



VISION: *An innovative and nationally recognized performing arts high school*
Collaborative Design | Candid Feedback | Original Work

F A Q

- **Why THSPA:** We are a performing arts high school. This was written in the original charter, and we are setting forth to becoming a nationally recognized institution, much like the original charter stated. This provides a narrow focus for us, emphasizing the performing and visual arts as an integral part of the learning experience. We strive to provide an intimate learning environment and small class sizes. Through collaboration, our students and staff will engage in the arts through core classes in ways that traditional public schools do not offer. We are proud to be unique in this way, and cherish the opportunity to teach differently, engaging students in ways that traditional schools cannot accomplish at this level.
- **Vision:** In order to achieve the vision, a variety of data was used. This included current and historical test/ state scores, researched best teaching practices, colleges/university, performing arts high schools, etc.
- **Honor's classes:** We will have more honors classes offered than ever before at the school. Through researched best teaching practices, our teachers will differentiate learning so that students will be able to participate in honors course work. This can be decided by the students, or by the teacher (when he/she knows the student can perform at the honors level). Students will be offered enrichment opportunities to extend learning.
- **4pm:** Students will have the opportunity to rehearse and design in all of the academy/studio classes. This was worked through with all the academy teachers, including the visual art academy as well as film/animation. Adding time each day in class allows these teachers to dive deeper into content, as well as limit the amount of after-school rehearsal.
- **Academic time:** 45 min each day M-Th with collaborative time and intensive learning sessions on Friday to enhance learning in all core subject areas. Utilizing best teaching practices, students will be assessed throughout the learning objectives, and teachers will reteach to ensure state standards are being met with fidelity.
- **AP coursework:** Students will have the opportunity to engage in AP course work for math and visual arts. These courses have not been offered at THSPA in the past few years, and some have never been offered. Our goal is to offer up to 6 AP classes over the next 3 years.
- **Rehearsals:** We will have more time in class to work towards performances, however, this certainly does not mean that we will never have after school practices. These will be decided with the teacher as needed prior to the performance. The new schedule will significantly cut down on after school rehearsals.
- **Foreign Languages:** As a performing arts specific high school, we will offer Spanish I and II face-to-face classes.



- **Hyperion/Choir:** Yes, there will still be Hyperion, with an emphasis in speech-level and pop vocals, preparing students for the next step in musical theatre. For the first time at the school, we will offer two Hyperion classes, Gold and Blue, in order to continue to build this great program. Students will work with industry professionals throughout the course. There will still be Madrigals as this is a banner program that will continue to be a highlight of THSPA. Madrigals will participate in a Shakespeare retreat where they will have the opportunity to work with the best names in choral education across the country.
- **Fridays/Period 10:** This is a required part of school and attendance will be taken, and a grade given. Students will be assessed on their collaboration, projects, and feedback. They will all report to period 10 on Friday morning at 9am, and then return for a feedback loop/share-out at 11:15am each day. Engagement in the Socratic seminar, as a model for discussion, will be part of the students experience and grade. Activities will include master classes, Titan times, clubs, service opportunities, showcases, performances, etc.
- **Grading:** THSPA will provide personalized, collaboratively designed work, that is authentic and equitable. Busy work, of any kind will not be assigned and grades will be updated, through PowerSchool, each Friday by 4pm. Grade notices will be provided to Advisory teachers, who will partner with teachers, parents, and Dean of Students to notify all parties of any failing grades, behavior issues, such that students will receive help in a swift and personalized way. Teaching will support student motivation to learn, take risks, and succeed – failure will never be inevitable, nor will “can’t” or “won’t” be a part of student or teacher vocabulary. As educators, we will lift our students every day in a positive way.
- **Auditions:** Students will still audition for classes, however there will be 1,2,4 (year, semester, quarter) opportunities to audition, dependent on class and teacher. Students will also audition for an adjudication panel, ensuring fidelity to talent.
- **Performances:** We want our students to be able to perform as much as appropriate without requiring more time than is already being required. This will/can include more performances in the community, joint/collaborative performances, and formal performances.
- **Bus:** THSPA will offer 2 bus routes (including the Little Valley area) that will run Monday – Friday each week. The routes will run the abbreviated Friday schedule, picking students up in order to being on time for a 9am start time.
- **Teachers leaving:** There were several teachers that departed for a variety of reasons. Some for personal/ family reasons, others for new opportunities, and others for retirement. Many of these decisions were made prior to any work on updating vision or schedule.

