

# WELCOME TO THEATRE ARTS INTEGRATION



## Meet the Teacher

Mr. Duncan's first play was in third grade! He holds a BA in Theatre Arts Education K-12 from Brigham Young University, minor in History Teaching. This will be his eleventh year teaching theatre, the third in public schools. Mr. Duncan specializes in creating new plays and historical research (dramaturgy). His work has reached over 15,000 youth throughout the state. He loves traveling with his wife, Camilla, baking, reading, and trying unusual ice creams!



## What is Theatre Integration?

Only 4% of American elementary schools have some form of theatre. Utah is very unique. Our state's Beverley Taylor Sorenson (BTS) Grant provides schools with integration specialists, teachers who combine traditional subjects with arts.

In theatre integration, your students will learn language arts, social studies, and science as they act, design, create puppets, write, engage in stories, and play improvisational drama games.

## Benefits of an Integrated Curriculum

Studies show elementary schools with the BTS program achieved higher language arts and math scores than non-BTS schools (The Utah Foundation, 2013). Students who receive theatre education miss less school and are more likely to graduate high school (N. Barry, J. Taylor, and Kwalls, 2002). Theatre students also scored higher on SATs: 65 points higher in the verbal component and 34 points higher in math (College Entrance Examination Board, 2005).

Theatre helps build the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills: critical thinking, communication, creativity, and collaboration. As a result, students become more empathetic, increase in motivation and self-esteem, and are more prone to engage in community service (Champions of Change, 1999; Catterall 1998). The benefits of theatre are both academic and social-emotional.



Beverley Taylor  
Sorenson Arts  
Learning Program

## Contact Information

[spencer.duncan@jordandistrict.org](mailto:spencer.duncan@jordandistrict.org)

Copper Canyon: M, W, every other F (Portable 2)

Elk Meadows: Tu, Th, every other F (Stage)

## Class Rules

Our theatre class has three rules:

- 1) Quickly listen to the teacher.
- 2) Respect the classroom.
- 3) Be kind to all.

All students sign a contract agreeing to our class rules, rewards, and remedies for misbehavior.



## Our Rewards System

Each time students come to theatre, they may earn three points, one for each rule kept. In earning these points, students rate themselves with teacher approval.

Approx. four times a year, our class will have a reward day. On these days, students spend their class points on the following rewards:

**Six points=** thirteen minutes of theatre games

**Nine points=** Mr. Duncan does an embarrassing thing invented by students

**Twelve points=** a one-song dance party (school-appropriate music)

## Remedies for Misbehavior

If students break a class rule, they will receive:

**First:** a verbal warning

**Second:** an assignment analyzing behavior (ThinkTime)

**Third:** communication home describing the behavior and developing plans for improvement

Students “reset” or start over each time they come to theatre.

## The FAQ: Will we perform a play?

Students only come to theatre about twice a month, for 30-40 minute sessions. This isn't enough time to rehearse a full-length play. However, families will be invited to “informances.” On these days, you'll observe what happens in class and special units your child has been working on.

In future years, performances may occur, but the focus of the Beverley Taylor Sorenson Learning Arts Program is always on the creative learning process, rather than formal shows.



## Supporting the Beverley Taylor Sorenson Grant

To show your state representatives you support having arts integration, please go to [friends.artworksforkids.org](https://friends.artworksforkids.org). Click “Become a Friend.” You will receive around two emails each a year, and your voice will be accounted for when the Utah Congress discusses the future of elementary school arts.