



THEATRICAL CANADA

SEPTEMBER 2024 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE



Craig Wrotniak, Executive Director, TAEA

Hello, fellow TAEA members, and welcome back to your classrooms, rehearsal studios and theatres, as another school year begins! We have a lot to report on from the summer, and a lot to look forward to in the coming months – including the upcoming National Drama Teachers' Conference and the Regional STAR Festivals. Let's start with those coming events.

The National Drama Teachers' Conference will begin on Friday, Oct. 25, in 10 in-person hubs across Canada – Victoria, Vancouver, Kelowna, Calgary, Saskatoon, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Rothesay and St. John's – and will continue the next day, Saturday, Oct. 26, with live Zoom meetings across the country.

We're off to an early start this year, in pursuing our goal of expanding the number of drama teachers attending across the country. You can be our biggest help, by both registering yourself, and influencing your colleagues to participate, in this amazing conference. Here is the link to our registration site, which also offers all the detailed information you need, as well as all the reasons why you owe it to yourself to attend: [2024 National Drama Teachers Conference](#). The site also contains links to the individual locations for the Friday in-person sessions, and a link to the Saturday Zoom workshops.

As for the Regional STAR Festivals, they will take place between mid-November and mid-January, at 27 live venues in nine provinces and one territory, plus one session to take place online across Canada. A Regional Festival is a one- or two-day event where students get to perform, watch performances, attend workshops and build community with other drama students from different school troupes. The purpose of Regionals is to create an event that builds community, celebrates educational theatre, facilitates student learning, and encourages the pursuit of excellence. For more information on these festivals, go to [Regional Star Fest - TAEA](#).

At TAEA we also want to highlight the best Canadian content being used in our schools, so that teachers wanting to produce more Canadian work will know about the most popular scripts being produced by their colleagues around the country. With that goal in mind, can you please complete the following survey for us [HERE](#)? It will take you only a few minutes, and once we get enough results, we will publish a list of the most produced Canadian plays, both on our website and in a future issue of this newsletter.

Now to a list of our accomplishments over the past summer! During the last few months, TAEA did all this:

- Hired the following support positions: Kyle Collins as Membership Manager, Tori Mallo in charge of Social Media and Student Portals, Yvette Neuman, Trevor Neuman, Gord Billard and Ethan Dyck for Clerical Project Support, Aliza Sarian for Document Creation / Support Projects, John Lazarus as Theatrics Canada Newsletter Editor, Sean Lam as Website Technologist, and Mark Rossiter as STAR Festival Registration Site Programmer and Support Person.
- Identified our future needs, and positions that we will be hiring for next summer.

- Expanded Our Marketing and Communications Support area, moving from project-based clerical support to a more permanent position.
- Created manuals and support materials for both our leaders and our troupe directors.
- Compiled a complete list of Canadian middle schools, so that we can contact more drama teachers and build a larger consumer base.
- Compiled a complete list of Francophone middle schools and high schools across Canada, to help us create more French-language and bilingual events.
- Created additional video supports, to help you get sponsors, and to help you get schools to attend our STAR Festivals.
- Created poster templates for a multitude of events, and a system to guide leaders to personalize them for regional events.
- Created an online workspace for the tracking and administration of your events (e.g., the Teachers' Conference, the STAR Festivals and the National Festivals).
- Created the Teachers' Conference registration site at [2024 National Drama Teachers Conference](#).
- Created ticketing sites for all our Regional Festivals.
- Finalized our 2023/24 Impact Report, and e-mailed it to the membership.
- Updated our STAR Guild upgrade categories, and changed the collective name of our school troupes from "TAG Troupes" to "STAR Troupes".

And one more important action: we have gained a new Canada-wide sponsor in Theatrical Rights Worldwide (TRW), an international licensing company who will be sponsoring a new TAEA STAR Short Play Program, in which our best Canadian student playwrights will see their scripts published in New York City every year.

Now, looking to the future, here are some of our goals for the 2024/25 season:

- To continue building a national identity for Canadian educational theatre, with our list of the most produced Canadian plays.
- To continue increasing the growing attendance at our Teachers' Conferences.
- To continue growing our student programs, already involving over 100 schools in STAR Fest, up from 70 last year.
- To start a new student-written short play competition and a new student-produced podcast competition.
- To grow our student unified audition participation and our student Star Search.
- To find more drama teachers to be our leaders in corners of the country where they do not yet have a STAR Fest regional event.

- To develop a parallel French-language platform in time for a full rollout in 2025-26. (A consumer contact list and a website containing program materials, both in French, are keys to achieving this.)
- To grow our sponsorship base, with more grassroots regional sponsors.
- To continue to increase our revenues, so that we can hire another round of support staff, and/or expand the roles of our current staff, next summer.
- And to expand our made-in-Canada brand into the U.S. market, as needs and opportunities present themselves.

And with all that on our plate, let me wish you a great start to your school year!

- Craig Wrotniak, Executive Director, TAEA