



SPOTLIGHT AWARDS

Nashville High School Musical Theatre Awards

2024-2025 Spotlight Awards – Nashville High School Musical Theatre Awards

ADJUDICATOR GUIDE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Spotlight Awards Program – Page 1
Spotlight Awards Program Values – Page 2
School Participation Information – Page 3
Show Selection and Casting – Page 4
Adjudication Overview – Page 5
Adjudication Requirements – Page 6
Attending a Performance – Page 7
Providing Feedback – Page 8
Awards Rubric Overview – Page 9
Honors Awarded – Page 10
Written Feedback – Key Reminders and Checklist – Page 11
Encouraging a Growth Mindset – Page 12
Ballot Submission and Travel Stipend Request Process – Page 13
Save the Date Calendar Listing – Page 14

ABOUT THE SPOTLIGHT AWARDS PROGRAM

The Spotlight Awards program is an arts education initiative of the Tennessee Performing Arts Center which celebrates, supports, and grows the artistry and diverse community of high school theatre programs in Tennessee while developing confidence, creativity, empathy, and collaboration among schools. The Spotlight Awards strives to embody a spirit of camaraderie, diversity and inclusion, celebration for the arts, and a growth mindset.

Community instead of competition

The Spotlight Awards is designed to be celebratory rather than competitive in nature. Participating schools are not directly competing against each other, but rather challenging themselves to continually grow and create the best possible work they can in their unique circumstances regardless of budget or size of the production. Different teams of adjudicators attend each production, and are asked to provide valuable feedback, not in comparison, but rather in the hopes of celebrating the achievements of each production and offering insights for strengthening future shows. The Spotlight Awards strives to embody a spirit of camaraderie, diversity and inclusion, celebration for the arts, and a growth mindset. We hope that each school will cultivate the arts community by supporting each other during the year, as well as at the ceremony.

Spotlight Awards Instagram Page

Follow us @SpotlightAwards for updates and events throughout the year, as well as school takeovers!

Program Goals

- To grow and develop artists, theatre audiences, and arts advocates in Tennessee by building a diverse high school theatre community
- To strengthen our community by instilling values of diversity and inclusion, artistic excellence, creativity, a growth mindset, and collaboration in our participants
- To provide high quality, diverse educational experiences in dance, theatre, and music for students, directors, and school arts programs
- To celebrate, support, grow, and advocate for high school theatre education by recognizing excellence in area high school theatre productions
- To engage community members, schools, and families in an inclusive celebration of theatre

Thank you to our sponsors Nissan North America – Official Education Partner, Vanderbilt University, Piedmont Natural Gas, and KraftCPAs.

Special thanks to our Founding Sponsor, Lipscomb University's College of Entertainment and the Arts.

The Spotlight Awards program is Nashville's regional awards program affiliated with The National High School Musical Theatre Awards® (the Jimmy Awards®), presented by the Broadway League Foundation. The Jimmy Awards® are a national celebration of outstanding student achievement, recognizing individual artistry in vocal, dance, and acting performance and elevating the importance of theatre arts education in schools. For more information on the Jimmy Awards, visit www.jimmyawards.com.

SPOTLIGHT AWARDS PROGRAM VALUES

Community

The Spotlight Community is a loving and safe place to learn about yourself and the arts industry we all love. We invite you to attend workshops, interact with us digitally, and find ways to engage with our community – it was created for you.

*We know that the lure of competition may be hard to ignore, but the Spotlight Awards is designed to be **celebratory rather than competitive** in nature, and the awards are only a fraction of the program. We are an Awards Ceremony 1 day of the year, **but we are an Education and Community program every day of the year** focused on goals such as encouraging collaboration and creativity, strengthening our community, championing diversity and inclusion, celebrating and supporting arts education and achievements, and developing a growth mindset.*

Growth

*Participating schools challenge themselves to **continually grow and create the best work** in their unique circumstances. **So celebrate your achievements, and the achievements of others, and find ways to continually learn and grow along the way.** Work hard, push yourself, challenge yourself, take a step out of your comfort zone - it's in these moments that growth happens.*

Inclusion

***Our wish for each of our participants is that they see the light in this world, in themselves, and in others.** Everyone is unique and special, and it's those unique qualities in each of us that make the world so beautiful. Be the best possible version of yourself, and choose to find the good in everyone around you and to celebrate with them.*

Creative Excellence

*The Spotlight Awards readily recognizes that artistic excellence provides new insights of the world around us, leading us to question and appreciate what we have never experienced. Excellence in the arts occurs when **an experience affects and changes us in novel ways, providing both fresh and relevant perspectives.** We celebrate the creativity and outstanding work happening in our high school arts programs.*

SCHOOL PARTICIPATION INFORMATION

The Spotlight Awards program is open to high schools in Tennessee and includes 3 main components: Learning Opportunities, Community Building Opportunities, and Professional Review and Recognition.

Schools can participate in Community, Show Review or Adjudication Tracks.

To be eligible for **adjudication**, a school must meet the following criteria.

Affiliation and Location

Participating schools must be located in Tennessee and may not participate in another Jimmy Awards regional awards program during the same school year. Schools should be within 2 hours drive from TPAC.

Production Date and Type

The high school production must take place between November 6, 2024, and April 12, 2025. The high school production must be included on The Jimmy Awards list of Qualifying Shows and is expected to follow the Show Selection and Casting guidelines provided. For a full listing of the Qualifying Shows, visit

www.jimmyawards.com.

Double Casting

The Spotlight Awards only accepts 1 musical submission per school, per year. If a school is presenting multiple shows during a school year or has multiple casts for the musical submitted, they will select which show/cast to submit for judging at the time of registration.

Other Participation Levels

In addition to the Adjudication Track, schools and individual students can participate in a Show Review or Community Track. These participants have access to workshops and events throughout the year, but do not have the same limitations for participation.

SHOW SELECTION AND CASTING

Show Choice/Casting and Scoring

Schools participating in Adjudication must select a production on The Jimmy Awards list of Qualifying Shows. School show selection and casting is solely up to the school's discretion. However, please note that show choice and casting are included in the scoring elements of Outstanding Direction's Overall Experience, which may affect the Outstanding Musical score for your school.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

TPAC and The Spotlight Awards is dedicated to celebrating, uplifting, and honoring the rich diversity of individuals across Tennessee. We strive to create an inclusive environment where every student, teacher, and adjudicator feels valued, appreciated, and empowered to express their authentic selves. Through ongoing dialogue and meaningful engagement with all communities, we are committed to amplifying a wide spectrum of voices, stories, and experiences, ensuring that everyone is seen, heard, and represented in this program. Our goal is to foster a space where every identity and background is recognized and celebrated.

Show Choice

We acknowledge the educational value of using the classroom to explore a wide range of stories and experiences that expand students' worldviews. At the same time, we encourage schools to thoughtfully reflect on the diversity of their own communities and audiences when selecting shows and casting performances. With an abundance of musicals to choose from, directors are encouraged and expected to select works and make casting choices that authentically honor a variety of cultures, identities, and lived experiences, while ensuring that scripts and direction avoid perpetuating stereotypes or exclusionary narratives.

Character Representation

When selecting a show, directors should thoughtfully consider the representation of characters in the story and how these portrayals will impact both students and the audience. It's important to choose shows that avoid objectifying women through text or costuming. Additionally, it is crucial to select shows that respect all individuals by avoiding objectification and stereotypes related to race, gender, sexual orientation, culture, identity, disability, or expression. This includes ensuring that the script and costuming do not perpetuate harmful or limiting portrayals. Directors should also ensure that all cast members, especially those from historically marginalized groups, are given the opportunity to play fully developed, authentic characters rather than being confined to one-dimensional or stereotypical roles. This approach fosters inclusivity and reflects the richness of diverse lived experiences.

Color-Conscious Casting

A theatre that truly reflects the richness and diversity of American culture is one that resonates with everyone. We encourage the use of color-conscious casting, rather than color-blind casting. To be blind to someone's race, ethnicity, or identity is to overlook their unique experiences and contributions. Color-conscious casting embraces the differences we see and experience every day, asking how these differences can deepen and enrich the story being told, while fostering representation and authenticity on stage. This approach values each person's identity and the powerful perspectives they bring to their roles.

Cultivating Inclusivity in your Theatre Program

- **Invite Diverse Voices:** Bring in guests from the community to enrich your classroom and rehearsal spaces with diverse perspectives. This allows for a broader representation of experiences and helps create a more inclusive environment.
- **Broad Representation in Your Program:** Ensure that diverse perspectives are reflected not only in the actors on stage but also in your designers and crew. Collaborate with other faculty members to engage participants from various clubs and subject areas, enriching your theater program with diverse talents and viewpoints.
- **Create an Inclusive Environment:** Foster an inviting and inclusive space in your classroom and theater. When everyone feels welcomed, valued, and respected, it enhances the growth and success of your program.
- **Evaluate Relevance of Character Race:** As a director, consider whether the race or identity of characters is central to the story and consult the script for relevant information. This will guide your casting decisions and ensure thoughtful, informed choices. Research and understand the issues presented in the show to create a more inclusive and positive environment.
- **Adapt Scripts Thoughtfully:** Collaborate with licensing companies to modify any problematic lines or songs in your script. Many shows offer options for updating outdated or insensitive content. Small adjustments can make a significant impact in creating a more respectful and inclusive production.

We want the actors onstage to reflect the mosaic of the world around us. We want young people to see people who look like them onstage and think, 'Wow, there might be a job for me, I can do this too.'
- Tara Rubin, founder of Tara Rubin Casting

ADJUDICATION OVERVIEW

Adjudicators will evaluate each school independently based on how well a school is meeting or exceeding their own potential with their unique resources and challenges, regardless of budget or size of the production. Different teams of adjudicators attend each production, and are asked to provide valuable feedback, **not in comparison**, but rather in the hopes of celebrating the achievements of each production and offering insights for strengthening future shows.

Community instead of competition

The Spotlight Awards is designed to be celebratory rather than competitive in nature. Participating schools are not directly competing against each other, but rather challenging themselves to continually grow and create the best possible work they can in their unique circumstances regardless of budget or size of the production. The Spotlight Awards strives to embody a spirit of camaraderie, diversity and inclusion, celebration for the arts, and a growth mindset.

The Adjudicator Role

- Thoughtful and Supportive: Your role is to encourage the students and directors by providing your expertise and guiding them toward constructive self-evaluation through feedback and helpful observations.
- Positive and Kind: You are the face of the Spotlight Awards and the Tennessee Performing Arts Center. Everything you say and do should reflect our program goals to better the community and celebrate arts education.

Conflict of Interest

Adjudicators are required to alert the Spotlight Awards administrators immediately if there is a conflict of interest with a participating school. Adjudicators having a relationship, either professional or personal, with a particular school are not assigned to evaluate that school's production.

Confidentiality

Adjudicator feedback is submitted through a secure online form. Adjudicators will not provide oral critiques following the performance, nor should teachers or students expect to speak to the adjudicators at all. Adjudicators are not allowed to discuss the results, evaluations, scores, or feedback with anyone other than Spotlight Awards administrators in any format. This includes, but is not limited to: faculty, staff and students from a participating high school, other adjudicators, colleagues, social media networks, etc.

Determining Nominees

To determine all nominations and the eventual recipients of each award, the nominee selection panel considers a variety of factors, and looks at all eligible candidates with a fresh perspective by thoroughly reviewing the Adjudicator feedback, scoring, photos and mandatory support material. All decisions of The Spotlight Awards administrators and nominee selection panel are final.

ADJUDICATION REQUIREMENTS

Spotlight adjudication is considered a volunteer position. However, adjudicators may request a travel stipend after attending a performance.

Experience Required

Spotlight Awards Adjudicators will have:

- Demonstrated experience in or knowledge of musical theatre;
- And/or a degree in a relevant field (music, theatre, dance, etc.);
- And/or extensive work experience in one of those disciplines on a professional or academic basis;
- And/or are professional artists or educators with knowledge of the American musical theatre canon.

Application and Writing Samples

Adjudicator Applications are open July-January of any season. New adjudicators will provide writing samples within the application process to demonstrate positive, specific, constructive feedback.

Training

Training for Spotlight Awards adjudicators is mandatory once a year. At least 2 training options are provided each year, and each includes extensive discussions and practice with rubrics, scoring, and written feedback.

Letter of Agreement

Participating Adjudicators are required to submit a signed Letter of Agreement. This will be sent for digital signing through DocuSign after training is completed.

Adjudication Documents – W-9, Ballot, and Invoice

- Current W-9 – Submitted SECURELY using request link (page 12) by November 1 for fall shows, or February 10 for spring shows.
- Ballots are submitted online within THREE DAYS of seeing the performance. Details and ballot link on page 13.
- Invoices - Travel Stipends are paid twice a year – in January and May. To be paid for fall adjudication in January, invoices are due by January 6. All invoices must be submitted by April 30, 2025 to be paid for this year's adjudication. Details on how to submit your invoices can be found on page 13.

Performance Adjudication Scheduling

Adjudication happens on each school's Opening Night, meaning most adjudication will happen on Thursday and Friday nights. In special cases, we may ask for last-minute adjudication on other show dates.

- Adjudicators are encouraged to attend at least 2 performances during a school year, but may attend more as scheduling allows. Attending a performance includes time to review Performance Detail information prior to the show, the performance itself, and time to submit your ballot.
- Adjudicators are expected to arrive at least 10 minutes prior to a performance and to stay for the entire performance.
- Adjudicators are intentionally assigned to provide a unique set of experience and expertise for each show. Adjudicators will not be scheduled as a regular team.

ATTENDING A PERFORMANCE

Production Detail – Information Email for Adjudicators

The week of the performance, adjudicators will receive an informational email including details from the school's Production Detail Form, as well as reminders about qualifying roles and award eligibility. This information should be reviewed prior to attending the performance, as it provides information on the performance concept and challenges at the school.

Performance Tickets

Two weeks before your adjudication date adjudicators will let Spotlight Administration if they would like 1 or 2 tickets for the shows they are judging. These will be at will call under the name "Jimmy Ward".

Anonymity

The Spotlight Awards strongly recommend schools allow the adjudicators to attend performances anonymously, so they can fairly evaluate the production without lobbying from cast members' families and friends or other school representatives. Adjudicators should not receive preferential seating, treatment, or gifts of any kind. Schools may be disqualified for providing special treatment.

Opening Night Adjudication

Every effort is made to send all adjudicators to the Opening Night performance.

1. Nothing beats the energy of Opening Night, and adjudicator scores reflect this positively.
2. Sending all adjudicators to the same show allows scoring to be based on the same experience instead of varying based on incidents on different nights.
3. Student health and voices are still at their best at Opening. By the end of a show run, student voices start to strain affecting their scores. Additionally, understudies may be performing by the end of a run due to vocal strain or illness, which greatly affects scoring and nomination eligibility.

Show Review Participation

Schools participating in the Show Review Track will request a specific date and time for professional review to take place. Adjudicators attending a Show Review performance will provide specific requested written feedback, no scores.

Performance Programs

Adjudicators should be sure they have a program to help them take notes and make nominations. Schools using digital programs should print a hard copy to be picked up with your tickets. If you are not able to get a program for any reason, let Spotlight Administration know immediately so they can provide one digitally.

Headshots Requested

Although we cannot require headshots to be included in show programs due to costs, schools are strongly encouraged to include them either in the program or in the lobby. Adjudicators are asked to do their best identifying students with or without headshots and direct any questions to Spotlight Administration.

Questions for the Director

Send any questions to Spotlight Administration ASAP to allow time for director response time before submitting your ballot. Do not stay after the performance to speak to school representatives.

Adjudicator Response to Random Occurrences

Just like live theatre often has random things for actors to react to, there will undoubtedly be times that adjudication does not go as expected. Please remember your role in the school - Remain calm, positive and kind and represent yourself and our program in the best light possible. Report to Spotlight Administration afterwards, but during the event simply smile and move on. We in the arts are nothing if not flexible to any situation.

PROVIDING FEEDBACK

Each adjudicator is asked to focus their feedback in a positive way, with the goal of encouraging and growing the arts in our community in mind. Adjudicator feedback is meant to serve as an educational tool, for teachers and students to use these insights to make their next show even stronger. Please be **constructive, specific, and objective** with your feedback.

Directors, students, and theatre programs cannot control the budget of a production, the resources available to them or the support received from their administrations and communities. We understand these limitations, and it is our mission to support and celebrate each program to ensure an equitable experience for all. It is an evaluator's responsibility to keep this in mind when giving scores and feedback.

Non-competitive process

Adjudicators should not be comparing school productions to each other. Due to scheduling and availability, adjudicators could be assigned to evaluate the same show at different schools. Keep in mind that each school should be viewed and evaluated on its own production, not compared to any others. Your feedback, scoring and honors should always reflect the question, "What are they doing with what they've been given?"

Outstanding Work

Adjudicators are not required to nominate students in every individual category. That being said, there is something outstanding happening at every school. Whether a school has a budget of \$500 or \$50,000, or if a show has 75 students versus 15, students across the state are creating admirable theater with the best resources they have available. Your ballot should reflect that in your scoring, student nominations, and written feedback.

Award Eligibility

Adjudicators will be given eligibility information for each school in the Production Detail Information email the week of the performance.

General eligibility guidelines include:

- Individual Award Nominations are for students in grades 9-12 only.
- We encourage participating schools to use readily available school resources, faculty, and students. (Faculty is defined as any full-time or part-time staff member at the school who is paid by the school district on an annual basis. One who is hired or volunteers to work on select productions throughout the year, or who is paid by the school in another manner, does not qualify as faculty.) The use of a professional/guest/parent artist will disqualify the school from that category.
- Schools are eligible for design awards if the design is created by students or faculty. Volunteers may help with application or construction as long as the design is created by students or faculty.
- Schools which recreate a Broadway designed show are not eligible for this award and should credit the original artist.
- Individual Student Awards will each have up to 12 nominees and 2 award winners. While adjudicators will attempt to maintain an equal mix of gender identities in their nominations, it is not a required limitation to their selections.

Ballot Submission

Ballots are submitted online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Ballot25>. Adjudicators have THREE DAYS to turn in their ballots to the Spotlight administrators.

AWARDS RUBRIC OVERVIEW

In the theater, we tell stories.

The Spotlight Awards adjudicators review the storytelling abilities put to work in each production. We are looking for an authentic tale well told, by your production team, ensemble, and individual performers.

We want to see how well you use the elements of theatre to tell the story you have chosen:

- ✓ How well does your company understand the story they are telling? How clearly do they relate that story and its themes to the audience?
- ✓ How passionately do your actors embody their characters and express their journey through this story?
- ✓ How do your actors use the performance skills of musical theatre (singing, dancing, and acting) to enhance the story?
- ✓ How collaborative was your company in presenting a unified concept for the audience to engage with?
- ✓ How did you showcase the unique talents and resources of your school and cast to advance the story and concept you created?
- ✓ How creatively did your company transfer the story from page to the stage?
- ✓ How does your storytelling create a memorable experience, emotion and change in your audience?

Adjudicator Rubric Scoring

Each award category available for adjudication has a rubric with detailed descriptions of the scoring. An overarching look at the scoring guidelines is below.

DEVELOPING (1-4)	PROFICIENT (5-9)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented the story practically, so that the events logically transpired but without impact to the characters. At times the effort to improve skills supersedes the story. • All technical elements served the basic requirements outlined in the script, but there is no evidence of collaboration with other areas to present a unified concept. • The musical selection was not appropriate, included harmful content or stereotypes, or did not showcase the school/cast talents and resources and produced few engaging moments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created a layered story with clear, evolving characters through a practical approach with moments of creativity evident. • An attempt was made to present a unified concept with input from all technical and performance components. • The musical selection rarely showcased the school/cast's diverse talents and resources, producing some interesting and engaging moments with some obvious missed opportunities.
SKILLED (10-15)	ADVANCED (16-20)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong storytelling with solid, believable characters and a creative approach. • A clear vision of the concept for the production was carried out with some evidence of creative collaborations from technical and performance areas. • The musical selection was appropriate and showcased some of the diverse talents of the school's performers and technicians, producing mostly strong elements of musical theater. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masterful storytelling with authentic, emotion-driven characters and a meaningful, memorable, and unique approach. • A clear, focused vision of the concept for the production was fully integrated with creative collaboration from each technical and performance area to ensure design consistency and advance nuanced themes. • The musical selection was appropriate and showcased the diverse talents of the school's performers and technicians, producing elements of quality musical theater.

HONORS AWARDED – ADJUDICATION PARTICIPATION TRACK

Based on adjudicator feedback, panel selections and/or teacher nominations, schools and individuals will be nominated in specific categories to be recognized at the Spotlight Awards Ceremony at TPAC on Saturday, May 17, 2025. Participation in the Spotlight Awards program does not guarantee nominations or awards.

Award Categories for 2024-2025 (Details for each award on following pages):

School Production and Design Awards

- Outstanding Cast Vocals
- Outstanding Orchestra
- Outstanding Small Ensemble
- Outstanding Large Ensemble
- Outstanding Costume Design
- Outstanding Hair and Makeup Design
- Outstanding Lighting Design
- Outstanding Set Design
- Outstanding Sound Operation
- Outstanding Design Concept
- Outstanding Choreography
- Outstanding Music Direction
- Outstanding Direction
- Outstanding Musical *

Outstanding Lead Performers**

- 1 student nominated by director
- Additional judge selections possible
- *Finalists and Winners chosen from separate audition submissions*

Individual Student Awards

- Outstanding Dancer
- Outstanding Vocalist
- Outstanding Ensemble Performer
- Outstanding Supporting Role Performer
- Outstanding Comedic Performer
- Outstanding Dramatic Performer
- Outstanding Solo Performance
- Outstanding Scene Partner

Teacher Nominated Awards

- Outstanding Community Engagement
- Outstanding Technical Achievement
- Outstanding Stage Manager
- Outstanding Student Designer
- Founder's Award
- All-Star Cast
- All-Star Crew

* 10 Nominees for Outstanding Musical are invited to perform at the Spotlight Awards Ceremony.

** All Outstanding Lead Performer Nominees are invited to perform the Closing Number at the Ceremony.

Outstanding Lead Finalists selected by judging panel will perform solos at the Spotlight Awards Ceremony.

Special Recognition Awards

The Spotlight Awards is a non-competitive program and wishes to honor the schools for their work to the highest degree. Because of this, there is the possibility that a school could receive an honor not listed. For example, if a Spotlight adjudicator finds a particular element of the production was outstanding or worthy of honorable mention, an award may be created specifically for that school. Some examples could include Fly Crew, Program Art Design, Props Team, or Front of House Crew.

WRITTEN FEEDBACK – KEY REMINDERS AND CHECK LIST

When in doubt – remind yourself that this is about the STUDENTS. They are young people, learning about the industry that we all love, and we want to help them grow on their educational journey. Always err on the side of higher scores and kinder comments.

Key Reminders:

- ✓ Keep in mind that your written feedback goes directly to the school and will be read by real people who put their heart and soul into the production.
- ✓ Celebrate students and directors wherever they are on their journey.
- ✓ Do not make comparisons to other shows, versions, youtube videos, or versions you have (or would have) directed yourself.
- ✓ Stay positive: Putting on a show is stressful. As theater practitioners, we know and understand this. Evaluations should be fair and contain useful language that furthers growth in the art form. Language should reflect what you saw and areas of growth but should be something that could be given to a student without edit.
- ✓ Honor the Director’s expertise: The school team members are participating in this program because they care about their students and want them to have experiences in theater. They are experts in their classrooms and on their students. Honor this expertise and recognize that, especially as adults, learning something completely new can feel intimidating and uncomfortable at times.
- ✓ Respect the Director’s workload: Receiving feedback is a skill. Learning a new skill and tackling outside opinions on top of an already rigorous school schedule and production experience can be a huge undertaking. Be mindful of their time and resources.

Feedback/Comment Check List:

- ✓ Does my feedback celebrate something the students or team did well?
- ✓ Does my comment give insight into one or more areas of next focus for improvement?
- ✓ Does my comment reference at least one specific moment or example that illustrates the point(s) I am trying to make?
- ✓ Does my feedback include at least 3-4 complete, easy-to-read sentences?
- ✓ Does my “improvement needed” comment include a clear strategy for improvement?
- ✓ Is my feedback written in a positive tone and framed in an educational and helpful way?
- ✓ Is my feedback written in a clear and concise way?

Example Sentence Starters/Formats

Phrasing in terms of growth

- ✓ Keep working towards...
- ✓ Continue to work on...
- ✓ Consider...
- ✓ In the future, you might try....
- ✓ I loved when you.....keep bringing that [energy/focus/etc.] to the rest of your performance...
- ✓ You did [this] well. To take your performance to the next level....
- ✓ Have you considered...?
- ✓ What would happen next time if...

Feedback to Avoid

- ✓ When giving a compliment, try not to write a positive followed directly by a negative. As an example, “You have great acting instincts, but I wanted more.” Do not tie the two thoughts together with a conjunction. Instead let the positive stand alone as its own thought, then frame the areas to improve or things to take into consideration. Example, “You have great acting instincts. Consider digging deeper into your character’s motivations.”
- ✓ Avoid words like “awkward,” “disappointing,” “gangly,” etc. Written feedback should always be appropriate for a high schooler to read. Additionally, please avoid using the word “outstanding” – this is the naming used for our awards and may be confusing.
- ✓ Adjudicators should not provide feedback based on health and safety concerns regarding Covid-19, how the adjudicator would have directed the show, food and drink accommodations for the adjudicator, or parking accommodations for the adjudicator (unless address was wrong, or parking was a logistical complication for all patrons).

ENCOURAGING A GROWTH MINDSET

Feedback can be daunting, especially for young performers just starting their journey to the stage. The Spotlight Awards encourages the development of a growth mindset, helping participants to recognize feedback as an opportunity to hone their ever-evolving skill sets.

What is a growth mindset?

- The belief that success comes from ongoing personal development, and skills and abilities can grow through effort, learning and practice.
- A focus on development in setbacks - You bounce back, pick yourself up, and try again. A growth mindset embraces challenges and views failure not as evidence of limitations, but as a springboard for growth.
- Focus on continuously improving your skills and abilities, rather than “winning”.
- Open to constructive criticism, realizing it creates growth, the chance to learn, improve and develop skills.

Strategies for Fostering a Growth Mindset in Written Feedback

- Reward improvement rather than results. When praising someone for a job well done, highlight the **journey** they took rather than an end product. When we recognize the effort and persistence behind a good result, rather than attributing it to innate qualities, our feedback is more meaningful, and encourages the recipient to revisit those positive behaviors when faced with their next challenge.
- Set goals. Suggesting set incremental, achievable goals demonstrates the attainability of growth and progress.
- Don’t oversimplify. “You can do anything!” may feel like harmless encouragement, but if students aren’t put in a position to overcome challenges, they’ll conclude that such statements are empty, and the feedback will lose credibility.
- Celebrate growth. This reinforces the emphasis on effort and process. It also provides opportunities to share valuable learnings.

We as educators must take seriously our responsibility to create growth-mindset-friendly environments – where kids feel safe from judgement, where they understand that we believe in their potential to grow, and where they know that we are totally dedicated to collaborating with them on their learning. We are in the business of helping kids thrive, not finding reasons why they can’t. – Carol Dweck

BALLOT SUBMISSION AND TRAVEL STIPEND REQUEST PROCESS

Spotlight adjudication is considered a volunteer position. However, adjudicators may request a travel stipend after attending a performance.

Payment will be made after **both ballot and invoice have been submitted**. Checks will be mailed to the address provided in your W-9. All invoices must be submitted by April 30, 2025 to be paid for this year's adjudication.

W-9 Secure Upload

In order to process your payment, TPAC will need your current W-9 information. Do not email W-9 information. Once it is filled out, please submit by November 1 (or February 10 for spring shows), using the [secure upload link](#) here - bit.ly/TPAC-AP

Ballot Submission

Ballots are submitted online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Ballot25>. In general, adjudicators have THREE DAYS* to turn in their ballots to the Spotlight administrators. However, if adjudicating multiple shows back-to-back, adjudicators should submit ballots BEFORE attending the next show.

Invoice Submission

Travel Stipends will be paid twice a year – in January and May.

- Please list all adjudications per semester on one invoice.
- Please submit your ballot before your invoice.
- Invoices should be emailed to education@tpac.org, and must include your name, address, name of the school/date you adjudicated, and the amount due.
- Travel Stipends are \$40 per performance when within 100 miles distance from TPAC (505 Deaderick Street, Nashville). When travelling farther than 100 miles from TPAC, the stipend will be \$50.
- To be paid for fall adjudication in January, invoices are due by January 6. All invoices must be submitted by April 30, 2025 to be paid for this year's adjudication.

Full-Time TPAC Staff Members

Adjudicators that are on staff full-time at TPAC have a slightly different process to receive payment. However, the invoice process above is the same. If this applies to you, please ask for the TPAC Full-Time Staff Adjudicator Addendum.

Optional Donations

Spotlight adjudication is considered a volunteer position. If you prefer to not request a travel stipend, you have the option on your ballot to donate your time.

2024-2025 SPOTLIGHT AWARDS – SAVE THE DATE INFORMATION

*Check out some of the upcoming events planned for this school year.
More details will come out for each one along the way.*

September 29, 2024

Adjudicator Training

FEBRUARY 3, 2025

Adjudicator Training

NOVEMBER 6, 2024

Performance Window Opening (*Ends – April 12, 2025*)

FEBRUARY 26, 2025, 7:30 PM

Invited Dress Rehearsal for MTSU's *Our Town*

NOVEMBER 6, 2024, 7:30 PM

Invited Dress Rehearsal for MTSU's performance of *She Loves Me*.

MARCH 27-31, 2025

Design Symposium at Tennessee State University
Gallery Opening Reception for designers and guests on
March 28, 5:00 PM.

NOVEMBER 12, 2024, 7:30 PM

Invited Dress Rehearsal for Belmont University's
performance of *Twelfth Night*.

APRIL 12, 2025

Performance Window Closes

DECEMBER 10, 5-6:30 PM

Master Class with Laura Michelle Kelly
<https://www.lauramichellekelly.net/>

APRIL 17, 2025

Nominee Announcement on the @SpotlightAwards
Instagram page throughout the day

DECEMBER 17, 2024

Spotlight SINGS! Support our program and join us for
this fantastic night of Broadway and Winter songs
performed by our talented Spotlight Society Alumni
members.

APRIL 28, 2025

Virtual Master Class with Telly Leung
<https://www.tellyleung.com/bio>

JANUARY 17-18, 2025

Thespian Conference – Come visit us in our sessions

May 5, 2025

Virtual Master Class with Adam Kantor

JANUARY 25, 2025

Spotlight Awards Community Kickoff Event

MAY 17, 2025

Spotlight Awards Ceremony – 7:00-10:00 PM