



Newsletter

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Technology Keeps Activities Going

The WHSFA is a member association of the NFHS, which provides oversight for interscholastic athletics, and serves as a forum for standards and best practices in Speech, Debate, Theatre, and Music activities. NFHS' member associations in Wisconsin are WHSFA, WIAA, and WSMA (listed in order by founding date). The networking among such organizations in Wisconsin with input from Wisconsin's DPI and DHS, as well as counterpart NFHS state associations in Michigan, Iowa, Minnesota, Illinois, Kentucky, Texas; the National Speech & Debate Association (NSDA); and the Educational Theatre Association (EdTA) – was instrumental for sharing ideas and approaches for sustaining Speech, Debate, and Theatre across the country.



At the Fall 2019 NFHS Speech, Debate, and Theatre State Administrators' conference in Chicago, an official from the NSDA demonstrated the potential for online Speech and Debate contests. Many administrators responded, "that's cute," and dismissed the notion as a novelty that might be useful at some point in the future, but never imagined we'd have a need for it just months later. WHSFA was proud to have pioneered one of the first statewide virtual contests (though Michigan had done one in an ad hoc manner in the past) in April 2020, the *Open Virtual Speech Festival*. Ben Stewart of SpeechWire took a rather new and experimental feature he had designed for adjudicators using laptops or tablets at in-person contests – online evaluations and ballots – and adapted it to work with prerecorded video submissions. Fast-forward to spring of 2021, and WHSFA ran one of the most dynamic contest series in the country, with elements of asynchronous and live participation, including fostering participation at the Middle Level.

Wisconsin has one of the earliest one-act play contest seasons in the country, so other states looked to us for guidance on conducting their Theatre contests. By fostering opportunities for schools to enter multiple plays or enter different casts of the same play, we expanded engagement with students in new and innovative ways. Asking directors to adjudicate provided particularly insightful feedback. Yes, we all want to see live theatre in-person again, but who would have thought we'd be quarantined at home, streaming one of Broadway's most popular shows ever – *Hamilton* – directly to our living room sofas?

As COVID-19 forced organizations to pivot, some processes and procedures will be forever transformed. Others will return to pre-pandemic norms. As we look ahead to the 2021-22 school year, we will take the benefits we've gained from these innovations, and incorporate those as we attempt to return to normalcy even as some uncertainty looms. However, WHSFA remains focused on our central objective: to make our activities as accessible as possible, with as much flexibility as is fair and equitable.

– Adam J. Jacobi, Executive Director

Retiring?
Resigning?

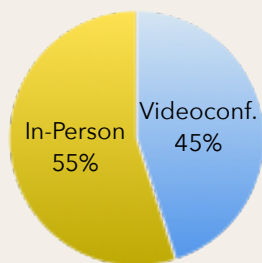
Please let us know:

[Complete Form](#)

Renew school
membership:

[Join/Renew](#)

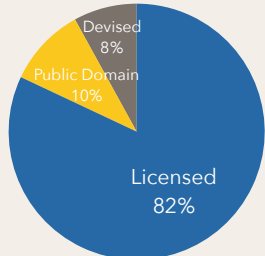
Recording Source



Participation Stats

66 Plays
52 Schools
1002 Students

Script Type



Awards:

19 Critic's Choice
22 Directing Awards
40 Ensemble Awards
16 Technical/Crew
65 Acting Awards

[Full Results](#)

All the World (Wide Web)'s a Stage

The 2020 Wisconsin High School Theatre Festival (WHSTF) engaged a number of schools new to the festival this year, and allowed schools to enter multiple pre-recorded one-act play submissions. Each play advancing to the State Festival was scheduled for a streaming time, followed by a live videoconference oral response from an adjudicator. Workshops and exhibit booths provided additional programming, even though these were not well-attended.

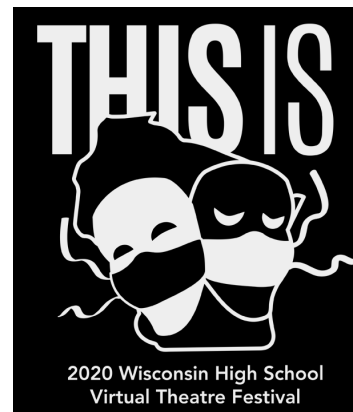
The following schools earned the WHSFA's esteemed Critic's Choice award:

School	Play Title	Director
Appleton North HS	<i>Saint Joan</i>	Ron Parker
Badger HS	<i>The Legend of Sleepy Hollow Radio Play</i>	Andrew Stoltenberg
Barneveld School	<i>The Midnight Caller</i>	Duane Draper
Burlington HS	<i>Mill Girls</i>	Carrie Fidler
Crandon HS	<i>Left to Our Own Devices</i>	Alicia Bradley
Gibraltar HS	<i>Loose Parts</i>	Lizbeth Thomas
Hamilton HS	<i>An Experiment</i>	Sarah Plamann
Homestead HS	<i>The Edge of Reflection</i>	Amelia Figg-Franzoi
Lincoln HS, Manitowoc	<i>Murder in the Knife Room</i>	Deanne Stokes
Oak Creek HS	<i>The Internet is Distract--Oh Look a Kitten!</i>	Elizabeth Fritz
Pulaski HS	<i>Me, My Selfie & I</i>	Amy Tubbs
Waukesha South HS	<i>Selfie</i>	Allison Schamburek
Waukesha West HS	<i>Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</i>	Nathan Berish
Waunakee HS	<i>Aunt Leaf</i>	Rick Braun
Waunakee HS	<i>What Dreams May Come</i>	Rick Braun
Wauwatosa East HS	<i>Antigone (Eteocles Cast)</i>	Colleen Juskulski
Wauwatosa East HS	<i>Antigone (Polynices Cast)</i>	Colleen Juskulski
Wauwatosa West HS	<i>All the King's Women - Cast A</i>	Adam Steffan
Wauwatosa West HS	<i>All the King's Women - Cast B</i>	Adam Steffan

The WHSFA sought a new graphic designer this year for the Theatre Festival, **Marquayla Ellison**, who also designed the logo for the **Milwaukee Black Theater Festival**, held late last summer. Marquayla is an alum of Vincent HS in Milwaukee, where she participated on the Speech team and enjoyed several trips to UW-Madison for State. Marquayla's company,

Elastic
DESIGNS

Elastic Designs, just celebrated its tenth anniversary.



Kenosha's Stanfield Earns Recognition



The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) named **Holly Stanfield** as the 2021 Outstanding Speech, Debate, and Theatre Educator for Section 4 (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, and Wisconsin). While Wisconsin has recognized state-level winners of this award previously, this is the first time a section-level winner has been named from Wisconsin. Holly teaches theatre at Mary D. Bradford High School in Kenosha, has been with the Kenosha Unified School District since 1990, and has been a public school theatre and music educator for about 40 years.

For her teaching prowess Holly has been honored as Kenosha Unified School District High School Teacher of the Year, Kohl Fellow, and Walmart Teacher of the Year. She is the 2014 recipient of the Children's Theatre Foundation Reba Robertson Award and has received a number of honorable mentions from the Tony Awards for Excellence in Theatre Education. In 2012 she was inducted into the WHSFA Theatre Hall of Fame in its second class, and in 2016 was inducted into the Educational Theatre Association (EdTA) Hall of Fame.

For the WHSFA One-Act Play contest series, Holly directs innovative shows – usually musicals – adapted for the 40-minute format, leading Bradford to be one of the most decorated schools in WHSFA theatre history with numerous awards, including Critic's Choice, directing, ensemble, acting, and technical theatre. Her students have appeared numerous times on the Wisconsin High School Theatre Festival showcase stage and more than a dozen times – including twice in the same year – on the International Thespian Festival main stage, including the high school pilots of *Aida: School Edition*, *Rent: School Edition*, *Avenue Q: School Edition*, *Tarzan*, *Shrek*, *Catch Me If You Can*, and *The Little Mermaid*. Holly was also invited by EdTA to direct the Thespian national cast of *Thoroughly Modern Millie: School Edition*. Under her direction, Kenosha Unified School District students have recorded seven reference CDs for Music Theatre International's school edition series, and has presented a couple times at the American High School Theatre Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland. Holly also enjoys traveling to New York City in the summer and directing staged readings of junior musicals for iTheatrics.

Holly was founding director of the Wisconsin Chapter of the Educational Theatre Association, and has been an active contributor to professional conference workshops and colleague seminars.

Holly's central value in her educational philosophy is how collaboration makes everyone stronger. Holly teaches in a diverse school district and has forged connections with high-powered professionals to work with students, who might only otherwise have those opportunities in an affluent school. Holly's own words in various news articles, podcasts, and videos are telling of her perspectives: "The arts are about telling stories and bringing people together. One show does not need to be better than another. It's an important form in our culture."

"Every single child in this place has gifts and beauty. So many people don't know anything about teaching. A lot of these parents don't bother coming to parent-teacher conferences because I see them all the time. Theater is communication. You break down those walls where it becomes much more than theater but a larger life lesson."



Holly's former students characterize the influence of her educational philosophy on them:

Rico Santana said, "I was born in poverty, and when I came to Wisconsin she brought me up from the hard times and very tough things like abuse and depression. I was actually homeless at one point, and she took me in. She nurtured me, not only as a performer, but as a human being. She taught me how to love in those times of hate and spite. She helped me find confidence and I learned to love myself."

Natalie Lall said, "Holly always says she is an artist who teaches, not a teacher of the arts. She really has a reverence for her craft that is so incredible, and she expects all of us to come up to her level, but she is so honest with us all the time and that enhances the art that we create – together."

Recounting Holly's constant advice to "choose happy," Sam Hailer said, "Those two words changed my life. Everything in life is a choice. No matter how bad things are, there's always a bright side. That's the biggest thing I've got out of theater. Aside from how to communicate with others, it's just how to mentally keep yourself motivated and happy. That's all it is. It's all in your mind."



FREE Online Course in Theatre Safety

As part of its commitment to performing arts and academic activities, the NFHS offers a FREE online course that takes about 1 hour to complete, with abundant supplemental resources, designed for anyone who uses a theater space (inclusive of music educators).

This course is perfect for *anyone* who uses an auditorium/PAC/theatre space.

One of the course authors is Kristi Ross-Clausen, board member with the Alliance for Wisconsin Theatre Education, who works with Arrow AV Group in Appleton. Kristi, a nationally respected expert in theatre safety, has held leadership and/or training roles with the AWTE, USITT, Stage Managers Association, IATSE, among others. She was recently a co-chair of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Theatre Standards Writing Committee. She often adjudicates, leads workshops, and consults with the Wisconsin High School Theatre Festival, an event she participated in as an alum of Tomahawk HS.



[Learn More/Enroll](#)

UW-Madison Online Theatre Courses



WISCONSIN
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

University of Wisconsin - Madison: Department of Theater will be offering two online classes specifically designed for the needs of HS theater, music, and dance teachers this summer: Undergrad #219, Grad #619: **Audio for Performing Arts Teachers** OR **Lighting for Performing Arts Teachers**; both available for 1, 2 or 3 credits.

[Learn More/Enroll](#)

You'll need to register as a "UNDS" Special Student if you're not otherwise registered and can apply here for free: <https://acsss.wisc.edu/apply/>

PLUS get a third course for free! Sign up for both the audio and lighting courses at the 3 credit level and you can take #219, "Hamilton: a cultural revolution" for free – taught by Sarah Marty. That's 9 credits for the price of 6. The two tech classes are 100% online, asynchronously offered, with flexibility because you deserve a summer, too!

Please share this with anyone you think would enjoy the class. All are welcome: advanced high school students, parents who help with shows, administrators who use the space, school board members who want to learn more about technical theatre.



Theatre Educators' Conference

Friday, September 24, 2021
Wisconsin Lutheran College • Milwaukee
+ *Online Streaming Options*

Learn more and register at: awte.net

Speech Season Successes

This year's *online* State Speech Festival involved 2,269 students comprising 1,828 entries, from 277 schools. Asynchronous adjudication of 1,701 entries happened April 9-15, with 127 entries adjudicated live, April 16-17, 2021. That compares to 2019 numbers of 4,013 students in 2,840 entries, representing 340 schools. Given flexibility of asynchronous adjudication, a special allowance was made for double-entry for the 2020-21 season, with 27 schools and 53 students overall trying this provision.

The WHSFA continued to recognize squad achievement with school awards, based on medals earned by students. The top 5% of schools and head coaches are recognized with the ***Excellence in Speech Award***:

- ◆ Bay Port High School (Suamico) - Krista Greene, Scott Pamperin
- ◆ Darlington High School - Clarey Schwartz
- ◆ DeForest High School - Tom August
- ◆ Fennimore High School - Alexa Chiefari
- ◆ Ithaca High School, Richland Center - Louise Murphey
- ◆ Lakeside Lutheran High School (Lake Mills) - Stephen Lauber
- ◆ Lancaster High School - Pam Curry
- ◆ Menomonie High School - Andrea Smith
- ◆ Muskego High School - Joe Meinecke
- ◆ Platteville High School - Cheryl Schober
- ◆ Prescott High School - Tanya Sponholz
- ◆ Regis High School (Eau Claire) - Judine Brey
- ◆ Waunakee High School - Walter Stenz
- ◆ Westosha Central High School (Salem) - Brenda Bursek-Krekling
- ◆ Wrightstown High School - David Winkler

Schools whose medals placed them in the top 6-10% earned our ***new Distinction in Speech Award***:

- ◆ Badger High School (Lake Geneva) - Mark Zastrow
- ◆ Barneveld High School - Duane Draper
- ◆ Elkhorn Area High School - Desirae Heckendorf-Reece
- ◆ Ellsworth High School - Jennifer Kieren
- ◆ Fox Valley Lutheran High School (Appleton) - Kathy Kolell, Seth Hahnke
- ◆ Holmen High School - Kam-Lin Roswall
- ◆ Hudson High School - Jessica Flanagan
- ◆ Iowa - Grant High School (Livingston) - Jacqueline Rolli
- ◆ Neenah High School - Andie Peterson
- ◆ New Berlin Eisenhower High School - Adam Bosetski
- ◆ Sauk Prairie High School (Prairie du Sac) - Ryan Mussack
- ◆ West De Pere High School - Natalie Buhl
- ◆ Winnebago Lutheran Academy (Fond du Lac) - Scott Herrewig

This year, the State Office mailed every participating school's principal a letter commemorating their participation and achievement, and all the extra work coaches had to do to adapt to virtual contests.

Cumulative Critic's Choice Medallion (Gold)

Lauren Thompson, Baldwin-Woodville HS
 Kalen Berger, Beecher-Dunbar-Pembine HS
 Kim Mazur, Beecher-Dunbar-Pembine HS
 Kassy Mazer, Beecher-Dunbar-Pembine HS
 Dori O'Sullivan, Burlington High School
 Abigail Bartlett, Central Wisconsin Christian HS
 Laura Sturtz, Darlington High School
 Victorria Meylor, Darlington High School
 Hailey Marshall, Drummond High School
 Shelby Schultz, Ellsworth High School
 Matthew Jenkins, Ellsworth High School
 Hannah Hinrichs, Ellsworth High School
 Ellie Ross, Fall Creek HS
 Collin Huza, Fox Valley Lutheran HS
 Micayla Buser, Fox Valley Lutheran HS
 Brynn Buchholz, Fox Valley Lutheran HS
 Sage Soman, Iowa-Grant HS
 Alexis Berget, Mineral Point High School
 Rebecca Hebert, Muskego High School
 Olivia Berther, New Berlin Eisenhower HS
 Lily Cain, Northwestern High School
 Brady Boebel, Platteville High School
 Sophia Tibayan, Prescott High School
 Cody Holmes, Shoreland Lutheran HS
 Raven Jensen, Stoughton High School
 Jordan Goggins, Union Grove High School
 Madylin Lorey, Union Grove High School
 Lauren Broman, Wrightstown High School



[Click here to take our Speech Survey, including to suggest 2022 topics >>](#)

Looking Ahead to 2021-22

WHSFA is planning for a return to in-person interscholastic contests, but we realize that may not be available to all schools.

As part of a strategy of transition from virtual programming during the pandemic, the WHSFA Board of Control has authorized allowance in Theatre for prerecorded shows to be submitted for asynchronous adjudication. Further details will be announced in the next few months, if not sooner. However, we are working with UW-Stevens Point to utilize their facilities for schools who are able to participate in-person.

The WHSFA Speech Advisory Committee will discuss plans for Speech, and bring forward recommendations to the Board of Control in September. The WHSFA is reviewing guidance from the NFHS in partnership with the National Speech & Debate Association (NSDA), as well as DPI and the Wis. DHS, pertaining to return to in-person contests.

The WHSFA also is taking time to engage in strategic planning, to revitalize debate, and to launch a new Film Festival program. Watch for more details as the new school year approaches!

Free NSDA Online Conference in August

The NSDA is holding a free online conference from August 3-5, 2021 centering around advocating for more equitable and inclusive speech and debate communities. All coaches are welcome, regardless of NSDA membership status.



NATIONAL
SPEECH & DEBATE
CONFERENCE
ONLINE 2021

[Learn More/Register](#)

Middle Level Speech Remains Strong

This year, 461 entries consisting of 694 students, from 74 schools participated in our online Middle Level Speech Festival, with prerecorded videos adjudicated asynchronously.

Help WHSFA Build a Video Library!

Despite not being able to share spaces together this year, recording students' presentations yields an opportunity to help our community of coaches and directors with a library of instructional videos, as well as launch a Middle Level Speech Adjudication course. If you have middle/high school presentations and/or plays you are willing to grant permission to WHSFA to utilize, please complete this linked form. You must get permission from each of the students and their parents/guardians.

[Video Volunteer Form](#)

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for organization updates
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