



OUR MISSION IS STUDENT SUCCESS...ACADEMIC, ARTISTIC, AND HUMANISTIC

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December 2014

Dear Parents and Students:

Thank you for considering School of the Arts. The purpose of this document is to provide you with information about SOTA and its audition process. We know that choosing a High School can be a daunting task for you and your family. We hope this document will answer your questions and alleviate some of your concerns.

SOTA students pursue one of six arts majors in addition to the typical academic requirements needed for graduation. These majors include: Creative Writing, Dance, Drama, Music - Band, Choir, Strings or Piano, Theatre Technology, and Visuals Art. Acceptance into SOTA is determined by the successful completion of an audition in one of these six majors.

Attending SOTA requires a six-year commitment by both students and their parents. In addition to being challenged academically, SOTA students will complete a rigorous arts curriculum which includes: evening and weekend performance and educational enrichment opportunities. These commitments include: before and after-school rehearsals, concerts, shows, and cultural field trips. Parents are responsible for providing transportation to and from these events, and may even be asked to assist in various capacities such as building sets, fundraising and offering support to school programs.

Below are some facts about SOTA, an outline of the audition process, and frequently asked questions that have been brought up by parents and students over the years. We hope you find this information useful and informative.

FACTS ABOUT SOTA

- 1,162 students
- 90% graduation rate
- SOTA is responsible for 5% of the total RCSD graduation rate
- 92% of students pursue advanced degrees after graduation
- 25-30% of students pursue a career in the arts after graduation

APPLICATION PROCESS

The SOTA audition process is an opportunity to showcase your artistic talent and to determine whether you are a good fit for SOTA and whether or not SOTA is a good fit for you. The audition only takes into consideration your child's artist ability and potential for growth in your chosen area of art. Be sure that your child chooses a major that they love and are most passionate about. The SOTA audition process and timeline of events is as follows:

- Complete RCSD Schools of Choice Booklet
- Complete SOTA Application by first Friday of December
- Choose one arts major for which to audition
- Secure a completed recommendation form from your teacher

- Once your application is complete, Assistant Principal of the Arts Alan Tirre will schedule your audition
- You will be notified in writing of your scheduled audition date
- Auditions will take place during the last week of January
- Bring your letters of recommendation and essay to your audition
- Student placement notifies families of acceptance by late March/early April
- Students who are not accepted will be placed on a waiting list. A letter will be sent home notifying those students of their score and position on the waiting list.
- Students on the waiting list can be notified of acceptance up until the first day of school.

Frequently Asked Questions...

Can I Audition For More Than One Major?

- No. Our experience has proven that students are more successful if they choose the major that they are most passionate about and focus only on that major. SOTA receives between 900-1,200 applications each year. Each applicant is guaranteed to be scheduled for an audition over a three- day period. SOTA simply does not have enough time or resources to audition that many students in more than one major.

How Many Seats Are Available Each Year?

- SOTA typically accepts 200 new students each year. This equates to approximately 20 students per major. Statistically, SOTA will accept roughly one out of every five students who apply.

Unfortunately, four of every five students will not be accepted. Because of this fact, it is vital that you complete the RCSD Schools of Choice Booklet to secure a seat at your second or third choice school if you are not accepted into SOTA.

Can I Audition Again Next Year If I Do Not Get Accepted This Year?

- Yes! You can audition each and every year. The largest number of acceptances occurs at Grade 7. Acceptance for off-grade level auditions - students entering any grade beyond Grade 7 - is not only based on the completion of a successful audition, but also seat availability specifically in the student's grade level and chosen art major.

What Is The Audition Like?

- SOTA's audition is a simulated classroom experience. During the audition, students will get an idea about what it would be like to attend SOTA. We have created a unique combination of group and individual work specific to each arts discipline. The audition lasts for approximately three hours and consists of class participation and/or rehearsal. In addition, there is an interview/performance component where prospective students will individually demonstrate their artistic ability.

What Does SOTA Look For In The Audition?

- We look for a unique combination of talent and potential to learn. We measure this through a three-hour simulated classroom experience where students will be able to participate in a variety of group and individual work.

Do You Factor In Academics, Behavior, Attendance, Etc. Into The Decision To Accept Students?

- No. Our charter does not allow for that; acceptance into SOTA is based solely on the child's artistic ability as measured during the scheduled audition.

Do You Expect All Of Your Students To Pursue A Career In The Arts After Graduation?

- No. Only 25 – 30 percent of SOTA students pursue a career in the arts after graduation. We are not in the business of training professional artists. However, 100% of our students will have a greater appreciation for the arts in education and in society when they leave School of the Arts.

Do You Give Preference To Students Who Have Siblings That Already Attend Sota?

- No. The only possible exception would be in the case of a tie-breaker. However, in that situation we would also factor in other considerations including: the completion of their application file; quality of student essays, letters of recommendation, and artistic portfolio.

If I Get Accepted Into One Art Major, Will I Have An Opportunity To Participate In Other Majors?

- Yes, particularly in Grades 7 and 8, our Middle School curriculum in the Arts is exploratory in nature. The Middle School Music Ensembles are open to all students. Additionally, Middle School students are scheduled into 10-week “arts rollover classes” where they will experience every major over the course of their two years in Middle School prior to entering Grade 9 where they will then essentially be locked into their chosen major through graduation. However, High School students also have ample opportunities to take elective classes in other majors, especially during junior and senior year. Any student can audition for SOTA's plays and musicals that take place throughout the year.

How Does SOTA Compare Academically To Charter Schools And Other Public Schools In Our Area?

- It is difficult to compare SOTA to charter schools because they operated under different guidelines. SOTA students are held to the same academic standards as any other public school. SOTA's high graduation rate is evidence of our strong academic program. There are also full offerings of Advanced Placement courses within every department. SOTA will fully prepare your child to pursue any academic or artistic career of their choosing after graduation.

We hope this document has answered some question that you may have had about SOTA and our audition process. If you have any further questions or need more information, please contact me at 585-242-7682 ext. 3320. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Alan Tirre
Assistant Principal of the Arts