



DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS

CIVIC CENTER ▪ STONER THEATER ▪ TEMPLE THEATER ▪ COWLES COMMONS

Dear School Director,

Welcome to the Iowa High School Theater Awards (IHSMTA) Publicity Toolkit! We have created this toolkit to provide simple instructions for you to publicize your school's participation and awards in the 2023-2024 IHSMTA to your school webmaster, community newspaper, or other local media contacts.

First, create your customizable **Release Template** on or after May 8, 2024 when all awards and performance invitations have been issued for the year:

1. Open a new word processing document.
2. Then, click the following link to be taken to the 'Release Generator'
<https://ihsmta.wufoo.com/forms/media-release-generator-ihsmta-showcase-2024/>
3. Click the prompts that fit your school's showcase participation.
4. Copy and paste each paragraph that is generated into the word processing document.
5. Save your customized template somewhere you can access it again.
6. The pasted text may be quite small in your word document. Select all the text and re-size, if helpful.
7. Next, find each place where there is text enclosed in brackets like this []. These indicate places to insert your school-specific information.
8. Make sure to also insert your full list of awards and honors, as sent to you separately by Maddie Grissom, MK Gillette or Karoline Myers.
9. Read through the entire release again to make sure everything is updated and correct. Feel free to add phrases like "also" or "in addition" if it helps the paragraphs flow better.
10. Save your finished release so you can access it again.

Next, email your release to local media or school contacts using these steps.

1. Decide who might be good partners in getting your school information out to your community. Ideas include:
 - School webmaster
 - School newsletter contact
 - Local newspaper
 - Local radio or broadcast station
 - Other community news sources
 - Administrators or School Board
2. Send the pitch to each contact one at a time using the following guidelines:
 - a. Locate the e-mail address of the contact.
 - b. Start a new email message and put the contact's email address in the 'To' field.
 - c. Copy and paste the sample "EMAIL INTRODUCTION TEXT" (located below) in the email body.

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- d. Fill in the blanks that include the contact's name, the name of your school production and performance dates, if applicable. Add your contact information.
- e. Below your contact information, paste in all the text from your customized media release.
- f. Read the entire email one more time to make sure everything is accurate.
- g. Attach at least one great photo from your school's production.

Things to think about when selecting your photo(s):

- Is the photo in focus?
- Do the students featured look engaged?
- Is this an image that is easily recognizable as being from the show you produced?

h. Click send.

3. Repeat for additional contacts or news sources.

EMAIL INTRODUCTION TEXT

Dear [Contact Name],

The release information (below) highlights our participation and honors in Des Moines Performing Arts' 2023-2024 Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards presented by EMC Insurance Companies. I've also attached a photo of our school production of [SHOW TITLE] that we performed in [Month].

Can you please recognize the Drama Department by sharing this information and photo on [outlet or channel]?

If using our photo and wish to caption, it includes the following students: [Student Names]

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Alternatively, you may contact Shelby Hisel, Publicist for Des Moines Performing Arts at ShelbyH@dmpa.org, with any questions or if you would like to coordinate any coverage of the Awards Showcase event.

Thank you!

[Name]

[Title]

[Contact Information]

[Copy and paste entire release information below your signature]

If you have any questions regarding the IHSMTA Publicity Toolkit, please let me know.

Shelby Hisel
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