



Grunin Performing Arts Academy



OCVTS GRUNIN PERFORMING ARTS ACADEMY

2026 Information Packet



The Grunin Performing Arts Academy is a four-year comprehensive public high school administered by the Ocean County Vocational Technical School District. Our program opened its doors in September 2001 for students entering the ninth grade. Grunin Performing Arts Academy offers an artistically distinctive and academically centered learning environment for students gifted in the performing arts and the technical aspects of artistic production. The academy offers its' students a curriculum that is specially designed with a concentration in audio engineering, dance, vocal music, and theatre, while providing a rigorous academic program of study.

In January 2020, the OCVTS Grunin Performing Arts Academy moved to a new state-of-the-art facility located at Ocean County College. This move resulted in the Grunin Performing Arts Academy becoming more centrally located in Ocean County, and it presented advanced learning opportunities for our students. Students have the opportunity to register in Ocean County College embedded classes for dual credit, opening the opportunity to earn an associate's degree in addition to their high school diploma.

The mission of the Grunin Performing Arts Academy of the Ocean County Vocational Technical School district is to bring together the combined talents and abilities of Ocean County's high school performing arts students in a single school focused on providing professional, high-quality arts education within the context of an academically challenging high school environment. Operating as a creatively focused, academically driven, and student-nurturing community, the school seeks to produce students who have grown into individuals capable of succeeding in the unique and challenging opportunities of the performing arts, higher education, and beyond.

The Grunin Performing Arts Academy is a competitive, specialized high school that selects its 9th grade class each year from applicants found within the public and private schools of Ocean County. All students apply and participate in a selective admissions process that considers middle school grades (transcripts), admissions test scores, and audition/interview performance in a specified discipline.

QUICK FACTS:

Type of School: Public Grades Included: 9-12

Total Enrollment: 270 (as of September 2026)

CEEB Code: 310683

The Grunin Performing Arts Academy Class of 2026 was offered almost \$12 million in scholarships and awards.



Grunin Performing Arts Academy COURSE OF STUDY

All students must successfully complete a minimum of 164.5 high school credits to graduate. Courses are typically instructed in block format, either semester long or alternating days. All courses are instructed on at the minimum of college preparatory level.

	GPA CREDITS	OCC CREDITS
FRESHMEN		
Performing Arts I / DANC 120**, THTR 197**, MUSC 101** or COMM 241** English I *	10	2/3
Algebra I* or Geometry* or Algebra II*	5	
Biology*	5	
World Civilization/HIST 181**	5	3
Health & Physical Education	5	
Spanish I or SPAN 151**	5	3
STSC 150** Student Success Seminar	2	2
CSIT 123**Integrated Office Software		3
TOTAL	42	13-14***
SOPHOMORES		
Performing Arts II / DANC 150**, THTR 197**, MUSC 190** or COEM 230** Performance Minor/DANC 145**, MUSC 190**, THTR 195** or Audio English II*	10	2/3
Geometry* or Algebra II* or Other*/**	5	3
Chemistry*	5	
Physical Education & Driver's Education	5	
SPAN 151**/Spanish II or Spanish III	5	3
TOTAL	40	8-9***
JUNIORS		
Performing Arts III/ THTR 194**/THTR 195**, DANC 131** MUSC 120**/MUSC 160**/MUSC 181**, COEM 231**/COEM 232**	10	4-6
English III, ENGL 151** or AP English Language and Composition	5	3
Algebra II*. MATH 165, AP Pre-Calculus/MATH 196** or Statistics/ MATH 156**	5-10	4+
ENVI 152** AP BIO		
US History I/HIST 173**	5	4
Political Science/POLI 183	5	3
Sociology/SOCI 181	2.5	3
Health & Physical Education	2.5	3
Note: Juniors must complete OSHA training for Senior Internship	5	
TOTAL	40	24-26***
SENIORS		
Performing Arts IV/THTR 189**, MUSC 194**/MUSC 161**, DANC 145**/ DANC 241**/DANC 121**, COEM 233, FILM 192	10	3-8
English IV * ENGL 152** or AP English Literature w/ ENGL 152**	5	3
Option Elective: Various	5	3-4
US History II/HIST 174**	5	3
Health & Physical Education/HEHP 160**	5	
Internship	2.5	
Performing Arts History/Theory	5	3
Financial Literacy	2.5	
Public Speaking/COMM 154**	2.5	3
TOTAL	42.5	15-24***

* Indicates course may be taken as college prep or honors level

** Embedded course/Ocean County College Credits

***Ocean County College course credits vary by major





OCVTS PERFORMING ARTS ACADEMY NAMED 2014 BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL, *AN EXEMPLARY HIGH PERFORMING HIGH SCHOOL* - Jean Sullivan

PRESS RELEASE FROM 2014:

The Ocean County Vocational Technical School's Performing Arts Academy (PAA) was one of 337 schools nationwide to be selected as a 2014 Blue Ribbon School by the US Department of Education. The National Blue Ribbon Schools award honors public and private elementary, middle, and high schools where students perform at very high levels or where significant improvements are being made in students' levels of achievement. PAA was recognized as an exemplary high performing high school.

The Performing Arts Academy is a four-year full-time high school designed to provide performing arts curriculum focused in dance, vocal music, and acting, integrated into a rigorous college preparatory academic program. The school exists to provide a unique, nurturing, and challenging learning environment for students living in Ocean County who are gifted in the performing arts. The teaching philosophy strives to incorporate the arts into all educational areas by integrating curriculum and by interaction with professionals from the arts industry.

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan proclaimed, "These great schools are fulfilling the promise of American education—that all students, no matter their name or zip code, can flourish when schools provide safe, creative, and challenging learning environments. National Blue Ribbon Schools are models of consistent excellence and a resource for other schools and districts. We celebrate them for their tireless effort and boundless creativity in reaching and teaching every student."

PAA Principal Karen Homiek added, "The staff's teamwork, collaboration and dedication play a major role in the success of our program. College prep, Honors classes, AP and college courses provide the foundation for academic and performance achievement. We are proud of this recognition and will continue to offer a challenging and rigorous curriculum to our students."

The OCVTS Grunin Performing Arts Academy is now accepting applications for incoming freshmen for the 2026-2027 school year. Students are selected from applications through a highly competitive process and enter at the ninth-grade level. Applicants must reside in Ocean County to be eligible for admission. Application deadline is midnight December 11.



NOTE TO STUDENTS INTERESTED IN ATTENDING OCVTS GRUNIN PERFORMING ARTS ACADEMY

Academy applications are available to students attending our Information Sessions as well as on-line at www.ocvts.org.

OCVTS Grunin Performing Arts Academy has a competitive admissions process. Student's middle school grades (transcripts), admissions tests scores, and audition/interview performance all play a role in acceptance into our program. The Grunin Performing Arts Academy is designed to provide students with performing arts curricula focused in dance, vocal music, acting, and audio engineering, along with a four-year rigorous academic program. Keeping this in mind, it is important for students who wish to attend be committed to their craft/talent and have a willingness to work hard.

We strongly recommend attending one of our Information Sessions to learn about our program and the education opportunities we offer. These sessions are designed to help students and their families make informed decisions regarding an educational pathway that is in the best interest of each student.

The academy approach to learning is different from the traditional high school setting and the decision to apply should be made after review and discussion of the material presented during our Information Sessions.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Our course of study exceeds the New Jersey minimum course requirements for graduation. OCVTS Grunin Performing Arts students are offered the skills necessary to develop and manage a career in the arts industry. Students are provided with the opportunity to perform and record in a professional audio recording studio. Trips are taken to see professional performances. Guest artists are invited to the school to perform and train our students.

ADVANCED CURRICULUM OFFERINGS

The Grunin Performing Arts Academy has forged a partnership with Ocean County College that provides our students with the opportunity to earn most of the credits needed for an associate's degree. In embedded classes, Ocean County College learning objectives and expectations have been aligned with ours to maintain coursework integrity, as well as ensure academic rigor. We are proud to be able to offer Ocean County College embedded classes throughout all four grade levels.



APPLICATION PROCEDURES

1. **Information Sessions:** Although you may have diverse interests, you may apply to only one of OCVTS's three academies. Attending our information sessions may help you decide which school is right for you. The Grunin Performing Arts Academy Information Sessions are scheduled for the following three dates: 10/10, 10/28 or 11/21. These are in person events. Please register on-line at <https://www.ocvts.org/academies> to attend one of our Information Sessions.
2. **Obtain Academy Admission Materials and Application:** Academy applications and admission materials can be obtained at one of the information sessions or online at www.ocvts.org.
3. **Application Submission:** Complete the required application online. The following academic grades **MUST** be included as support material: 7th grade final report card and 8th grade first marking period report card.
4. All applications and academic grades **MUST** be submitted online by midnight on **December 11, 2026**.
5. **Admission Testing:** Take the admission test on **January 16, 2027** at:
OCVTS Grunin Performing Arts Academy:
1 College Drive, Building 12 (Parking Lot 2)
Toms River, NJ 08754
Staggered start times will be used for Admission Testing
6. **Auditions:** Auditions will be held on **January 23, 2027** at:
OCVTS Grunin Performing Arts Academy
1 College Drive, Building 12 (Parking Lot 2)
Toms River, NJ 08754
Staggered start times will be used for auditions

Acceptance Criteria

Applicants will be ranked using the following criteria:

- A) Academic grades 7th grade
 8th grade (first marking period)
- B) Admissions Exam
- C) Audition



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What must be included with my application?

- A.** The application must be filled out completely.
OCVTS will be requesting a copy of the student's grades/report cards from their current school via email.

The deadline for online applications is **midnight on December 11, 2026**. Late applications WILL NOT be accepted.

Q. How competitive is the admissions process, and what are the minimum requirements?

- A.** In general, there will be more applicants than available space. We assign scores to all applicants based on academic records, performance on our entrance exam, and performance at our auditions/interview(s).

Q. What happens if I am not accepted?

- A.** If you are not accepted but you meet the minimum criteria, your application will remain on file. Should an opening occur, your application may be reconsidered.

Q. What is on the entrance exam?

- A.** The exam contains two sections: mathematics and language arts literacy. Questions are multiple-choice. Calculators are permitted on one portion of the mathematics assessment.

Q. What is the audition?

- A.** Auditions for singers, actors, and dancers consists of a practical demonstration of the candidate's talent and skill in their area of interest. Actors and singers, warm as a group, but audition individually. Students that audition for dance participate in a dance workshop, that last approximately 2 hours long, where prospective students are judged individually. Students interested in Audio Engineering program are expected to create a product/presentation and participate in an interview. Both auditions and interviews are evaluated by industry professionals. Specific audition/interview requirements will be made available to applicants prior to auditions during the Information Sessions.

Q. What if I am sick and miss the exam/audition?

- A.** A make-up date will be available for the exam and/or the audition, based on the circumstances of the individual.

Q. How and when will I be notified of acceptance?

- A.** It will take approximately four weeks for all processing to be completed after the audition date. All applicants who have completed the admissions process will be notified by mail whether they have been accepted or not.

Q. Can I apply to more than one Career Academy?

- A.** No, you may only apply to one school. Our Career Academies offer very specialized curricula. The Career Academies admissions process attempts to match students to the most appropriate program for that student. One of the first steps in that process is for you to choose the school that most fulfills your interests and abilities.

Q. How will I make arrangements for transportation and other costs?

- A.** The Ocean County Vocational Technical School District is a public-school district. If you have been accepted, your resident school district will be notified and transportation will be provided by that district. You can expect to incur the same kinds of costs that you would in your resident school. Notebooks, pens, pencils, etc. are your responsibility to provide.

Q. How will my child, if accepted, get to Grunin Performing Arts Academy?

- A.** The student's resident district will be responsible for transporting the student to the Grunin Performing Arts Academy.

Save the Dates!

**Grunin Performing Arts Academy
Admission Information Sessions**

Saturday, October 10, 9:00 AM

Wednesday, October 28, 6:00 PM

Saturday, November 21, 9:00 AM

To register for an information session, please visit <https://www.ocvts.org/academies>

**All Grunin Performing Arts Academy
Information Sessions will be in person events**

Application Deadline: December 11, 2026 (MIDNIGHT)

Admission Testing: January 16, 2027 (Begins 8 AM – Scattered Starts)

Auditions/Interviews: January 23, 2027 (Begins 8 AM – Scattered Starts)

Additional information regarding Admission Testing and Auditions/Interviews will be sent electronically after you have completed the application process.





College Acceptances

The Grunin Performing Arts Academy Class of 2026 was offered almost \$12 million in scholarships and awards.

Adelphi University
Albright College
American Academy of Dramatic Arts
American Musical and Dramatic Academy
Arcadia University
Atlantic Cape Community College
Ball State University
Belmont University
Bennington College
Berkeley College
Boston Conservatory
Boston University
Brandeis University
Brookdale Community College
Caldwell College
California State University
Carnegie Mellon University
Cedar Crest College
Coastal Carolina University
College and Conservatory of Music
Columbia College
Dartmouth
Delaware State University
DeSales University
Drew University
Drexel University
East Carolina University
Elon University
Emerson College
Fairleigh Dickinson University
Fashion Institute of Technology
Five Towns College
Flagler College
Florida Atlantic University
Florida State University
Fordham University
Georgian Court University
George Mason University
Green Mountain College
Hartford County College
Hartford University

The Hart School of Music
Hofstra University
Ithaca University
James Madison University
Kean University
La Roche College
Long Island University, CW Post
Louisiana State University
Loyola University
Manhattan College
Manhattan School of Music
Marymount University
Marymount Manhattan College
Maryville College
Mason Gross School of the Arts
McNally Smith College of Music
Messiah College
Miami Dade College – Kendall
Monmouth University
Montclair State University
Mount Saint Mary's College
Naropa University
Nazareth College
New World School of the Arts
New York Film Academy
New York University
Northeastern University
Nyack College
Ocean County College
Ohio Northern University
Otterbein College
Pace University
Peabody Conservatory of Music
Penn State University
Point Park University
Ramapo College
Rider University
Rutgers University
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rowan University
Sacred Heart University
Salisbury University

Sanford Brown Institute
Santa Fe University of Art and Design
Savannah College of Art and Design
Seton Hall University
Shenandoah College
Slippery Rock University
St. Joseph College
St. Louis University
St. Peter's College
Stevens Institute of Technology
Stockton University
Southern Illinois University
Temple University
The Art Institute of New York City
The College of New Jersey
Tisch School of the Arts
Towson University
University of Arizona
University of Cincinnati –
Conservatory of Music
University of Delaware
University of Alabama
University of Georgia
University of Hawaii at Hilo
University of Maryland
University of North Carolina
University of the Sciences
University of Tampa
Vassar College
Wagner College
Washington College
West Chester University of
Pennsylvania
Westminster College of the Arts
Wilkes University
William Patterson University of
New Jersey



GRUNIN PERFORMING ARTS ACADEMY

STUDENT CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

A cappella (Phantastix)
Bible Club
Black Box Players/Drama Club
Community Service Leaders/Key Club
Connections Club
Dance Club
Fall Drama
Film Club
GSA
Heart Club
International Thespian Society (ITS)
Literary Magazine (Wasabi)
Math League
National Honor Society (NHS)
National Honor Society of Dance Arts (NHSDA)
English Honor Society
GPAA Performance Troupe
GPAA School Musical
Model UN
Morning Brew Crew
Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO)
Roots and Shoots
SkillsUSA
Student Council (by grade level)
Table - Top Role Playing Club
Theatre Tech Club
Vocal Music Club
Vocal Ensemble
Vocal Chorale
Yearbook

Current Fall Dramas and Spring Musicals:

- *Beauty and the Beast* – Spring Musical 2018
- *Chicago* – Spring Musical 2019
- *Crucible* – Fall Drama 2019
- *Legally Blonde* – Spring Musical 2020
- *Hindsight* – Fall Drama 2020
- *Chorus Line* – Spring Musical 2021
- *Macbeth* – Fall Drama 2021
- *Bring It On* – Spring Musical 2022
- *Clue* – Fall Drama 2022
- *Sweeney Todd* – Spring Musical 2023
- *Dracula: A feminist Revenge Fantasy*- Fall 2023
- *The Prom*- Spring 2024
- *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*- Fall 2024
- *SpongeBob the Musical*- Spring Musical 2025
- *A Monster Calls*- Fall 2025
- *Mama Mia!*- Spring Musical 2026
- **Coming Soon! *Present Laughter*- November 2026**
- **Coming Soon! *Urinetown!* - February 2027**

An example of outside intensives/workshops/performances:

- NYU Tisch School of the Arts (summer program)
- Alvin Ailey summer intensive program
- Alvin Ailey independent study program
- Governor's School (summer experience), The College of New Jersey (TCNJ), Ewing Twp., NJ
- Peridance (summer program)
- Manhattan Dance Project (summer program)
- The Rockette Experience (summer program)
- "Slide" (summer intensive workshop with Mike Minnery)
- "The Pulse" (hip hop convention)
- New York City Dance Alliance
- The State University of New York (SUNY) - Binghamton, intensive summer dance institute
- Tremaine Dance Convention
- Annie Get Your Gun, Phoenix Productions; Count Basie Theatre, Red Bank
- The Scarlet Pimpernel; Count Basie Theatre, Red Bank
- Young Artist Program, Westminster Conservatory
- Phantom of the Opera, Broadway
- Miss Saigon, Broadway
- Crossmen Drum and Bugle Corps summer program, East Coast Tour/Performances
- Once Upon a Mattress; Manchester Township High School, Manchester
- West Side Story; New Egypt High School, Plumsted Township
- Desire Entertainment Talent Expo 3; The Strand Theatre, Lakewood
- Benefit performance for Tsunami Victims; Methodist Church, Island Heights
- Intern/Apprentice Cabaret; Surflight Theatre, Beach Haven
- The Pirates of Penzance, Phoenix Productions
- United Synagogue Youth Mission Mitzvah; nationwide tour
- Joe Valmonte and Christmas Bash performance, The Valmonte Studio
- "Write On" Workshop; Our Gang Players, Barnegat
- New York Performing Arts Center
- The Historic Strand Theatre's summer theatre program, Lakewood, various productions
- "The Play's the Thing" Scholarship, Two River Theatre Company
- A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, Toms River High School North
- Previous vocal major signed to a record deal with a country music label, Nashville, TN
- Westminster Youth Chorale, Brazilian Tour, Summer 2006
- St. Brendan the Navigator, Irish Pipe and Drums Band
- Dover Recreational Parks' Summer Program and Musical Revue
- Westminster Choir College's Summer Musical Theater Camp and Youth Chorale
- National Anthem Performance, Giants Stadium
- Songs of Inspiration, Algonquin Theatre
- Internships, Two Rivers Theatre
- Surflight Theatre's Summer Program Apprentice Program
- Berkshire's Institute of Music and Art's Summer Program
- Rock N' Roll Chorus
- All State Chorus
- Two River Metro Scholar



OCVTS Grunin Performing Arts Academy

2026-2027 Show Dates

2026 FALL DRAMA

Present Laughter

Performance Location: Ocean County College Jay and Linda Grunin
Center for the Arts 1 College Drive, Toms River, NJ
Friday, November 20 -Sunday, November 22, 2026

2027 MUSICAL PRODUCTION

Urinetown

*Performance Location: Ocean County College Jay and Linda Grunin
Center for the Arts 1 College Drive, Toms River, NJ
Friday, February 19 - Saturday, February 20, 2027*

For show details, links and more information please go to:

<https://sites.google.com/ocvts.org/ocvtspaa>

OCVTS Grunin Performing Arts Academy

Ocean County Vocational Technical School District

Tierney Meeker, Principal
Christopher Mazur, Vice Principal

Audio Engineering

William Bourke
 Mathew McCourt
 Timothy Pannella

Dance

Kelly Bourke
 Melissa Faisst

English

Gabriella Grant
 Julia Gilmore
 Michelle Stavros

Health/Physical Education

Michael Baiata
 Barbara DeSantis

Mathematics

Andrew Dennison
 Robin Kelly
 Nicole Komorowski
 Katerina Wunsch

Science

Kerry Anderson
 Olympia Gaglioti
 Alyson Wrisley

Social Studies

Matthew Leddin
 Michael Mazzola
 Melissa Morrison

Spanish

Nancy Petrocelli
 Daniel Wellner

Technical Theater

Tara Mangano

Theater

Anthony Ciccotelli
 Carolyn Little

Vocal Music

Mary Kenny
 Joseph Puliafico

School Counselors

Dawn Murphy
 Zackary Montesana

School Nurse

Dana Weinstein

Administrative Assistants

Jackie LaMazza
 Deborah Sansone

Custodians

Frank Harris
 Matthew Long
 Scott Sheets
 John Sweeney

Board of County Commissioners

Commissioner Frank Sadeghi.....Director/OCVTS Liaison
 Commissioner Jennifer BacchioneDeputy Director
 Commissioner Robert S. AraceMember/OCVTS Liaison
 Commissioner Sam Ellenbogen.....Member
 Commissioner Ray GormleyMember

Board of Education

Stephen Scaturro.....President
 Maureen C. Stankowitz.....Vice President
 Michael Donahue.....Member
 Susan R. Naples.....Interim Executive County Superintendent/Member
 Ronald L. Rosetto.....Member

OCVTS Central Administration

Gary L. MacDonald, Jr.....Superintendent
 R. James Barbieri.....Assistant Superintendent
 Stephen J. Brennan, CPA.....Business Administrator

OCVTS Administration

John Biscardi.....Principal, Waretown
 Paul DeFrancesco.....Principal, MATES
 Jeremy Dusza.....Principal, Adult Education
 Jennifer Etzkorn.....Vice Principal, Jackson
 Lauren Mattei.....Vice Principal, Brick
 Christopher Mazur.....Vice Principal, GPAA
 Thomas McInerney.....Principal, Jackson
 Tierney Meeker.....Principal, GPAA
 Melanie Patterson.....Principal, Student/Special Services
 Jenna Rosenfeld.....Vice Principal, Toms River
 Christine Santasieri.....Principal, Toms River/LPN
 Lynn Sauer.....Principal, Brick
 Tiffany Seeley.....Principal, ALPS
 Dr. Michael Tash.....Principal, Technology
 Dr. John Wnek.....Supervisor, MATES



The mission of Ocean County Vocational Technical School is to provide an intensive and immersive educational experience aligned with the current and emerging demands of business, industry, and advanced education. We instill the knowledge, skills, and competencies required for students to experience success in entering the workforce, advancing along a career pathway, and achieving career aspirations.

It is the policy of the Board of Education of Ocean County Vocational Technical School not to discriminate in its technical programs, vocational opportunities, activities, employment practices or admission policies and practices on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, ancestry, national origin, affectional and sexual orientation, disability or social or economic status. Lack of English language skills will not be a deterrent to admission to any program at Ocean County Vocational Technical School.

Inquiries regarding affirmative action, discrimination (including Federal Title IX requirements), sexual harassment or equity should be directed to: James Barbieri/Melanie Patterson, Title IX/Affirmative Action Office, 732-240-6414 (ext. 3318) or 732-473-3100 (ext. 3123) Melanie Patterson, Federal Section 504 Officer, 732-473-3100 (ext. 3123) Melanie Patterson, Americans with Disabilities Officer, 732-473-3100 (ext. 3123)

We are an Equal Opportunity Employer and Educator who fully and actively supports equal access for all people regardless of race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin, veterans status, disability, genetic information or testing, family and medical leave, sexual orientation and gender identification and expression. We prohibit retaliation against individuals who bring forth any complaint, orally or in writing, to the employer or the government, or against any individuals who assist or practice in the investigation of any complaint, or otherwise oppose discrimination.

