

Red Bank Regional High School

Academy of Visual
& Performing Arts
Handbook

2023-24 Edition

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September 2022

Students and Families,

Welcome to Red Bank Regional's Visual and Performing Arts Academy! We hope you are as excited to take part in this program as we are to offer it. Please use this guide to make the most of your time at RBR, as we look forward to an outstanding four years of creativity and excellence!



Lisa Boyle Supervisor of Visual & Performing Arts, Business, and Consumer & Life Sciences

VPA Mission Statement

The mission of the VPA Academy is to provide a four-year career-focused learning experience for serious emerging artists who possess proven advanced aptitude and interest in the visual and performing arts with the ultimate goal of inspiring all students to pursue careers and/or admission to competitive colleges/conservatories of fine arts.

Furthermore, the VPA Academy/Department strives to provide arts opportunities to members of the general school population with an interest in or affinity for the arts in the hopes of developing their skills and enriching their understanding of aesthetics in the world.

RBRHS Visual & Performing Arts Philosophy

Red Bank Regional High School is a place for students who want to pursue academic and artistic excellence where they will be honored by passionate, inspiring teachers while celebrating creativity, community, and service.

The mission of the Academy of Visual and Performing Arts is to prepare competent young professionals and college-bound students in art, brass, creative writing, dance, drama, guitar, Media Production, percussion, photography, piano, strings, vocal music, woodwinds, and other fine arts with the intent of lifelong pursuit of involvement in the arts.

The program presents a variety of approaches to the study of the arts, designed to teach literacy, performance practices, theory, structure and form, history, use of technology, current trends, ensemble and solo techniques, and a perception of the expressiveness and uniqueness of the arts.

In all courses, the performing arts engage the imagination, foster flexible ways of thinking and problem-solving, develop disciplined effort, and build self-confidence. These are lifetime activities that should enhance the quality of student lives long after high school.

The objective of the visual and performing arts component of the core curriculum is to expand students' knowledge of the human condition and human cultures, especially in relation to behaviors, ideas, and values expressed in works of human imagination and thought. Through the study in the visual and performing arts, students will engage in critical analysis, form aesthetic judgments, and develop an appreciation of the arts and humanities as fundamental to the health and survival of any society. As a strand running throughout the core curriculum, the essential skill of critical thinking which is embodied in this component, embraces methods for applying both qualitative and quantitative skills analytically and creatively to appropriate subject matter in order to evaluate arguments and construct alternative strategies.

SIGN AND RETURN TO TEACHER

Student Performance Contract

Purpose:

The Visual and Performing Arts (VPA) Academy/Department of Red Bank Regional High School requires all Visual & Performing Arts students to participate in after-school rehearsals, performances, exhibitions, and events in their respective programs. As a Visual and Performing Arts student, your performance and conduct are a direct reflection of you, your classmates, your family, your school, and your community. The following contract is an agreement that the Visual and Performing Arts student will adhere to in their participation in our program.

Definitions:

- VPA Visual and Performing Arts
- VPA Academy/Department: VPA Academy Program and VPA Elective Program
- VPA Majors: Students in the VPA Academy
- VPA Students: All students in the VPA Academy and VPA Elective Program

All rules and regulations outlined below are subject to and are enforced with those in the Red Bank Regional High School Parent/Student handbook.

“Events” include photo and art exhibition receptions, class/group trips, and individual and group performances at various school functions.

Beliefs:

- Artistic achievement requires a sincere commitment from all participating students, families, teachers, and administrators
- The school administration and VPA staff believe strongly in being accessible to families.
- The administration is committed to supporting our teaching staff to deliver an educationally sound experience for all VPA students.
- The VPA Academy/Department continually strives to improve communication with students and families. For our performances and events to be successful, it is necessary for everyone to understand the focus and direction of our program.

Terms:

This contract will be kept on file for the duration of the student’s time at Red Bank Regional High School and will cover a multi-year commitment to the program, not to exceed four academic years. Changes to the handbook will be published in the form of addendums.

Agreement:

I/we have read and are familiar with the material included in the VPA Handbook and agree to fulfill the obligations therein. Misconduct will result in a review of my status in the program.

VPA Student

Date

VPA Parent

Date

COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS

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Expectations

Academic Expectations of VPA Students

Students in the VPA Academy are expected to treat their academic progress with the same determination as their artistic development. Students who are failing classes outside of their major should first communicate with their individual teachers regarding strategies to improve their grades, and then seek additional assistance through the many school resources for extra help.

Students failing two or more classes outside of their major or one class within their major are placed on Academic Probation. They must attend a school-sponsored resource, such as homework help or tutoring.

The student must show marked improvement by the end of the next marking period. Failure to demonstrate academic improvement may result in dismissal from the VPA Academy or continued Artistic Probation.

Behavioral Expectations

- VPA Students will display good conduct, which equates to being modest in winning and gracious in losing at all times whether it is within the school or at events involving students from other performing arts schools/programs.
- VPA students are asked to set a positive standard of behavior for others to follow both in and outside of the classroom. They should treat all teachers, staff members and fellow students with courtesy and respect.
- Students suspended from school may not participate in rehearsals or performances that are extra-curricular. Participation in curricular performances will be decided by a committee comprised of administration and VPA staff.
- Detention will be considered an unexcused absence.
- Students will not cut classes to prepare for any event.

Departmental Expectations

All VPA Majors are expected to participate in the following activities as a part of their program:

- Relevant coursework
- Required meetings, rehearsals, and performances/presentations/openings
- Departmental juries (Music majors only)
- VPA Service Hours (not Community Service Hours)
- Annual attendance at four VPA and/or professional arts events outside of their major
- Structured Learning Experiences, such as: Guest artists, trips, competitions, tours, senior showcases/recitals, etc. (at the discretion of the individual teacher)

Attendance and Participation Expectations

- All rules regarding general school attendance are in effect for VPA students.
- Repeated unexcused absences may result in: reduced participation in performances, suspension from the performance (Artistic Probation), or dismissal from the VPA Academy. Out-of-district students may be asked to return to their home school. Please refer to the Student-Parent Handbook available on the school website for current policy.
- Attendance at all rehearsals and performances is mandatory. If circumstances arise that prohibit your attendance at a required rehearsal or practice, the teacher must be notified at least two weeks prior when possible. It is the responsibility of the student to be familiar with the performance schedule. In the case of a conflict with an athletic event, the student must be familiar with that schedule and notify the VPA staff and coaches so that arrangements can be made.
- Students who leave school from the health office due to illness are not permitted to return for rehearsals or performances.
- Students who arrive late to school must be in attendance a minimum of four hours as per the Student-Parent Handbook or they will be ineligible to participate in rehearsals or performances.
- Juniors and seniors are asked to arrange college visitations around the rehearsal/performance schedule.
- VPA students who miss extended long-term rehearsal sequences (play, musical, dance show, etc.) with excused absences may jeopardize their role in a performance. If the absence is due to physical injury in the case of dance or theatre, participation will be determined at the discretion of the teacher.

Extra-Curricular Conflicts

- We encourage students to engage in the broad variety of extra-curricular activities available at RBR, but students should choose extra-curricular activities wisely to avoid continuous conflicts between them.
- The VPA Department/Academy offers both extra-curricular and curricular activities that extend beyond the school day. In the case of a conflict between a curricular commitment that extends beyond the regular school day and an extra-curricular commitment, preference should be given to the curricular event as it may adversely affect a student's grade for the event. VPA teachers will work to minimize the number of curricular commitments within a school year and will inform students in advance so that students and families may plan accordingly. Should it be necessary for a student to miss a curricular event that occurs outside of the regular school day for an excused reason, a makeup assignment will be provided at the discretion of the VPA teacher.
- Attendance at all rehearsals and performances is mandatory. (*See Attendance and Participation Expectations above*)
- Rehearsals begin after school at 2:45 PM. Students who have other extracurricular commitments or need extra help from a teacher should meet those commitments and notify their VPA teacher that they will be at rehearsal by 3:15 p.m. In the case of dress rehearsals, students should give priority to dress rehearsal over other extra-curricular meetings.

- VPA rehearsals and performances are scheduled well in advance. Work schedules MUST be arranged around those rehearsals and performances.

Performance Eligibility

When warranted, an alternative assessment may be provided for a missed performance or rehearsal at the discretion of the VPA staff member. If the performance is used as an assessment for a curriculum-related grade, the teacher will, at their own discretion, provide an alternative assessment.

Transportation Expectations

Student performers must travel to and from events in transportation provided by the VPA Academy/Department when group transportation is provided.

Prior approval (both verbal and in writing) and a visual confirmation of an individual's departure from the group with a student's parent or guardian is required for any and all exceptions to the above policy.

Expectations of VPA Staff

VPA staff will inform families:

- When and where rehearsals and performances are scheduled and updates on any changes that may occur.
- About each particular discipline's philosophy and requirements (via a meeting, letter, and/or website).
- About the expectations for their child regarding their participation as a solo performer and/or as part of an ensemble or performing group.
- About injuries (dance/theatre) and the services for treatment available through the school.

Expectations of Families

VPA staff often need families to:

- Informally tell them about any specific health problems and/or concerns at a mutually convenient time.
- Notify VPA teachers of any student-performance schedule conflicts well in advance.
- Work with teachers to address behavior or participation issues in the VPA program.

Addressing Concerns

Communication and an open mind are the keys to conflict resolution. Please follow this chain of command so that we can work together to assure that your child will get the most benefit from their arts education.

- All VPA teachers are accessible by email. If a discussion or meeting with the teacher does not result in a resolution to the problem, you are encouraged to call the VPA Supervisor to set up an appointment to discuss the situation. Staff should respond to parental emails within 24 hours.

- Make an appointment with the teacher. Please do not attempt to confront a teacher before, during, or following a rehearsal or performance.
- In the event that communication with the teacher and then the VPA Supervisor still has not resulted in a resolution to the problem, you are encouraged to call the Principal to set up an appointment.

Cell Phone Policy

Due to the unique nature of involvement in the Academy of VPA program, it may become necessary for students and teachers to converse or text one another using personal telephone numbers. In an effort to protect the interests of both parties and ensure responsible use of this technology, the following have been identified as appropriate instances where students and teachers may communicate using cell phones:

- As an emergency contact while on tour or trip outside of school (e.g. on overnight competitions or trips to New York City in case of medical emergency or lost students).
- As an emergency phone chain in the event of changes, cancellations, etc. in a performance or rehearsal schedule. In this case, information would likely be distributed to either student officers, upperclassmen or those students involved (in the case of All-Shore or All-State, for example).
- As a means of effective communication “across-building” during rehearsals that utilize multiple rooms within the school building.
- As a means of informing the teacher of your location and safety status when you anticipate being late for a rehearsal or meeting time.
- As a means of answering questions requiring an immediate answer during off-campus auditions and competitions.

Calendar of Events

Please visit the [VPA Calendar](#) for an up-to-date listing of upcoming performances and exhibitions.

Parental Involvement

VPA Families are encouraged to participate actively in the RBR Buc Backer Foundation. This group has traditionally supported the VPA program with grants and exposure. VPA teachers may also call upon families to assist with chaperoning trips, and assisting with logistical concerns, such as clothing/costumes, concessions/receptions, ticket sales, advertising, etc. For more information contact your child’s VPA teacher directly or through their school email.

Families should sign up for either or both of the following methods of communication regarding the VPA Academy: On Twitter @rbrvpa, and for text messages regarding important information, please sign up for your teacher’s Remind Messages.

VPA Advisory Committee

A committee of arts industry professionals and teachers exists to steer and advise the VPA Academy’s current and future status. If you are or know of a professional visual or performing artist, technician or arts manager who may be able to assist in this regard, please refer them to the VPA Supervisor.

PROGRAM

Non-major Involvement

Many elective courses and extra-curricular opportunities are available to any student within the school. Students should not feel intimidated about auditioning for shows or going out for extracurricular activities just because there are VPA Majors involved. For a full list of VPA Electives, consult the RBR Course Guide. VPA Extra-curricular activities may include:

String Ensemble	Chamber Choir
Marching Band	Concert Band
National Art Honor Society	Tri-M Music Honor Society
Fall Play	Spring Musical
Stage Crew	Jazz Band

Three Period Majors

VPA students who have a three-period commitment for their major (Brass, Percussion, Strings, Woodwind, and Vocal Music) will sometimes need to participate in Physical Education/Health classes during their Lunch/Study Module in order to fulfill their state graduation requirements during their time at RBRHS.

Recommended Electives for VPA Majors

If a double major is out of the question, but a student finds that they have room in their academic schedule for a spare elective, the department recommends selecting a related VPA elective that pertains to the student's interest or career path. For example, someone planning to major in the music industry in college may want to take a business course, music industry, songwriting, or music technology in addition to their music major. Someone interested in becoming a graphic designer might add digital photography or digital design to their commercial art major. A singer may want to double up on languages or take a piano elective, while someone interested in musical theatre may want to take a drama elective, musical theatre or dance elective. For more suggestions of recommended electives, consult your VPA teacher or guidance counselor.

Dual Credit Options

Some VPA majors offer dual credit options for students who excel academically. In these programs, by maintaining a predetermined grade point average, the student tests out of select beginning courses at participating colleges or universities. To see if your major offers dual credit options, or to find out which colleges have an existing partnership with our school, speak with your VPA teacher.

Honors Options

Some VPA courses offer an honors credit if a student meets prescribed criteria in addition to the regular course load for the class. Students fulfilling honors credit will be awarded honors status for the course on their transcripts. To see if honors credit is available for your VPA class, speak with your VPA teacher.

Structured Learning Experiences

Consult with each individual VPA teacher for more information on participation in SLEs (Structured Learning Experiences). They vary greatly between majors in breadth, scope, and frequency and include:

- Competitions
- Charity fundraisers
- Extra-curricular opportunities
- Guest Artists
- Internships and Externships
- Senior showcases
- Service Hours, VPA
- Travel/Tours

Music Department-Specific Items

Juries

A jury is an assessment of the performance ability of an Instrumental, Piano, or Vocal Major. In the jury, each student plays or sings in front of a panel of judges. These judges usually consist of faculty, administrators, and/or professional performers or music teachers. The judges critique each student's performance based on the evaluation criteria listed below. The jury will be treated like a professional or college audition.

EVALUATION CRITERIA- Students will be judged on the following criteria:

1. Technical Competence
2. Interpretation
3. Stage Presence
4. Musicianship

RULES AND GUIDELINES

1. Every music major must do an end-of-the-year performance jury in order to complete a particular level of study and advance to the next.
2. The jury is an Academy of Visual & Performing Arts assessment, and therefore, does not always function strictly within the "Final Exam" schedule. This will primarily depend on the availability of the judges and the number of students performing.
3. Level four students are exempt from the performance jury pending the successful completion of their recital hearing.
4. Each Piano major should prepare four selections representing each musical period: Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Modern. Repertoire should be selected with the help of the student's teacher and best exemplify the student's ability. Memorization requirements are at the discretion of the piano instructor.
5. Each Instrumental major should prepare scales, etudes, and repertoire as directed by their instructor.
6. Each Vocal major should prepare, FROM MEMORY, four representative selections for each jury using the following criteria:

Level 1: Two songs from Broadway, pop, folk, spirituals/hymns or jazz repertoire
Two art songs or arias in English

Level 2: One English song or aria

Three Italian art songs, recitatives, or arias OR Two Italian and one Spanish or Latin song/aria

Level 3: One song in any language OR an original vocal composition (written copy must be present) Three art songs or arias in German

Level 4: Four selections representative of four different languages and four different historical periods (used only in extenuating circumstances). One selection must be in

French.

7. If a student is a senior before they have completed level 3, they may choose to do a recital in addition to a regular jury.
8. Students must bring all materials to their designated jury time and dress appropriately. All music majors must provide sheet music for their accompanist. Students must have rehearsed with their accompanist.
9. The jury accounts for a large portion of the student's end-of-the-year grade.
10. Students may not repeat musical material from a previous jury.
11. No student or parent may wait backstage or "listen in" on another student's jury.
12. Students should be prepared to answer verbal questions during the jury pertaining to any aspect of their level of study, including: repertoire, technique, ensemble, music history, music theory, etc...

Recitals

A recital is a performance where an Instrumental, Piano, or Vocal major presents a public concert based on specific guidelines. Before a student may perform in a recital, they must complete a recital hearing. This is an assessment tool that is similar to, but more extensive than, a jury. The hearing will be treated like a professional or college audition, and the recital will be treated like a professional performance. All level 4 music majors must complete a recital.

RECITAL HEARING

1. Each music major recitalist must complete a recital hearing a minimum of two weeks prior to the recital.
2. All musical selections, advertising materials, translations, and programs/notes must be prepared for the recital hearing.
3. At least two VPA faculty must be present at the recital hearing (one of which must be the applied teacher). No one but the hearing judges, the student, the accompanist(s), and those performing in the recital may be present during the hearing.
4. Students should dress appropriately for their hearing.
5. Students may be asked verbal questions during the hearing.
6. Students completing the recital hearing will receive one of the following scores:
 - a. Passed, proceed with the recital as planned.
 - b. Passed conditionally, proceed with the recital with the following changes.
 - c. Not Passed, the recital is not suitable for public viewing.
7. If a student does not pass their recital hearing, they may not perform their recital publicly, and they must then complete a Level 4 jury.
8. Students should not send invitations to guests or post advertisements until they have received word that they have passed the hearing. Save-the-date notices in advance of invitations are acceptable.
9. The recital grade is comprised of:
 - a. The hearing
 - b. The performance
 - c. Preparedness
 - d. Professionalism

- e. Musicianship
 - f. Attire
 - g. Advertising/Invitations
 - h. Research (notes and translations)
 - i. Programs
10. Vocal and Instrumental majors may be assigned one or more Piano major accompanists who will play for the hearing and recital. It is both of the student's responsibilities to find time prior to the hearing to rehearse together. In addition to the student accompanists, a faculty accompanist will be provided.
 11. If a student wishes to have an accompanist(s), vocalist(s), or instrumentalist(s) perform for their hearing and recital from outside of the school, they must clear it with their Applied Teacher well in advance of the recital hearing.

RECITAL GUIDELINES

1. Recitals should be the culminating event of all four levels of study.
2. Any additional fees incurred for outside rentals or services are the responsibility of the recitalists and their families, not Red Bank Regional High School or the VPA Academy.
3. VPA faculty and selected administrators must be invited to the recital, as well as, family and friends. Posters must be posted around the school at least one week before the recital but after the approval of the applied teacher and the Student Activities Director.
4. Repertoire should include a sampling of various musical time periods, styles, and languages (vocal). Appropriate literature should be selected with the guidance of the Applied Teacher and should incorporate the input of the student's private teacher when applicable.

Sample periods: Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Impressionism, Modern

Styles: Pop, folk, blues/jazz, ethnomusic, Broadway, "classical," art music, etc.

Languages: English, Italian, German, French, Spanish, Latin, Hebrew, etc.

Unlike juries, recitals should include previously studied material along with new selections.

5. Students may or may not elect to have a reception following the recital. Families of recitalists often arrange this part of the recital. If you decide to have a reception it can be as simple as punch and cookies, or as elaborate as hot hors d'oeuvres, flowers, decorations, etc. Receptions must always occur after the recital is over (as the recitalists are not to be seen by the audience before the show or during an intermission). If you are planning a reception, you must let your Applied Teacher know at your recital hearing so that they may arrange for tables, etc. It is the recitalist's responsibility to make sure that everything is cleaned up after the reception.
6. Students should dress appropriately for the recital, and conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times.
7. Students must report early (generally at least 2 hours in advance) for their recital to warm up, set-up the room, dress, and/or take care of any last-minute arrangements. The recitalist should be out of sight at least one-half hour before the recital begins. It is advisable to set up immediately after school on your recital day, and to bring performance attire on the morning of the performance.
8. The recitalist must submit a stage use form to Mr. Grillo and make sure the stage crew (including curtains, lighting, and sound) and ushers are acquired. Recitalists are responsible for

printing their own programs, posters, and invitations. 100-150 copies of programs are recommended. If a student is financially unable to print their own programs and posters, they should see their Applied Teacher well in advance.

9. Guidelines for translations, program notes, and program arrangement will be given by the Applied Teachers during recital planning.
10. If you would like your recital to be recorded, you must make arrangements on your own.
11. REMEMBER! This is your recital, you are the one in the spotlight, but there are a lot of behind-the-scenes details that go into planning a recital. Nobody is going to do things for you. You must be responsible for yourself. Do not assume anything while planning.

Concerts

Major concerts are always an exciting time for the music department. They mark the culmination of long-term projects that have come to fruition. Please note the dates and times of the major performances for your musical ensemble as soon as the calendar is published to avoid unnecessary conflicts. Please note that major concerts are factored into student grades, including a large percentage of the final exam grade. If there is a question as to whether a particular performance is required/graded or optional, please contact the specific VPA teacher or VPA Supervisor. Due to the unique nature of the educational objectives and outcomes created in a concert atmosphere, authentic makeup assignments are difficult if not impossible to recreate. In extenuating circumstances where a student has an excused absence, a makeup assignment will be administered at the discretion of the VPA teacher.

Attire

VPA Music students are expected to dress in a professional manner for all performances, according to the expectations set forth by the VPA teacher. In many cases, VPA music students will be assigned performance attire near the beginning of the school year. Students are expected to take care of these garments and return them cleaned and in good condition at the conclusion of the school year. If the garments are damaged or missing, a financial obligation may be filed with the main office.

Students who need financial assistance to secure needed attire should speak to their teacher privately well in advance of a performance.

TheatreArts Specific Item

Audition & Casting Philosophy for The Red Bank Regional Theatre Company Fall Play and Spring Musical

For the past 48 years, the Basie Award-winning Red Bank Regional Theatre Company has produced some of Broadway's and Hollywood's biggest theatrical productions on the stage of the Joseph A. Russo III auditorium. Productions have ranged from Shakespearean tragedies to American musical comedies and everything in between.

RBRTC productions are open to all Red Bank Regional High School students. Casting is not and never has been based on the seniority of an RBR student. Anyone from any grade level and discipline can be offered a role in an RBRTC production. The criteria of the casting is based on how well that student actor or actress best represents and fits the role being auditioned for. The size of the role being cast is not a determining factor of talent nor does it necessarily reflect the level of talent or skill that a student may possess; but is a result of the play or musical and the director, musical director, choreographer, playwright or composer's intention. There are no small roles, only small actors. In other words, every part is important to the overall impact and success of an RBRTC production and the actor is only as limited as his or her imagination and work ethic.

Auditioning for a role in the RBRTC as a Visual and Performing Arts student is not mandatory but is highly recommended for experience and educational purposes. Being in the VPA does not guarantee a part or a particular sized role in a production.

A student must commit to the play or musical if cast. If (for any reason other than health) a student drops out of the production, they forfeit future casting possibilities with the Red Bank Regional Theatre Company.

If a student who auditions for a role in the Fall Play or Spring Musical is not cast in the production, that student is welcome to work in other areas of the production in such areas as stage crew, set construction, sound & light and possibly as assistant director and stage manager.