



PSHS Theatre Guild Casting Process

The process of auditioning and casting a show is a complex, arduous process that requires great care on the part of the Production Team. Our objective is to develop a process that takes into consideration the students' time, skill level, educational opportunities, and the timeline of the production. Our process is also rooted in psychological research on teenagers' current levels of anxiety, stress, and resiliency.

Step 1 - Audition Workshop

Many students come into an audition having never experienced an audition before or have experienced an audition, but with a different theatre company or school. Between two to three weeks prior to audition week, an audition workshop will be held that is specific to the upcoming production. The workshop will be optional, but will allow students the opportunity to work with the director and production team on audition etiquette, the audition process, and general acting technique.

Step 2 - The Audition

The audition process for a production can last anywhere from a week to two weeks, depending on the production, scheduling, and elements involved (music, dance, etc...). In any scenario, the audition process involves an individual element and a group element. For example: When auditioning a musical, there will be an individual audition in which students are asked to sing a song by themselves with piano accompaniment. After the individual audition, a callback audition is announced for students whom the production team would like to see again. This may be for a specific part or simply because the production team would like to hear the student again. Auditions are scheduled in 5-7 minute increments using Doodle or some other web-based scheduling site.

Step 3 - Callbacks

Different theatre companies and guilds have differing thoughts and philosophies on the purpose and function of callbacks. Ours is simple: Callbacks are held to see students we'd like to see or hear again. This may be to see them for a specific part or simply because their individual audition may have been an insufficient gauge to determine their role in the show. Because of how tight our timeline is for auditions, the most effective and professional way to inform students of callbacks is through a list. This allows us to hold callbacks within 24-48 hours of the individual audition.



Step 4 - Casting

Again, different companies and guilds have differing thoughts and philosophies on the purpose and function of casting a production. Again, ours is simple: Our role as theatre educators is to set up students for success and serve the playwright's intention when they wrote the piece we're producing. We're not here to pretend we are a professional theatre company but we *are* here to provide as professional an experience as possible for our students. When we cast a show, we are not "cutting" students, rather, we are assigning roles to students we believe set them up for success, offer an educational opportunity, and serve the play.

The announcement of a cast list is a sensitive matter and a topic about which I've seen countless debates on social media. Our approach is simple: We want to serve the student while also providing them an opportunity to process their emotions. We believe the most effective way to announce the casting of a show is by sending a list home via email or posting a list somewhere in school. This allows students the chance to process their thoughts and emotions on their own and also allows them time to formulate questions they may have about our process or decision. This process also encourages self-advocacy in students and resiliency, both of which studies show high school students are less and less equipped with in today's world of instant gratification and knee-jerk social media.

Thank you for taking the time to read through our process. If you have any questions, concerns, or simply want to talk through the process, feel free to contact an advisor of the PSHS Theatre Guild.