



THESPIAN
DEMOCRACYWORKS



Dear Student,

This year, New Jersey Thespians is implementing a DemocracyWorks student essay competition. Originally the program was founded by the Educational Theatre Association in 2009 to support and grow student advocacy on behalf of theatre and other arts education. We are so excited to announce for the second year in a row, ArtPride New Jersey has agreed to co-sponsor the award!

On the national level, since 2009, more than 270 students have written essays and submitted them to EdTA focusing on topics ranging from the importance of diversity to the value of theatre education in a democratic society. Each year's winner earns a trip to Washington, D.C. to take part in National Arts Advocacy Day, where they read their essay before attendees and visit Capitol Hill to meet with legislators to talk about the value of arts education. In 2018, EdTA implemented a Theatre Education Advocacy Day where Theatre Educators from around the US went to Washington to advocate for theatre arts education. Theatre Education Advocacy Day, sponsored by the Educational Theatre Association, brings together arts education advocates from throughout the country to meet with legislators on behalf of a wide range of arts issues, including arts education.

New Jersey's essay competition winner(s) will attend the 2022 National Arts Action Summit. It has not been announced if the event will take place virtually or in person. The winner (s) will be attending with New Jersey's Arts Advocacy Chair Zachery Bates and Chapter Director Carolyn Little. Multiple EdTA officials and NJ leaders will also be in attendance at this event. A panel of Theatre Education professionals & Advocacy Leadership Network members will choose one or two essay winner(s) based on their application and response to the above question.

The Deadline for submission: December 17, 2021. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at zbates@njthespians.org.

Sincerely,

Zachery Bates

Zach Bates

NJ Thespians Arts Advocacy Coordinator

New Jersey Thespians DemocracyWorks 2020-2021 Guidelines

A. Essay. There are two choices for this essay. Please choose to answer either one of the following prompts.

1. *How does theatre help bring diverse communities together?*
2. *What's your theatre story and how has it made a difference in your life?*

B. Short Answer. Please answer all of the following questions. Answers should be 2-3 sentences each.

1. *What is the importance of Theatre Arts Education?*
2. *Why do you want to advocate in Washington, DC for Theatre Arts Education?*
3. *What will you bring back and how will you share that with our state?*

Eligibility: Any student who has an interest in theatre education advocacy may submit an essay.

Important: If your essay is selected you must be available to attend the National Arts Action Summit. The dates have yet to be announced, but it usually takes place in March/April. It is unknown at this time if the event will be virtual or in person. You will be notified as soon as possible.

The National Arts Action Summit is sponsored by Americans for the Arts and brings together arts educators & professional advocates from throughout the country to meet with legislators on behalf of a wide range of arts issues, including arts education. The winning essayist will take part in all scheduled National Arts Action Summit events, including legislative training on current arts issues circulating on Capitol Hill, the Nancy Hanks Lecture & visits to representatives' and senators' virtually or in person and much more.

Submission procedures: All essays must be between 1,000 - 1,500 words, based on one of the prompts. This does not include the three short answer questions. Both the essay and the short answers must be submitted electronically to the Google Form: <https://forms.gle/QhaHphNaE52fYT5Y6>. Please load all documents onto the form as Google Doc or PDF. At the top of the essay, please include your name and troupe number. The short answer questions will be answered on the Google Form. All participants will receive an email confirming their submission just after the due date of December 17, 2021.

Awards: The winners will be announced during the closing ceremony of the NJ Thespian Festival. The winner will receive registration to the National Arts Action Summit held during the 2022 school year, courtesy of New Jersey Thespians & Art Pride NJ.