

Summer Intensive Musical Theatre Program Update

Overview

Downey Unified School District's Summer Intensive Musical Theatre Program provided middle school students with an immersive performing arts experience during the summer. The program combined theatrical instruction, performance preparation, and collaborative learning opportunities while allowing students to participate concurrently with summer school programming.

Program Structure

The 2025 Summer Intensive Musical Theatre Program was held at Stauffer Middle School from June 9 through July 7. The program served incoming sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students from across the district. A total of 77 students auditioned, with 44 students selected to participate. Students represented all four Downey Unified middle schools.

Student Production

Participants prepared and performed Disney's *Frozen Jr.*, a musical production that provided students with opportunities to develop skills in acting, singing, movement, collaboration, and stage performance. Through rehearsals and performances, students gained firsthand experience in the creative and technical aspects of musical theatre.

Program Leadership and Support

The program was led by a team of experienced theatre educators and arts professionals, including:

- Andrea Pyle, Artistic Director
- Chris Nelson, Acting Coach
- Ozzie Zarate, Voice Coach
- Monica Ulloa, Choreographer

The production was further supported by five student stage managers and volunteer support from Jeff Toussieng, who assisted with set design, lighting, set construction, special effects, setup, and teardown.

Student Learning and Engagement

The Summer Intensive Musical Theatre Program provided students with opportunities to:

- Build confidence through performance and public presentation
- Develop collaboration and teamwork skills
- Strengthen communication and creative expression
- Gain experience in both on-stage and behind-the-scenes theatre production
- Connect with peers from across the district through a shared artistic experience

Program Impact

By bringing together students from all four middle schools, the program fostered districtwide connections while expanding access to arts education during the summer months. The experience supported the District's commitment to providing engaging enrichment opportunities that cultivate student creativity, collaboration, and personal growth through the visual and performing arts.