



2026 KEY CHANGES OVERVIEW

EVENT GUIDE FORMATTING UPDATES

To make the Event Guide more user-friendly, each section now has a “Key Dates for this Track” table at the top, that outlines all dates/deadlines for that element of participation.

In addition, more showcase-related documents and forms that have been sent via email to qualifying schools are now linked throughout the document for ongoing ease of reference.

SHOWCASE TOWN HALL CALLS

We will host virtual Town Hall calls in late April. All directors are asked to prioritize one of two options. The first portion will be for all directors. The latter portion will be for directors new to IHSTMA or Showcase.

REQUIRED STUDENT WAIVER – EARLIER DUE DATE

The required Waiver/Release for all student participants will now be due prior to all on-site activity commencing and will double as an emergency contact form. Students will not be allowed to begin rehearsal without a waiver/emergency contact form on file. (See page 9)

ADJUSTED CALL TIMES ON EVENT DAY

Call times on the event day have been adjusted to build in an intentional “flex” rehearsal window for whichever of the Opening, Finale, or Triple Threat medleys could use additional stage time.

AWARD PICK-UP WINDOW

The window for picking up your physical awards has been shortened to eliminate hours that saw minimal foot traffic. (See page 13.)

NO PHOTOGRAPHER AT AWARD PICK-UP

A photographer will not be provided during Award Pick-Up. Branded backdrops will still be available, and schools are asked to self-manage any photo opportunities after picking up their awards.

DRESS REHEARSAL – CONTINUING FOR A SECOND YEAR

A required afternoon dress rehearsal was implemented for the first time last year. Based on feedback from schools and the production team, we will again incorporate a full dress rehearsal into the schedule. Students will again be provided with dinner between dress rehearsal and the showcase. (See page 13.)

STUDENT SEATING – NOW BY PARTICIPATION ELEMENT

This year, we intend to adjust how students’ seats are assigned during the showcase. Rather than being seated by school, we hope to seat by the element in which they are participating. This will expedite the seating assignment process for staff, ensure that students coming to showcase on their own have peers to sit with, and help us more easily find students when it is time for their group to go backstage. (Directors who elect to sit in the student section will be seated with at least one of their students.)

TECHNICAL THEATER SCHOLARSHIP – UPDATED AMOUNTS & DIVISIONS

Technical Theater Scholarship application information has been incorporated into the Event Guide. In addition, for 2026 the scholarship amounts and the eligible divisions have been updated. (See page 42.)

PERFORMING ENSEMBLES – SOLIDIFYING MAXIMUM STUDENT NUMBERS

To better manage available ticket inventory for all participating schools, we have solidified guidelines around the maximum number of students that schools with performing ensembles can have participate. (See page 22.)