



Tuesday, January 18, 2022

Dear Administrator,

Each year the Maryland Chapter of the Educational Theatre Association produces the Maryland Thespian Festival offering an integral curricular and/or extra-curricular field trip opportunity for high school theatre students and theatre educators. Due to the decline of COVID-19 cases in the DMV region, the omicron variant having crested on January 8 according to the state's coronavirus dashboard, and in an effort to get back to normal, this year's festival will take place in person on February 25 and 26 at the Gordon Center for the Performing Arts in Owings Mills, Maryland.

We remain fully committed to the safety of our festival participants. According to the CDC, vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic, and promoting vaccination can help schools safely return to extra-curricular activities. As such, full vaccination status will be required of all adults attending the Maryland Thespian Festival and will be strongly encouraged for all participating students. In addition, universal in-door masking will be in place for the duration of the event, and contact tracing measures will also be in effect. You can view how we're keeping our festival as safe as possible on our website. As sporting events have returned to programming as usual, arts-based programs, especially competition-based arts programming such as ours, seek the same equitable support.

It's important to note that attending the Maryland Thespian Festival is students' only opportunity to qualify for the International Thespian Excellence Awards. It is also the only opportunity schools have to qualify for the International Chapter Select Showcase. In addition, through a multitude of additional award opportunities for school programs, educators, and students, the Maryland Thespian Festival is the only chance to bolster the recognition and solidify the reputation of your school's performing arts programming. Finally, it is the only opportunity for students to audition for collegiate performing arts-based programs of study and scholarships at the size and scale we offer.

We hope you will support your Thespian Troupe's participation in the Maryland Thespian Festival this year. Should you have any additional questions or need further information on how we plan to keep everyone safe while offering a once-in-a-lifetime educational and artistic opportunity, please don't hesitate to reach out directly.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sean Elias', is written in a cursive style.

Sean Elias, M.A., B.F.A.  
Chapter Director  
Maryland Thespians, an Educational Theatre Association Affiliate