

Membership FAQs

For the Educational Theatre Association and International Thespian Society

More detailed information is available at schooltheatre.org, including the EdTA Code of Regulations, EdTA Membership Policy, and troupe handbooks.

GENERAL INFORMATION

What is the Educational Theatre Association?

The Educational Theatre Association (EdTA) is a national nonprofit organization with approximately 135,000 student and professional members. EdTA's mission is *shaping lives through theatre education* by: honoring student achievement in theatre and enriching their theatre education experience; supporting teachers by providing professional development, networking opportunities, resources, and recognition; and influencing public opinion that theatre education is essential and builds life skills. EdTA operates the International Thespian Society (ITS), an honorary organization that has inducted more than 2.3 million theatre students since its founding in 1929. EdTA also publishes *Dramatics*, a monthly magazine for high school theatre students, and *Teaching Theatre*, a quarterly journal for theatre education professionals.

What is the International Thespian Society?

The International Thespian Society, a division of EdTA, is an honorary organization for high school and middle school theatre students. There are ITS *troupes* at more than 4,900 affiliated secondary schools across America and abroad. The Society's mission is to honor student achievement in the theatre arts. Students earn induction by participating in an affiliated school's theatre program and accumulating points based on the quality and quantity of their work in theatre. High school inductees are known as *Thespians* and junior high/middle school inductees are known as *Junior Thespians*.

What kinds of educational programs and events does the Educational Theatre Association offer?

EdTA National Conference. The event for busy theatre education professionals, Conference features practical workshops designed to be integrated into the classroom. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and college credit are available.

EdTA Professional Development Intensives (PDI). These training programs for theatre education professionals are one- or two-day workshops focused on a single topic. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and college credit are available.

International Thespian Festival (ITF). The world's largest educational and performance event for middle and high school theatre, Festival is a weeklong celebration of theatre for students and educators held each year at the end of June.

Chapter festivals and conferences. These local and regional celebrations of theatre are organized by and for theatre teachers and students from EdTA chapters established within US states and other geographic areas. Schooltheatre.org/StateChapters.

How do the website log-in IDs and passwords work?

Any individual may create an account to access the Theatre Education Community at schooltheatre.org. Logged-in EdTA members gain access to features that include members-only Community resources and discussions, digital editions of our publications, and special member pricing for events and theatre books, DVDs, etc. Logged-in troupe directors can induct students and purchase ITS honor items and troupe supplies online. Thespians with email addresses have log-in access to online student benefits, but there are no access codes for Junior Thespians at this time. The log-in ID is always the email address on the individual's personal profile, which may differ from the email on his or her troupe profile. The online trophy store and ITF registration site have different, user-created accounts and log-in codes, which may differ from those used for schooltheatre.org.

THESPIAN TROUPE INFORMATION

How do schools benefit from International Thespian Society affiliation?

The school's ITS troupe affiliation allows it to recognize the achievement of its theatre students through induction into ITS. It also provides its troupe director access to EdTA professional resources. Schooltheatre.org/benefitsofatroupe.

What does a Thespian troupe get for its annual troupe dues?

- EdTA professional membership for the designated troupe director
- The ability to induct top theatre students into their honor society, ITS
- A subscription to print and digital editions of *Teaching Theatre*, our bimonthly journal for theatre educators (a \$47 value)
- A bimonthly subscription to print and digital editions of *Dramatics* magazine (a \$38 value)
- Member-level access to online Theatre Education Community discussions and resources
- EdTA affiliate professional membership opportunity for adults affiliated with the troupe (save \$35)
- A charter certificate and membership roll
- Access to Thespian graduation and honor items that may only be purchased by troupe directors
- Member rates for EdTA educational programs and events at the state, local, and national level
- Member pricing for theatre and classroom resources through our online EdTA Store
- Assistance in obtaining reduced royalties on plays from publishers
- The ability to nominate and be considered for EdTA awards and grants
- Troupe director ability to nominate, vote, and run for elected office in the Association
- Scholarship and grant eligibility for Thespian inductees
- Advocacy support and representation at the national, chapter, and local levels

How do students benefit from International Thespian Society affiliation?

Thespians and Junior Thespians receive the highest recognition due those who have demonstrated commitment and excellence in their school's theatre program—induction into the world's largest

theatre honor society. In addition to the many tangible benefits listed below, inductees enjoy the sense of community and recognition inherent in being inducted into an honor society. ITS membership and its system of progressive honors and recognition encourages them to practice their craft and to grow as a person. The 21st century skills that they learn from a quality theatre arts education—creativity, self-confidence, leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills, as well as specific theatre skills—will benefit them throughout school and beyond.

How does my school start a Thespian or Junior Thespian troupe?

In general schools that serve students in any combination of grades six through twelve, have a theatre program, and provide full academic coursework in a traditional school setting may start an ITS troupe. In addition, ITS makes provisions for some programs to join as *non-traditional* troupes. Details on charter eligibility are found in the [EdTA Membership Policy](#). Contact the National Office by email at members@schooltheatre.org with any questions about charter eligibility. To start a troupe, a school must submit an online application, a one-time charter fee (\$95), its first-year troupe dues (\$95), and a minimum of six new student members for ITS induction. Schooltheatre.org/benefitsofatroupe.

Once my troupe is chartered, how do I keep it active?

Each troupe must submit its annual troupe renewal dues between August 1 and October 15 of each school year to remain active. Troupes must also maintain a minimum base of six active student members and pay all bills in a timely manner.

What is the minimum active student member requirement for ITS troupes?

Troupes are required to maintain an active student membership base of at least six Thespians or Junior Thespians, calculated at the end of each school year (7/31). Troupes are *not* required to induct six students each year as long as they meet this requirement. Troupe directors should keep this in mind as students graduate or transfer from their troupes. In addition schools must have a minimum of six active student members when they charter or reinstate the troupe to active status.

What is the term of my troupe's membership?

The troupe membership term is from August 1 through the following July 31, the ITS school year. Troupes chartered or reinstated August 1 through June 30 become active through the end of the current school year (July 31). Fees are not prorated for partial years. Troupes chartering late in the school year are still required to pay renewal dues for the following school year by October 15. Troupes chartered or reinstated in the month of July will be active through July 31 of the following school year.

What happens if the troupe does not meet its annual dues requirements by October 15?

If a troupe doesn't submit its annual dues by October 15, its benefits will be suspended and its membership status changes to *inactive*. If its dues remain unpaid after November 15, the troupe's membership status will change to *withdrawn*. To return to active status, the withdrawn troupe must pay its annual troupe dues plus a reinstatement fee and have a minimum of six active student members. Students already on the active troupe roster count toward this requirement.

Does the drama director have to be the troupe director?

No. A troupe director may be any adult appointed by the school's administration, i. e., another teacher, a parent, or an alum.

Can we have troupe assistant or co-directors at the school, and how does that work?

Troupe directors may share the responsibilities of troupe management if they choose; however, for Association purposes, only one person may be the official troupe director. This person receives the full EdTA professional membership. We encourage troupe assistant or co-directors to become affiliate members, so they can enjoy EdTA benefits as well.

What is a troupe constitution?

Each troupe operates under its own constitution (a template is available by download from the [Thespian](#) high school and [Junior Thespian](#) troupe director resource pages). This document outlines rules for membership, activities, and governing policies for the troupe. At the end of the troupe constitution, a section for bylaws documents and organizational information unique to the troupe can be changed more frequently. The school administration and all members and potential members of the troupe must have access to a copy, so that everyone is aware of expectations.

What is the difference between an Honor Thespian and an Honorary Thespian?

Honor Thespians are student Thespians who have attained that rank by earning a minimum of 60 points and fulfilled other local troupe requirements. Additional ranks are earned at 120 and 180 points.

Honorary Thespians are adults who perform outstanding service for an ITS troupe. Troupe directors can submit them online through their troupe dashboard page. Honorary Thespians become members of ITS and receive a personalized membership card and certificate, a membership pin, and a one-year subscription to *Dramatics* magazine.

ITS STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

How do students qualify for membership?

Students qualify by earning points for their work in the theatre arts. ITS provides a point system guide for reference. The points listed are the suggested maximum for excellent work. These points should be earned in a minimum of two productions and in two different production areas (i.e., acting and stage management).

Thespians (grades 9 through 12). One Thespian point represents ten (10) hours of excellent work. To be eligible for Thespian induction, a student must obtain a minimum of ten points, the equivalent of one hundred hours.

Junior Thespians (grades 6 through 8). One Junior Thespian point represents five (5) hours of excellent work. To be eligible for Junior Thespian induction, a student must obtain a minimum of ten points, the equivalent of fifty hours.

What do Thespians and Junior Thespians receive as inducted members of ITS?

All Thespians and Junior Thespians receive:

- A personalized membership card and certificate
- A bumper sticker that reads: *Proud parent of a theatre arts honor student*
- Eligibility to:

- participate in Individual Events at chapter conferences and the National Individual Events Showcase at the International Thespian Festival (per chapter policy)
- receive ITS graduation and honor items (per troupe policy)

All Thespians also receive:

- A Thespian induction pin
- Log-in access to his or her own member dashboard page and a variety of online benefits
- A one-year, bimonthly subscription to *Dramatics* magazine (a \$38 value) and a subscription to the online edition, *Dramatics Digital*, from induction through the year *following* high school graduation
- The ability to renew the print subscription at a special member rate
- Member-only pricing on Thespian apparel, theatre books, and resources at the online EdTA Store
- Student member access to the online Theatre Education Community
- Eligibility to:
 - apply for scholarships and grants
 - run for office as a State Thespian Officer (STO) (per chapter policy)
 - run for office as an International Thespian Officer (ITO)
 - submit their original compositions to the Thespian Next Generation Works program

All Junior Thespians also receive:

- A Junior Thespian induction pin
- Ability to begin their high school careers with half of the Thespian points required for high school induction

When are student memberships due?

Troupe directors may submit new inductions at any time during the school year.

Do students need to renew their memberships every year?

No. Payment of the one-time induction fee entitles the student to a lifetime membership, the active benefits of which last through high school or middle school graduation. Troupes may assess additional participation fees at their discretion.

What if a troupe director does not use the point system as published by the National Office?

The ITS point systems are guides. Different programs have different needs, and each director may need to tailor the qualifications to fit a school's unique program and environment. If a troupe is using anything other than what is published by the Association, these changes should be documented in the troupe's constitution and made available to students and administrators. Other induction requirements that may not be altered are listed in the EdTA membership policy.

Can a troupe director revoke a student's membership?

No. Once a student's paid induction has been processed by the National Office, he or she is a Thespian or Junior Thespian for life. However, each troupe may have its own requirements for being a *member in good standing* of their local troupe. These should be defined in the troupe's constitution. If a director determines that a student is not eligible to participate in troupe activities, he or she may prohibit that student from participating (ideally the sanction is within the guidelines of the troupe's constitution). Resolution of any dispute over a student's ability to participate in a troupe activity rests with the school's administration.

Can a student be a member of more than one troupe?

No. If a student's school has an active ITS troupe, he or she may only be a member of that troupe. Students may participate in and earn points for work done with other ITS groups and in other theatrical activities if the troupe constitution and bylaws permit. If a student's school does not have an active troupe, he or she may be eligible for induction into an active troupe at another school. Full troupe affiliation guidelines are available in Appendix 3 of the troupe handbooks.

What if a student changes schools?

Troupes are expected to accept transferring student members with credit for a minimum of ten points. If a student member transfers to a school that has an active ITS troupe, the director of the new school must submit a student membership transfer form to the National Office. Transferring members are not submitted along with new inductees, and they do not pay any additional membership fees. Transferring members may be required to fulfill certain additional expectations to receive local troupe benefits at their new school. The troupe director may order new ITS credentials for the transferring member. Student members transferring to schools without active troupes remain members of their original troupes. That troupe's director and constitution determine if the student will continue to receive local benefits. Members transferring to unaffiliated schools are encouraged to pursue chartering a troupe there.

What happens to students' points if they move to another school with an ITS troupe?

Whether or not points beyond the ten needed for induction will be recognized at the new troupe is determined by the new troupe director and that troupe's constitution. Similarly, all, some, or none of the points of students who haven't been inducted may be accepted by the new troupe.

Do Junior Thespians transfer to high school troupes?

No. Junior Thespians moving to high schools must be inducted into the high school troupe. They begin their high school careers with at least half of the points needed for high school induction, usually five out of ten. When they become eligible for induction, they are submitted along with all other Thespian inductees.

What is a Thespian or Junior Thespian membership card used for?

Some state chapters require proof of induction to participate in auditions and other activities at their conferences. Some member schools extend special deals and privileges (discounted tickets, free preview performances, etc.) to cardholding ITS members as part of a good neighbor policy. Some local theatres and businesses may extend similar deals to cardholders based on previously arranged deals. Troupe directors should make themselves aware of any such deals and inform their students. Troupes are encouraged to gather with others in their area to explore opportunities and arrange deals.

How do the Thespian subscriptions to *Dramatics* magazine work?

All Thespians receive a one-year, bimonthly print subscription that is renewable at our lowest rate. Inductees can expect to receive their first print issue within six to eight weeks. ITS will only provide missing issues if notified within 90 days of the scheduled start date. If a student's address changes while the subscription is active, he or she should log in to schooltheatre.org and update the address on his or her online member profile. Thespians also receive a subscription to the online edition, *Dramatics Digital*, from induction through the year following graduation, which is accessible by logging in to schooltheatre.org.

What are ITS graduation and honor items?

ITS offers a wide variety of items for recognizing member achievement. Induction and scholar pins, graduation honor cords and tassels, medallions, and other honor items may only be purchased by troupe directors. They may only be presented to officially inducted students. Some items are specific to Thespians and others to Junior Thespians. ITS trophies and plaques may be presented to student members and non-members (parent volunteers, for example) at the troupe director's discretion. Troupe directors should work closely with their school administrations to determine which items are appropriate. All items are ordered through the online EdTA Store.

What is an ITS scholar distinction?

While ITS does not have a minimum GPA requirement for induction, officially inducted Thespians and Junior Thespians who demonstrate high academic success in addition to their achievements in theatre arts may earn the distinction of *scholar*. The scholar distinction always follows the student's ITS rank to create his or her full *designation*: Junior Thespian Scholar, Thespian Scholar, Honor Thespian Scholar, Junior Thespian President's List Scholar, National Honor Thespian Vice President's List Scholar, etc.

What's the difference between Thespian honor rank and ITS scholar distinction?

High school students earn Thespian honor ranks for reaching Thespian point awards over and above the ten points required for induction (60, 120, and 180). Thespian points are awarded based on the quality and quantity of each student's work in theatre arts. Scholar distinction is granted to a Thespian or Junior Thespian for academic achievement in overall coursework. Thespian honor ranks are only available to high school Thespians. Junior Thespians use a system of star ratings instead of honor ranks to record ongoing point achievements.

EdTA PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Who are the professional members of the Educational Theatre Association?

EdTA professional members are theatre educators, teaching artists, administrators, and other individuals who have an interest in keeping theatre a part of the educational curriculum.

Why do I need to be a professional member of the Educational Theatre Association?

By joining EdTA, you become a member of the largest professional organization for the field of theatre education. You become part of a community devoted to developing the strongest and most educated professionals and advancing the importance of theatre's role in the educational curriculum. Membership in EdTA provides the professional development and advocacy resources to aid you in your efforts.

What are the benefits of an EDTA professional membership?

- A one-year subscription to print and digital editions of *Teaching Theatre*, our bimonthly journal for theatre educators (a \$47 value)
- A one-year subscription to print and digital editions of *Dramatics* magazine (bimonthly, a \$38 value)
- Special member rates for purchasing theatre and classroom resources sold through the EdTA Store
- Special member rates for EdTA educational programs and events

- Member-level access to discussions and resources through our online Theatre Education Community
- Advocacy support and representation at the national, state, and local levels
- Award and grant eligibility
- The ability to nominate, vote, and run for office in EdTA

What types of memberships are available?

The Educational Theatre Association offers memberships for educators at every stage of their career—from the theatre education major to the most experienced retired arts educator.

Professional membership. The standard membership for individual adults, including theatre educators, arts administrators, teaching artists, performers, theatre technicians, college professors, educational outreach coordinators, youth theatre directors, and arts advocates.

Troupe director membership. ITS troupe directors are full professional members of EdTA.

Pre-professional membership. This membership features student-friendly rates for full-time college students who are interested in making theatre education an important part of their professional lives.

Affiliate membership. Any adult affiliated with an ITS member school is eligible for this discounted membership, including troupe co-directors, volunteers, faculty, and administrators.

Emeritus membership. Emeritus members are individuals who have retired from teaching theatre full-time but want to maintain an active relationship with their professional association.

How do I become an EdTA professional member?

Any adult interested in membership can join online at schooltheatre.org/join.