

## Theatre In Our Schools

*A Perspective From a 2020 New Jersey Junior State Thespian Officer*

**“Theatre! An important essential to my everyday lifestyle.** My daily schedule consists of long days at school, Drama till 5, Homework, a time-consuming effort than other clubs and obligations to attend to. That’s basically the gist of my day. But at the end of the day, it’s worth it because no matter how tired and overworked I feel, I’m still doing what I love. **That love for theatre has shaped me into the teenager I am today.** Teaching me with dedication comes responsibility... and with that comes a passion and a set of other skills that will guide me for life. That’s why theatre is so important to have in our schools; it sets kids for life; impacting them in so many ways people don’t expect it to. Everyone has this stereotype that Drama and Musical theatre teach the kids nothing, and all that we accommodate for is a performance and making the kids who aren’t athletic feel like they belong but, it’s so much more than that.

Let’s face it, not everyone is going to be a great athlete. Some are blessed with the gifts of athletics others are blessed with the gifts of song. We are all born with talents and were given them to embrace them. But, if a school doesn’t have a theatre program what is that kid who loves to act and was gifted with a beautiful voice supposed to do. It’s simply unfair that football players and soccer players are doing what they love and embracing their talents but, the other can’t because there is no option. **I’ve seen theatre change people on so many different levels.** It enhances not only their social health but their emotional health as well. There’s this whole idea of equality and acceptance in theatre that it makes the kids who are different from everybody else feel welcome. For example, it makes that kid who is maybe transitioning or that autistic kid who are always getting picked on and bullied feel more aware that there are people out there for them. High School and Middle school are rough times even the kids who aren’t different get picked on and bullied.

Can you only imagine what kids like them go through daily? So, after that long hard day, school drama is like a comforting thing for you because you have these groups of people who won’t judge you and make you feel like an outcast constantly, but will welcome you with open arms for who you are. Don’t you think that would be the highlight of your day? Along with all this, theatre teaches kids to pursue their dreams and talents no matter what aspect of life they are in, and isn’t that what schools are for? In all, theatre enriches kids to become great successful, loving, caring people in life which is why it should be placed in all schools nationally across America. It not only advances children theatrically and musically but prospers great human beings in our society. It is a mix of all aspects of life in one knowledge, compassion, and character. It fits the criteria of a great program overall. **So, the next time someone trash talks about theatre or tries to make budget cuts or even tries to get rid of the program, read this to them** and see what they say, or if it even inspired them because it truly is such a great thing. A program that has sprouted not only to entertain, but at the same time, provide an escape from the cruel outside world.”

*Joseph Novitsky*

