

## Program 5: Creating Rich Learning Environments

# Dance

### SEGMENT 2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

**Mary Harding**

14 years teaching

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#### About the School

**Arts High School**

Perpich Center for Arts Education  
Golden Valley, MN

**Type:**

Statewide residential program/  
Arts-focused public high school

**Grades:**

11-12

**Students:**

300  
Very mixed socio-economic status

**Majors:**

Dance, Literary Arts, Media Arts, Music,  
Theatre, and Visual Art

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#### About the Dance Program

**Faculty:**

2 full-time

**Students:**

20-30 dance majors + 75 non-majors

**Facilities:**

Above Average in the Area

- 1 large studio
- 2 locker rooms
- 120-seat black box theatre

**Focus:**

Modern dance-based ensemble program  
that welcomes dancers with developed  
talent as well as potential.

**Required Courses:**

Ballet Technique, Composition,  
Improvisation, Dance History, Dance  
Criticism, Career Explorations, Anatomy  
and Somatics, Music for Dance,  
Repertory, Guest Artist Residency,  
Conditioning, Yoga, and Jazz

**Elective courses:**

Modern Dance, Arts Improvisation, Arts  
and Ideas, Moving Anatomy, Viewpoints  
in Dance and Theatre, and Drumming

**Audition:**

Movement class, interview, and an arts-  
oriented assignment. Prior to the  
audition, each student is sent a list of 5  
words and asked to bring in a new,  
original artwork related to those words.  
Dancers must present a short solo in any  
style.

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#### About the Featured Class

**Modern Dance Technique  
Class (for dance majors):**

Students work on developing  
alignment and musicality, key  
building blocks in their development  
as modern dancers.

**Student Motivation:**

Mixed. Some dancers lose their  
motivation when they work on more  
abstract dances. Others lose their  
motivation as they realize that this is  
not the field for them.

**Student Level:**

Mixed. The background of the  
dance majors varies widely with  
some having just started, while  
others have been dancing for ten  
years or more.

**In the Teacher's Words*****Why is alignment so  
important in modern dance  
class?***

*There are some basic alignment  
difficulties that we all have. Often  
in class we'll be moving along  
and I can see that certain things  
are not working. So I back up  
and go back to some basic  
alignment concepts.*

***What is A.S.I.S.?***

*ASIS is the Anterior Superior Iliac  
Spine or the top front pelvic rim.*