



BETTY LYNN
BUCKLEY
AWARDS

2026/2027

PARTICIPATION GUIDE

Updated 8/04/2026



Casa Mañana School of Musical Theatre
CASAMANANA.ORG

**All information included is subject to change with or without notice to participants.*

THE 2026-2027 BETTY LYNN BUCKLEY AWARDS

CELEBRATING 27 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE IN HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT US

Founded in 1958, Casa Mañana Theatre is the largest performing arts organization in Tarrant County and a cornerstone of Fort Worth's cultural community. Known as "The House of Tomorrow," Casa is dedicated to producing high-quality live theatre and inspiring the next generation of artists.

Each year, over 165,000 students and educators attend performances through our Children's Theatre, and our nationally recognized Casa Mañana Studios offers exceptional training for young performers. Programs include year-round classes, Camp Casa, private coaching, and our Apprentice Program — a pre-professional track with workshops led by industry professionals, including casting agents, directors, and college audition coaches.

Our education and outreach initiatives continue to grow, providing access to arts experiences for students across North Texas and helping young artists build confidence, discipline, and creativity.

HISTORY OF THE BETTY LYNN BUCKLEY AWARDS

Established in 2000, the Betty Lynn Buckley Awards honor excellence in high school musical theatre across North Texas. Named after Fort Worth native and Tony Award-winning actress Betty Lynn Buckley, a Casa Mañana and FWISD alumna, the program recognizes outstanding student performers, technicians, and educators.

What began as a local scholarship initiative has grown into one of the region's most respected theatre awards, now including schools from multiple surrounding counties. Each spring, nominees are celebrated in a live, Tony Awards-style ceremony, with opportunities for scholarships and professional recognition.

The Buckley Awards continue to spotlight the talent and dedication of high school theatre students while supporting the next generation of performing artists.

HOW IT WORKS

1. Register

High schools across North Texas are invited to register their full-length musical productions for participation in the Buckley Awards. Schools must meet eligibility guidelines and submit production details by the registration deadline.

2. Adjudication

Each registered production is evaluated by a panel of DFW's best theatre professionals. These experienced adjudicators attend performances and score them based on detailed rubric, covering categories such as acting, choreography, technical elements and overall production quality.

3. Awards

Based on adjudicator scores and feedback, nominees are selected in categories like Outstanding Lead Performer, Outstanding Supporting Performer, Technical Achievements, Best Play and Best Musical. Finalists are announced ahead of the ceremony.

4. Ceremony

Finalists are invited to perform at the annual Buckley Awards Ceremony, modeled after the Tony Awards. The event includes live performances, special guest appearances, and the announcement of winners in each category.

5. Scholarships

Students who win in select categories are eligible to receive a scholarship award of up to \$1000 to support their continued arts education or training.

Karen Snyder Pirzchalski Scholarship

Established in memory of longtime Casa Mañana supporter and board member Karen Snyder Pirzchalski, this endowed scholarship fund provides ongoing financial support for deserving students studying at Casa Mañana. Thanks to the generosity of her husband, Stan, Karen's legacy continues to uplift young performers for generations to come.

Bobbie Wygant Scholarship

The Bobbie Wygant Scholarship honors the remarkable legacy of Bobbie Wygant, a beloved figure in the entertainment industry and a steadfast supporter of the arts at Casa Mañana. Her lifelong dedication to storytelling and community inspires young artists to pursue their passions and make their own lasting impact. This endowed scholarship fund provides ongoing financial support for deserving students studying at Casa Mañana.

6. Workshops

Throughout the Buckley season, students can attend exclusive workshops led by industry professionals, covering topics like audition prep, vocal technique, choreography, and college audition prep and college theatre programs.

CASA MANANA MISSION STATEMENT

Casa Mañana strives to create, nurture, and advance live professional theatre unparalleled in artistic excellence for the enrichment and education of our diverse community and its future generations of artists and patrons.

REGISTRATION

ELIGIBILITY

Public, private, and charter schools serving grades 9–12 are invited to participate in the Betty Lynn Buckley Awards, celebrating excellence in high school theatre across North Texas. Each eligible school may submit up to two productions — either plays or musicals — for adjudication.

Schools may only submit 1 musical for adjudication.

School Applications must be turned in no later than September 18, 2026.

The adjudication window runs from September 26, 2025 through the weekend of April 11, 2026.

Schools located in the following counties are welcome to participate:

Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Hood, Kaufmann, Johnson, Parker, Tarrant and Wise Counties

PARTICIPATION FEES AND REQUIREMENTS

The entrance fee for each selected production is based on a tiered system:

- Tier I – \$200 per production: Public schools classified as Title I (not including private or charter schools).
- Tier II – \$325 per production: All non-Title I schools, including private and charter schools.

Payment must be submitted via check made payable to Casa Mañana, Inc or with a card payment (using our Registration Fee Form, provided at the end of this packet) within one month of acceptance.

Once accepted:

- Schools must submit a completed Production Details Form (and for musicals, a musician list) at least two weeks before opening night.
- Productions with double casting must choose one cast to be adjudicated.
- Missing deadlines may result in disqualification from awards eligibility.

BETTY LYNN BUCKLEY AWARD REFUND POLICY

All entrance fees are non-refundable, and productions cannot be adjudicated without full payment.

PRIMARY CONTACT REQUIREMENT

Each school participating in the Betty Lynn Buckley Awards must list a primary and secondary contact for all program-related communication. These individuals will be responsible for receiving important updates, deadlines, and adjudication information. Providing two contacts helps ensure that no communication is missed during the production and awards process.

BETTY LYNN BUCKLEY SCHEDULE OF EVENTS AND TIME COMMITMENT

At Casa Mañana and the Betty Lynn Buckley Awards, we understand the time and dedication it takes to produce a high school show. We strive to respect that commitment by minimizing additional responsibilities for educators and students throughout the adjudication process.

However, if your school receives a nomination, there will be additional time commitments related to the awards ceremony, including potential rehearsals and materials submissions.

Registration Window	August 4, 2026, through 5:00 PM, Friday, September 18, 2026
Adjudication Window (Production Dates):	Wednesday, September 23, 206 – Saturday, April 3, 2027 • Production Details Form due 2 weeks before opening night • Post-Adjudication Form due 2 weeks after final show
Nominations Announced:	On or around Thursday, April 8, 2027
Spelling Corrections Due:	5:00 PM, Monday, April 12, 2027
Excellence in Musical, Materials Due:	5:00 PM, Wednesday, April 21, 2027
Awards Ceremony Prep	April 27-April 30 & May 3-7, 2027
Buckley Awards Ceremony	7:30 PM, Friday, May 7, 2027

SOCIAL MEDIA AND STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

By participating in the Betty Lynn Buckley Awards, schools grant Casa Mañana permission to share production photos and highlight student achievements across our social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

We love shining a spotlight on the incredible work being done by students and educators across North Texas. It's our way of celebrating your creativity, dedication, and the power of high school theatre!

Please remember not to publicly announce nominations until Casa Mañana shares them on our official platforms.

Follow along and see your students featured:

Facebook: facebook.com/casafb

TikTok: @casamanana

Instagram: [@CasaManana](https://www.instagram.com/CasaManana)

You can email stories, photos and videos to marketing@casamanana.org for us to share out.

PROGRAM AD

Casa Mañana requires all schools to place the provided ad in the printed and digital program for adjudicated productions. The ad serves to promote the high school as one of the schools involved in the Betty Lynn Buckley Awards. Casa Mañana will provide the artwork. If interested, Casa Mañana can also provide artwork for our Casa Mañana School for Musical Theatre and TYA/Broadway season.

PARTICIPATION ANNOUNCEMENT

Casa Mañana encourages all participating schools to announce their participation in the Betty Lynn Buckley Awards on social media sites, newsletter, websites and other materials produced by the schools and district.

OUR ADJUDICATION PROCESS

The Betty Lynn Buckley Awards are proud to feature some of the best and brightest theatre professionals in the DFW community as adjudicators. These experienced individuals are passionate about arts education and are committed to providing constructive, encouraging, and skill-building feedback to students and directors alike.

Each participating school will be assigned three adjudicators who will attend a live performance and submit evaluations using a standardized Buckley Awards rubric. Adjudicators also receive training through a mandatory orientation to ensure consistent scoring and thoughtful, respectful critiques.

We encourage all participants to remember that theatre is subjective, and feedback is meant to support growth, not discourage creativity. Adjudicators will also consider directors' notes, budget constraints, and any additional materials submitted to provide a well-rounded assessment.

Our goal is to celebrate student achievement while fostering continued development in performance, production, and collaboration.

ADJUDICATION PROCESS: STEP-BY-STEP

1. Assignment of Judges

Each participating production will be assigned three adjudicators.

2. Notification of Attendance

Schools will be notified of the adjudicators' arrival dates and times during the week of their performance.

3. Double-Cast Productions

If a show is double cast, the director must submit dates and times for only one cast to be adjudicated.

4. Conflict of Interest Policy

Adjudicators will not be assigned to evaluate a school or district where a conflict of interest exists.

5. Complimentary Tickets

Adjudicators will receive two complimentary tickets, which should be placed under “Buckley Adjudicator” at the box office.

6. Post-Show Feedback

Following the performance, each adjudicator will complete a detailed feedback form based on their observations.

7. Design & Stage Management Evaluation

- Design Categories are judged based on the production’s presentation, video submission, and design portfolio.
- Stage Management is adjudicated through a video submission and portfolio.

8. Scoring & Nomination Process

Adjudicators submit numerical scores along with their written feedback. These scores are compiled to determine nominees and winners.

9. Feedback Distribution

After the Buckley Awards Ceremony, the Buckley Coordinator will compile and send all adjudicator feedback to participating schools.

AWARD CATEGORIES

The award categories for the 2026-2027 Season includes:

OVERALL CATEGORIES

- Excellence in a Musical
- Excellence in a Play

PERFORMANCE CATEGORIES

- Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role in a Musical
- Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role in a Musical
- Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Musical
- Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Musical
- Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role in a Play
- Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role in a Play
- Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Play
- Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Play

DESIGN, PRODUCTION, AND ARTISTIC CATEGORIES

- Excellence in a Student Orchestra (in a musical production only)
- Excellence in Choreography
- Excellence in Stage Management

- Excellence in Costume Design
- Excellence in Lighting Design
- Excellence in Scenic Design
- Excellence in Sound Design

EDUCATOR AWARDS

- Educator of the Year

NOMINATIONS & WINNERS

Nomination Announcement

Nominations will be announced on or around April 8, 2027, and will be shared live on Casa Mañana's Instagram (@CasaManana).

Additional Student Nominations

Buckley adjudicators attending a performance may nominate up to two additional student performers for consideration in the Lead or Supporting categories.

Finality of Decisions

All nomination and winner selections are final and not subject to appeal.

Decision-Making Authority

Casa Mañana retains the right to interpret all rules and regulations and make final decisions regarding any matters not explicitly covered.

ELIGIBILITY FOR NOMINATIONS

The Betty Lynn Buckley Awards are designed to recognize and celebrate the talent, creativity, and hard work of high school students. All nominations are based on the strength and abilities of students alone — not on budget, adult involvement, or size of the production.

Only students in grades 9–12 are eligible for consideration.

1. Student Performance Categories (Lead & Supporting)

- Each production may submit up to 6 student performances for adjudication in lead or supporting categories.
- Directors will determine which roles are lead vs. supporting using the criteria below.
- Students must be in grades 9–12 to be eligible.
- Schools are not required to submit all six roles. However, no more than six may be submitted per production.

Musicals

- Lead Roles must meet the criteria outlined by the Jimmy Awards: named characters with at least one solo, a featured song, spoken dialogue in multiple scenes, and appearances in all acts.
- Supporting Roles must have a name, at least one solo (featured or in a group number), and significant spoken dialogue.

Plays

- Lead Roles must be named, appear in multiple scenes with substantial dialogue, and be present in all acts.
- Supporting Roles must have a name and significant spoken dialogue with other characters.

2. Student Orchestra (Musicals Only)

- Orchestras may not be more than 20% of adult participants, including the conductor.
- Schools must submit a full musician list in their Production Details form, clearly indicating student vs. adult players.

Design Categories

- A team of up to 3 students per design category may submit as a single nominee. Execution must be student-led, though adult guidance is allowed.
- Design Portfolio Requirements (due 1 week before opening night via Google Drive)
- If Design Portfolios are not turned in, in a timely manner, the student(s) will be disqualified.
- All student designers must be listed in the program as designers.

1. Stage Management

- Blocking diagrams
- Props tracking or preset
- 1 rehearsal report
- 1 production report
- Run sheet
- Any other relevant documentation
- 3-5 video submission including topics such as:
 - Challenges and adjustments.
 - Safety considerations.
 - Considerations to unify all design aspects.
 - Process to execute design.

2. Costume Design

Up to 3 students may submit a shared nomination.

Portfolio must include:

- Two renderings for two different characters
- Photos of each costume in its final form
- 3-5 video submission including topics such as:
 - Challenges and adjustments.
 - Safety considerations.
 - Considerations to unify all design aspects.
 - Process to execute design.

3. Scenic Design

Up to 3 students may submit a shared nomination.

Portfolio must include:

- 1 scenic rendering or model photo
- 1 photo of completed set onstage
- 3-5 video submission including topics such as:
 - Challenges and adjustments.
 - Safety considerations.
 - Considerations to unify all design aspects.
 - Process to execute design.

4. Lighting Design

Up to 3 students may submit a shared nomination.

Portfolio must include:

- 1 lighting plot
- 3 photos showing different lighting cues
- 3-5 video submission including topics such as:
 - Challenges and adjustments.
 - Safety considerations.
 - Considerations to unify all design aspects.
 - Process to execute design.

5. Sound Design

Up to 3 students may submit a shared nomination.

Portfolio must include:

- Examples of sound cues
- Mic list
- 3-5 video submission including topics such as:
 - Challenges and adjustments.
 - Safety considerations.
 - Considerations to unify all design aspects.
 - Process to execute design.

6. Choreography

Up to 3 students may submit a shared nomination. * Dance Captains are NOT Choreographers. Students must create and teach the dances.

Portfolio must include:

- A 2–3 minute video showing the student(s) teaching choreography
- Rehearsal footage
- Final performance video

Submitting Design Portfolios:

A team of up to 3 students per design category may submit as a single nominee. Execution must be student-led, though adult guidance is allowed.

Design Portfolio Requirements (due 1 week before opening night via Google Drive).

If Design Portfolios are not turned in, in a timely manner, the student(s) will be disqualified.

**Please email all design portfolios via Google Drive to:
bettybuckleyawards@gmail.com**

Subject Line Format:

School Name – Show Title – Design Portfolios

VIDEO SUBMISSIONS, TIME STAMPS AND PHOTOGRAPHY REQUIREMENTS

All participating schools must submit a Post-Adjudication Form on our website within 1 month of your final performance. This submission must include a full video recording of the production, time stamps for eligible categories, and production photography.

Video Submission Guidelines

- Schools are responsible for submitting an HD-quality video recording of the full production via Google Drive.
- These videos may be used in the Buckley Awards Ceremony, so please ensure the video and audio quality are clear.
- The video must be accessible (no download or access restrictions).
- **Musicals and Plays who wish to be nominated for Best Overall Musical or Best Overall Play must submit a video. If a school does not submit a video, then they will not be considered for nomination.**

Required Time Stamps

Please include a list of time stamps highlighting the following categories:

- Excellence in a Musical / Student Orchestra: One full ensemble number
- Excellence in a Play: Up to 5 minutes showcasing the overall production
- Performance Categories: Up to 2 minutes per nominee, highlighting a key song or scene
- Design Categories: Up to 2 minutes for each design area (e.g., scenic, costumes, lighting, etc.)

Photography Submission Requirements

Along with your video and time stamps, schools must submit high-resolution photos of the following:

- 1–2 images of each nominated performer
- 1–2 images of each nominated design
- 3–4 production photos showcasing the overall show

These materials help us properly feature and celebrate your students' work during the awards ceremony and on our platforms.

26th ANNUAL BETTY LYNN BUCKLEY AWARDS CEREMONY

For the past 26 years, the Betty Lynn Buckley Awards have celebrated the best in high school theatre across the DFW Metroplex with a vibrant, Tony Awards-style ceremony honoring outstanding student talent and creativity.

This year's ceremony will take place on Friday, May 8 at 7:30 PM, and promises to be an unforgettable evening recognizing the passion, enthusiasm, and artistry of our participating schools.

Students, faculty, and families from all participating schools are encouraged to attend and be part of this special celebration of theatre excellence.

PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

OUTSTANDING MUSICAL NOMINEES – PERFORMANCE GUIDELINE

- Schools nominated for Excellence in a Musical will be invited to perform one number from their production during the Betty Lynn Buckley Awards Ceremony.
- All 24 Best Leading Actor/ Actress and Best Supporting Actor/ Actress in a Musical nominees will receive one free Buckley Awards Ceremony Ticket.
- All other performers and nominees must purchase a ticket to attend the ceremony. Additional ticketing information will be provided in Spring 2027.

Performance Requirements and Limitations

- Schools must submit a performance track (from their original production) to be used during the ceremony. Live accompaniment will not be permitted.
- Musical numbers must be no longer than 4 minutes in duration.
- Each school may bring no more than 25 student performers. Schools exceeding this number will not be allowed to perform.
- No set pieces or props will be permitted on stage during performances.

Approval and Licensing

- Casa Mañana reserves the right to approve all selected musical numbers based on stage space, time constraints, and overall program balance.
- Casa Mañana will coordinate **performance licensing** for the ceremony; however, participating schools are responsible for notifying the appropriate licensing agent of their involvement in the Buckley Awards when securing production rights.

Submission Deadline

- All performance materials must be emailed to buckleys@casamanana.org by 5:00 PM on Wednesday, April 21, 2027.

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCER NOMINEES

Students nominated for Best Lead Actor and Best Lead Actress will be invited to perform featured selections during the Buckley Awards Ceremony as part of the evening's celebration of excellence in performance. (a detailed schedule will be sent out closer to the awards ceremony).

These students will receive one free Buckley Awards Ceremony Ticket.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

MASTER CLASSES

Participating students in the Betty Lynn Buckley Awards gain exclusive access to Casa Mañana master classes, led by visiting industry professionals. These sessions cover a variety of topics including college audition preparation, vocal technique, acting, and dance, offering valuable training and insight from artists working at the highest levels of theatre.

GROUP SALES DISCOUNTS/STUDENT MATINEES

Group sale tickets are available through the Casa Mañana Group Sales Coordinator. Contact Group Sales at groupsales@casamanana.org