

Attention Kansas Educators!

Music Theatre Wichita is proud to be presenting the **24th Annual Jester Awards**. We had a great time celebrating last year and are excited to continue to implement changes and improve the program.

My name is **Joshua Larson**, and I am the **Education Director of Music Theatre Wichita**. Throughout my 17 years with MTWichita, I have loved seeing the Jester Awards Program grow. I am dedicated to continually evolving and improving the program.

Included in this packet are the **rules and guidelines for the Jester Awards for the 2025-2026 school year**. We implemented some changes from last year and continue to strive toward the best representation and adjudication throughout the program.

Please read over the rules and guidelines and don't hesitate to contact me with any questions. I look forward to receiving your application and hope your school will participate in the program!

Please visit our website MTWichita.org for links to the rules, guidelines, and application. The [Jester Application](#) is also linked here.

Joshua Larson

MTWichita Education Director

Josh@MTWichita.org | 316.265.3253



Application Requirements

- Participating schools should be within approximately 250 miles of the Wichita area.
- Schools are not eligible to participate in any other similar awards program.
- Applications must be received by **September 20, 2025**.
- Completed applications and fees must be paid before judges are confirmed.
- Coordinating teacher must communicate any changes from the original application no less than two weeks before production opens.
- Judges will have access to your application prior to attending.
- Schools may submit one application/production per school year.
- There is a \$100.00 non-refundable application fee per school*.
- Checks should be payable to Music Theatre Wichita.
- All productions must take place before **March 29, 2026**.
- The Jester Awards Ceremony is scheduled for **Sunday May 3, 2026**.

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

- A published musical, operetta, or revue either held by a licensing house or having entered public domain.
- An original piece which features an original script, music, and/or lyrics, and is covered under a valid copyright.
- An original compilation of material from other sources that is presented with the approval or permission of the original creators or their representatives.

*This fee helps cover the costs to run the Jester program, awards, ceremony, and to assist in getting the best adjudicators for your productions.

Award Categories & Nomination Eligibility

*Denotes categories which scores will be tabulated to determine Outstanding Overall Production.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Overall Production | • Ensemble/Chorus* | • Technical Achievement |
| • Direction of a Show* | • Small Ensemble | • Scenic Design* |
| • Leading Performer* | • Production Number* | • Costume Design* |
| • Leading Performer* | • Orchestra Direction* | • Lighting Design* |
| • Supporting Performer* | • Vocal Musical Direction* | • Sound Design* |
| • Supporting Performer* | • Choreography/Staging* | • Design Guest |
| • Cameo Performer | • Stage Crew* | • Artistic Guest |
| • Pre-High School Performer | • Lobby Display | • Program Design* |
| | | • Spirit of the Jesters |

To be eligible for Jester Awards, individuals must be current faculty members or students of the school whose production is being judged. Independently hired guest artists (directors, choreographers, musical directors, scenic designers, costume designers, lighting designers, sound designers, and program designers) may only be recognized in two special guest award categories. Their scores for their specific category will be included in the Overall Production total.

MTWichita employees who serve or work in prominent positions on the creative or technical staff of a participating production are not eligible for nomination, but their score will be included in the Overall Production total.

OUTSTANDING OVERALL PRODUCTION NOMINEE ELIGIBILITY

- Production elements that have continuity and appropriateness in accordance to the demands and specifications of the scripts
- Balance between the performance of the students and physical aspects of the production
- Enthusiasm and commitment from the cast and crew
- The numerical value awarded each school by adjudicators and judges

OUTSTANDING ORCHESTRA DIRECTION NOMINEE ELIGIBILITY

- Orchestra must be made up of at least 10 musicians
- Orchestra must be at least 75% students
- Eligibility in this category will be based on information provided in the school's application form and program listing and shall be at the discretion of the awards committee

Nomination Eligibility (cont.)

OUTSTANDING SCENIC DESIGN NOMINEE ELIGIBILITY

- Cannot rent or borrow more than 25% the sets/props used.

OUTSTANDING COSTUME DESIGN NOMINEE ELIGIBILITY

- Cannot rent or borrow more than 25% of total costumes.

TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENT NOMINEE ELIGIBILITY

- Teachers will recommend one student who has given their time and talent in a backstage capacity including but not limited to stage manager, stage crew, light board operator, costumes, etc. One student per school can be recommended.
- Teachers must complete and fill out the online nomination form, linked [HERE](#).
- Teachers should submit a one-page letter outlining the student's contributions to the production.
- Recommended students will submit a self-created portfolio in support of their work on the production.
 - Requirements:
 - i. One-page personal essay about their experience in the production.
 - ii. At least one supplemental piece or artifact that demonstrates the student's work on the production. The amount of supplemental materials provided in the portfolio is at the discretion of the student and their teacher. Please note that more information included in the portfolio allows for a stronger evaluation. Supplemental materials can include but are not limited to: a Prompt book, Crew lists, Shift lists, Lighting plots, Sound plots, Design renderings or sketches, Cue scripts, Rehearsal materials, Video support or a highlight reel of a student's process or work, Resume, Photos, Other relevant evidence of the student's planning and execution. All information must be received by the deadline listed in the application.

OUTSTANDING PROGRAM DESIGN NOMINEE ELIGIBILITY

- Proper credit given to authors
- Proper credit given to licensing house
- Correct spelling
- Cast and Crew listed
- Musical numbers listed
- Acknowledgement given to rented/borrowed items
- Authorized Jester participation logo included (see Show Program and Documentation below)
- Final score will include the Judges overall score in addition to items listed above

Documentation & Adjudication Information

The link below is the MTWichita Jester program's official Jester logo and participation statement. These materials **must be included in each school's printed program**.

[Jester Artwork 2025-26](#)

We ask that you take plenty of digital photos of performers in costume, full cast photo, sets, lobby display, etc. so that they may be used for the Jester Awards program and slideshow. These will be requested after your performance in a follow up form sent by the Jester Team.

JUDGES

For the 2025-2026 Jester Season the Jester Awards will be allocating attendance of at least three performing arts professionals at each production. These arts professionals have a wide array of knowledge and education in the performing arts and will include but are not limited to those that are professional actors, professional directors, musical theater and dance collegiate professors, arts administrators, etc.

These volunteers are required to have training, education, or experience in the realm of musical theater. They must attend mandatory meetings, and receive extensive orientation of the program and the evaluation process.

JUDGES EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Evaluation based on school's unique resources and challenges
- Achievement is emphasized, not budget or size of production
- Observe and provide feedback based on what they saw or didn't see
- School size and budget are considered when reviewing how resources were used

By establishing these evaluation criteria, productions with varying budgets and student populations will be reviewed and evaluated as equitably as possible.

Adjudication Information (cont.)

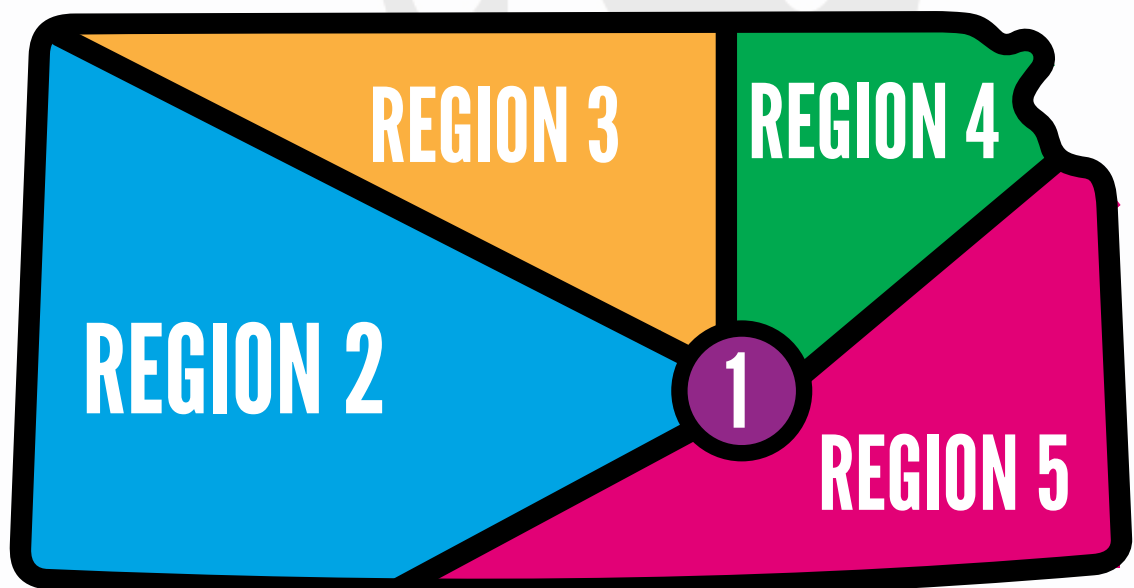
- MTWichita strives to have at least three volunteer judges attend each school's production. Other options will be discussed if MTWichita is unable to assign at least two judges to each production.
- If a school chooses to double cast one or more roles, that school must select which cast is to be judged.
- Participating Schools will furnish MTWichita/Jester Judges with complimentary tickets.
- Performance times and number of tickets for judges/MTWichita Staff Members will be arranged no less than one week in advance.
- If you anticipate a full house, please reserve seats for judges. Please do not indicate on signage that seats are reserved for Jester Judges. If you anticipate ample open seating, judges will select their own seats.
- Judges may bring a guest and tickets for these individuals will be arranged by MTWichita when reservations are made.
- Additional tickets shall not be unreasonably requested by Music Theatre Wichita nor unreasonably denied by participating schools.
- MTWichita requests that schools provide the dates and times of dress rehearsals and school matinees in addition to regular performances.

Regional Honorees & Jester Award Nominations

To get the best representation and recognition of high school musical theater throughout the state, the Jester Awards Committee have created five regions throughout the state. In each region the top 2-4 (dependent on category) honorees will advance to the final Jester nominations and awards ceremony.

- Each region will consist of up to five honorees in each category.
- The top four honorees in each region for Leading Performer and Supporting Performer will advance to the Jester Award Nomination list and awards ceremony.
- The top two honorees in all other categories will advance to the nomination list and awards ceremony.
- Regions, boundaries, and schools are subject to change at the Jester Committee's discretion.

A preliminary list of regional honorees and Jester Award Nominees shall be emailed to each school's instructor in early April. This email is to confirm the names and spelling in each category your school is honored/nominated for. Please do not share this information with students, social media, or media until the press release has been issued. Be aware that this information is subject to change before the nominee list is finalized. A press release will be issued in mid-April and emailed to each school and the newspaper offices for that area.



Jester Award Nominations

REGION 2 LEADING PERFORMER JESTER HONOREES

REGINA GEORGE

ANGELICA SCHULYER

*ELPHABA

*NINA ROSARIO

DIANA MORALES

REGION 4 LEADING PERFORMER JESTER HONOREES

EURYDICE

MOTORMOUTH MAYBELL

*CELIE

JENNA HUNTERSON

*EFFIE WHITE

REGION 3 CHOREOGRAPHY/ STAGING JESTER HONOREES

*BOB FOSSE

CASEY NICHOLAW

GWEN VERDON

TWLA THARP

JOE TREMAINE

REGION 1 CHOREOGRAPHY/ STAGING JESTER HONOREES

MARTHA GRAHAM

*ALVIN AILEY

JEROME ROBBINS

AGNES DE MILLE

ISADORA DUNCAN

LEADING PERFORMER JESTER AWARD NOMINEE

*NINA ROSARIO

*ELPHABA

*CELIE

*EFFIE WHITE

CHOREOGRAPHY/ STAGING JESTER AWARD NOMINEE

*ALVIN AILEY

*BOB FOSSE

LEADING PERFORMER JESTER AWARD RECIPIENT

*EFFIE WHITE

CHOREOGRAPHY/ STAGING JESTER AWARD RECIPIENT

*BOB FOSSE

Additional Adjudication & Judging

The Leading Performer nominees will receive three different adjudications from different groups of judges (listed below). This will allow for more diverse and accurate scoring.

1) Arts Professional/Volunteer Judges (50% of total score)

Jester Judges attend a performance and submit their scores, following the judge's rubric.

2) Video Submission Adjudication (25% of total score)

Schools with a student nominated as a leading performer should submit a video of the nominated student performing a musical number they performed in the production. No costumes or sets will be allowed. A simple recording on a phone will suffice. Instructions on how and when this must be submitted will be sent to the specific schools nominated in these categories.

3) MTWichita Staff/Jester Awards Committee (25% of total score)

The Music Theatre Wichita Staff as well as select members of the Jester Awards Committee will view the video submitted by students.

All three scores will be combined from the different groups of judges to select the Jester recipients of Leading Performer.

After the regional honorees and Jester nominations go out the Jester Awards Music Director will be contacting each school nominated in the Leading Performer category for additional materials and instructions.

Feedback

Written feedback from the performing arts professionals who attended the live performance will be sent to instructors. This feedback is meant to assist the school in continuing to improve and to help them reach their full potential based on available resources. The MTWichita staff will do their best to provide feedback to the school within three weeks of the performance.

Awards Ceremony

- Ceremony will be held on Sunday May 3, 2026, at 3:00pm at Century II Convention Hall.
- Each participating school will receive 10 complimentary tickets to the awards ceremony.
- Each participating school will also receive a discount code for up to 15 \$10.00 tickets.
- Additional full-price tickets are \$15.00 and can be purchased online at MTWichita.org or at the door before the ceremony.
- Leading Performer nominees will be asked to be involved in an opening group number for the awards ceremony AND in a medley with the other nominees that will showcase their talents and specific character they were nominated for. **These mandatory rehearsals will take place on both Saturday and Sunday (May 2 and 3) the weekend of the ceremony.**
- Overall Production nominees will be asked to present a musical number from the production at the awards ceremony.
- Selection of musical number will be made by the school's instructor and approved by the awards committee. If different schools are nominated for the same musical, the same production number will not be allowed.
- No scenic or design elements allowed. Costumes and hand props will be allowed that can be easily transported by students.
- Production numbers will be accompanied by the Jester Awards Band for rehearsals and performances. The Jester Music Director will be in touch to get sheet music from nominated schools.
- Overall Production nominees will have a maximum of 4 minutes for their performance. No exceptions will be made for performances over the 4-minute time limit. Once music is turned into the Jester Awards Music director, they will reach out to schools regarding the time limit to avoid any issues at rehearsals.
- Lighting and sound decisions are at the discretion of the Jester Award Staff.
- Scholarships are awarded to the two award recipients in the Leading Performer category and the Technical Achievement recipient.
- Previous scholarship winners will not be eligible to win again.
- Both Leading Performer Jester Recipients will be provided an opportunity to be a performing intern in one of MTWichita's mainstage productions for the 2026 season. MTWichita will not be able to provide housing or travel for the Leading Performers if they choose to participate.
- Technical Achievement Recipient will be provided an opportunity to be a production intern in for one session in one of MTWichita's Production Shops during the summer of 2026. MTWichita will not be able to provide housing or travel.