

THE  
CHICAGO  
HIGH SCHOOL  
FOR THE  
ARTS



# CHIARTS ADMISSIONS GUIDE






# WELCOME TO CHIARTS

At The Chicago High School for the Arts (ChiArts), we believe every young person in Chicago should have access to high-quality academics and arts, all under one roof, with no price tag. We believe every student should have the opportunity and arts training to thrive, no matter their previous exposure to arts education. ChiArts opened in 2009 as Chicago's first public arts high school. We are Chicago's only public arts high school offering pre-professional training in the arts and the only arts high school in the United States actively recruiting novices.

**A novice is a student with little to no prior training in their art form but exhibits passion and desire to learn and grow in their chosen art form.**

By prioritizing novice students and offering academics along with four years of intensive, donor-funded arts training, ChiArts uniquely supports a more equitable arts education model that directly removes financial and geographic barriers to entry.



# WE BELIEVE IN THE ARTS AS A TRANSFORMATIVE FORCE FOR SOCIETY

**Our Mission:** The Chicago High School for the Arts (ChiArts) develops the next generation of diverse, artistically promising scholar-artists through intensive pre-professional training in the arts, combined with a comprehensive college preparatory curriculum.

ChiArts is home to over 600 scholar-artists from all of Chicago's 50 wards. Every day, scholar-artists begin with academics and end with the arts. Students apply to study in 1 of 5 arts conservatories—**creative writing, dance, music, theatre, and visual arts**—studying with the city's most motivated academic educators and teaching artists.

## WE REFLECT, CREATE, CONNECT, AND EXPRESS:

**CREATIVITY** — We pursue artistic and intellectual inquiry through active use of imagination, and we take risks towards passionate innovation.

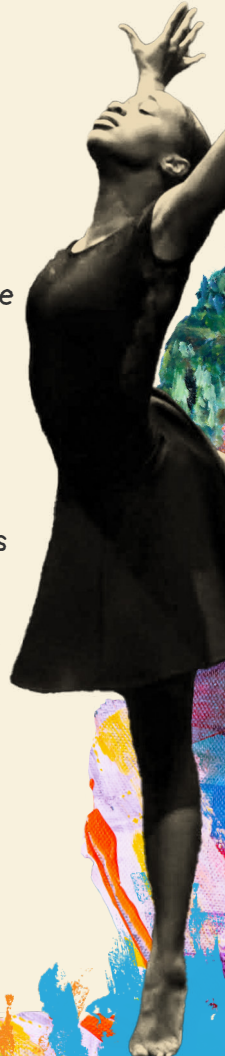
**COMMUNITY** — We support personal growth, respect diversity, and foster citizens who positively affect the intellectual and artistic life of Chicago and give back to the community through service.

**INTEGRITY** — We hold ourselves and each other to high academic and artistic standards through honesty, sincerity, and accountability.

**HUMILITY** — We allow our artistic and intellectual talents to speak for themselves, acknowledge our history, and are open to constructive criticism, realizing our finest achievements could not happen without the contributions of others.

**BALANCE** — We strive to lead well-rounded lives; we are reflective, and we manage our energies in ways that are productive, healthy, and foster connection with others.

**PERSEVERANCE** — We demonstrate courage through self-discipline and dedication as we embrace a willingness to move through obstacles with resilience.



# WHAT WE OFFER



## College-Prep Academics

In 2024, ChiArts held a 96% graduation rate, with 92% of graduates committing to two and four-year colleges.

## ChiArts Community

Scholar-artists gain a network of academic educators, teaching artists, and over 1,500 ChiArts Alumni working as artists, performers, educators, entrepreneurs, scientists, engineers, and more.

## 5 Arts Conservatories

Every scholar-artist graduates with 2,500+ hours of pre-professional arts training at no cost. All five arts conservatories are donor-funded through the ChiArts Foundation.

# DIVE INTO ACADEMICS

The ChiArts academic curriculum offers college prep, honors, and Advanced Placement (AP) classes, all of which align with College Readiness Standards and prepare students for post-secondary education. ChiArts operates on a block schedule where each academic class meets every other day. AP classes are offered beginning sophomore year and are based on enrollment numbers.

**Science** **English**

**Mathematics**

**Social Science**

**World Languages**

**Physical Education**

**Academic Electives**

**Career Education**

**Computer Science**

## A CHIARTS SCHOOL DAY

**8:00 AM - 1:15 PM**

Academics (also includes advisory and study hall)

**1:15 PM - 2:00 PM**

Lunch, Club Meetings, Transition into Arts Conservatory

**2:00 PM - 5:00 PM**

Arts Conservatory Classes

# CREATIVE WRITING CONSERVATORY



The Creative Writing Conservatory integrates the ChiArts Core Values into a rigorous study of the foundations of creative writing and the development of individual voice and polished work. Students will also gain experience editing and publishing a literary magazine. Upon completing the four-year program, ChiArts Creative Writing students will have developed a solid foundation in **fiction**, **poetry**, and **creative nonfiction**, including writing alongside a deep and wide knowledge of texts. Students will also have a polished portfolio, including pieces from each genre. This foundation will make students competitive candidates for undergraduate creative writing programs.


**100** % COLLEGE ACCEPTANCE  
& ATTENDANCE

**32** SCHOLASTIC ART  
& WRITING AWARDS  
RECEIVED \*2023

**9** DEDICATED FACULTY  
MEMBERS

**18** PRE-PROFESSIONAL  
DONOR-FUNDED  
COURSES OFFERED

Data 2024



# DANCE CONSERVATORY



The Dance Conservatory leads with a student-centered, trauma-informed, and interdisciplinary approach that empowers young people to seek and share their unique voice, artistry, and leadership. The Dance Conservatory students study various dance techniques, **ballet/pointe**, **modern** (Horton, Graham), **contemporary** (jazz, modern), **conditioning**, **Spanish**, **African**, **hip hop**, **tap**, and **intro to yoga**, in addition to their personal & professional development classes. The Dance Conservatory is committed to providing a high level of instruction and experiences that will prepare students to study at the college level or enter a professional dance training program.

**99** % COLLEGE & TRAINING PROGRAM ATTENDANCE

**40** + ALUMNI SIGNED WITH PROFESSIONAL DANCE COMPANIES  
\* 2023

**12** DEDICATED FACULTY MEMBERS

**27** PRE-PROFESSIONAL DONOR-FUNDED COURSES OFFERED

# MUSIC CONSERVATORY

The ChiArts Music Conservatory continues to be one of the most enriching and engaging pre-professional high school music departments in the country, holding the title of Illinois High School State Champions in Music (IHSA Class A). ChiArts Music prides itself in offering both Instrumental and Vocal majors focusing on diverse genres. ChiArts scholar-artists study **classical, jazz, pop, Latin, music of the African Diaspora, music theory, music production, music history, ear training, piano/keyboard skills, guitar skills, and songwriting**. Instrumental majors study the technique and repertoire of their instruments through various ensemble classes, production, and instrument-specific technique courses. Vocal majors receive training in vocal technique, experience in ensembles, keyboard skills, guitar skills, acting, songwriting, and movement.

**46** PRE-PROFESSIONAL  
DONOR-FUNDED  
COURSES OFFERED

**21** DEDICATED FACULTY  
MEMBERS

**4** ILLINOIS HIGH SCHOOL  
ASSOCIATION CHAMPION  
TITLES SINCE 2019

**29** 2023 SCHOLAR-ARTISTS  
PERFORMING AT THE ILLINOIS  
MUSIC EDUCATION FESTIVAL

Data 2024



# THEATER CONSERVATORY

The Theatre Conservatory offers a joyful and diverse instruction program at the highest artistic level in both Acting and Musical Theatre majors. ChiArts Acting majors focus on a steady progression of study that includes **movement, history of theatre practice and literature, stage production and design, periods and styles, and devising new work.** The Musical Theatre major works with faculty from the Theatre, Music, and Dance conservatories, focusing on a progression of study that includes **acting, vocal technique, dance, music theory, keyboard skills, history of musical theatre practice & literature, stage production & design, and devising new work.** All scholar-artists have the unique experience of working with a range of artists from the Chicago theatre community, giving them insight and experiences with professionals in the field.

**25<sup>+</sup>** PRE-PROFESSIONAL  
DONOR-FUNDED  
COURSES OFFERED

**18** DEDICATED  
FACULTY  
MEMBERS

**2** 2023 BROADWAY  
IN CHICAGO  
NOMINATIONS

**12<sup>+</sup>** AUGUST WILSON NEW  
VOICES COMPETITION  
FINALISTS



# VISUAL ARTS CONSERVATORY

The Visual Arts Conservatory welcomes a scholar-artist with a wide array of foundational instruction focusing on essential art-making skills and understandings and then progressing toward more complex concepts, including critical analysis of visual culture and the fostering of independent work. Each scholar-artist can “major” in a medium of their choice, including **drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, illustration, and graphic design**. Additionally, all scholar-artists can take art history and professional development and select four electives in their final two years at ChiArts. Visual Arts electives include courses such as **Digital Media, Mural, Wearable Sculpture, Sequential Art, and Experimental Animation**.

**18** PRE-PROFESSIONAL  
DONOR-FUNDED  
COURSES OFFERED

**16** DEDICATED FACULTY  
MEMBERS

**17** SCHOLASTIC ART  
& WRITING AWARDS  
RECEIVED

**26** SCHOLAR-ARTISTS  
FEATURED IN CPS'  
ALL-CITY VISUAL  
ARTS EXHIBITION



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **IS THERE TUITION TO ATTEND YOUR SCHOOL?**

No, ChiArts is a public school with a contract with the Chicago Public Schools (CPS). Our arts conservatories are donor-funded through philanthropic partner, the ChiArts Foundation. There is a once-yearly \$450 fee, but families are welcome to submit to have this fee waived if necessary.

## **DO I NEED TO LIVE WITHIN THE CHICAGO CITY LIMITS TO ATTEND CHIARTS?**

Yes, ChiArts is a Chicago Public School (CPS) and according to CPS policy, you must live within the Chicago city limits. Prospective students must prove residency by July 1, 2025, or they will forfeit their spot at ChiArts.

## **DO YOU HAVE TO WEAR A UNIFORM?**

No, there are no mandatory uniforms.

## **WHAT ARE THE TRANSPORTATION/SCHOOL BUS OPTIONS?**

Bus Routes: Division, Chicago, California, Westen, Grand, & North Ave

Train Lines: Red & Blue Line

## **DO YOU HAVE ANY ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS TO APPLY TO CHIARTS?**

No, we do not. Our admissions are based on the student's program ranking and audition score alone.

## **CAN SCHOLAR-ARTISTS BE IN MORE THAN ONE CONSERVATORY?**

No, scholar-artists are in one art conservatory for all four years. However, there are many opportunities for cross-conservatory collaboration and performances.

## **CAN STUDENTS SWITCH CONSERVATORIES?**

Yes, students can apply to switch conservatories, but it is not guaranteed. Students will have to fill out an application and audition for the conservatory they're interested in, and their admittance will be determined by available spaces in the conservatory.



# ADMISSIONS PROCESS



1. Application
2. Programs
3. School Ranking
4. Audition
5. Acceptance

# AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

## Creative Writing

- 3-6 pages of a prepared sample that showcases student's best writing
- Participation in a 45-minute writing session

## Visual Arts

- 7-10 pieces of student's work for evaluation
- Short interview with adjudicators referencing work

## Dance

- 1-minute solo in any genre
- Participation in a 1-hour dance class

## Music - Instrumental

- 2 prepared solo pieces
  - 3 scales (preferred 2 major, 1 chromatic)
- Specific requirements may vary by instrument*

## Music - Voice

- 2 contrasting songs (one fast and one slow, or one happy and one sad)
- Participating in a vocalization exercise (no preparation required)

## Musical Theatre

- 90-second monologue
- 60-second song (32 bars)

## Acting

- 90-second monologue

## REMOTE APPLICANTS

Virtual Auditions are available for applicants unable to attend in-person auditions. Contact [admission@chiarts.org](mailto:admission@chiarts.org) or visit our website for more information on accommodations.



# AUDITION STEPS

## Step 1: Prepare your material

Students should carefully review the audition requirements for their chosen conservatory and ensure they are preparing all the correct materials. Video audition guides and material recommendations can be found on our website [chiarts.org](http://chiarts.org).

## Step 2: Check audition details

Visit [go.cps.edu](http://go.cps.edu) for audition dates and times.

## Step 3: Audition Time

Students may arrive up to 30 minutes prior to their scheduled audition time. Students are seen in the order they arrive, so be prepared for downtime. Students auditioning for the Dance Conservatory **MUST** arrive at their scheduled time or risk missing vital dance class time.

## Step 4: Do your best, and lead with passion


We are looking for students who demonstrate passion and potential! On average, 65% of our students enter as novices with little to no prior training in their previous art form. We want to see your joy and love for your art form!

## Step 5: Additional Auditions

After the preliminary audition, students may be asked to return for a second audition (called a "callback"). No preparation for a callback is needed, and not all conservatories have callbacks. If a student is not called back, this does not mean they are not still being considered for ChiArts - it simply means that we saw everything we needed in the preliminary audition.

## Step 6: Celebrate and look at GoCPS

After auditions, released will be released by GoCPS in the spring. The ChiArts Admissions Office has no details before the results are released. Once results are released, accepted student events will be held to help you decide before the GoCPS deadline.



# TRANSFER PROCESS

## Transfer Application

Transfer applications are available for transfer students at [chiarts.org](http://chiarts.org) and considered at the end of each semester for the following semester.

Our waitlist will expire 6 weeks into each semester.

## Minimum Academic Eligibility Requirements

1. GPA: 2.5 or Higher
2. Attendance rate: 92% or higher
3. Earned credits on track with ChiArts Graduation requirements
4. Eligible students are invited to audition

## Application To-Do's

1. Submit up-to-date high school transcript, including in-process credits from the current semester
2. Submit attendance record
3. Include both of these documents in one file, via email to [admissions@chiarts.org](mailto:admissions@chiarts.org) or via fax to 773-534-4022
4. Auditions are required and will be scheduled for eligible applicants

**\*Transfer applications are considered at the end of each semester for the following semester. Specific dates are available on [chiarts.org](http://chiarts.org).**



# ADMISS TIMELI



**SEPTEMBER**

GoCps Applications Open

**OCTOBER - NOVEMBER**

Open Houses, High School Fairs,  
Shadow Days, In-Person Tours



**NOVEMBER**

GoCps Applications Close

**NOVEMBER - JANUARY**

Auditions

# SIONS NE



**FEBRUARY - MARCH**  
GoCps Results Release

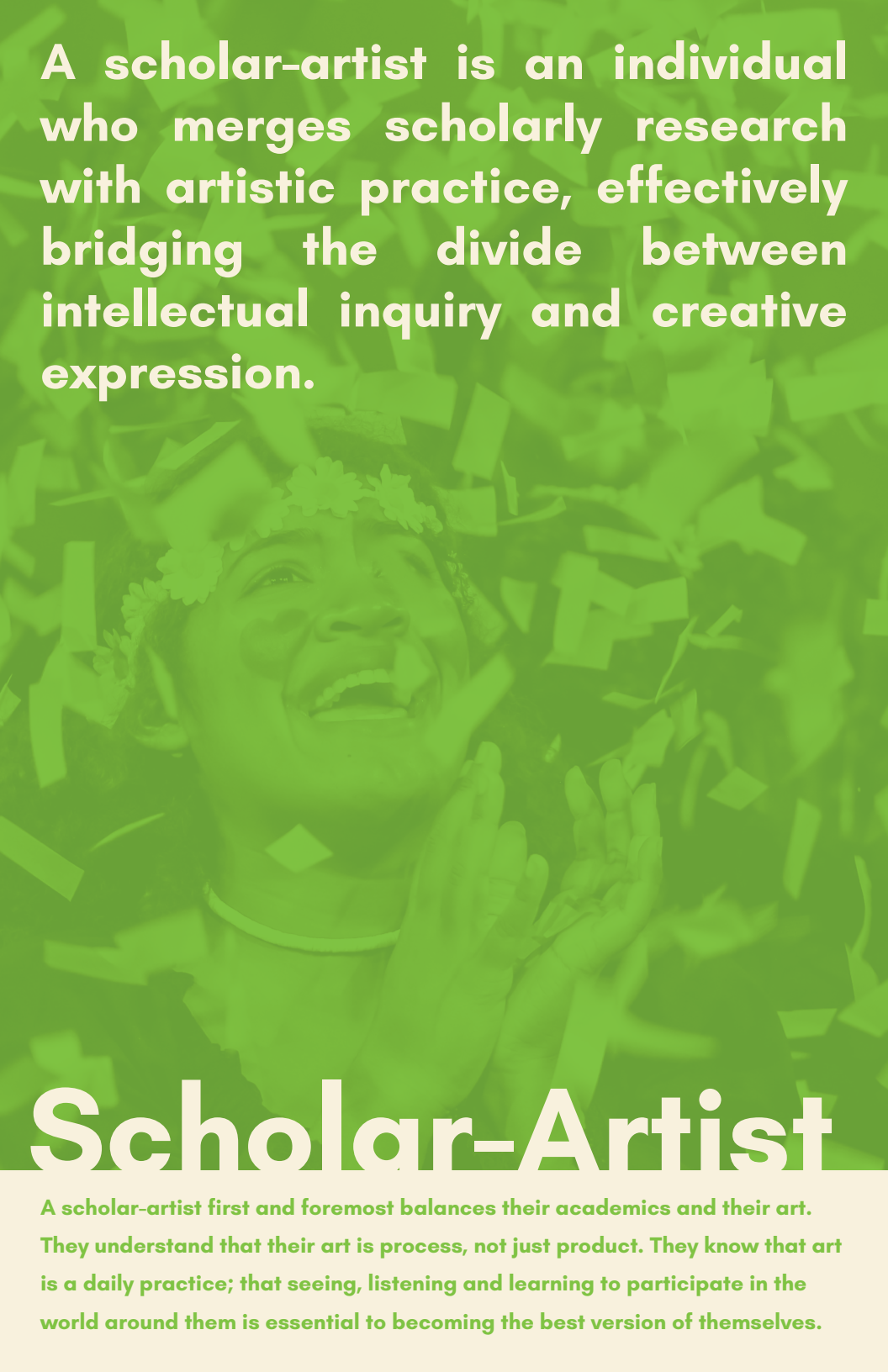


**MARCH - APRIL**  
Accepted Student Events

**MAY - JULY**  
Enrollment for Incoming  
9th Graders



**AUGUST**  
Summer Institute

A woman with a flower crown and hands raised in a confetti shower. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. The woman is smiling and looking upwards, with her hands raised in a gesture of joy or celebration. The background is filled with falling confetti.

**A scholar-artist is an individual who merges scholarly research with artistic practice, effectively bridging the divide between intellectual inquiry and creative expression.**

# Scholar-Artist

**A scholar-artist first and foremost balances their academics and their art. They understand that their art is process, not just product. They know that art is a daily practice; that seeing, listening and learning to participate in the world around them is essential to becoming the best version of themselves.**

# ADMISSIONS EVENTS

**ChiArts offers Shadow Days, Campus Tours, and Open Houses throughout the year. Registration for Shadow Days & Open Houses is reserved for 8th-grade students during the Fall Semester. Shadow Days will open up for 7th-grade and transfer students in the spring.**

## Campus Tours

In-person campus tours allow prospective students and their families to meet with our admissions team to tour ChiArts while learning about the school day and our admissions process. In-person tours take place on Tuesdays at 4:00 PM. To register, please complete the Campus Tour Request Form on [chiarts.org](http://chiarts.org), and click on Prospective Students - Admissions Events

## Open House Events

We will hold three Open House events throughout the fall semester for prospective students and families. These events give students a backstage pass to see audition examples, talk with current scholar-artists and educators, and learn more about the academic breakdown of the day and the admissions process. To register, please fill out the Open House Registration Form on [chiarts.org](http://chiarts.org), and click on Prospective Students - Admissions Events

## Shadow Days

Shadow Days give prospective students the chance to experience a "day in the life" of a scholar-artist. Each prospective student will be paired with one current ChiArts student and will attend the entire school day, from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM To register, please fill out the Shadow Day Registration Form on [chiarts.org](http://chiarts.org), and click on Prospective Students - Admissions Events

\*Shadow Days are on a first-come, first-serve basis, and not all students are guaranteed a spot. Due to the overwhelming demand of students interested in shadowing, prospective students will only be able to shadow one conservatory.



# CHIARTS ADMISSIONS OFFICE

[admission@chiarts.org](mailto:admission@chiarts.org)

773-534-9718

[chiarts.org/prospective](http://chiarts.org/prospective)

## The Chicago High School for the Arts (ChiArts)

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Chicago, IL 60622

[f](#) [i](#) [in](#) [v](#) @ChiArtsHS

*This brochure was brought to you by the ChiArts Foundation,  
learn more at [chiartsfoundation.org](http://chiartsfoundation.org).*