

RI State Drama Festival - Guidelines for Participation

A. Selection of Materials

1. When selecting a script, the director should consider the quality of the material and the ability of the material to challenge both students and audience.
2. It is assumed that the director is confident that his/her students can handle adult material maturely. It is the responsibility of the festival committee to foster a similar attitude among the members of the audience.
3. As a theater education association, we encourage the participants to experience the full range of theater experiences; however, we are aware of the controversial nature of some material. If a production contains subject material, stage business or language that may not be appropriate for all audiences, the director should include an explanatory note in the program.
 - Example: "This production contains sensitive material such as (please be specific) which may trigger some members of the audience."

Topics that should have warnings printed in the program include topics such as:

- Rape
- Abuse
- Violence
- Firearms
- Child endangerment
- Suicide
- Death
- Or use of lighting/sound triggers such as strobe lights, gunshots, etc.

*Note that this is not a complete list of subjects that may trigger distress amongst audience members. Sensitive subjects in your production should be listed in the program at the discretion of your school.

4. Musicals: Because this may be the one opportunity which some students have to present non-musical material before a sizable and appreciative audience, musicals as such are not allowed for adjudication. If the material presented could be found in a catalog

under “musical” it will be considered a musical and therefore be disqualified from adjudication and will be ineligible to advance to the New England Drama Festival. Feedback will still be offered from the adjudicators.

B. Facility Requirements

1. The stage area should have a fully operable main curtain, adequate lighting facilities, and a public address system with provisions for other methods of audio projection.
2. In addition to the auditorium/stage area, the following facilities should be provided:
 - a. A large scene storage area with double door access, if possible. Every attempt should be made to provide a locked storage space for scenery and equipment which a participating school might want to leave between its technical rehearsal and performance. However, since such space is at a premium in many schools, the host school is not obligated to provide such an area.
 - b. A “home base” (usually a standard classroom, not a specialized room such as art or home economics) for each participating school. However, if such facilities are limited, each school must have a “home base” for the particular session during which it performs.
 - c. Make-up and changing rooms. However, if such facilities are limited, each school may use their assigned “home base” for the particular session during which it performs.
 - d. A warm-up space. However, if such facilities are limited, each school may use their assigned “home base” for the particular session during which it performs.
 - e. An adjudicators’ conference room
 - f. Provisions for securing items on loan to the school such as lighting/special effects, etc.

C. Festival Regulations

1. **Time Limit:** Each school will be allotted a total set, performance, and strike time of one (1) hour. Any show exceeding the one (1) hour time limit by one (1) minute or more will be disqualified from representing Rhode Island at the New England Drama Festival.
2. **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is strictly prohibited and will result in disqualification.

3. **3. Casting:** All participants will be students of high school age (grades 9-12) enrolled at the participating school. The RITEA Executive Board must approve any exemption due to special circumstances. Such a request should be made on the initial Entry Form.
4. **4. Single Gender Schools:** A single-gender school may draw upon a brother or sister school for participants provided there is approval from the administration of the other school. Permission should be presented in writing at the mandatory directors meeting.
5. **5. Adult Participation:** Any adult production assistant must be so indicated in the program with an asterisk. This includes anyone (alumni or otherwise) who has graduated or is beyond the age to be a student in high school.
6. **6. Administration Approval:** The principal of the entering school must sign a permission form, assuming responsibility for the material, which is to be presented, and indicating his/her authorization of the adult in charge.
7. **7. Chaperones:** Each school must have at least one chaperone in addition to the school's theatre director/advisor in order to supervise students while the director/advisor is in the adjudication room. Additional chaperones after this number should comply with their school's chaperone policy.
8. **8. Royalties:** The director must provide written verification of the publisher's permission for performance and payment of royalty fees whenever either or both are required. If a script is submitted as a cutting, appropriate cutting rights must be presented and adhered to as prescribed by the publisher. Publisher's permission to perform an approved cutting must be presented in writing at the mandatory director's meeting
9. **9. Student directors:**
 - a. If an adult participates to a great extent in the directing or design process, then a student cannot be listed as having been in charge of that directing or design area.
 - b. If a play is student directed, RITEA must receive a signed statement from the school's principal or headmaster, attesting to the fact that he/she is aware of the arrangement (included in the Principal's Release Form). For liability purposes, the statement must include the name of an adult advisor.
 - c. The adult advisor must be in attendance at the load-in and load-out sessions, the technical rehearsal, the preparation time, the performance and at other times when the cast and crew are at the festival.
 - d. The student director and the adult advisor must attend all directors' critique sessions. The student director and the adult advisor should be informed beforehand about the nature of the closed directors' critique sessions and how they may differ

from the open critique sessions. Since, even with this advanced notice, a student may not be fully aware of what to expect, student-directed productions should not be scheduled during the first session of performances, if at all possible.

10. **Attendance:** All schools and festival participants must be present for all sessions within their festival. A school may miss the play immediately preceding their production if they are preparing for their performance. The director of each school must also be present at all sessions and adjudications within the festival. Failure to adhere to this regulation may disqualify the school from representing Rhode Island at the New England Drama Festival.

- The RI Drama Festival Committee must approve exceptions due to extenuating circumstances that are presented in writing prior to the mandatory director's meeting. Schools are encouraged to attend all regions or to send representatives to each portion of the festival.

11. **Use of music:** Per current copyright law, productions may utilize up to 30 seconds of any piece of music without written permission from the artist. Any portion of music that is used for more than 30 seconds in a production must be accompanied with written consent from the artist or company which owns the rights to the music. Failure to adhere to this regulation will disqualify the school from representing Rhode Island at the New England Drama Festival.

D. Technical

1. **Technical Rehearsal:** Participating schools are permitted a one hour (1) technical rehearsal at the host site before the festival. Scheduling of that rehearsal is done at the mandatory directors meeting.

- Timing of your tech rehearsal begins once you enter the theatre. The time allowed for each tech rehearsals is strict and no exceptions will be made.

2. **Scenic Elements:** Any school may use necessary properties, scenery, special effects, and costumes to enhance its production. The following restrictions apply:

- Such materials must be able to fit on the Host School's stage.
- All materials need to fit inside the storage area provided by the school. Dimensions of the storage area will be provided at the mandatory directors meeting.
 - Set storage before or after your performance is at the discretion of the Host School.
- The set must be designed to maneuver through standard single doorways unless announced by the Host school as different.
- All scenic elements are flame proofed with written documentation, signed by a school administrator, presented by the school's technical rehearsal. Any exception must be approved by the RITEA Executive Board.

- All schools must adhere to their Host School's fire codes and regulations, and the participating school must obtain approval from the Host School for the use of incendiary devices and/or smoke effects. Under no circumstances will an open flame be allowed on stage.
- All technical elements must adhere to Rhode Island Fire Safety Code. <http://www.fsc.ri.gov/>
- All elements of a production are eligible for testing by the State Fire Marshal.

3. **Safety:** The safety of students is paramount to the RITEA. If elements of the set, usage of the set or props, blocking or any other element of a production seem to pose a physical hazard to the students, then the RITEA Executive Committee reserves the right to pause the performance at any time, and deny the use of any element deemed dangerous.

- The on-site supervisor has the right to make the final decision regarding appropriate safety measures, reserving the right to make a ruling on behalf of the RITEA, and in cases of extreme safety issues, to halt or disqualify a show.
- If in doubt, directors should bring potential safety issues to the attention of the RITEA before the Festival, or to the attention of the day's supervisor at the morning directors' meeting.

4. **Time Limit:** Each school will be allotted a total set, performance, and strike time of one (1) hour. Any show exceeding the one (1) hour time limit by one (1) minute or more will be disqualified from representing Rhode Island at the New England Drama Festival.

- Scenery may be moved from storage to the wings and from the wings back to storage without being timed. Schools must ensure that the movement of sets to and from storage does not delay the festival day schedule.
- The opening, closing, trimming or adjustment of drapery, soft goods, and teasers will not be timed or considered to be part of any schools total time.

5. **Adult Supervision:** At all times, each school must provide adult supervision for their students. This includes the duration of all meals, breaks, and intermissions.

- Only students may be actively involved in the assembly of set materials on stage.
- The director may not touch the scenery during the set-up and strike, but they may be onstage in an advisory capacity.
- At no time may directors or any other adult technical personnel take part in the actual running of productions.
- No adults may be backstage during a production, with the exception of the Host School's technical staff.

6. **Supplementary Lighting:** The host school must be able to accommodate and pre-hang such additional material (anything not pre-hung becomes part of the set-up and strike time).

- Cabling and taping down of supplementary lighting is not part of the set-up and strike time.

7. Operation of Lighting Control System: Lights for a performance must be run by a student from the performing school unless otherwise restricted by the Host School.

- If a participating school has no students to run lights, it may request such assistance from the Host School.

8. Operation of Sound Equipment: Sound for a performance must be run by a student from the performing school unless otherwise restricted by the Host School.

- If a participating school has no student to run sound, it may request such assistance from the Host School.
- A participating school may bring supplementary sound equipment if the Host school is able to accommodate and preset the equipment.

E. Adjudication Process

For each year's festival, the RITEA board chooses 3 qualified individuals to serve as adjudicators. Each adjudicator is responsible for attending the entirety of each production, providing a brief public adjudication immediately following each school's performance, providing a more detailed verbal adjudication for directors at the end of each session, and providing a completed rubric with notes and comments to each school at the end of the festival. Adjudicators will also be responsible for choosing All-State Company recipients, specialized awards, and 2 schools to represent Rhode Island in the New England Drama Festival. There is no formal scoring system. Adjudicators use their notes from each show to engage in a conversation to determine how awards will be allocated.

Directors of participating schools will be informed as to who the adjudicators are prior to the festival date.

Below are the various categories that the judges are asked to consult when filling out a rubric for a school's performance:

Acting

Characterization: Is each character sufficiently delineated and collectively, are characterizations consistent with production concept, the playwright's intent and with each other?

Interaction: Do the actors relate to one another and do they work together as an ensemble?

Vocalization: Are the actors able to be heard and understood? Are voices sufficiently modulated and appropriate to the characters which they portray? Are the speech patterns adjusted to the time and place of the production?

Physical Presence: Is movement and business motivated and in character?

Stage Presentation

Staging: Are the physical environment and action supportive of and consistent with each other?

Interpretation: Do all aspects of the production create a consistent, integrated performance which clearly indicates the development and implementation of an overall production concept?

Rhythm: Is the overall pace appropriate to the script; is it sufficiently varied, and does it reach convincing climax(es) when required?

Theatrical Attainment

Originality/ Endeavor: Is the overall concept of the production inventive and creative?

Theatricality: Do the various elements of the performance work to create a unified whole which provides an aesthetically pleasing and emotionally satisfying theatrical experience?

Technical Theatre

Set: Is the design and execution of the set effective and appropriate?

Makeup and Costume: Are makeup and costumes appropriate to the characterizations and production style?

Lighting and Sound: Within the limitations of available facilities, do the lighting and sound designs provide visibility and audibility; and do they contribute to the realization of the production concept?

Each school will be given a rating for their production. Schools will have the opportunity to receive a Superior, Excellent, Very Good, Good, or Fair rating. Adjudicators will ultimately use these ratings to help them decide which schools will serve as the RI representatives in the New England Drama Festival.

Timeline

By December 15th:

- Any school participating in the RI Drama Festival will return their initial registration form to RITEA.

By the End of January:

- All participating schools must have their registration fee paid to RITEA.
- Performance order will be communicated to all directors

At the Mandatory Meeting (to be held at the festival site!):

- The Technical Director for the festival will orient all participants to the stage and its facilities.
- Technical rehearsals will be established by a lottery. Schools may trade rehearsal or performance slots, as long as the technical director is informed and he/she approves.
- A performance information form must be filled out, including play title/author, cast/crew size, and setup/performance/strike time.
- You will receive all forms and information necessary to participate in the festival.

Two Weeks Prior to the Festival:

- A .jpeg, .png, or .tif copy of the one-page program (5 ½" x 8") will be submitted by each participating school.
- Completed program and ad forms will be handed in.
- Nominations for the Stanley Anderson & Terry Murray Awards will be submitted.

Before the First Technical Rehearsal:

- The following forms must be submitted to the Technical Director:
 - Fire Retardant Form w/ Proof of Purchase

- Principal's Release Form
- Technical Information Form
- A copy of the performance license for any published plays being performed
- A copy of of any permissions for cutting/altering your script (if applicable)
- Meal order form (with payment)
- Notice is given to the site Technical Director of any special needs of the production.
- All participating schools will be informed of any special technical equipment which will be used by a school beyond that which will be provided by the host school. All such equipment must be made available to any school which requests it at its technical rehearsal and performance.

At the Start of the Festival:

- Packets will be distributed to the adult advisor of each participating school.
- Each adult advisor will meet with his/her students to go over pertinent information (schedules, orientation to the area, rules of the festival, etc.) and distribute necessary materials, such as badges and programs. Special attention should be given to rules regarding proper audience etiquette. All students must attend all performances, with the exception of the play immediately preceding their own. Any blatant violation of this policy may result in the school's disqualification from representing Rhode Island New England Drama Festival.

FINAL NOTE TO DIRECTORS Above all, inspire in your students a friendly and welcoming attitude about the entire experience. Take the opportunity to set a positive tone, which will carry right through the festival. Encourage your students to be good sports, to applaud all of the performances, to speak positively about their fellow students, and to make new friends.