# THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

## THE MUSICAL THEATRE & ACTORS STUDIO

## Director's Notes

Welcome to this year's first issue of ***The Director's Cut***, a monthly newsletter where I – along with the students in the Musical Theatre & Actors Studio [MTAS] – will offer a behind the scenes look at what makes up our Academy!

At the end of each month, you'll get an inside look into what we've been working on. We'll be sharing our experiences involving curriculum, performances, guest artists, workshops & masterclasses, and so much more! I look forward to regularly communicating with the families and colleagues who support our program and welcome you to always reach out with any questions or concerns.

I am honored to serve as the Director of the Musical Theatre & Actors Studio! I'm eager to work closely with our students to unlock their true creative potential...not to mention make some amazing memories along the way!

Unique educational experiences. Professional training. Industry exposure. It's all here at the Academy's Musical Theatre & Actors Studio. I'm glad you're here!

*Erich DiCenzo*

**DIRECTOR OF THE MUSICAL THEATRE & ACTORS STUDIO**

## *Welcome Home!*

**The Pre-Professional "Sweet Sixteen" Class of 2027 Pose for Their First Group Photo of the Year**

Welcome to our 2026-2027 school year! For those of you whom I have yet to meet, my name is Erich DiCenzo, Director of the Musical Theatre & Actors Studio [MTAS]. I am thrilled to be entering my seventh year in this position – fourteenth as a Performing Arts educator – and cannot wait for the opportunity to work with you!

I want to assure you that safety will remain a top priority. I have always strived to foster a classroom in which students feel both physically and emotionally safe. It's essential to our work as performing artists that individuals in the MTAS feel free to express themselves, feel encouraged to take risks, and feel supported as they grow to discover their own identity and abilities.

It's going to be an exciting year! With plans to offer multiple performance opportunities, continue our successful partnerships with professional theatre companies, and welcome several Broadway artists, students in the Academy will be exposed to one-of-a-kind industry experiences sure to foster growth and success. A heightened focus on professional pursuits and college and career readiness is just part of what makes the MTAS so special. Students will get to experience this firsthand as some of the field's top college and conservatory admissions officers visit the classroom for in-depth Q&A's and recruitment.

With so much planned for our year, I don't want you to miss a beat. Be sure to keep a lookout for the next issue of *The Director's Cut* and visit our Musical Theatre & Actors Studio website often! And, as always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email me or schedule an appointment. I want to thank you for supporting the performing arts and the Fairfax Academy. I look forward to working together!

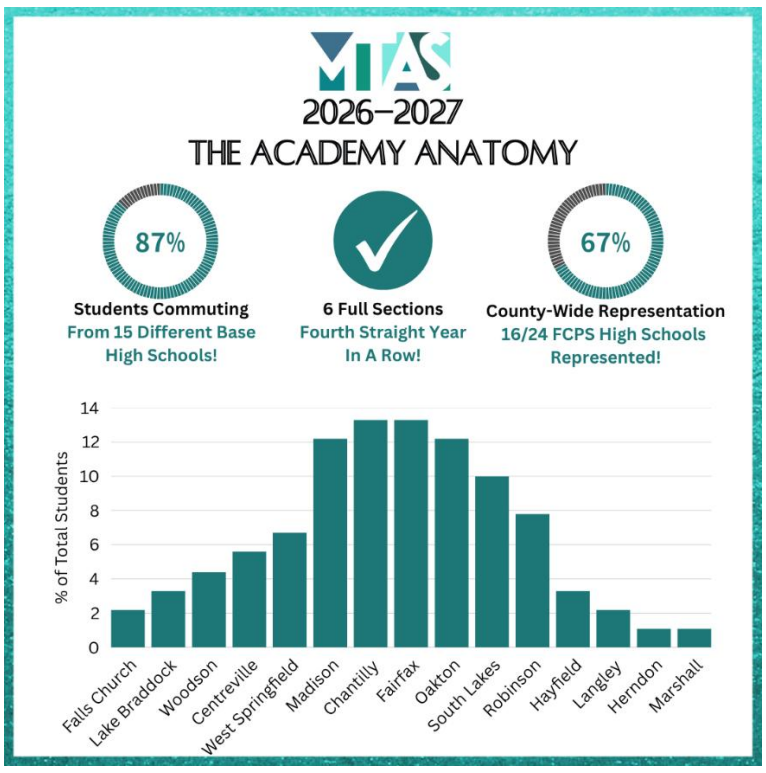
# DIRECTOR'S CUT

## The Academy Anatomy:

### Where Are Our Academy Students Coming From?

**The Musical Theatre & Actors Studio is made up of four tracked courses**:
*Fundamentals, Workshop, Advanced Workshop, & Pre-Professional [HN]*

This year marks the fourth year in a row that MTAS enrollment is at capacity, with six full sections. Welcoming students from sixteen of our twenty-four FCPS high schools, the MTAS has 67% county-wide representation! This year, 87% of our MTAS students commute from high schools across the county. The rest, 13%, attend Fairfax High School as their base school. The bar chart on the right highlights this year's high school representation by number of students from each base high school.




## NEW VOICES: What Are Your First Impressions of the Academy's Musical Theatre & Actors Studio?

*""The whole environment of MTAS is very welcoming and it is clear that everyone supports their peers. I love how everybody is passionate about their craft and expanding their skillset while having fun. You're always working hands-on and being exposed to experiences that help you grow as a performer and person."*
**Lana Vittor - Pre-Professional MT** - *South Lakes HS*

*"I've never felt more welcomed by a group of people…genuinely. I haven't felt awkward or excluded in any way. I also appreciate how organized and engaging everything has been. I'm looking forward to a great year!"*
**Juliet Yetik – MT Workshop** - *Langley HS*

*"Everything is so well-organized and Mr. DiCenzo has been very welcoming. I really appreciate that everything is so proactively planned; it helps us jump right into things. My peers have also been incredibly welcoming. They make me feel like I've been here the whole time. I'm looking forward to the year because I can already tell we'll be tackling curriculum I haven't had the chance to touch on yet."*
**Ellie DeVaughn - MT Workshop** – *Robinson SS*

*"My first impressions of academy have been nothing but fun, positive vibes and I am so grateful to get the opportunity to meet all these incredible new people in my class! After our first performance, I got so much support from my fellow classmates and it has been so much fun getting to know everyone. This group is so beyond talented, and I love being surrounded by people that are there to learn, grow, and get experience just like me!"*
**Madeleine Clapp - MT Fundamentals** – *Woodson HS*

*"Everyone is so talented and totally deserves to be in this incredible academy, hands down! I can already tell this community is nothing but supportive and inspiring! I have had the most amazing first couple of days here and can't wait to go to class with the most uplifting and wonderful people for the rest of the year!"*
**Tatum Sweetland - MT Fundamentals** – *West Springfield HS*

## LOOK AHEAD

As outlined in the MTAS Handbook, a high expectation on students in the Academy is to maintain an organized and detailed calendar, especially for those students who will be balancing opportunities at both their base school and within the Academy.

It is important to me that students are able to participate in everything they desire. I am a big believer that with enough advanced planning and proactive communication, conflicts can be worked through. I never want a student to look at a rehearsal calendar and just assume that they can't participate. In the end, it may not be possible, but I encourage all students to initiate open and clear communication to see if a work around may exist.

Once we return from Labor Day weekend, our year will really begin to kick into high gear! I want to use this opportunity to highlight some of the early events on our schedule so you may begin to save the dates on yours!

**Monday, September 4th**
No School

**Thursday, September 7th**
No School

**Thursday, September 9th**
**1st MTAS Boosters Meeting**
FHS Black Box Studio
6:30-7:30pm
+
**Boosters Social** [Adults Only]
PJ Skidoos from 7:30-9:00pm

**Thursday, September 10th**
**MTAS Kick-Off Pizza Party**
FHS Auditorium
6:00-8:00pm

**Thursday, September 16th**
**Academy Back to School Night**
Commuter Families: 5:30-6:30pm
FHS Student Families: 6:30-8:00pm

**Monday, September 21st**
No School

**Thursday, September 24th**
**Pre-Professional MT Showcase**
FHS Auditorium at 7:00pm

**Friday, September 25th**
**& Monday, September 28th**
In-Class Signature Workshops

**Tuesday, September 29th**
**"Merrily We Roll Along"**
Optional School Day Field Trip