



# WASHINGTON STATE THESPIANS<sup>SM</sup>

AN EDUCATIONAL THEATRE ASSOCIATION AFFILIATE

## September 2021 Newsletter

Welcome back Theatre Educators and Friends,

I'm excited to share all the great plans we have in store for this new year. This newsletter is bursting with information. As always, don't hesitate to reach out if you have questions or thoughts. We are here to serve and support you!

### **NEW WEBSITE!**

Our fantastic board member, Bryan Sullivan has revamped our Washington State Thespians Website for a new and easier experience. Please note that our domain has also changed. You can find an abundance of information by visiting:

<https://www.wathespians.org/>

### **CALENDAR OF EVENTS for 2021-2022**

We have created a Google Calendar of all our meetings, events, and deadlines. Feel free to add this to your own Google Calendar.

[WA STATE THESPIANS CALENDAR](#)

### **STO (State Thespian Officer) News:**

**Meet our new STO:** <https://www.wathespians.org/state-thespian-officers>

More information will be coming out regarding our STO Virtual Leadership Workshop on **October 9th** for your student leaders. This will be a great opportunity for your troupe officers to meet other leaders from different schools to share, network, and learn!

### **TEACHER INSERVICE / PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

In previous years we have offered our own day of PD for theatre educators. This year we've partnered with EdTA to offer WA State Clock hours (Up to 10 hours; 14 if you add a PDI) for attendance at their Virtual National Conference from September 24 - 26. We know that the content offered will be rich and meaningful, and we encourage all our colleagues to take advantage of this incredible opportunity. You can register now by visiting: <https://tec.schooltheatre.org/index.cfm>

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE: September 10**

**COST:** EdTA Members (\$99); Non-Members (\$229) and includes membership for the year.

- If the cost is prohibitive you can try the following things:

- Ask your administrator; we very seldom have PD specifically for us as theatre educators! Many schools will pay for this!
- Apply for an [EdTA Grant](#); many years grant money goes unused!

We hope to see you in virtual attendance. There will be some WA State gatherings scheduled for those registered so we can connect and support one another!

## **INTAF (Inland Northwest Theatre Arts Festival)**

“Places, Please!” – This year’s theme for INTAF – The Inland Northwest Theatre Arts Festival. INTAF will return in person in a modified one-day-only format. INTAF will be held on Saturday, **October 23** at North Central High School in Spokane, WA. We look forward to welcoming back students and teachers for this annual festival we all missed so much last year. Check out the [INTAF website](#) for more information!

## **UPDATE ON COLLEGE AUDITIONS:**

Prior to 2020, Washington Thespians offered an in-person unified audition event for seniors interested in studying theatre after high school. For fall of 2020, we partnered with Oregon and British Columbia to offer a virtual unified event. In the time since, almost every college theatre program now has its own preferred virtual audition option for the class of 2022 in addition to the college audition opportunities with the International Thespian Festival and the National Unified Auditions.

Due to the Delta Variant of COVID-19 and uncertainties surrounding school trips and hosting in-person performing arts events early in the fall of 2021 (when the WA Unified College Audition event was traditionally held), Washington State Thespians is unable to hold a College Audition event for the 2021-2022 school year. Instead, we have asked colleges who participated in our event in both 2019 and 2020 to provide us with a link to their auditions/admissions page as well as a preferred email contact for you to reach out to with questions about their program and auditions. We will be updating the college audition page on our site as a hub of website and contact information in September 2021 so you may connect with these programs and arrange a virtual or in-person visit/audition with them!

## **THEATRE TEACHER CONNECTION -**

The WA State Board is hosting monthly teacher meetings on the 4th Tuesday of most months to discuss important topics and offer insights and information. Each month will have a different topic of discussion.

Tuesday, **September 28** at 7 p.m. we will be discussing the changes to Thespy and answer any and all of your questions on how to best prepare your students for success.

### [ZOOM MEETING LINK](#)

**Future dates & topics include:** (TBD - To be determined)

October 26: Building Membership and including the Juniors - led by Julie Olson

December 14: Submitting Thespy and Registration Support

February 1: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - led by Sydney Baird

February 22: TBD

April 26: TBD

May 24: TBD

## **THESPYS - Changes are coming...**

We are still awaiting the updated guidelines and rubrics from EdTA; and once we receive them, we will share them with you. Some additions to look forward to: Make-up Design and Playwriting!

Last year students submitted their Thespy performances and presentations through an online system called Open Water. Adjudicators were able to take their time and

give much more thorough feedback, and students from anywhere in the state could submit without the obstacles of busy schedules and transportation. This year we will continue with the online Thespy submissions; however, we will also include three regional - *in person* - THESPYS Celebrations! They are scheduled for: **January 29** (East & SW) and **February 5** (NW). There will be much more information coming your way regarding these changes. The deadline for virtual submission is **January 6**.

Please join us for our Theatre Teacher Connection meeting on **September 28** to discuss these changes in greater detail.

## **HOW WA THESPIANS IS SUPPORTING THEATRE EDUCATORS THROUGHOUT THE STATE:**

As you know there are so many issues facing us as theatre educators. We, the WA State Thespian Board, are a collection of volunteer theatre educators working on behalf of our colleagues to advocate for and improve the opportunities for our students. Here are some updates regarding these issues:

**DOH GUIDELINES:** The Covid guidelines most recently published by the Department of Health exhibited significant disparities between what is permitted for athletics vs. the Performing Arts. Our WA State Board Secretary, Suzanne Maguire, reached out and met with the DOH team and shared our concern. The DOH is reevaluating the guidelines and will be meeting again with Suzanne soon to finalize an update to their guidelines. We will continue to speak up on behalf of theatre educators on the importance of equity for our students. Please keep an eye out for more communications on this issue.

**CTE - Student Leadership:** For many of us who teach CTE Stagecraft courses, we are expected to participate with a Student Leadership organization. Thespians has been working on becoming this organization for WA State. Our Vice Chapter Director, Ben Stuart has been working on making this happen. If you are interested in collaborating on a standard OSPI CTE Student Leadership Template document for all of our CTE Directors to submit for our Theatre courses, please email Ben Stuart at [ben.stuart@wathespians.org](mailto:ben.stuart@wathespians.org)

**HB 1660:** If you are not aware of this new law, I encourage you to take a moment to familiarize yourself with it. This is regarding waiving fees for ASB, athletics, and all extra-curricular activities for low income students. [Here is a link to OSPI's information on the bill.](#) Most of our districts are still trying to determine HOW they will implement this new law. I've already heard of one district removing gate sales for their athletics AND box office sales for their Performing Arts programs. We've been in communication with WIAA and will work closely with them moving forward. Please feel free to let me know if you are being impacted by this law so we can gather data and continue to advocate for adequate funding.

**RCW 43.09.240 (ASB Financial Law that limits our use of online ticket sales):** We've been fighting this battle for some time. We've taken this to OSPI, the State Auditor's Office, and our next step is to reach out to local legislators to try changing this state law. This doesn't just impact theatre, but any group that wishes to use online fundraising. If you are interested in helping advocate for a change in this law, please let me know and we can work on our next steps. A special thank you goes out to Sara Coiley (Working Board Member) and Ben Stuart (Vice Chapter Director) for their earlier efforts at drafting strong communications for districts and OSPI. We will continue to work on this issue.

## **WANT TO BE A PART OF THIS TEAM?**

If you are interested in joining our State Thespian Board, you can apply to be a part of the Working Board, supporting our efforts and events! [APPLY HERE](#)

## **WRAPPING IT UP**

Congratulations for making it through to the end of this lengthy email!

In spite of the challenges facing us as we start our new year, I'm optimistic that the best is yet to come! May you have a wonderful start to your school year, and we look forward to connecting with you soon!

Sincerely,

Kristina Cummins  
Co-Chapter Director  
WA State Thespians  
<https://www.wathespians.org/>

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