

WE are Lakota

Theater Community Conversation

Oct. 15, 2018

What would you like to tell the school board and superintendent about the theater program, that you think they don't already know?

After I joined theater, I now have two groups of friends, the ones I had and new ones.

You know your theater friends will be there for you. You shared bonds and made a journey together.

People of all different backgrounds come together and build a bond.

The programs at Lakota are top-notch. They continue to send kids to theater programs in higher ed and beyond.

The leadership they learn will benefit them in a lot of different areas.

I wish the board knew the real amount of money and time that it all takes.

It teaches us life skills that no class or sport will teach us.

You learn life skills like team values and taking responsibility.

I would never have learned to work lights on a stage doing anything else.

You learn time management, when you have homework to do and you're building sets.

Learning communication skills – and not just the actors. Everyone learns them.

Learning conflict resolution.

At both schools, students run the show.

Things kids learn: public speaking...confidence...teamwork...creativity.

We need more opportunities in junior high.

It's hard to recognize all the work that gets done. There's only a few shows every year. Football has a game every week.

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Sports has mandatory pep rallies. We don't have anything like that.

Football is where the funding is.

At East we did get recognized at one pep rally last year.

I think there's a stigma with theater...it's not as "cool" as sports.

It's open to everyone.

The shows are amazing.

Sports has its own place too. Sports can also offer opportunities.

You learn accountability.

It was really great once when the junior high and high school theater programs went to the elementary schools to perform. But I know how hard it is to give up academic time.

The shows aren't attended the way they should be.

We have to engage the community, not just family and friends.

What are some the frustrations you have?

Theater should come with a gym credit.

As a society, arts are getting less value. Fewer people come out to enjoy the arts.

We have to support the arts, or they'll go away.

The number of students who have opportunities to participate – is there any way to have more?

At East and West, we take everyone – we don't turn anyone away.

The community offers scholarships for sports, but not for theater.

The parent involvement gets expensive – costumes, chaperones, bringing in food.

What is the allotment of money between activities – is it fair?

We're not recognized at all. There's no money from the school board. We have to pay for everything ourselves.

There are mandatory pep rallies but kids aren't allowed to miss class to see the show. There's disparate treatment.

Why not have theater programs in elementary schools?

More arts earlier.

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They do have after-school drama at Adena.

Kids know at East there's more programs. But West has the junior school program.

"We Are Lakota" – we shouldn't have to choose between schools to get certain programs.

Can we share resources? We need a little more equality.

Start theater younger, before band and sports gobble them up.

East had a phenomenal program, but then the levy failures cut into the programs.

There are just two to three shows at most.

People think about sports or band, but there's so many more opportunities.

If the theater program is at the next level, what would that look like? And what's the impact of that?

Every elementary would have a special for theater.

In junior school it could be an elective.

In high school you could balance electives with academics.

There would be more classes, funding, experiences, facilities.

There would be a Lakota Performing Arts Center, that could help pay for itself by having facilities that could be leased or rented.

The impact would be on all the things we've already talked about tonight.

Sports brings in money...theater would bring in money.

There would be more participation, funding and attendance.

More teaching artists coming into the schools.

Just like band does, small theater ensembles could perform in the community.

It would be so cool to do small performances in theater, not just big shows.

When little kids see a show, it's real to them. It's not just actors.

A Lakota Performing Arts Center would help create a supportive community for kids.

We could publicize it more and get it out there.

If there's more understanding, there's more acceptance.

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We could create a season for all the different programs – elementary, junior high, high school.

We would go to professional productions and see what they're doing.

There would be:

1. More equitable funding
2. The high school schedule would support more involvement.
3. It would be embedded in the junior school curriculum.
4. In-school performances would expose all student to the arts.
5. Fog machines for everyone!

Junior school classes would get more people involved, earlier.

All vocal skills would start at a higher place.

We need entry points at all levels, not just the earliest ones. Some kids come to the program later.

Everything is being done to the nth degree. It makes it tough not to be siloed.

The Lakota PAC idea as a shared resource in the community.

A zero period.

The Lakota PAC – with two-thirds of the school involved, both East and West using it – We Are Lakota.

Two students needed a place to professionally record auditions...where do you do that. A PAC would have space for it.

Don't underestimate the theater program's social/emotional benefit. Look for opportunities to snag the introverts.