

# 2024-2025 Adjudication Handbook



NEW MEXICO HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL THEATRE

## ENCHANTMENT! AWARDS ★

An awards program once a year. An education program every day.

## Preface

---

Our program serves the entire State of New Mexico, meaning that any high school within our borders is eligible to participate in our program. That makes us responsible for finding adjudicators anywhere across the state, or transporting adjudicators to the farthest corners of the Land of Enchantment.

If you are aware of a school that should be participating with our program, please let us know. We would be happy to reach out to them. If you know of someone who would make a good adjudicator for our program, please tell us that, too. Just contact us at [nmhsmta@gmail.com](mailto:nmhsmta@gmail.com).

Thank you!



*Best Actor nominee Michael Montaña from V. Sue Cleveland High School sings "Supertime" from You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown as his solo in the 2024 Enchantment Awards.*

*On the cover: Best Actor and Best Actress nominees applaud a run-through of the DCC/Best Supporting Actor/Best Supporting Actress medley during rehearsals for the 2024 Enchantment Awards.*

## Table of Contents

---

|                           |    |
|---------------------------|----|
| Preface                   | 2  |
| Table of Contents         | 3  |
| Letter to Adjudicators    | 4  |
| The Jimmy Awards          | 5  |
| Adjudication Overview     | 6  |
| Expectations              | 6  |
| Conflicts of Interest     | 7  |
| Communications            | 8  |
| Compensation              | 8  |
| Awards Show               | 8  |
| Adjudicating a Production | 9  |
| Scheduling                | 9  |
| Adjudication Deadlines    | 9  |
| Attending a Show          | 10 |
| Tickets                   | 10 |
| Electronics               | 10 |
| Evaluations               | 11 |
| Confidentiality           | 11 |
| Evaluation Guidelines     | 11 |
| Storytelling Feedback     | 11 |
| Adjudication Forms        | 12 |
| Scoring                   | 13 |
| National Perspective      | 13 |
| Rubrics                   | 14 |
| Assigning Numbers         | 15 |
| Award Categories          | 16 |



*Nori Kai Little, from Albuquerque Academy, sings her solo during the 2024 Enchantment Awards. Her performance of "Your Daddy's Hands" from Ragtime helped her win the award for Best Actress.*

NEW MEXICO HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL THEATRE  
**ENCHANTMENT**  
**AWARDS** 

An awards show once a year.  
An education program every day.

---



933 San Mateo NE, #500-221  
Albuquerque, NM 87108  
nmhsmta@gmail.com  
nmhsmta.org

Dear Adjudicator,

Thank you for your service to our students and teachers in drama programs across New Mexico. Your work is at the heart of what we do and this program could not continue without your efforts and knowledge.

New seasons bring new surprises as schools choose which musicals to produce, as new schools register with our program, and as new students join the various drama programs in schools across the state. In this program, there is always something new to find each year.

Because our program connects to the National High School Musical Theatre Awards — the Jimmy Awards — our program adds a connection to Broadway for high school musical theatre productions in New Mexico. Those musicals are among the hardest and most rewarding projects of their adolescent years. As many of you know, deciding to step on your school's stage and perform before your friends, your family, and your community can be an act of artistic bravery. Our presence brings a measure of kinship with the millions of students who have done this before them, and underscores the honor and privilege we all share as we watch students take center stage in their world, often for the first time in their lives.

We hope you take pride in the work you do because it is important to the development of each student we adjudicate. It is important to the drama programs we enrich with the lessons and perspective you provide. It is important because it shines a brighter spotlight on the value of having drama programs in our schools.

Thank you for your contributions to the growth of these students, and the teachers and programs that support them!

Sincerely,

The Adjudication Committee

Zane Barker, Chair  
Jessica Shaffer-Gant

Terry S. Davis  
Laura A. Maness

## The Jimmy Awards

---

The National High School Musical Theatre Awards, also known as the Jimmy Awards, began in 2009 as a program of the Broadway League, the same organization that produces the Tony Awards. The idea was to honor the value that high school theatre programs deliver to their students all across the country, to celebrate the talent found in those schools, and to deliver an educational program unlike any other available to those students.

Each year since it started, the Jimmy Awards has hosted a growing number of students in New York City, arranged for classes and workshops led by Broadway professionals, and rehearsed the students in their own awards show — sometimes called the Tony Awards for Teens — where they would perform together on a Broadway stage with their peers from across the country.

The New Mexico High School Musical Theatre Awards was organized to give our state's high school students the opportunity to participate in that program. It initially began as a part of Popejoy Hall's Education and Outreach Program in 2015 and was called the Popejoy Awards. Even after a successful first year, Popejoy could not continue the program due to state and University of New Mexico budgetary issues. Popejoy gave its blessing to continue the program outside its purview and maintained the connection between the program and the Broadway League.

Those who had organized, produced, and directed the first year at Popejoy created a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and carried on the work. Including that first year, we have sent two students to participate in the Jimmy Awards every year since 2016, except for 2020 when the Jimmy Awards were cancelled due to COVID. Our students have won one award and three scholarships with a total value of \$7,000. They have been offered both professional and academic opportunities that would not have been available to them without participating in the Jimmy Awards.

Your work as an adjudicator for our program is where it begins every year.



*Joliana Davidson from Cibola High School (lower left) and Devon McCleskey from Los Alamos High School (upper right) were the first New Mexico participants in the Jimmy Awards in 2016.*

## Adjudication Overview

---

Our adjudicators find the talented high school students who, as nominees for our highest individual honors, perform together in the Enchantment Awards show in Popejoy Hall and compete to represent New Mexico in the national Jimmy Awards as winners of our Best Actress and Best Actor awards.

Adjudicators also choose, through their scores, our Best Supporting Actress and Best Supporting Actor as well as winners of our production awards for schools: Best Production, Best Direction, and Best Ensemble.

Each school's production — or, in the case of double-casting, each cast — will be evaluated by a trio of adjudicators. Adjudication forms for both the individual nominees and for the production itself will be returned to the teachers for distribution, *minus scores and adjudicators' names*.

Adjudicators will have:

- 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;
- And/or demonstrated experience in or knowledge of musical theatre.

Additionally:

- All adjudicators must possess the ability to effectively communicate in writing and to evaluate production elements and student performances *in a constructive manner*.
- Each will be trained in the adjudication process by our team.

Adjudicators form the core of our program's educational mission. As an adjudicator, your feedback supports each student's education in theater, particularly musical theater, as well as the educational efforts of the teacher.

### Expectations

To uphold the integrity of our program, adjudicators are expected to comply with the expectations listed below:

- Participate in an annual adjudicator training;
- Be available to adjudicate at least one school production;
- Respond to each opportunity to adjudicate, even if you are not available for any of the assignments, so we know who is available should an opening occur;
- Attend performances to which you have been assigned and contact our staff immediately if a conflict arises;
- Attend the full show, beginning to end, or alert us if a problem arises;
- Complete the adjudication form consisting of educational feedback and scores for assigned productions by the deadline issued for each production;



*Nora Cullinan from Los Alamos High School performs her solo, "My Philosophy" from You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown, in the 2019 Enchantment Awards. She earned that year's Best Actress Award.*

- Follow the rubrics listed here and on the evaluation sheets;
- Represent our program in a professional manner;
- Keep information regarding evaluations confidential (see details below);
- Alert our program if there could be any conflicts of interest (see details below);
- Be an advocate for the Enchantment Awards and its affiliated programs.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

Adjudicators are required to alert us immediately if there is a conflict of interest between you and a student or a participating school. We will not schedule you for that adjudication. We request that you agree to uphold our conflict of interest policy and not allow personal preferences or bias to influence production evaluations. Adjudicators should not have personal or professional relationships with the school, the theater productions, or the students they are evaluating. This includes, but is not limited to:

#### **Professional Conflict of Interest**

- Employment
- Receiving/providing compensation/donations
- Gifts
- Financial support
- Favors that are substantial in nature from any department of a participating high school or any student's family
- Board connections
- Organizational partnerships
- Volunteer work
- Business ties
- Financial investments
- Private voice/dance instruction of students
- Any other professional ties with the school or individuals in the production that might influence your evaluation.

*Jill Novick (left), drama director for Cibola High School, accepts the award for Best Production at the 2024 Enchantment Awards. The school's production of Mamma Mia! earned them the top production honor.*



#### **Personal Conflict of Interest**

- Alumni status
- Involvement of immediate family members — spouses, partners, siblings, parents, children — in a participating high school's musical theater productions
- Performing or working together in professional or community theater productions with students or others involved with the high school's production
- Any other personal ties that might positively or negatively influence your evaluation.

## Communications

Here are the communications we send to you and will refer to throughout the handbook.

These come from [nmhsmta@gmail.com](mailto:nmhsmta@gmail.com):

- Invitations to annual trainings;
- Adjudication opportunities;
- Team assignments for adjudication opportunities;
- Adjudication assignment details (date, time, place, etc.) with an offer to carpool from Albuquerque to locations outside of Albuquerque;
- Invitation to the Enchantment Awards;
- An offer for an honoraria (see below)

These come from [noreply@formresponse.com](mailto:noreply@formresponse.com):

- Confirmation of your response to adjudication opportunities;
- Confirmation of your production and individual evaluation submissions, including a link to edit them;
- Confirmation of your request for Enchantment Awards tickets;
- Confirmation of your honorarium acceptance.

Please add both senders to your approved list in your email app.

## Compensation

We may be able to offer you an honorarium for your adjudication work. If we are financially able to do that, we will send that offer to you at the end of the season, likely in the summer of 2025. We will ask you to complete a form accepting the honorarium/honoraria and let us know if you are willing to donate any of that money to the Enchantment Awards. Since we cannot guarantee right now that we will have enough money in our annual budget to do so, we cannot make that a standing offer (yet!). We make sure all our promises to students and all our obligations to funders have been fulfilled before we commit to offering adjudication honoraria. We only pay honoraria for fully completed sets of evaluations.

## Awards Show

Adjudicators will receive two complimentary tickets to the Enchantment Awards on Friday, May 2, 2025. Please save the date now. More information about how to claim your tickets will be sent in April.



*Best Actor and Best Actress nominees perform in the opening medley at the 2022 Enchantment Awards.*



## Adjudicating a Production

---

A team of three adjudicators is assigned to review each registered musical. As schools register, we send opportunities to adjudicate to all adjudicators. Those willing and able indicate their availability on our response form. From those who volunteer, we select each adjudication team. Watch for an email that lists assignments for each production. Those chosen to adjudicate will receive another email confirming date and time, address, and a list of students with their roles to be adjudicated. **Please note:** just because you volunteer for an assignment does not mean you will be assigned.

*2018 Best Actress nominee Julia Flores from Rio Rancho High School sings "There Are Worse Things I Could Do" from Grease! on stage in Popejoy Hall.*

Schools may double-cast their shows (fully or partially) and register both casts for adjudication. When they do, we send a second team to adjudicate the second cast. The second team scores and evaluates all students nominated for awards, but does not score and evaluate the production. Performances for the second cast are listed as separate opportunities on our response form.

The production and all performances are critiqued based on our rubrics (see below). Adjudicators' evaluations are collected and sent to the participating school's teacher. Scores are for internal use only and never sent to the schools. Only the written evaluations for each student and the production as a whole, included anonymously, are sent to each school.

### Scheduling

All productions must take place by the end of Saturday, April 12, 2025. Typically, performances are on Thursday, Friday, or Saturday. Evening performances usually start at 7pm, but can start earlier. Few start later. Schools will sometimes schedule Saturday matinees and occasionally we have Wednesday or Sunday performances. Schools have also arranged for us to see special performances when issues arise.

### Adjudication Deadlines

All adjudications are due 15-16 days after the show closes. Deadlines are listed in all communications about the adjudication opportunities and assignments. If you give yourself two weeks from your attendance at the production, you will almost always meet the deadline.

The exception is for any production in the last three weeks of adjudication. All deadlines are shorter since we have to announce nominees three to four days after our April 12, 2025 cutoff date. For those productions, the following truncated schedule will apply:



Productions ending March 26-30, 2025:  
Scores and evaluations due April 12

Productions ending April 2-6, 2025:  
Scores due April 12  
Evaluations due April 21

Productions ending April 9-12, 2025:  
Scores due April 13, 5pm  
Evaluations due April 21



*Allen Dominguez, Public Academy for Performing Arts, sings in the Directors Choice Chorus during the 2022 Enchantment Awards.*

**TIP:** It is easier to complete evaluation forms while the production is fresh in your mind.

## **Attending a Show**

Adjudicators should plan on arriving at each production 15 minutes before curtain and must remain through the entirety of the performance. If adjudicators are unable to attend a performance they have been scheduled for, they must contact our staff immediately so we may find a replacement.

### **Tickets**

Our response form, which offers adjudication opportunities, includes options for you to ask for one or two tickets to each show, indicate what performance or performances you can attend, and which performance you prefer. We will assign you to your preferred performance as often as possible. We will make sure you have the number of seats you requested.

When you go to the performance, ask for tickets for the Enchantment Awards and the number of tickets reserved for you. Most shows are general admission, allowing you to sit anywhere. Some schools assign seats, or hold seats specifically for the Enchantment Awards; we often don't know this in advance. However, you can request a change if the seats assigned or held don't work for you. While some of us prefer to sit close to see and hear better, many prefer to sit further back to take in the whole show. The earlier you arrive, the more options you will have to find seats that match your preferences. **Please note:** some of the shows we adjudicate do sell out.

### **Electronics**

Many adjudicators take notes on portable electronic devices, or will bring small reading lights to attach to notebooks so they can see to write. If you do either, please also do the following to minimize the distraction of having a light source in the house during the performance.

- Sit as far back as possible to minimize the distraction for performers and other audience members.
- Turn the screen or light source to its lowest level.
- If you use a nightlight feature on a phone so you can see to write in your notebook, choose a blue light like you might see backstage.
- If you have the option to change the color of the background in your note-taking app, choose a light blue, or turn your device to night mode.

## Evaluations

---

### Confidentiality

As an adjudicator, you should not share evaluations or scores with the schools, or provide any critique following the performance. Nor should you discuss the show with anyone while at the venue, not even your companion. Our staff will send the schools your feedback along with evaluations by your fellow adjudicators. Numerical scores will not be shared outside a small circle of designated Enchantment Awards personnel. Since adjudicator scores determine the nominees for Best Actress and Best Actor and the winners for Best Supporting Actress, Best Supporting Actor, Best Production, Best Direction, and Best Ensemble, scores should never be revealed to maintain the greatest level of surprise possible.



*Troy Ainsworth, Organ Mountain High School, performs "Marian the Librarian" from The Music Man during the 2024 Enchantment Awards.*

### Evaluation Guidelines

The main purpose of our program is to provide schools with constructive and educational feedback regarding their musical theatre productions. Each adjudicator's feedback will:

- Provide schools with specific feedback,
- Celebrate outstanding work,
- Encourage development, and
- Offer suggestions for the next step in a student's or program's improvement.

**Please remember:** this is an educational tool, not a critique. Feedback should include both praise and constructive criticism that connects to the evaluation criteria, which is included on the form. You should include specific examples from the production to support your comments. Please note such examples as you watch the show to make your comments as detailed as possible, but do not allude to or reveal your final scores in your comments. Please write in full sentences and proofread your comments before you submit them, checking them for clarity, punctuation, and encouragement.

**TIP:** Use a word processor with spell check and possibly grammar check to write constructive comments. Then copy and paste those comments into the evaluation form.

### Storytelling Feedback

Our program encourages teachers to include storytelling lessons in their curriculum. We firmly believe that if our students can embody story, they have a greater chance with college or professional auditions.

We strongly suggest you read the material, based on Michael Shurtleff's book *Audition*, [on our website](#) that we have provided to teachers concerning the teaching of embodying story. You can then drop references

to Shurtleff's 12 Guideposts into your evaluation. For example, this note for an actor in a production of *The Lightning Thief* discusses the value of discovery (Guidepost 6):

“My Grand Plan” was a great moment in the show for you partially because it was the time when you were at your most expressive. It's tough in theater to really let go and allow yourself to be vulnerable, but that is the challenge. You did something in that number that I didn't see a lot of through the rest of the show — you discovered the thoughts as you were singing.

**Please note:** You do not need to reference the guidepost number in your evaluation.

### **Adjudication Forms**

We provide JotForm forms online for adjudicators to use. One is for the production as a whole, the other is for individual performances. You will be sent links to the two forms when you are assigned to adjudicate the show. We recommend that you not use the form during the performance. Just take notes.

However, you should read through the forms in advance to know what you are being asked to comment on so your notes will be appropriate to the task. You can review those forms [on our website](#).

The production adjudication form is used once per production; the individual adjudication form is used for each actor or actress you adjudicate. Both forms have the rubrics included for your reference and hints to help you with scoring. Refer to those as you work, but also review the information on scoring below.

Both forms allow you to save your work, or save and continue later. When you submit the form, you get an email copy of your submission from [noreply@formresponse.com](mailto:noreply@formresponse.com). The email also contains a link that allows you to edit your submission. If you change a score, [please tell us](#) so we know to look for it. Changes update in JotForm, but not in the spreadsheet that it sends

data to. We use the spreadsheet to tabulate who our nominees and winners are.

**TIP!** Keep the school's program book, if they offer one, to help you with spelling and other references you might wish to add to your feedback.



*Best Actor and Best Actress nominees sing their opening medley during our 2017 show, which was still called the Popejoy Awards. We changed the name to the Enchantment Awards in 2018.*

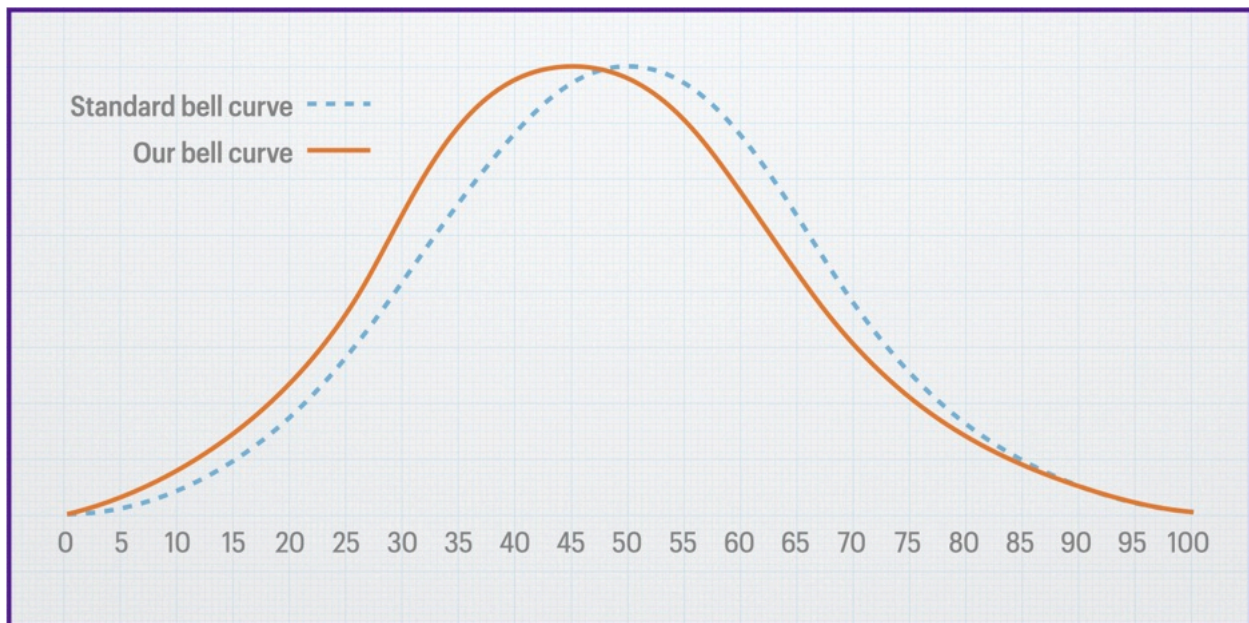
## Scoring

---

Assigning scores to performances can be one of the most challenging aspects of the work we do. Adjudication generally — and scoring specifically — generates the greatest frustration for all the regional awards programs across the country. We are asking you to evaluate something that is not quantifiable and put a number to it. We do have some guidelines for you to help you in that task.

### National Perspective

The number you assign is not an estimation of how good the performance or production is; it's an assessment of where it stands in comparison to other performances and productions across the country. Because we send our students out to participate — and compete — with students from across the United States, we score them on a national level. We also know most of you don't have a lot of experience watching high school productions from across the country. That's part of why we use a 1-100 scoring system. It offers a standard you are familiar with: the bell curve. If all scores were distributed evenly, most would land at 50 and fall off in both directions at the same rate to lower and higher scores. When graphed, that looks vaguely like a bell (the blue dashed line in the graph below). Because we "reserve" the higher end of our scoring spectrum for Jimmy Awards-level talent (discussed below), our bell curve skews a little to the left (the orange solid line).



An exercise you can do is to watch snippets of high school productions posted online. Go to YouTube. Search for any musical by its title and add "high school." (For example: search for "Shrek musical high school.") You'll see a few choices, usually, of high schools who have posted their entire show on YouTube. Drop in at any point and watch a few minutes. Each time you do that, choose different schools.

You should definitely familiarize yourself with the level of talent we see at the Jimmy Awards. Sample some performances from recent [Jimmy Awards performances on YouTube](#). In particular, watch the character medleys and solos to give you an idea of the individual abilities of other high school students from across the country. Those who sing solos are Jimmy Awards finalists and would typically earn our highest scores.

## Rubrics

Our rubrics emphasize the importance of storytelling, since all theater artists are storytellers, and salute those who do that very well. All rubrics are written for high school rather than professional performances.

### Individual

81-100: Masterful storytelling; fully realized, emotion-driven character; excellent musical theatre skills. These are Jimmy Award nominees and, at the higher levels, Jimmy Awards finalists.

61-80: Good storyteller; nearing mastery of musical theatre skills; a mostly believable performance. Many Enchantment Awards nominees earn these scores. At >75, students might be suitable for the Jimmy Awards.

41-60: Moderately good student performance; exhibits some strengths in musical theatre skills, including storytelling. Students scoring 55-60 could be in the Enchantment Awards.

21-40: Developing abilities; demonstrates an understanding of some skills; shows moments of future promise; embodies story in some moments or in a tentative way throughout the performance.

1-20: Novice performer; may exhibit an ability for some skills; untrained, inexperienced; offers few if any emotion-driven moments.

**Note: We have yet to see any student in New Mexico performing at Jimmy Awards levels (81-100) in their high school productions. We help them improve to that level once they are in our program.**

- All Best Actress/Actor nominees improve as we work with them ahead of the Enchantment Awards.
- We coach our Best Actress and Best Actor, once chosen, to help them become better performers before they go to New York.
- Their training in New York lifts their performances to an even higher level.

That's how our students — and others like them from across the country — reach the level those scores would indicate. We do keep those scores available for that rare student we might see who does perform at that level in one of our schools.



*Our Best Actor, Breton Sego from Rio Rancho High School, sings "My Petersburg" from Anastasia: The Musical with Langston Lee, winner of the Jimmy Awards Best Actor Award in 2023. They both performed the role of Dmitry in productions at their own schools and sang "dueling" versions of the song in a character medley on stage in Broadway's Minskoff Theater.*

## Production

81-100: Excellent storytelling; cohesive, creative production; all disciplines support a well-defined central story.

61-80: Good storytelling; moments of creativity evident; some disciplines need improvement; mostly balanced production.

41-60: Moderately good high school production; not always creative, but very practical; honest effort in most disciplines.

21-40: Growing program; some disciplines may outpace others; story may get lost in the details; skills are still being developed.

1-20: Program exhibiting basic abilities; efforts to learn skills supersedes story; little to no mastery shown, (but they produced a show!).

## **Assigning Numbers**

Your willingness to assign scores to both individuals and productions should rise and fall with the respective sizes of those numbers in the illustration below. The larger the number, the more willing you should be to assign it. The numbers between those shown below (e.g., 38, 43, 49) help you provide nuance to your scores.

1 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70 75 80 85 90 95 100

Before you submit your scores, review them. Does a score feel too low? Raise it by a point, not five. Is your final score too generous? Lower one or two scores by a point or two. If you lower the overall score by one point, it actually lowers the overall score by two points, since the overall score is counted twice.

*Albuquerque Academy performs "We Both Reached for the Gun" from Chicago: Teen Edition during the 2023 Enchantment Awards.*



## Award Categories

---

As adjudicators, you have a profound impact on the talent that appears on stage in the Enchantment Awards. The better that talent is, the better our program looks overall. Our long term success depends on all adjudicators working together to find students who truly belong on the Popejoy stage each year. *The more in tune your scores and evaluations are with your fellow adjudicators, the better this program works.*

### Best Actress & Best Actor

Adjudicators determine who the 10 finalists for each award will be. Please make sure you choose, through your scores, those who truly have the talents and stage presence they need to perform with the other 19 nominees and feel like they belong.

### Best Supporting Actress & Best Supporting Actor

Your scores determine the winners in each of these categories.

### Spotlight Award

This award is given by the producers to highlight something that might have otherwise missed notice: a well-called show, a stage crew that made set changes seamlessly, an off-the-charts lighting design. If you see something that you believe needs notice, send us an email about it to [nmhsmta@gmail.com](mailto:nmhsmta@gmail.com).

### Best Production, Best Direction & Best Ensemble

These awards are also determined by your scores. Best Production winners have the highest total scores. Best Direction and Best Ensemble winners earn the highest scores in those categories, unless they have already won one of the other awards. No one school can win more than one award in any given year.

**Thank you!**



*The engraved crystal trophies we give to all award winners*