Mentor Discussion and Editing Guide: Cappies 2018-19

\*Highlights from the Mentor Cappies Binder\*

Planning for the Show

Please plan on a very long evening, when you're the Mentor at a Cappies Show. Leave for the show early enough to enable you to **arrive at least 45 minutes before curtain**, giving allowance for traffic. That's when Critics are asked to arrive, which gives them plenty of time for getting lost and getting settled.

**Please plan on staying until the last Critic leaves or is picked up**. That's usually about 45 minutes after a show is over, but often there's a Critic whose friends or parents are a little late picking them up. If so, you will need to stay until the ride gets there. We don't want any teenager stranded at an unfamiliar school, ever.

**Note**: A Mentor is part teacher, part mediator. The best way to lead a discussion—before the show, during intermission, and after the show—is to do it the way you would lead a class.

Once you get there

Please advise whoever is handling refreshments that they cannot be in the room during intermission and after the show, when the Critics are discussing anything. Those conversations are highly confidential. This means that parents will have to wait until the Critics are finished before they can start cleaning up. Make sure to get the envelope with their music & Kevin’s address from the Show Director!

The school should provide at least one student (or adult) usher, to stand outside the door of the Cappies Room and escort the mentors and Critics to their seats right before the show starts, and again after intermission. While the Critics are in the Cappies Room, the usher should stay by the door, in case there are any questions. However, please make sure they are not able to listen in on the Critics' conversation.

Make sure the Cappies Room will be secure, and locked, during the Cappies Show. If it is not, you will need to advise Critics to take all valuables with them into the theater. Students can sometimes be careless with their belongings—and they (and their parents) can understandably get quite upset if anything is lost or stolen.

SIDEBAR – THE CAPPIES ROOM:

**Who should be in the Cappies Room?: Critics & Mentors ONLY;** Please remember that you, your students, and your parents are NOT allowed to be in or around the Cappies Critic room while critics are there. Please hand these materials to the mentors as soon as they arrive, then vacate as much as possible. Thanks for your attention to this matter ☺

**What is appropriate discussion OUTSIDE of the Cappies Room?** NONE

**What is appropriate discussion INSIDE the Cappies Room?** Positive or Constructive Criticism

Before the Show

You must take attendance as the Critics arrive. This is very important. Right before the Critics enter the theater, you should confirm that everyone has checked in with you. (You might need to do this at the start of intermission, as well.) Make sure that friends or family members of Critics are not in the Cappies Room at any time.

Hand out the show programs, and make sure everyone has an evaluation form. If any Critic does not have an evaluation form, another Critic might be able to share one.

Confirm the review deadline with the Critics. It is always on Sunday. Ordinarily, it is 10 AM Sunday for Cappies Shows on Friday evenings or before, noon Sunday for Cappies Shows on Saturday afternoons, 2 PM Sunday for shows on Saturday evenings, and 9 PM for Cappies Shows on Sunday evenings.

From 45 minutes before curtain until 20 minutes before curtain, your task will be to take attendance and make sure all arrangements (Cappies Room, usher, tickets, seating area, materials) are satisfactory. Try to answer any possible question about award eligibility for any category. During this time, the Critics are free to socialize, have refreshments, look through materials, binders, and tech evidence.

The **pre-show discussion** should begin promptly, **15-20 minutes before curtain**. Spend 10 minutes …

1. Discussing the history (the original show, story, and creative team) of the show being performed,
2. Identifying any aspect pertaining to award eligibility for any category (what are the critics looking forward to seeing during act 1?)
3. Reviewing materials provided by the Show Director.

Before entering the theater, instruct Critics to turn off , cell phones, and other noise-making devices before entering the theater. Cell phone noise can be particularly embarrassing when others in the audience hear it coming from the Cappies seating area.

**Remind Critics** not to reveal their opinions of the Cappies Show, by comment or gesture, while in the theater, except in the manner of normal applause, laughter, and end-of-show ovations. Remind them to be careful, when walking to and from the Cappies Room, not to discuss the show in any way, even quietly to another critic, since those conversations might be overheard.

During the Show

Critics may sit anywhere in the Cappies section. They may sit with other Critics from their school, if they wish. Their friends and family members may not sit in the Critics' seating area.

Watch the show with the Critics. It helps if you sit in the furthest back of the rows provided for the Cappies, so you can observe the Critics as well as the show. Make sure Critics do not socialize with any friends at the performing school while at the Cappies Show, whether before, during, or after the show. They may not greet or even gesture to anyone in the performing cast or crew. They may NOT be on their cell phones for any reason.

Make sure Critics exit the theater promptly at intermission, and after final bows.

Intermission Discussion

During intermission, do not start discussions until you are certain no one is present from the performing school. Sometimes a parent might be adding another tray of cookies, so you have to watch for that. And please make sure no one (including the usher) appears to be listening outside the door. That can sometimes be a problem.

Two minutes after the end of the first act, close the door, and start the discussions. Do not wait until all Critics have returned to the Cappies Room. (Some may be still in a restroom, in which case the usher can let them enter.)

Take charge. Make sure there's only one conversation going—yours. Ask Critics to raise hands, so you can call on them before they talk. Ask them to stand when making comments. Keep their comments brief, so as many Critics as possible can make their points.

Invite brief comments from as large as possible a number of Critics, and make sure they are respectful of other opinions. Encourage Critics with contrasting points of view to speak out. Take firm action to prevent anyone from dominating, "showing off" their knowledge of theater in an intimidating manner, or belittling any other Critics who may disagree with them.

Welcome comments from Critics who may be new at this, or who may not be theater students. Critics should not be reluctant to ask questions if they are confused about a rule, or about some technical aspect of theater. (Experienced Critics can sometimes help answer those questions.)

**Question Starters…**

1. "What's working in act one?"
2. “What do you like best about the show, so far?"
3. "What's not working quite as well, so far?"
4. "What could be a little better?"

You should allow critical comments, as long as they are stated fairly, reasonably, and constructively. It's fine for Critics to make any comments they want, and be as critical as they want, as long as things don't get out of hand—too harsh, too belabored, or in any way sarcastic. Critics can mention performers by name, or (better) by character name, during discussions.

You may need to remind some Critics that this cast, crew, and director may do theater a little differently from the way their own school does things—and to respect that difference. You might at times need to point out how differences in budgets can influence the quality of the tech work.

If the comments start taking an overall negative tone, try to steer the conversation back in a more constructive or balanced direction.

If any Critic makes a comment that is grossly unfair or unreasonably harsh, you might gently urge that Critic to keep things within bounds, and ask that no further comments of that kind be made.

You can raise issues, ask questions, provide expertise, and request contrasting points of view, but **please do not do anything that might be perceived by Critics as an attempt to shape or alter Critics' opinions**.

Try to say as little as possible about what you thought of the show. If the Critics are overlooking something you think is important—good or bad—ask a pointed question. If the orchestra was terrific, don't say "Wasn't the orchestra terrific," but instead ask "How did you like the orchestra?" Or, if some of the costumes were out of period, don't say that, just ask the Critics "Were the costumes in period?"

During discussions, the Critics might have some questions. They might want to know the name of a particular dancer, or who painted a backdrop—things like that. If so, one of the Mentors should try to get the answer, either from the usher or (if necessary) from the Show Director.

Post Show Discussion

Start with the same questions you began the intermission discussion with:

1. What worked in the second act?
2. What did you like best?
3. What didn’t work quite as well in the second act?
4. What could have been a little better?

Then, discuss the entire show. Consider…

1. What worked really well through the entire show?
2. What did you like best?
3. Where did the entire show fall a little short?
4. Ok, Real fast, let’s go around the room, what did you like best about the entire show?

Critic’s choices

Finally, decide on the critics’ choices for the show. Try not to spend too much time debating between actors – let one person speak for each person, then hold a vote! Here are the critic reminders for this point of the discussion:

1. Vote for the critics choices that you feel strongly about
2. “Speak for” anyone that you think deserves to be a critics’ choice
   1. Be ready to support whomever you speak for with evidence from their performance!
3. Reminders:
   1. Review the rules for who is eligible for featured/supporting BEFORE you put someone up for consideration.
   2. If a Director vouches for a tech category, they are eligible. Consider their evidence when taking your notes and writing down your scores.
   3. Remember that when voting, your points should be +/- 3 of what you are putting on your critics’ choice sheets, so consider scores carefully.
   4. Be respectful of other critics and comments: do not talk under them, and if you disagree, disagree with the idea not the person.
   5. If a discussion seems to be at a sticking point, don’t be afraid to suggest a Lead Critic vote.

When the discussion is over, Critics can be excused to leave for home. Ask the Critics who finish a little early to help clean up the Cappies Room while the others are still marking their forms.

Please remind Critics to take their show programs home with them, for them to use when writing reviews and confirming the correct spelling of performer names and character names. (Please take your show program home, also, so you can double check the correct spelling of performer names and character names.)

DO NOT FORGET TO COLLECT THE CRITIC’S CHOICE FORMS**.**

These should be mailed to Kevin as soon as possible!

Editing/Selecting Reviews: A quick Guide

**Editing Reviews.**

First things first, be sure to bring home a copy of the show program.

1. Read through ALL of the reviews. Confirm that each one complies with the rules on criticism (below).
2. Edit all reviews for obvious spelling errors (especially names of cast and characters), since all reviews will be forwarded to the performing school!
3. After editing each review, click "Save changes."
   1. When you return to the "Edit Critic Reviews" page, that review will now be marked as "edited."
   2. To read the original submission, as written by the critic, click the "View Original" button.
   3. Do NOT click the "Submit Reviews" button until you have edited ALL reviews.
4. While you read, write down the numbers of your top 5 reviews. This way, when you begin discussing with the other mentors, you can see where your crossovers are, which will make it easier to choose your top 3.

**Selecting reviews to be forwarded for publication.**

1. The selected reviews should offer at least a brief, interesting description about the background of the show and about the story line.
2. The selected reviews should have NO “I” statements and should fit within the word limit parameters   
   (300 – 500 words)
3. Carefully edit each of the selected reviews for the following:
   1. Spelling (especially names of cast and characters)
   2. Grammar and style
   3. Complies with the **rules of Criticism**, which must be:
      1. Within the range of fair comment.
      2. Stated constructively, combined with praise, to the extent possible.
      3. Presented as observation, not as advice.
      4. Not longer than necessary to state a point.
      5. Not directed toward any named student or character.
      6. Not directed toward any adult in the cast, or in any offstage role.
      7. Not directed toward any composer, playwright or lyricist.

*\*\*\* If you determine that a review* ***substantially*** *violates the rules on criticism—if, for example, it is so negative, personal, or sarcastic that it's beyond editing range—please alert the Program Director about the review, making sure to (1) identify it by number and (2) paste the review on the email.*

Please email the review to adminBAL@cappies.com

When you have read and (as necessary) edited all reviews, read and complete the checklist near the bottom of the "Edit Critic reviews" page.

Click the "Submit Reviews" button, and your work is done! 😊

\*\*\*Once you click on the "Submit Reviews" button, you will no longer be able to edit reviews, change rank orders, or resubmit reviews for any reason. After you click the "Submit Reviews" button, you will still be able to see the original and edited reviews.\*\*\*