



EVANSTON-SKOKIE SCHOOL DISTRICT 65

DRAMA DEPARTMENT

The District 65 Drama Department, established in 1924, is the longest thriving creative drama program in the United States. Under the guidance of creative drama specialists, this nationally renowned drama department provides the children of Evanston with exceptional theatre education. Central to that mission is the recognition that creative drama is both a theatrical art form and a powerful teaching methodology.

Drama classes are approximately 40 minutes in length. Elementary students have 1 drama class per week and middle school students receive one rotation of drama per year.

Creative Drama is an improvisational, non-exhibitional, process-centered form of drama in which participants are guided by a leader to imagine, enact and reflect upon human experience. (adapted from Children's Theatre Review XXVII, 1 (1978), 10-11).

The Creative Drama process is dynamic. The teacher guides the group to collaboratively explore, develop, express and communicate ideas, concepts and feelings through dramatic enactment. In creative drama, classes improvise action and dialogue, using the impulse of play and the elements of theatre to give form and meaning to the experience. The primary purpose of creative drama is not to train actors for the stage, but rather imagine, enact and reflect upon human experience.

Creative Drama is used not only to teach the elements of the art form of theatre, but to make history and literature come alive, develop empathy, strengthen oral language skills, cultivate creativity, enhance collaborative decision-making, apply elements of dramatic structure and to develop ensemble. Students work with the drama teacher to improvise a scene, story, historical event, concept or idea and then reflect on and make personal connections to their own work and the work of peers.

The greatest strength of the District 65 Drama Program is its emphasis on equity and culturally responsive pedagogy. The creative drama classroom is a place where all students achieve. Because theatre is an organically differentiated art form incorporating design, movement, music, playwriting and technology, creative drama has the ability to reach students with varying talents. In class, activities are differentiated to ensure that each student can be successful in the lesson. Students are encouraged to demonstrate learning and creativity through verbal and kinesthetic expression, writing, drawing, collaborative planning and various forms of reflection. The drama work is structured to welcome and embrace the cultures, ethnicities, languages and special needs of all our students.

Priority Arts Standards 2020-21 - Illinois State Board of Education

Creating:

Anchor 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Anchor 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work

Performing:

Anchor 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

Responding:

Anchor 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Anchor 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

Connecting:

Anchor 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

