### Program 2: Developing Students as Artists

#### Dance

**SEGMENT 1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**Michael O’Banion**  
20 years teaching

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**About the School**

**Denver School of the Arts**  
Denver, CO

**Type:**  
Urban/Arts-focused

**Grades:**  
6-12

**Students:**  
900  
Very mixed socio-economic status

**Majors:**  
Creative Writing, Dance, Theatre, Instrumental Music, Stagecraft & Design, Video & Cinema Arts, Visual Art, and Vocal Music

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**About the Dance Program**

**Faculty:**  
2 full-time + resident and guest artists

**Students:**  
115

**Facilities:**  
Above Average in the Area  
- 3 large dance studios  
- 2 theatres (178 seats, 550 seats)  
- Full light grid  
- Dressing rooms

**Required Courses:**  
Modern, Ballet, Jazz, African & Spanish, Improvisation, Composition, Repertory, Performance Technique, Partnering, and Senior Seminar

**Elective Courses:**  
Tap, Hip Hop, and Pointe

**Audition:**  
Technique Master Class, individual choreography showings, and interview

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**About the Featured Class**

**Senior Project:**  
Students choreograph other advanced students as well as their own solos, and then the graduating class works as a team to create a full evening of dance in concert form as a culminating choreographic project.

**Preparations/Prerequisites:**  
Eligible students are seniors with a B or better grade

**Student Motivation:**  
High

**Preparations/Prerequisites:**  
- Sixth-graders begin collaborating on choreographic projects  
- Intermediate students learn partnering skills and group choreographic techniques and devices  
- Juniors collaborate on an informal evening of choreography – Junior Project  
- Advanced sophomores and juniors participate as performers in Senior Projects

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**In the Teacher’s Words**

**What motivates your students?**

The Senior Project is an honor and a responsibility. It is part of the tradition of the program, and students look forward to the opportunity to complete a Senior Project. It is not mandatory that a student participates, but no student has ever elected not to.