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September 8, 2009

Dear Parents,

Congratulations on your child enrolling in the two theatre courses being offered for college credit through our partnership with North Country Community College. At the conclusion of the school year, your child will have earned 6 credits in Drama at a significantly reduced rate. Mr. Ford will be in contact with you shortly, if not already, to discuss payment for the courses.

Drama 101, Introduction to Theatre, acquaints students with various aspects of the theater, including theater history, play analysis, acting techniques, directing, scenic design, lighting, and costuming. Drama 115, Plays and Production, examines three plays in depth, both as literature and as productions. It will be taught in conjunction with Willsboro's Elementary Drama Club to allow students to study the many facets of production.

In both courses, students will be expected to travel to watch and analyze community, collegiate, and professional theatre. Three trips will be taken to Proctor's Theater in Schenectady, NY, to watch the national touring companies of *The Color Purple*, *Wicked*, and *Spring Awakening*. The school has agreed to provide transportation, but the cost per ticket must be paid by the student. Additionally, we will travel to SUNY Plattsburgh to watch *Tartuffe*. Two additional shows, *The Last 5 Years* and *Wit* will be produced and presented here, at Willsboro, for no cost to the students. Students will be expected to write a critique on each show, which counts towards their final grade. Payment of \$180 for the three professional shows will be due October 1, 2009.

Attached, please find a permission slip for your child to take these courses and to attend the field trips. A brief synopsis of each show and any questionable content has been provided. If you would like a copy of any of the scripts to review prior to you granting your permission, please feel free to contact me at (518) 963-4456 x252 or dhopkins@willsborocsd.org.

Thank you for your support. I look forward to working with you and educating your child in the theatrical arts!

Sincerely,



Derrick A. Hopkins

September 8, 2009

I, _____, give my child, _____,
[print parent's name] [print child's name]
permission to participate in the college theatre courses being offered at Willsboro Central School. I understand that adult content and language will be read and discussed in the context of the given play (list of questionable content and each show's synopsis listed below). Plays were selected for their literary content, historical/social significance, and the unique production qualities of each show.

Permission is also given for my child attend the field trips to see *The Color Purple* (10/17/09; \$55), *Wicked* (12/19/09; \$65), and *Spring Awakening* (2/21/10, \$60) at Proctor's Theatre in Schenectady, NY, and to see *Tartuffe* (11/6/09; \$8) at SUNY Plattsburgh, which will result in additional fees from the initial course fee. All Proctor's Theatre tickets must be paid in full at a cost of \$180 total by October 1, 2009. The bus will depart at 10:00am on the day of the Schenectady trips. Students will purchase their *Tartuffe* tickets on the night of the trip at the SUNY Box Office.

Parent's Signature

Date

Student's Signature

Date

SHOW	QUESTIONABLE CONTENT (IF ANY)
<i>Noises Off</i>	sexual innuendo & adult language
<i>Death of Salesman</i>	sexual innuendo
<i>Oklahoma!</i>	sexual innuendo
<i>I Hate Hamlet</i>	sexual innuendo & adult language
<i>Tartuffe</i>	none
<i>Wicked</i>	sexual innuendo
<i>Spring Awakening</i> *	see paragraph below & show synopsis on next page
<i>Glass Menagerie</i>	none
<i>Equus</i>	sexuality & adult language
<i>Doubt</i>	explores allegations of abuse of a minor
<i>The Last 5 Years</i>	sexual innuendo & adult language
<i>Wit</i>	adult language
<i>101 Dalmatians</i>	none

**Spring Awakening* is the most controversial play that we will read and analyze. It was originally written in 1891 and the riveting nature of the play still finds controversy in today's audience. It was selected to compare the original play to the modern musical adaptation. The play and musical versions allow the class to discuss relevant issues surrounding teens today to that of 1891. The professional performance that we are scheduled to see does show acts of violence towards women, suicide, homosexuality, and simulated sexual encounters. If parents feel uncomfortable with this content, a different compare & contrast essay will be assigned at your request and your child will be excused from these discussions.

Synopsis of Shows

NOISES OFF – The story plays on the concept of a play within a play, in this case a dreadful comedy titled *Nothing On*. *Nothing On* is set in "a delightful 16th-century posset mill" that has been converted to a modern dwelling for which renters are solicited; the fictional playwright is appropriately named Robin Housemonger. Each of the three acts of *Noises Off* contains a performance of the first act of *Nothing On*.

DEATH OF A SALESMAN - The story revolves around the last days of Willy Loman, a failing salesman, who cannot understand how he failed to win success and happiness. Through a series of tragic soul-searching revelations of the life he has lived with his wife, his sons, and his business associates, we discover how his quest for the "American Dream" kept him blind to the people who truly loved him. A thrilling work of deep and revealing beauty that remains one of the most profound classic dramas of the American theatre.

OKLAHOMA! - Rodgers & Hammerstein's first collaboration remains, in many ways, their most innovative, having set the standards and established the rules of musical theatre still being followed today. Set in a Western Indian territory just after the turn of the century, the high-spirited rivalry between the local farmers and cowboys provides the colorful background against which Curly, a handsome cowboy, and Laurey, a winsome farm girl, play out their love story. Although the road to true love never runs smooth, with these two headstrong romantics holding the reins, love's journey is as bumpy as a surrey ride down a country road. That they will succeed in making a new life together we have no doubt, and that this new life will begin in a brand-new state provides the ultimate climax to the triumphant OKLAHOMA!

I HATE HAMLET - Andrew Rally seems to have it all: celebrity and acclaim from his starring role in a hit television series; a rich, beautiful girlfriend; a glamorous, devoted agent; the perfect New York apartment; and the chance to play Hamlet in Central Park. There are, however, a couple of glitches in paradise. Andrew's series has been canceled; his girlfriend is clinging to her virginity with unyielding conviction; and he has no desire to play Hamlet. When Andrew's agent visits him, she reminisces about her brief romance with John Barrymore many years ago, in Andrew's apartment. This prompts a séance to summon his ghost. From the moment Barrymore returns, dressed in high Shakespearean garb, Andrew's life is no longer his own. Barrymore, fortified by champagne and ego, presses Andrew to accept the part and fulfill his actor's destiny. The action becomes more hilarious with the entrance of Andrew's deal-making friend from LA, spouting the laid-back hype of the Coast and offering Andrew a fabulous new TV deal worth millions of dollars. The laughs are nonstop as Andrew wrestles with his conscience, Barrymore, his sword, and the fact that he fails as Hamlet in Central Park.

TARTUFFE - The story takes place in the home of the wealthy Orgon, where Tartuffe—a fraud and a pious imposter—has insinuated himself. He succeeds magnificently in winning the respect and devotion of the head of the house and then tries to marry his daughter and seduce his wife and scrounge the deed to the property. He nearly gets away with it, but an emissary from King Louis XIV arrives in time to recover the property, free Monsieur Orgon and haul Tartuffe off to jail. And so his duplicity is finally exposed and punished. But not before the author has mercilessly examined the evil that men can commit in the guise of religious fervor and the dangers that imperil those who would believe only what they choose to believe despite a mountain of evidence to the contrary.

WICKED - When Dorothy famously triumphed over the Wicked Witch, we only ever heard one side of the story. Gregory Maguire's acclaimed 1995 novel, *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*, re-imagined the land of Oz, creating a parallel universe to the familiar story written by L. Frank Baum and first published as *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in 1900. *Wicked* tells the incredible untold story of an unlikely friendship between two girls who first meet as Sorcery Students at Shiz University: the blonde and very popular *Galinda* and a misunderstood green girl, *Elphaba*.

SPRING'S AWAKENING / SPRING AWAKENING - First performed under heavy censorship in Germany in 1906, Frank Wedekind's play closed after one night in New York in 1917 amid public outrage and charges of obscenity. The play's content was radical indeed: teenage sex, suicide, abortion, masturbation, sadomasochism. But even more radical was the unsentimental and brutally authentic comedy with which Wedekind treated it. The story traces the dawning sexual awareness of four teenagers, Melchior, Moritz, Wendla, and Hanschen. They are at once too innocent and not remotely innocent at all.

THE GLASS MENAGERIE - Amanda Wingfield is a faded, tragic remnant of Southern gentility that lives in poverty in a dingy St. Louis apartment with her son, Tom, and her daughter, Laura. Amanda strives to give meaning and direction to her life and the lives of her children, though her methods are ineffective and irritating. Tom is driven nearly to distraction by his mother's nagging and seeks escape in alcohol and the world of the movies. Laura also lives in her illusions. She is crippled, and this defect, intensified by her mother's anxiety to see her married, has driven her more and more into herself. The crux of the action comes when Tom invites a young man of his acquaintance to take dinner with the family. Jim, the caller, is a nice ordinary fellow who is at once pounced upon by Amanda as a possible husband for Laura. In spite of her crude and obvious efforts to entrap the young man, he and Laura manage to get along very nicely, and momentarily Laura is lifted out of herself into a new world. But this crashes when, toward the end, Jim explains that he is already engaged. The world of illusion that Amanda and Laura have striven to create in order to make life bearable collapses about them. Tom, too, at the end of his tether, at last leaves home.

EQUUS - Dr. Martin Dysart, a psychiatrist, is confronted with Alan Strang, a boy who has blinded six horses in a violent fit of passion. This very passion is as foreign to Dysart as the act itself. To the boy's parents it is a hideous mystery; Alan has always adored horses. To Dysart it is a psychological puzzle that leads both doctor and patient to a complex and disturbingly dramatic confrontation.

DOUBT, A PARABLE - In this brilliant and powerful drama, Sister Aloysius, a Bronx school principal, takes matters into her own hands when she suspects the young Father Flynn of improper relations with one of the male students.

THE LAST 5 YEARS - A contemporary song-cycle musical that ingeniously chronicles the five year life of a marriage, from meeting to break-up... or from break-up to meeting, depending on how you look at it. Written by Jason Robert Brown (Parade, Songs For A New World), The Last Five Years is an intensely personal look at the relationship between a writer and an actress told from both points of view.

WIT - Vivian Bearing, Ph.D., a renowned professor of English who has spent years studying and teaching the brilliant and difficult metaphysical sonnets of John Donne, has been diagnosed with terminal ovarian cancer. Her approach to the study of Donne: aggressively probing, intensely rational. But during the course of her illness—and her stint as a prize patient in an experimental chemotherapy program at a major teaching hospital—Vivian comes to reassess her life and her work with a profundity and humor that are transformative both for her and the audience.

101 DALMATIANS - In a loving home in the city of London, Dalmatian parents, Pongo and Perdita happily raise their Dalmatian puppies, until the monstrous Cruella De Vil plots to steal them for her new fur coat! Join all the dogs of London, as they daringly rescue the puppies from Cruella and her bumbling henchmen. With a delightfully fun score, lovable characters, and one of the most deliciously evil villains in the Disney canon, this stage adaptation is certain to charm and delight all audiences. And with a highly expandable chorus, the stage could easily be filled with 101 performers to fit the bill!