



Program 8: Nurturing Independent Thinkers Theatre

SEGMENT 3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Joseph Mancuso
20 years teaching

Andrea Arden
16 years teaching

About the School

**Somerset County Vocational
Technical High School**
Bridgewater, NJ

Type:
Countywide performing arts program/
Vocational high school

Grades:
9-12

Students:
60 (24 Acting, 15 Musical Theatre, and
21 Dance)
Very mixed socio-economic status

About the Performing Arts Program

Faculty:
2 full-time and 9 part-time

Students:
60

Audition:
Students throughout the county audition
in March for acceptance in the following
academic year. Acceptance is based on
faculty assessment of two rounds of
auditions.

Facilities:
Above Average in the Area

- 600-seat performance hall
- Performance studio
- Three offices
- On-site and off-site storage
- 2 classroom spaces (under construction)
- Expanded offices (under construction)
- Dressing rooms (under construction)
- Student locker space (under construction)

Required Courses:

- Acting major: Acting, Voice and Movement, Speech, Theatre History, Technical Theatre, Theatre Fundamentals, and Musical Vocals
- Musical Theatre major: Acting, Ballet, Jazz, Voice, Theatre History, Technical Theatre, and Theatre Fundamentals
- Dance major: Ballet, Jazz, Modern, Composition, Choreography, Dance History, and Technical Theatre

About the Evaluation Session

Individual Feedback Session:
Every semester the acting faculty meets with each student to discuss the student's progress.

This session allows the faculty to provide individual feedback in a more detailed way than is possible during regular scheduled class time.

Students are also asked to give the faculty feedback on their teaching and the program in general. This feedback helps the teachers adjust their practice.

In the Teacher's Words

How did you develop the idea of an individual feedback session?

Joseph Mancuso: The process existed before my tenure and was developed by Sheila Buttermore, now head of the Dance program. In the session, the faculty reviews particular issues that might exist, and then we give the student a chance to talk back. We ask questions like, "Where's the program working for you?" "Where isn't it working for you?" "Is there something else you'd like to see in the program?"