanding Ensemble category, if any adults perform as ensemble members, the school will not be considered.

3. For the Outstanding Orchestra category, only schools composed of 75% or more student musicians will be eligible.
4. For Outstanding Scenic Design and Outstanding Costume Design categories, schools that rent 50% or more of their sets or costumes will be ineligible. Additionally, for both categories, students must contribute at least 75% to the design and to the construction to be eligible.
5. For all technical categories, if more than 25% of the work was done by adults, the school will not be eligible for the applicable category.
6. Determination of eligibility will be based on information provided by the school in the Production Information Form.

C. Budget Tiers (Only Path #1)

All production categories are divided into two tiers based upon the overall budgets submitted by the schools. Budget tiers are defined annually by evenly dividing the schools into higher or lower tiers by the budgets provided on the Production Information Form. Schools will have the opportunity to provide an updated budget in the spring, prior to the tiering process.

D. The Jimmy Awards – Actor and Actress (Only Path #1)

Starlight plans to participate in the 2024 National High School Musical Theatre Awards (NHSMTA), also known as The Jimmy Awards. Any student who was cast and performed a qualifying role in their adjudicated high school production (based upon the annual NHSMTA qualifying roles list) is eligible to audition for this category. By auditioning for this category, students commit to attend rehearsals in April/May, perform in a character medley during the Blue Star Awards Ceremony, and be available to attend NHSMTA in New York City. Six finalists will be announced in this category. All six finalists will receive a \$500 monetary award. Should either of the two winners not be able to attend NHSMTA, two alternates from this pool will be determined (but not announced) and will have the opportunity to attend in the winner’s place. A full list of dates will be included in the audition notice.

1. To be considered for this category, students must RSVP by **January 31, 2024**. Auditions will include:
 - a. 2.5-minute or less cut of a song from their school role
 - b. 32-bar Broadway solo
2. Following a required April/May rehearsal process, students will audition again for adjudicators. Two winners and two alternates will be determined from this audition. In the second audition, students will perform a group character medley and a 2.5-minute Broadway solo. Starlight leadership will determine the songs for the character medley. Students will receive guidance in selecting a 2.5-minute Broadway solo song. This song can be, but is not required to be, the same as the 32-bar Broadway solo piece.

E. Community Impact Award (Path #1 and Path #2)

1. This award recognizes a high school musical theatre program that found a way/s to connect to their community, whether through productions or troupe initiatives. The winner receives a trophy and \$1,000 monetary award to utilize within their department. A runner-up will be selected to receive a \$500 monetary award to utilize within their department. The runner-up will be notified after the Ceremony.
2. To be considered for an award, the following must be submitted by **March 4, 2024**:
 - a. a one- to two-page summary of your community engagement initiative, including examples of cast/crew/troupe participation;
 - b. additional supplemental materials; and
 - c. one to four photos from the project.

F. Blue Star Awards Ceremony Ensemble (Path #1 and Path #2)

Open auditions will be held at Starlight at the beginning of the spring semester for students who would like to be considered in this category. The audition will consist of performing a musical theatre 32-bar cut and participating in a dance call. Starlight's production team will select students to participate in a production number at the May ceremony. By auditioning, students commit to attend listed rehearsals in April/May and perform in the Blue Star Awards Ceremony. Three nominees will receive \$500 monetary awards based off their auditions. Students must perform in the Ceremony to be eligible for these awards. A full list of dates will be included in the audition notice.

G. Creative Contribution Award (Path #1 and Path #2)

1. This award recognizes students who contributed in the areas of direction, music direction and/or choreography (either at their schools or other venues). The winner receives a trophy and \$500 monetary award. Students at all high school grade levels may be considered. **This application process may be initiated by a student or teacher.**
2. To qualify, the student/s had to have taken full responsibility for directing one or more scenes, teaching and working with performers/musicians in learning one or more songs, and/or creating and teaching the choreography for one or more songs.
3. To be considered for the award, the following must be submitted by **January 22, 2024**:
 - a. Creative Contribution Award Application;
 - b. a one-page essay written by the student/s that details their contributions to the production as well as what they learned from the experience (offering specifics about the applicable scene/s and/or song/s); and
 - c. a statement of 500 words or less from the recommending teacher/advisor that provides details about the student's/students' contributions and why they feel the student/s should be considered for the award
 - d. electronic portfolio of support materials pertaining to the student's area(s) of expertise
4. Multiple students may be considered together for this award; however, no more than three students who worked equally on the same aspect/s will be considered in tandem. Should multiple students be considered together and win, each will receive a trophy, but will split the \$500 monetary award.

H. Technical Contribution Award (Path #1 and Path #2)

1. This award recognizes students who have given their time and talent in a backstage capacity (i.e. stage manager, crew head, board operator, etc.) or design field (i.e. lighting, scenic, costume, etc.). The winner receives a trophy and \$500 monetary award. Students at all high school grade levels may be considered. **This application process may be initiated by a student or a teacher.**
2. To be considered for an award, the following must be submitted by **January 22, 2024**:
 - a. Technical Contribution Award Application;
 - b. a statement of 500 words or less from the recommending teacher/advisor that provides details about the student's/students' contributions and why they feel the student/s should be considered for the award
 - c. a one-page essay written by the student; and
 - d. electronic portfolio of support materials pertaining to the student's area(s) of expertise.

3. Multiple students may be considered together for this award; however, no more than three students who worked equally on the same aspect/s will be considered in tandem. Should multiple students be considered together and win, each will receive a trophy, but will split the \$500 monetary award.

I. Rising Star Scholarships (Path #1 and Path #2)

1. Rising Star Scholarships are awarded to high school students who made outstanding contributions to their high school's musical theatre program. **This application process may be initiated by a student or a teacher.**
2. These scholarships will now be awarded across multiple grade levels:
 - a. One \$500 Sophomore Rising Star Scholarship
 - b. One \$500 Junior Rising Star Scholarship
 - c. One \$1,500 Senior Rising Star Scholarship
3. To be considered for a scholarship, the following must be submitted by **January 22, 2024**:
 - a. Rising Star Scholarship Application;
 - b. a résumé of work, volunteer and theatrical activities;
 - c. a student essay of 500 words or less; and
 - d. a statement of 500 words or less from a recommending teacher/advisor that provides details about the student's/students' contributions and why they feel the student/s should be considered for the award.

J. Dream Production Award (Path #1 and Path #2)

1. Any participating student is eligible in this category. 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. The winner receives a trophy and \$500 monetary award.
2. This award highlights the creativity of students working in the areas of lighting design, costume design, scenic design, hair and makeup design, graphic design/publicity, direction, and/or choreography. A student may only participate in one focus area.
3. Students must register for this category by **December 11, 2023**.

Section 5 – Production Adjudication

A. Three adjudicators attend each registered production and complete a comprehensive written response, which includes commentary that is later provided to each participating school.

1. When scheduling adjudicators, Starlight works to ensure adjudicators are not sent to the same school two years in a row. This allows schools to have fresh eyes and opinions from year to year. In some instances, due to sickness, weather or other unforeseen circumstances, a replacement adjudicator who did attend the previous year's production may be added to a school.
2. Adjudicators receive a list of participating schools annually. Starlight asks adjudicators to recuse themselves from a school if they have a personal relationship with the leadership of the school's musical (or other school employee). If they were hired by a school to serve in a creative/supervisory role for the theatre and/or if they have a child who attends a participating school, adjudicators recuse themselves from that entire school district.

B. Adjudicator Tickets

Schools must reserve six tickets (two per adjudicator) at no cost during their show's run. Once adjudicators are assigned for each show, Starlight's Community Engagement Department will contact coordinating teachers to request that tickets be set aside at Will Call for adjudicators to pick up at the performance.

C. High-Volume Weekends

The highest volume of productions takes place during November. With this in mind, the following November guidelines are in place:

1. In the order that their intent to participate forms are received, the first 10 schools returning to the program from the prior year will automatically be accommodated with adjudicator scheduling for each week of November so long as their form was received by the deadline date. Returning schools that do not submit the form by the deadline date forego their priority status.
2. For new schools, plus returning schools that did not meet the form deadline but wish to register, whose performances fall in these high-volume weeks over and above the first 10 productions mentioned above, Starlight will make every effort to accommodate their productions depending on the final layout of the full scheduling.
3. Schools over and above the first 10 whose productions fall in these weeks that *cannot be accommodated* after every attempt is made will be contacted by Starlight's Community Engagement Manager to request one of the following to ensure participation:
 - a. that an additional performance that can be adjudicated be added, or
 - b. that access be granted to adjudicators to attend another performance that will take place but was not included in the submitted production schedule listing (i.e. an all-school matinee performance, a "friends and family" performance, etc.)
4. Schools that cannot be accommodated by the above steps will have the option to participate in Path #2 of the program.

D. Double Casting

If a school has or plans to double cast one or more roles in their production, the coordinating teacher must notify Starlight's Community Engagement Department at the time of registration. The school must select one set of cast members to be adjudicated and inform Starlight regarding which dates and times the selected cast will perform. Multiple students may not be adjudicated for the same role for the production categories. If a school fails to notify Starlight of double casting, the cast seen by two of the three adjudicators will be the cast in consideration for the production categories. However, any student who was cast and performed a qualifying NHSMTA role can audition for The Jimmy Awards category.

E. Evaluation Areas

Adjudicators consider a multitude of areas when evaluating each Blue Star Awards category. The following pages contain the areas they are asked to evaluate per category.

Technical Categories

Orchestra

- Balance with stage performers
- Balance between orchestral parts
- Pitch and tonality
- Appropriate tempi
- Rhythm
- Execution
- Elements of professionalism (i.e. deportment, etiquette)

Scenic Design

- Established and maintained mood
- Established and maintained time period
- Established and maintained location
- Ease of movement
- Appeared sturdy and safe
- Functional
- Complete and finished
- Size appropriate
- Well-executed

Lighting Design

- Established and maintained mood
- Established and maintained time period
- Established and maintained location
- Helped to focus the attention of the audience
- Well-executed

Costume Design

- Established and maintained mood
- Established and maintained time period
- Established and maintained character
- Established and maintained location
- Gave performers full range of motion
- Well-executed (fit, neatness, attention to detail, etc.)

Hair and Makeup Design

- Established and maintained mood
- Established and maintained time period
- Established and maintained location
- Established and maintained character
- Well-executed (fit, neatness, attention to detail, etc.)

Outstanding Technical Crew (adjudicated from curtain to curtain*)

Lighting Crew

- Helped to maintain the design elements
- Maintained the world of the play
- Executed cues with accuracy
- Completed their tasks with no performance interruptions
- Transitioned smoothly between cues

Sound Crew

- Helped to maintain the design elements
- Maintained the world of the play
- Executed cues with accuracy
- Maintained balance between performers and orchestra
- Maintained balance among performers
- Provided clarity

Set Crew

- Helped to maintain the design elements
- Maintained the world of the play
- Moved quickly and effectively
- Completed their tasks with no performance interruptions

Costume Crew

- Helped to maintain the design elements
- Maintained the world of the play
- Moved quickly and effectively
- Completed their tasks within a timely manner
- Accuracy and completion of the performer's look

Hair and Makeup Crew

**** Pre-show application as well as curtain-to-curtain maintenance are considered.***

- Helped to maintain the design elements
- Maintained the world of the play
- Moved quickly and effectively
- Completed their tasks within a timely manner
- Accuracy and completion of the performer's look

Performance Categories

Adjudicators consider the following for each of the individual performance categories:

Singing

- Pitch and tonality
- Rhythm
- Diction
- Phrasing and interpretation
- Expression and artistry

Stage Movement

- Accuracy
- Character consistency
- Fluidity
- Motivation of movement
- Animation and energy
- Spatial awareness

Acting

- Animation and energy
- Believability
- Dialogue interpretation
- Relationship to other performers
- Character consistency
- Comfort on stage
- Stage presence

Dancing

- Precision
- Animation and energy
- Execution of choreography
- Expression and artistry

In addition to the previous elements, adjudicators consider the following for the Ensemble:

Singing

- Vocal balance
- Balance of harmonic parts

Acting

- Dynamics between performers

Section 6 – Nominations

A. Blue Star Awards Nomination Committee

1. Starlight convenes a Nomination Committee of selected adjudicators to review and evaluate adjudicator feedback. Starlight provides oversight but makes no contribution to decisions made by the committee. Starlight strives to have a blend of new and returning committee members each year.
2. Section 5 above lists the areas adjudicators evaluate. Adjudicator evaluations, which include scoring components, commentary, and the option to flag an area/student for nomination consideration, are made available to all Nomination Committee members.
3. Starlight establishes a system of review that requires all Nomination Committee members to consider students or elements (depending on the category) in a specific order. They start with students/elements receiving three flags for nomination (one per adjudicator) from top cumulative score down; those with two flags for nomination follow, again starting with the top cumulative score. The process continues until committee members have reviewed an established number of entrants in a given category. 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. Committee members are always reminded that if they saw a show, their opinions are already present as one of the three commentaries provided to all committee members.

4. Once a category has been reviewed, Nomination Committee members privately complete a top-pick sheet, ranking their personal preferred entries in a given category from 1 to 8 (with 1 being their top choice). Starlight then assigns a numeric component to each place (1st place gets 8 points, 2nd place gets 7 points...). The students receiving the highest cumulative totals in a category become the nominees.
5. Once nominees are determined in all categories, Nomination Committee members receive a final ballot of all categories. Nominees are listed in alphabetical order on the ballot *without* the cumulative point totals they previously received. On this final ballot, members privately vote for their top choice in each category; majority vote wins the category. In the case of a tie, the nominee with the highest cumulative point total from the top-pick scoring heading into the final ballot is declared the winner. If the tied nominees also tied in the previous cumulative point total, they will both be declared winners in that category.

B. Receiving Nominations

1. When the review process is complete, official nominations are made and announced to all schools and the general public in late April/early May.
2. Schools that earned nominations will receive banners listing nominations received and a nomination packet including all necessary Blue Star Awards Ceremony information.
3. For Overall Production nominees performing a song from their production in the Blue Star Awards Ceremony, the schools will be contacted by Starlight with requirements and teachers will be asked to attend an informational videoconferencing call.

Section 7 – Ceremony

A. The 2024 Blue Star Awards Ceremony will be held at Starlight Theatre on the evening of Thursday, May 16, 2024. The ceremony date is always dependent upon Starlight’s annual production calendar.

B. Admission and Seating

1. Admission to the Blue Star Awards Ceremony is free and open to the public. The ceremony will be a ticketed event. Tickets will be available in the spring.
2. Schools nominated for Outstanding Overall Production are reserved seating equal to the number of participating students listed on the school’s Production Information Form.

C. The Jimmy Award Finalists

1. All six finalists for The Jimmy Awards category will perform a character medley of their signature songs during the Blue Star Awards Ceremony in a medley arranged by Starlight’s music director.
2. Starlight’s Community Engagement Department and production staff will select the song that will be performed.

3. Finalists are required to participate in rehearsals for the medley at Starlight prior to the ceremony.

D. Outstanding Overall Production Nominees

1. All schools nominated for Outstanding Overall Production (4 nominees per tier) are asked to perform one musical number from their production during the Blue Star Awards Ceremony.
2. Starlight's Community Engagement Department will select the song that will be performed. The selected song will be one of the ensemble numbers from the performing school's show.
3. Maximum performance time allowed is five minutes.
4. Performing schools may not make special lighting or scenic requests.
5. Performing schools must be blocked to only utilize the stage space, with no students permitted to perform in/from Starlight's audience seating.
6. Performers are required to wear footwear when performing on the Starlight stage.
7. All performers are required to attend a rehearsal at Starlight prior to the ceremony. Rehearsal schedules are distributed when nominations are announced.

E. Blue Star Awards Ceremony Ensemble Nominees

All nominees for the Blue Star Awards Ceremony Ensemble are required to attend rehearsals at Starlight prior to the ceremony. Rehearsal dates and times are listed as part of the submission process to avoid conflicts.

F. Blue Star Award Winners

1. Each individual award category (such as Outstanding Performer in a Supporting Role) is presented with a trophy that should be kept by the winning student.
2. Group award categories, such as Outstanding Ensemble or the Community Impact Award, are presented with a trophy intended to go to the school to be displayed as part of its theatre's history.