



TO: College and University Admissions Committees

An applicant to your college is a Cappies student critic, awards honoree, and/or a cast or crew member in a reviewed show—and has included mention of this in the application. In this letter, we explain what your committee might wish to know about the program and the applicant’s involvement in it. (You can learn more at www.cappies.com.)

The Cappies were founded in 1999, for the purpose of celebrating high school theater arts and providing a learning opportunity for theater and journalism students. The program has been sponsored by the William T. Grant Foundation, *The Washington Post*, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Capitol Steps, and the volunteer efforts of a great many theater teachers throughout America.

Numerous Cappies programs exist across the nation. Some are small, and others involve more than fifty schools. During the current 2006-2007 school year, nearly 2,000 students are serving as critics, and tens of thousands of others are cast or crew in reviewed, awards-eligible shows.

Here’s how the program works: High school students are trained in critiquing and writing skills, with a curriculum specially developed for the Cappies. They are organized into critics teams and assigned to attend at least five plays and musicals at schools other than their own. At each Cappies show, during intermission and after curtain, they participate in confidential discussions about the performing and technical aspects of the production under the guidance of teacher-mentors.

On deadline, student critics write 400-word reviews, in which they comment on the quality of the show, including cast and crew work—with criticisms, within reasonable limits. The teacher-mentors select the best-written reviews, which are forwarded to and published by local newspapers, including *The Washington Post*, *Dallas Morning News*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Ottawa Citizen*, and many others.

After each show, the student critics vote for “critics choices”—cast and crew whose work qualifies them for the awards ballot. At the end of the school year, the critics vote for “Cappie” nominations and awards in 33 tech and performing categories. “Cappie” nominations and awards are given to outstanding critics and critics teams, as well. Many students also receive Cappie Commendations, which are given by each school’s theater director to recognize outstanding contributions to a theater program. These awards are presented at a Cappies Gala, a Tonys-style event hosted by a major performing arts venue in each region.

In the summer, top honorees from Cappies programs across the U.S. are invited to join the cast or crew of the Cappies International Theater, hosted by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, where they workshop three shows in the Theater Lab.

The Governing Board of the Cappies has urged students who are seniors to advise college admissions committees of their involvement in the Cappies—including any awards, published reviews, and favorable comment about their work in reviewed shows.

We encourage college and university admissions committees to look favorably upon these and other student achievements in the creative arts.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Judy Bowns

Judy Bowns
National Chair, The Cappies

BILL STRAUS

William Strauss
National Director, The Cappies