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# WEST VIRGINIA THESPIANS<sup>SM</sup>

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AN EDUCATIONAL THEATRE  
ASSOCIATION AFFILIATE

## **STATE THESPIAN OFFICER HANDBOOK**

UPDATED SEPT 2020

**Questions about this handbook should be directed to STO Advisor:  
Caitlin Maxwell at [cplmaxwell17@gmail.com](mailto:cplmaxwell17@gmail.com)**

### **Who We Are**

The West Virginia Thespians is the state chapter level of the Educational Theatre Association (EdTA). The EdTA is the home of the International Thespian Society, the honor society for educational theatre. On the state level we strive to support educational theatre in all aspects.

### **Purpose of this Handbook**

The purpose of *This Handbook* is to provide a collective document for all of the activities in which West Virginia State Thespian Officers engage. As our activities may change from year to year, this is a living document, and items may change at any time. However, we will clearly communicate changes to our members as they occur.

## **STO Job Description**

State Thespian Officers (STOs) serve as the student voice for West Virginia Thespians. They are strong leaders in their troupes who positively impact West Virginia Thespians for their peers across the state. They work hand in hand with the Adult Board (AB) to plan, implement, and serve during all conferences and events. They promote creativity, collaboration, respect, and artistry in everything they do. STOs travel throughout the state to various conferences, so STOs need to be reliable and flexible with their schedules.

## **STO Officers**

STO Officers will be voted on at the May meeting which signals the beginning of the new term year. The positions are as follows:

- Secretary (1 chair)
  - Record the meetings
- Historian (1-2 chairs)
  - Gather images, quotes, press and all important information regarding WV Thespians during their term year
- Outreach (1-3 chairs)
  - Spearhead the mission of recruiting new members and schools as well as keeping in touch with alumni
- Fundraising (1-3 chairs)
  - Spearhead the mission of raising funds for WV Thespians, ITS, EdTA, and BCEFA
- Member At Large (remaining amount of board members)
  - Represent the student's voice

## **STO Code of Conduct**

- STOs are model students. They display the utmost amount of respect for their peers, adults, and surrounding facilities. STOs should model appropriate behavior at all Thespian events.
- STOs are leaders and collaborators beyond their troupe's requirements. STOs work with their fellow Thespians and troupe directors on various projects with deadlines. STOs are expected to make all deadlines for their responsibilities. If they cannot, they are expected to communicate their impending late completion to the STO Advisor with ample amount of time for adjustments to be made.
- STOs are expected to be in good standing with their home Thespian troupe and school. A STO can be removed at any time based on behavior or failure to complete duties for their troupe or school. Indiana Thespians honors the individual school and Thespian troupe expectations and consequences.

## **STO Duties**

- STO members are required to attend STO planning meetings, Area Festival, and the State Festival. Attendance is mandatory. No more than one absence is excused in advance by the STO Advisor. Inconsistent attendance will be treated as a resignation. Excused absences are considered to be an absence for illness, death in the family, or school related event.
- STO members must secure their own transportation to and from all of the STO events listed in the above duty. STO members must understand that these events occur all over the state of West Virginia.
- STO members must actively solicit individual troupe involvement in Regional, State, and International Thespian activities. STO members must address individual troupe concerns with the State Director(s) and STO Advisor.
- STO members must advise the Adult Board (AB) about student concerns and seek input in our State organization.
- STO members must serve their term beginning at the State Thespian Festival and conclude at the State Thespian Festival the following year.

## **STO General Calendar**

- Fall STO/AB Meeting (Sept)
- Winter STO/AB Meeting (January)
- Area Festivals (Usually in February)
- State Festival (Usually in April-March)
- Spring STO/AB Meeting (May)

## **STO Applicant Guidelines**

- Applicants need to be inducted Thespians in order to apply.
- There is no set amount of “involvement” or “experience” or Thespian Points that a student needs to have in order to apply or be selected as a State Thespian Officer.
- The applicants must be in high school during the year they apply.
- The STO board does not have a minimum or maximum amount of students. Students are selected based on their leadership abilities regardless of the total number.
- Schools can submit as many applicants as they wish. The best applicants will be selected regardless of what school they attend.
- STO members serve one term after being elected; however, STO members may reapply to be elected the following year.

## **Application Process**

- Applicants will submit a digital application through a Google Form process. This application includes general information, short answer responses, and long answer responses.
- A recommendation letter from their teacher should be sent to [cplmaxwell17@gmail.com](mailto:cplmaxwell17@gmail.com).
  - ◆ It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that their Troupe Director has been given enough time to write the recommendation letter and send it to the STO Advisor by December 31. West Virginia Thespians highly suggests applicants communicate their pending application so Troupe Directors can plan accordingly.
- Applicants must submit a video to the STO Advisor prior to their Area Festival. The video must consist of the applicant’s name, school, and why they would like to be a STO.

- Applicants may be narrowed down by the STO Election Committee. After the winter meeting, the applicants will receive an email stating if they have been elected.
- Applicants are encouraged to “shadow” the current STOs at Area Festival to get a better understanding of the position. All interested applicants need to make arrangements to shadow through the STO Advisor via email.
- The new STOs are announced via email, and online.

### **Area Festival**

- STOs must attend their respective Area’s Festival.
- STOs are expected to arrive at the Area Festival early so they can welcome the troupes as they arrive. STOs should spread themselves out between performances and during lunch to interact with other troupes.
- STOs will introduce each play with an introduction provided by the director.
  - ◆ The STOs are expected to review these passages so they confidently and accurately present them to the audience.
- The STOs help hand out awards at the end of the festival.

### **State Festival**

- STOs are required to attend all of State Festival.
- STOs are welcome to be in their school’s play, bring tech projects, perform in IEs, audition for scholarships, etc. STO weekend duties are planned around STOs’ performance times.
- STOs are expected to attend the STO meeting prior to State Conference to help finalize plans and jobs.
- STOs create an Opening Ceremony skit that explains the rules and expectations for the delegates.
- STOs will take attendance at every workshop and play. They will also count attendance and award attendance prizes.
- STO will plan and host student activity for Friday night.
- STOs introduce each play with an introduction provided by the director.
  - ◆ The STOs are expected to review these passages so they confidently and accurately present them to the audience.

## **International Thespian Festival**

- Attending the International Thespian Festival is not required to be a STO, but it is highly encouraged.

## **Dress Code**

In the interest of presenting the STO as community role models students must adhere to a simple dress code. Students can wear casual clothing; however, students must look neat and clean. Students should not wear clothing that represents gang activity, drugs or alcohol, or any other illegal activities. Clothing should cover the students body respectfully.

## **STO Removal Process**

- If a STO fails to comply with any of the aforementioned expectations and code of conduct, the following procedures will take place based on a 3 Chances model.
  - ❖ STO receives a formal warning from the STO Advisor in hopes to rectify the situation and move forward with positive results.
  - ❖ STO and Troupe Director receive a formal warning stating that the problem has not resolved or a new one has surfaced.
  - ❖ STO is removed from the board. The now former STO is welcome to attend any and all West Virginia Thespian Conferences, but is not considered a member of its leadership team.

## **Liability**

- STOs, their parents/legal guardians, and their Troupe Director understand that all STOs are required to provide their own transportation to and from all Thespian Conferences. West Virginia Thespians hold no liability in regard to damage and/or injury to self and/or personal vehicle.

- STOs are welcome to ride with their troupes on school buses to conferences when possible.
- STOs and parents/legal guardians are to sign a permission slip for STOs to travel in the STO Advisor's personal vehicle when possible.
  - ◆ STO Advisor does her best to assist with travel by car pooling when possible.
  - ◆ Parents/Legal guardians are welcome to decline the offer.
- Incidents of unsafe weather will be taken into consideration for STO travel. In the event that the roads are not deemed safe for young drivers, the STOs will not be required to attend that particular Thespian event in person but may have to attend a meeting online. Those decisions will be made by the STO Advisor at that time.