



ISW is pleased to announce that we are launching a multi-track program within our high school. Students will have the opportunity to take college prep coursework *and* pursue their academic passions now, before college, with a high school “major.” We began in September of 2016 by piloting a performing arts high school program, and we began piloting a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) track in 2017.

Our performing arts high school program features a theater “major.” Students will pursue college preparatory academic subjects as well as one to two hours of performing arts daily. Students will study acting, movement for stage, voice, and stagecraft. As a complement to the formal study of these subjects, ISW has created Huzzah Players, one of the only student-run high school theater companies in the US. Huzzah will afford ISW theater students the opportunity to work with high school students from around the area creating performances for audiences in the larger community.

We invite you to apply to be among the first to attend ISW’s innovative new program!

Mission

The mission of the Independent School of Winchester is to create a learning environment where young people discover and develop their own unique abilities to think logically and critically, to effect positive change in the world, and to approach life with an open heart.

The mission of ISW's High School Performing Arts Track is to create an inspiring learning environment where young people set high standards for themselves, develop their creative and analytical skills, and build communities with a passion for the arts.

Goals supporting the mission are to

- Offer instruction through classes, performances, and in cross-disciplinary opportunities by a faculty of professional instructors, artists, and mentors.
- Provide exceptional performance and exhibition experiences.
- Prepare and inspire students to meet the most rigorous admission requirements of colleges, universities, conservatories, internships, and other career opportunities.
- Provide opportunities for students to serve their community.
- Create partnerships with arts and education organizations within the community.
- Build audiences to appreciate and enjoy the arts within the community.

FAQs

Who might be interested?

Strong students who love theater will want to apply to be a Theater Major. The Performing Arts Track affords students opportunities to study theater and to perform throughout the school year.

Will my student be prepared for college?

Yes! ISW provides a rigorous college preparatory foundation in all academic areas. Students have the opportunity to take four years of lab sciences, foreign language, humanities (English and history), as well as math classes through calculus—with advanced coursework available in all subjects. Most of our faculty members hold masters degrees. All have taught for at least five years; many have taught in a variety of settings—including colleges and public high schools.

What if my student doesn't plan to pursue theater in college?

ISW's graduates will have a solid academic foundation for pursuing any major in college as well as a multitude of transferrable skills and confidence in making presentations.

What can you do with these skills? They seem very specific.

What can't you do with these skills? There are (at least!) three strengths any student completing our Performing Arts Track will graduate with: the ability to create and tell a good story, confidence in front of an audience, technical expertise. The ability to tell a good story will serve students well in almost any walk of life—from advertising to law. Confidence in front of an audience also pays off in many careers, and the only way to achieve it is to spend many hours in front of audiences. And finally, the technical expertise our students will develop (from sound to lighting to programming) will serve them well in almost any field of student or career.

Are there performances planned?

Yes! ISW will offer at least two major productions every year. They will be created through our after school program, Huzzah. In addition, students in ISW's High School will participate in all-school concerts and poetry panel.

Can students attend the program part-time?

Yes.

What is the maximum number of students in a section?

ISW limits class size to a maximum of 15.

What is Huzzah?

Huzzah is ISW's student-led theater production company. It meets after school and is open to high school students throughout the Northern Shenandoah Valley. Huzzah is responsible for choosing shows and running the business/management aspects of two major productions a year. Students in the Performing Arts track are expected to become members of Huzzah. While there is a charge for participating in the productions either as techie or as an actor (typically \$75 to \$150), there is no charge for being a member of Huzzah.

What does the field trip fee cover?

Students will take several field trips over the course of the year. Some of those trips will include college and professional theater.

Curriculum Plan for Theater Major

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Acting/History of Theater 1	Acting/History of Theater 2	Acting/History of Theater 3	Acting/History of Theater 4
Dance 1	Dance 2	Dance 3	Dance 4
Voice 1	Voice 2	Voice 3/Auditions	Voice 4/Auditions
Stagecraft 1	Stagecraft 2	Stagecraft 3	Stagecraft 4
Communications	Milestone Project		Capstone Project

Note: As we expand our program, we will develop new opportunities for students which require us to alter this sequence.

Acting/ History of Theater: Students will work on acting technique and will chart the development of theatre as an art form and entertainment over the past 2,500 years.

Dance and Movement for Stage: In addition to teaching dance for musical theater, this class focuses on physical training for actors and non-actors that promotes body awareness, storytelling through body language, and character development.

Voice for Stage: This class will focus on training the voice (both speaking and singing) for the stage.

Stagecraft: This class, which combines lecture and hands-on experience, is designed to give students a basic understanding of theatrical scenery, properties, lighting design, sound equipment, costume design and construction.

Milestone Project: Students plan and create a year-long project that focuses on an interest or passion during the sophomore year.

Capstone Project: Students plan and create a year-long project during the senior year. They present the project to the entire school with a Senior Speech.

Students are encouraged to continue studying with private instructors in programs outside ISW.

Sample Schedule

ISW develops the academic schedule for the following year in the spring. The following is a sample 9th grade schedule.

Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
8:30-10:00	GS History	8:30-9:30	GS English	8:30-10:00	GS English	8:30-10:00	Math & Spanish Lab	8:30-10:00	GS History
		9:30-10:00	Break						
10:00-11:00	Spanish 3	10:00-11:15	Algebra 2	10:00-11:00	Spanish 3	10:00-11:15	Algebra 2	10:00-11:00	Spanish 3
11:00-12:25	Biology	11:15-12:25	Biology	11:00-12:15	Art	11:15-12:25	GS English/History	11:00-12:15	GS English
12:25-12:55	Lunch	12:25-12:55	Lunch	12:25-12:55	Lunch	12:25-12:55	Lunch	12:15-12:55	Lunch
1:00-2:00	Voice	1:00-3:05	Acting/Th Hist	1:00-2:00	Voice	1:00-2:00	Biology	1:00-3:05	Acting/Th Hist
2:05-3:05	Movement for Stage			2:05-3:05	Movement for Stage	2:05-3:05	Stagecraft		

Faculty

Dr. Christina Romich (Director of Performing Arts, Choir Director, Stagecraft, Music Director and Faculty Advisor for Huzzah) has her doctorate in vocal performance from West Virginia University, a Masters in Vocal Pedagogy from Shenandoah University, and a Bachelors of Music from Shenandoah University. She is a very experienced teacher who has worked with students of all ages—from the very youngest preschoolers to adults. Chris directed opera scenes at WVU, music directed high school student musicals, and conducted choirs, pit bands, and marching bands. She and her husband and daughter live in Winchester.

Jennifer Ratcliffe (Acting) has more than 20 years' experience teaching acting to students of all ages. Jen holds a BFA in Theater Arts/Acting from the University of Florida. She is also the owner of Kids' Dramatix, Inc.

Karen Erikson-Lee has been teaching for more than 30 years. Trained as a dancer, Karen holds a BS in Dance with a minor in psychology from Shenandoah University. She was the founder and director of the Northern Virginia Academy of Ballet and later taught dance at the prestigious Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet.

Advisers to ISW's Performing Arts Track High School Program

Jennifer Green, Shenandoah Conservatory Arts Academy

JJ Ruscella, Director of Acting, Shenandoah University

Joanne Ruscella, Associate Director of Education, Studio 52, Flat Rock Playhouse

How to Apply

1. Schedule an interview and tour with the Head of School. Call 540-877-5552 or email claire@iswva.org.
2. Fill out the Application Form. We sure to write both essays and include your performing arts resume if you have one.
3. Ask at least one performing arts professional who is familiar with your work to complete a Teacher Evaluation and send it to ISW. Note that you will need a total of three Teacher Evaluation Forms completed; only one must be from a performing arts teacher.
4. Set up an audition with Dr. Chris Romich (christina@iswva.org). The audition will require students to demonstrate their skills in acting, singing, and dancing. Students should not worry if one of these areas is weaker than the others. That is typical for theater students. Prepare for your audition:
 - A one-minute monologue
 - A song from the musical theater genre

Students should wear clothes and shoes appropriate for movement/dance.