

# EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

## EDUCATIONAL MISSION

Whenever I try to answer the question of “Why am I a performing arts educator?” I often find myself thinking about how I felt when I was a student in theatre class. It was the place in which I felt the most supported by my peers. I could be goofy and express my true self without being judged. I, and my classmates, would work all semester on a production that we would be so proud of by the end because we created it, together, from the ground up. Without even realizing it, I became a more confident person, learned the value of teamwork, and exercised my empathy as I explored the world from the perspective of each character I portrayed. I know that theatre class changed my life for the better and I want nothing more than to share that experience with the next generation.

## CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

I am a firm believer that in an educational setting, the process is far more important than the product. Of course, I always strive for a successful production that exhibits quality and evokes emotion, but the students spend the majority of time in class or rehearsal; which is where I think the real work happens. If our rehearsal process can be a group effort in which others are supporting their fellow actors’ or technicians’ ideas, and they leave each meeting feeling better about themselves or the world, then I would call that a success no matter how the show turns out to be. As a teacher or director I intentionally focus on the positive in the room rather than the negative. Without a doubt, that mentality breeds success in our experiences and our productions.

## WARM-UP

- Voice
- Body
- Imagination

## RULES

- Respect
- Participate
- Have Fun!

## WRAP-UP

- Questions
- Gems
- Hands In



## IMPORTANCE OF STORYTELLING

Storytelling allows us to see the world from another point of view and to take an audience along with us on that journey. Books, movies, and paintings...I think they're all terrific mediums, but I believe that witnessing real life human interaction evokes a unique connection and thoughtfulness unlike any other. I think that anytime a person is a part of, or witness to, a theatrical production the world becomes a better place.



*"When we get a chance to act, it's our job, at least in part, to get inside a character's head and to search for a way to see life from that person's point of view... It may never be more urgent to see the world through another person's eyes. And when the culture is divided so sharply, actors can help, at least a little, by doing what we do. The nice part is it's fun to do it... So my wish for all of us is: Let's stay playful, let's have fun and lets keep searching. You can't solve everything, but it wouldn't hurt."*

-Alan Alda

## OVERCOMING CHALLENGE

To excel in any subject requires hard work. Putting in the time and effort to succeed is a huge undertaking for a student, but when they do, it shines a light on their dedication and perseverance. Performing and Fine Arts subjects not only require this enthusiasm and commitment, but they also ask the students to dig deeper and allow themselves to express their creativity. This might be the biggest challenge of all. While attending one of his lectures, I once heard from an education specialist named Dr. David Ackerman that, "Learning is the ability to accept change. To allow change in our environment requires trust. Therefore **trust** between the educator and the learner is at the root of all learning." Building relationships and an understanding of trust is essential for any learning environment, especially one that requires students to challenge themselves by sharing their work in front of others.

## TRANSCENDING VALUES

Confidence. Empathy. Teamwork. Students develop these skills and values, among many others, when they are engaged in the performing arts, and they can have a lasting impact long after our play has come to a close. I believe that the values that students exercise while they create characters, develop a performance, overcome challenges, and build a production carry over to their schoolwork, friendships, and whatever their career ambitions may be. I care deeply about the production quality and emotional depth of the performances I oversee. Mostly though, I strive for an enriching classroom and rehearsal experience that my students will take something away from; which I believe changes their lives and makes the world a better place.