CENTRAL
UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 301

MEMORANDUM

FROM: Mike Sitter, Athletic/Activities Director

TO: District 301 Board of Education

DATE: October 6, 2026

RE: Illinois High School Theatre Festival: All State CHS Student Participation 2027

Our Director for CHS plays, musicals, and sponsor for drama club, Christine Heckman, is requesting the approval of an overnight trip for the 2027 All State Production: This information is regarding student selection and participation in the 2027 Illinois High School Theatre Festival All State Production of *Something Rotten.*

Background:

Produced annually for the past 50 years, the Illinois High School Theatre Festival (IHSTF) is held on Illinois' state college campuses, and this year's festival will be hosted at Illinois State University. This multi-day event offers educational experiences in the performing arts. Over a period of four days in early January, theatre students from across the state gather and participate in performance, technical, and design workshops led by high school and college faculty as well as professional artists. Additionally, students have the opportunity to meet with college performing arts faculty to learn more about degree and professional training programs. Further, high school drama programs and clubs from across Illinois bring selected productions to perform throughout the Festival, offering attendees the opportunity to attend multiple shows per day.

All State Production

The IHSTF All State Production serves as the capstone performance at the Festival in January. Participation in the production is a highly selective process for which students must audition (for performance and pit orchestra) or interview (for technical theatre areas). The application process opens to all Illinois rising sophomores, juniors, and seniors in May of the previous year. Students complete an application form, which includes a director's recommendation and a principal's recommendation. Students schedule an initial audition or interview and subsequently, may move onto a callback, which is the next stage in selection. From this point, the show is cast and the crew is selected. The students will rehearse or create the technical aspects of the show over several weekends leading up to the tech week (which are intensive day-long rehearsals coordinating performers and technical aspects of the show: set, lighting, costumes, sound, etc.)

At the festival, the All State Production runs several evenings, serving as a capstone performance, showcasing some of the most talented high school theatre students from across the state.

2027 All State Production: *Something Rotten* and Central High School Student Representation

Mrs. Heckman, CHS theatre teacher (director for CHS plays and musicals, sponsor for Drama Club, and IHSA Drama team coach), had the opportunity to attend the festival as a workshop instructor in her former position as a theatre artist and faculty at Dominican University. She saw the opportunities available to performing arts students and wanted to extend this rich educational experience to CHS students. Working with the talented students at CHS, Mrs. Heckman feels strongly that CHS should be represented and recognized in this statewide showcase. She advised and guided students through the application, audition, and interview processes.

With District support, Heckman attended the 2023 and 2025 IHSTF as a high school theatre educator, CHS theatre director (for participating students), and workshop presenter teaching directing techniques for students and other Illinois theatre educators alike. Since this event is sponsored by the Illinois Theatre Association (ITA), which is an organization approved by the Illinois State Board of Education, the IHSTF is an approved educator professional development event.

As a result of Heckman and Jim Struyk's efforts, 2027 marks the **fifth consecutive year** that students have represented CHS in the All State Production. This year, one student from CHS was selected to participate in this highly competitive and selective process. These students are:

- **Sasha Munao (2028)**

The Fine Arts department is proud to have this dedicated, hardworking student represent Central High School among some of the most talented theatre artists in the state.

Financial Considerations

To participate in the production, each student must pay a $750 fee. This fee covers the following expenses:

- Food at rehearsal weekends in August, September, October, November, and pre-fest/ tech week in January
- Food and hotel lodging in January (January 3-9, 2027) at the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana campus
- A company t-shirt and water bottle

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The student, her parents, and Mrs. Heckman request that the District pay for the **$750 fee**. The student and her family will be responsible for any additional expenses (Makeup kits, supplies, additional food, additional college audition/ interview fees, etc).

Lodging is not included for Mrs. Heckman ("sponsor") in this cost; consequently she is requesting reimbursement/ coverage for the following expenses:

- Stay at Home2 Suites by Hilton Champaign/ Urbana 2013 S. Neil Street Champaign, IL 61820
- Food and additional expenses to be paid by Mrs. Heckman.

Additional Information Resources

- Illinois High School Theatre Festival Website
- 2027 Something Rotten All State Welcome Letter and Information (Includes Cast and Crew List and Student Itinerary)
- All State Production Website
- Heckman Tentative Itinerary
    - Thursday evening: Attending Opening Ceremonies.
    - Friday: Present workshops to students, attend All State Show
    - Saturday: Present workshops