

= School for Creative and Performing Arts =

The School for Creative and Performing Arts (SCPA) is a magnet arts school in Cincinnati , Ohio , United States , and part of the Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) . SCPA was founded in 1973 as one of the first magnet schools in Cincinnati and became the first school in the country to combine a full range of arts studies with a complete college @-@ preparatory academic program for elementary through high school students . Of the approximately 350 arts schools in the United States , SCPA is one of the oldest and has been cited as a model for both racial integration and for arts programs in over 100 cities .

SCPA had three different homes in its first four years , including a makeshift campus in the Mount Adams neighborhood and another in Roselawn . In 1976 , it occupied the Old Woodward High School building , on the site of one of the oldest public schools in the country . The school rose to national prominence in the 1980s , but was nearly closed in the 1990s following a series of scandals , leadership struggles , and an arson fire which destroyed the auditorium . Its reputation recovered in the years that followed and in 2009 ? 10 , the school was featured in the MTV reality series Taking the Stage , filmed at the school and featuring SCPA students . In 2010 SCPA combined with the Schiel Primary School for Arts Enrichment to create the first kindergarten through twelfth grade (about ages five to seventeen) arts school and first private sector / public arts school in the US . A new facility in Over @-@ the @-@ Rhine was championed by the late Cincinnati Pops Maestro Erich Kunzel and funded through a unique public @-@ private partnership that raised over \$ 31 million in private contributions to match public funding . The building features specialized facilities for the arts and three separate theaters and is the key to redevelopment plans for the area .

Students must audition for admission ; fewer than 20 percent of those who apply each year are accepted . SCPA is free to CPS students but also attracts tuition @-@ paying students from outside the district and the state . The newly combined school will serve approximately 1 @,@ 300 students in 2010 , offering a curriculum designed to prepare students for professional careers in creative writing , dance , drama , music , technical theater , and visual art . The emphasis is on performance , and students in every field are required to perform or present their work in public regularly . Students compete successfully in arts competitions locally and internationally . On standardized tests , SCPA ranks second among Cincinnati public schools . Ninety percent of graduating seniors continue on to college , and those students receive one of the highest levels of scholarship funding in the city . A limited number of extracurricular activities are offered , as students are expected to commit significant after @-@ school time to training and performance . SCPA has produced notable graduates in a wide range of artistic fields , including award @-@ winning actors , singers , directors and technicians .

= = History = =

= = Background = =

The School for Creative and Performing Arts arose , in part , as a response to the recurring desegregation battles in the Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) in the late 1960s and early 1970s . In a 1965 civil rights suit , the city prevailed when a federal judge found that the schools were not intentionally segregated , but that " the racial composition of each school is simply a result of the racial composition of the neighborhoods which they serve " . By 1971 , Cincinnati 's neighborhoods and schools had grown more segregated and the Supreme Court of the United States upheld forced busing as a remedy for school segregation in other cities . Desiring to avoid such drastic remedies for Cincinnati , newly appointed Superintendent Dr. Donald Waldrip pushed forward a program of alternative schools (later called magnet schools) , designed " to calm the desires of parents for academic choice and to stem the demands of federal judges for court @-@ ordered desegregation . " The theory behind alternative schools was open enrollment : students could attend any alternative school they chose at no cost , so long as an even racial balance at the new school was maintained .

So far as possible , students were admitted to these programs on a one white for one black basis . The School for Creative and Performing Arts was the first alternative school in what would become one of the largest and most robust magnet programs in the country .

In 1965 , Robert McSpadden and Bill Dickinson , both music teachers in the Cincinnati Public Schools , founded the Cincinnati All -City Boy Choir , where they were struck by how the discipline they established for the boys in the choir carried over into their academic studies . They conceived the idea of a school where basic education was combined with intensive attention to children with artistic talents . With the support of Waldrup and Tom Murray , director for the west -central division of Cincinnati elementary schools , they pushed for \$ 119 @, @ 000 as part of a tax levy referendum in May 1973 ; the measure was defeated . The school was approved with a drastically reduced budget of \$ 27 @, @ 000 plus \$ 9 @, @ 850 from the Board of Education 's general fund . They turned to private funding and won a \$ 292 @, @ 000 grant from J. Ralph Corbett , one of the city 's foremost philanthropists for the arts , and \$ 24 @, @ 500 for a piano lab from the Baldwin Piano Company , which had manufactured pianos in Cincinnati since 1891 .

The School for Creative and Performing Arts opened in August 1973 , as the only grade four through six school for the performing arts in the country and the first public school that combined all of the arts in a single program . The curriculum included art , instrumental music , choral music , dance and drama , and was not organized strictly by grade , but permitted students to advance as soon as their abilities allowed . Murray explained :

Fourth through sixth grades will be together in classes . Teaching will often be done in teams . Art students will design scenery for plays , written by drama students . Music pupils will supply the music . They work together regardless of age . In reading classes they will read according to their own individual levels . A brilliant music student , capable of interpreting Beethoven 's wildest dreams , might stumble on fifth level reading . This does not make him a dunce simply a slow reader .

= = = Founding in Mount Adams (1973 ? 1975) = = =

Dickinson was named coordinator and six weeks later he , McSpadden , Murray and others had selected a staff , developed a program , recruited students , and moved into the Mount Adams Public School building at 1125 St. Gregory Street . Described by Cincinnati Magazine as " a quaint village of imaginative , arty residents , unusual shops and restaurants , and historic buildings " and overlooking downtown Cincinnati and the Ohio River , Mount Adams had been home to the Art Academy of Cincinnati (the museum school of the Cincinnati Art Museum) since 1887 , and was a " mecca for students and teachers of art " . The Mount Adams School was nearly defunct , with fewer than 80 students remaining . Fifty of those children , ranging from kindergarten (around age five) to third grade (around age eight) remained alongside the new SCPA . A dozen of the Mount Adams middle school students were accepted into the new program , along with the 140 other fourth through sixth grade pupils selected from schools around the city by audition .

By 1974 , SCPA had 332 students , with 500 on the waiting list , and had overflowed into rented space in the surrounding neighborhood , including three rooms at the nearby Holy Cross School , two rooms at the community center two blocks away , and large room for drama above Mike 's Meat Market across the street . Students practiced instruments in hallways and restrooms , and the library was in the middle of the second floor hall . Student productions were held in other schools around the city , and the first major musical , Babes in Toyland , was performed at Education Center downtown . With plans to expand to ninth grade (around age 14) and 540 students in 1975 , and to twelfth grade (around age 17) and 1 @, @ 400 students in 1977 , a new facility had to be found . Waldrup proposed the school move to the Old Woodward school building , then home of Abigail Cutter Junior High School , in Over @-@ the @-@ Rhine , a predominantly African @-@ American area near downtown . Neighborhood resistance was strong and opponents , arguing that " the school administration was trying to avoid problems of integration by moving an alternative school to Cutter and transferring Cutter students elsewhere " , blocked the plan .

Councilwoman Bobbie Stern proposed the school move to Cincinnati Union Terminal , a National Historic Landmark which the Historic American Buildings Survey called " a unique and monumental

manifestation of Art Deco architecture and interior decoration " , noted for its mosaic murals depicting the history of Cincinnati and its rotunda , 106 feet (32 m) high and 110 feet (34 m) long , the largest semi @-@ dome in the western hemisphere . The facility , vacant since it was abandoned by Amtrak in 1972 , was to house the school , a maintenance facility for the Queen City Metro transit service , and a new rail terminal for Amtrak . The plan was approved in April 1975 and was due for completion for the 1976 school year .

= = = Transition in Roselawn (1975 ? 1976) = = =

Temporary space was needed in the interim , and the school relocated its 550 fourth through ninth grade students to rented space in Roselawn , the epicenter of Cincinnati 's Jewish Community . The school was divided between two buildings , the Yavneh Day School building at 1636 Summit Road and the nearby Jewish Community Center . The Yavneh Day school , founded in 1952 by parents who wanted to combine secular and Jewish education for their children , moved to Roselawn in 1958 but had outgrown that facility . The school had no lockers ; students carried their belongings between buildings . Lunches were delivered from another school and served at a nearby church .

Dickinson became principal in 1975 , and worked to fully integrate the arts into the academic program . " Academics don 't end when art , drama or music classes begin , " he said , " but blend , in an interdisciplinary approach to education . " Music study included acoustics and the history and architecture of important musical periods ; art history was part of the art curriculum and anatomy and physiology were studied in the dance program . The school was recognized with The Cincinnati Post 's Corbett Award in 1976 as " the arts organization making an outstanding contribution to the community " .

The Union Terminal project was derailed when the three prospective tenants failed to agree on how to share the space . Having outgrown its temporary facilities , SCPA was again forced to find a new home for the following year . After examining options including the historic Rockdale Temple and two schools slated to be closed in the city 's West End , the school board once again settled on the Old Woodward building , over the objections of the community .

= = = Old Woodward and national attention (1976 ? 1990) = = =

SCPA 's new home was in the heart of Pendleton district in Over @-@ the @-@ Rhine . One of the largest German @-@ American neighborhoods in the United States in the 19th century and a famed entertainment district at that time , Over @-@ the @-@ Rhine had declined into an impoverished and crime @-@ ridden enclave for migrant Appalachians in the 20th century . By 1970 , a combination of white flight and the destruction of surrounding slums had transformed the area into Cincinnati 's most infamous ghetto . It is one of the largest , most intact urban historic districts in the United States and the most dangerous neighborhood in Cincinnati . The school , with its 650 students , moved into this historic but blighted neighborhood , and its Old Woodward School building at 1310 Sycamore Street .

Woodward was one of the oldest public schools in the country , founded as the Woodward Free Grammar School in 1831 ; it was named for William Woodward , a local tanner who donated the land to provide , in his words , " facilities to educate the children of persons who could not afford the expense of private schooling " . The building was replaced once in 1855 , and again in 1907 when President William Howard Taft , who graduated from Woodward in 1874 , laid the cornerstone of the current building ; it opened in 1910 . The site is linked to the Underground Railroad , an informal network of secret routes and safe houses used by 19th @-@ century black slaves in the United States ; Levi Coffin (known as " The President of the Underground Railroad ") had a home there from 1856 to 1863 . The five @-@ story brick , stone , and terra cotta building is approximately 225 @, @ 000 sq ft (20 @, @ 900 m2) . Designed by Gustav Brach , it was considered " an architectural gem " in its time , with some of the most modern facilities of its day , including flush toilets , central heating , and two swimming pools . It is graced with 12 rare Rookwood Pottery drinking fountains from the early 1900s , gifts of the Art League , founded in 1895 , which raised dues from students

who would then vote on works of art to buy for the school . The building is part of the Over @-@ the @-@ Rhine National Register Historic District , which encompasses 362 @.@ 5 acres (146 @.@ 7 ha) of the original German community and adjoins the Sycamore ? 13th Street Historic District , which reflects the significant architecture associated with middle and late 19th century Greek Revival , Queen Anne , and Italianate styles .

Woodward High School moved to a new facility in Bond Hill in 1953 , and the building became Abigail Cutter Junior High School (also known as Cutter) , named for William Woodward 's wife . SCPA occupied the fourth floor in 1976 , and the entire building in 1977 , displacing the Cutter students to other public schools . It graduated its first class in 1979 , becoming the first elementary through grade twelve arts program in the country . The first so @-@ called " survivors " , who began in fourth grade , graduated in 1982 .

SCPA continued to attract national attention , and as a local TV special reported , " educators from all over the country flock [ed] to Cincinnati to see how , and why , it works . " In 1981 , SCPA was invited to perform *The Wiz* at the National Theatre in Washington , DC , the " Theatre of the Presidents " and oldest major touring house in the country , becoming the first non @-@ professional group to perform there since it opened in 1835 . SCPA student Roscoe (Rocky) Carroll won the 1981 National Endowment for the Arts Talent Search in drama and became a Presidential Scholar in the Arts . The school received the Blue Ribbon School of the United States Department of Education in 1984 and the National Secondary School Merit Award in 1985 . By 1985 , it had been credited as the model for arts schools in 100 cities in the US , Europe , and Asia , and had been cited in textbooks as a model of excellence in school integration .

The school relied heavily on donations , which made up over ten percent of the total budget . The Friends of SCPA (commonly known as The Friends) , a nonprofit organization led by parents and members of the business and arts communities , had been a vital source of funding since the school 's inception . In 1984 , The Friends raised over \$ 400 @,@ 000 to pay the salaries of the artistic director , technical director , costume designer , and dance , strings , and production teachers . In later years , The Friends raised up to \$ 1 million each year through special events , corporate gifts and sponsorships , advertising sales , and other programs to support the artistic needs of the school including staff salaries , production expenses , scholarships for private lessons , and artists in residence .

= = = Controversy and comeback (1991 ? 2009) = = =

Scandal erupted when founding principal Dickinson resigned in 1991 , citing health reasons , while under investigation for alleged improper contact with students off school grounds ; no charges were ever filed . He was succeeded by Dr. Rosalyn England , former principal of Central VPA High School in St. Louis . Controversy continued and between 1992 and 1995 , two teachers confessed to having or attempting to have sex with students and two more were investigated for allegations of sexual misconduct . In 1992 , open conflict with England led to the departure of original Artistic Director Jack Louiso , whom Dickinson had called " the ' life @-@ blood ' of the school 's artistic endeavors " . The artistic program would remain in upheaval ; four more artistic directors would come and go under England . The controversies took a toll ; applications suffered , teachers departed , financial support dwindled and the quality of the productions declined . By 1996 , enrollment had fallen from nearly 1 @,@ 200 to 956 .

In April 1996 , an arson fire destroyed the school 's auditorium , causing over \$ 1 million of damage ; it was a turning point for a school then dangerously close to closure . The culprit was never identified . Erich Kunzel , long time Maestro of the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra and nationally renowned as " the Prince of Pops " , announced his vision for a new SCPA campus near Cincinnati Music Hall , which would be part of an arts and education complex that would help revitalize Over @-@ the @-@ Rhine . A campaign was launched that , over the following 13 years , raised funds and made plans for the new facility .

England abruptly retired in 1997 and was replaced by Jeff Brokamp , who had been principal of the Crest Hills Year @-@ Round School , which had won awards for its all @-@ year curriculum .

Brokamp , with no previous arts experience , began to turn the school around . A new emphasis on academics , more Advanced Placement courses and more stringent audition standards that admitted only the most dedicated students led to better test scores and a higher level of artistic talent ; Brokamp pushed to expand the school 's vocational training programs in photography , stage management , and costume design by 50 percent . Applications to audition more than tripled by 2001 and fund @-@ raising rebounded .

Brokamp resigned and was replaced by Clarence Crum in 2004 , who was followed by John Carlisle in 2006 . Carlisle went on extended leave in October 2007 , pending an investigation into the alleged rape of a former student off school grounds . Carlisle denied the accusation and no criminal charges were filed . He resigned in March 2008 . According to Cincinnati Magazine , the " scandal launched rumors and confusion " and " the revolving door of school administrators " took a toll on faculty and student morale . Carlisle was replaced by Dr. Jonathan Futch , formerly Assistant Principal at Withrow High School .

= = = Taking the Stage (2009 ? 2010) = = =

Taking the Stage , a " musical reality " TV series set at SCPA , premiered on MTV in March 2009 . The series , co @-@ created and co @-@ produced by SCPA graduate Nick Lachey , was a dramatized depiction of life at the school . The show chronicled the lives of five real SCPA high school students and their friends in their careers at SCPA . Each episode featured original music and choreography by the students themselves , performed at the school and other locations in Over @-@ the @-@ Rhine .

The first season , which premiered on March 19 , 2009 , was the number one primetime cable telecast among females 12 ? 24 years old and one of the top four among all viewers 12 ? 34 years old . The second season began filming at the school in 2009 , and first aired on January 16 , 2010 . The show was cut from one hour to 30 minutes and focused on new transfer students instead of current SCPA students , leading some students and parents to complain that the admission process had been compromised . The school denied the claim . It ran for 16 episodes , through April 15 , 2010 . In May 2010 , MTV announced there would be no third season .

The school was paid \$ 10 @,@ 000 for each of the nine episodes in season one and twelve in season two . The show attracted international attention for the school and interest from prospective students around the world ; applications for admission increased by 60 percent in 2009 .

= = = Washington Park (2010 ?) = = =

In the aftermath of the 1996 fire , a group of local benefactors led by Kunzel formed the Greater Cincinnati Arts and Education Center (GCAEC) to , in Kunzel 's words , " transform the area around Washington Park into a unique arts community that would include a new School for the Creative and Performing Arts . " The GCAEC committed \$ 31 million , the Cincinnati Public Schools \$ 34 million , and the State of Ohio \$ 7 million , to combine SCPA with the Schiel Primary School for Arts Enrichment in one building to create the first public kindergarten through twelfth grade arts school in what the GCAEC called the " nationally unprecedented public school system ? private sector partnership " .

Schiel , built in 1911 as an elementary school for the Corryville neighborhood , was converted to a Spanish @-@ language magnet school in 1974 and again to an arts enrichment school in 1985 . Schiel students have been admitted by open enrollment on a first @-@ come @-@ first @-@ served basis . With 420 kindergarten through third grade students in 2008 (around ages five through nine) , 83 percent of them black , 72 percent economically disadvantaged , it has been the primary feeder school for SCPA , for which Schiel students have been required to audition . Schiel was one of two CPS schools recognized as a Blue Ribbon School in 2010 .

The construction plans faced opposition from those in the community who feared the project would displace the Drop Inn Center , the region 's largest homeless shelter , and the design was revised to build around it . By 2007 , after more than a decade of fund @-@ raising and negotiations , 90

percent of the final \$ 72 million budget had been secured and ground was broken for a new building across from Washington Park in September of that year . The 5 @. @ 75 @-@ acre (2 @. @ 33 ha) park , reclaimed from old burial grounds between 1858 and 1863 , is lined with trees and benches and features statues of Friedrich Hecker and Robert Latimer McCook , German @-@ American heroes of the American Civil War . As Over @-@ the @-@ Rhine has declined , a significant homeless population has overtaken the area .

The park faces Cincinnati Music Hall , home to the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra , Cincinnati Opera , Cincinnati May Festival , and the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra . Designed by Samuel Hannaford , one of Cincinnati 's most important architects , and built with private funds in 1878 , it was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1971 , noting its " stunning composition in the High Victorian Gothic mode " . It was listed as a National Historic Landmark in 1974 . Memorial Hall , a Beaux Arts theater built by Hannaford in 1908 , is immediately south of Music Hall , and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 . Since 2005 the area has also been home to the Art Academy of Cincinnati , founded in 1869 . Formerly aligned with the Cincinnati Art Museum , it became an independent college of design in 1998 . The Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati and Know Theater are also part of the rich cultural community that has developed around the park and Music Hall .

The combined school retains the name School for the Creative and Performing Arts . Private donors will have a significant and ongoing voice in how the school is operated . According to the Cincinnati Enquirer , the school board approved a plan in 2003 to allow the GCAEC to choose five of the twelve members of the Local School Decision @-@ Making Committee (LSDMC) , an independent body that provides oversight for the school , as a condition for continued fund @-@ raising . This private sector oversight has been criticized by union leaders as excluding faculty and staff . The GCAEC began fundraising for an endowment in 2010 , and as of 2010 , had pledged to contribute at least \$ 150 @, @ 000 per year to the school .

No plans were announced for the Old Woodward building , but it was expected to remain vacant for years . An Ohio School Facilities Assessment in 2002 reported that it was " very attractive architecturally and merits any means required to preserve it " , and that residential units would be the best use , but that a major redevelopment project , while attractive to private developers , would be prohibitively expensive . The area surrounding the old building has seen a resurgence in recent years including a public green space named Cutter Playground directly north of the building , currently home to the OTR Urban Kickball League . In November , 2012 , the building was sold at auction to Core Redevelopment of Indianapolis for \$ 1 @. @ 3 million . It had been appraised at \$ 8 @. @ 5 million . The developer 's plans for the building were not made clear at the time .

= = Admission = =

The school has been criticized as " elitist " for its selective admission policies . Prospective students are evaluated on their artistic sensitivity and potential . Students entering grades four through six are required to audition in every arts major ; older students may audition in only the areas they choose . Each applicant performs in front of up to seven teachers in different areas in the day @-@ long process , which is designed to ensure that no student is admitted to a program in which they do not belong . Admission is granted to students scoring 8 out of 10 points in at least one area . On average , 1 @, @ 700 students apply each year , 1 @, @ 000 are invited to audition , and 250 are accepted . Attendance is free for Cincinnati Public School students . Ten percent of students come from outside the district ? some from outside the state ? and pay tuition to attend . Tuition for the 2006 ? 2007 year was \$ 6 @, @ 309 for out @-@ of @-@ district students and \$ 9 @, @ 654 for out @-@ of @-@ state students .

As a magnet school founded to promote school integration , racial and economic diversity have been important factors in admissions decisions . The student body was 52 @. @ 1 percent black , 41 @. @ 7 percent low income , and 7 @. @ 7 percent disabled in 2009 ? 10 . In 2007 , in response to a US Supreme Court decision prohibiting racial criteria for assigning students to public schools , CPS eliminated race and gender as determining factors in magnet school admissions . School officials

insist this will have little impact , despite parent concerns that the decision will erode diversity .

= = Curriculum = =

= = = Arts = = =

The curriculum is designed to prepare students for professional careers in the arts . Each student concentrates in at least one major area : creative writing , dance , drama , music , stagecraft , and visual art . Younger students often concentrate in two or more . High school students are required to specialize and major only in the areas in which they have potential to do professional work . Advanced students study up to two hours each day in their major . Forty percent of the students stay at least two hours after school for rehearsals , private lessons , and productions .

The program stresses discipline and performance . There are no appreciation courses ; the curriculum emphasizes that arts appreciation grows from practicing an art . The interrelation of the arts is also stressed . All students take at least one course in each major area . A dancer , for example , will be required to study visual art , drama , and music .

The visual arts program includes drawing , painting , photography , sculpting , digital art , and art history . The program is highly structured , emphasizing technique and control over free expression , which has attracted criticism from the local art community . Art students receive individualized instruction , participate in art exhibits and competitions , undertake commissioned work , and work at in @-@ house galleries and off @-@ site exhibits . Most art majors take Advanced Placement art courses by the end of their sophomore year , and many attend pre @-@ college programs at major universities between their high school years .

The drama program stresses technique and performance ; students must perform in public at least twice a year . There are three major dramatic productions each season , and high school students are required to compete in the English Speaking Union Shakespeare Contest . Advanced students audition for the Acting Ensemble Company , which provides a full season of performances in venues outside the school . The creative writing program focuses on writing as an art in journalism , script writing , poetry , and creative non @-@ fiction . Students participate in writing competitions , internships , and develop portfolios to showcase their work .

The dance program was founded on the training principles of the " most famous dance schools of Europe " , which emphasize body training . All dancers are required to study ballet , but may also learn modern dance , jazz , tap , and other forms of dance . There are nine levels of ballet , and students begin intensive training in fourth grade . Dance classes meet for at least two 45 @-@ minute periods every day ; advanced students may train for three or more . Dance Ensemble , selected by audition , stages public performances throughout the year .

The instrumental music program offers specializations in orchestra , band , piano , jazz , percussion , and harp . Students major in an instrument and specialized training begins in grade four . Advanced students take private lessons , arranged by the school , and have master classes with guest instructors from the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra . Vocal music students audition to perform in one of 13 vocal performance groups . High school students may audition for the most selective of these , " 13th & Broadway " , which performs throughout the region .

The technical theater program offers college @-@ level training in stage management , lighting , sound , and set and costume design . Each specialty has a lab for students to develop concepts and practice technique , and students work side @-@ by @-@ side with professional trades people in their chosen field .

Student present to the faculty of their major department twice a year in a " proficiency review " to assess their progress . It is a learning experience for younger students , but students in grades 7 ? 12 who fail to attain a passing rating are placed on probation and must pass their subsequent review to be allowed to continue in that major . Students must audition if they wish to change majors for the following year .

The highlight of the performance season is a major musical production which is an important source

of revenue for the school . There are two ballets each year : The Nutcracker in the winter and a piece from repertoire in the spring . The technical and production aspects of performances are handled entirely by students , a level of responsibility the school claims is unusual even among arts schools . Strict racial balance is maintained in all school performances through " non @-@ traditional casting " , in which the race of each lead role alternates in each production .

SCPA students and faculty have performed with professional companies and in major venues including Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center . Students are selected to perform with every major local arts company , including the Cincinnati Opera , Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park , and the Cincinnati Ballet , and appear in local television programs and commercials . SCPA students have performed on PBS with the Cincinnati Pops and toured with Broadway productions including 42nd Street and The King and I. Students on tour continue their studies at " set school " and rejoin their classmates when they return .

SCPA students are encouraged to compete in arts competitions at all levels , including international contests like the World Piano Competition and the American High School Theater Festival in Edinburgh . Honors since 2008 have included first place in the Ohioana Robert Fox Award for Young Writers , a bronze medal at the Cincinnati World Piano Competition , top honors at the Days of International Choir Music Competition , and the 2008 Cincinnati Arts Association Overture Award in Visual Art .

== = Academics == =

Students are required to complete a standard CPS academic curriculum alongside their arts studies and the school day is 45 minutes longer than other Cincinnati public schools . SCPA ranks first in the district on standardized test scores at the elementary school level . At the high school level , only Walnut Hills High School , Cincinnati 's selective public college preparatory magnet , ranks higher . In 2009 , the graduation rate was 95 @. @ 5 percent and the mean score on the ACT , a standardized college admissions test , was 23 (at the 69th percentile) . On the Ohio Department of Education 2009 ? 2010 School Year Report card , SCPA was designated " Effective " and Schiel was designated " Excellent . " Ninety percent of graduating seniors continue on to college , and those students receive one of the highest levels of scholarship funding in the city . In 2007 , the 98 graduating seniors received a combined \$ 7 @. @ 1 million in scholarships and SCPA averaged \$ 72 @, @ 449 per student , the third most of any public or private school in Cincinnati .

== = Extracurricular activities == =

SCPA offers a limited range of sports and other activities compared to other CPS schools , as students are expected to commit significant after @-@ school time to practice and performance . Volunteer community service opportunities are organized by the Positive School Culture committee and made available to students in every grade . Student Council is elected from each grade and raises funds for student activities . National Honor Society (for grades ten to twelve) and National Junior Honor Society (for grades seven through nine) are by invitation only to students who demonstrate outstanding achievement , service , leadership , and citizenship .

German , French , and Spanish clubs are open to all students and plan language @-@ related activities . The Astronomy Club for Girls for fourth through sixth graders takes advantage of the nearby Cincinnati Observatory to explore astronomy . The Brain Bowl team , also for fourth through sixth graders , participates in academic competitions . Students Involved in Fostering Tolerance (SIFT) works to promote tolerance and diversity through awareness field trips and fundraisers .

Student publications include the yearbook , 1310 Address of the Arts , a monthly newspaper published by the Creative Writing department , but open to contributions by all students , and Pandora 's Backpages , a full @-@ color magazine featuring creative writing , visual art and musical compositions by students , faculty , and alumni .

The school competes athletically in Cincinnati 's Independent conference in boys ' and girls ' basketball , boys ' baseball , and girls ' softball . Intramural sports are open to all high school

students .

= = Campus = =

The new building , called the Erich Kunzel Center for Arts and Education , opened for 1 @, @ 350 students in August , 2010 . The \$ 72 million facility , bordered by Elm , Race , and 12th streets and facing Central Parkway , was designed by Moody ? Nolan , a large minority @-@ owned architectural firm known for its numerous design awards , and is the largest development project in Over @-@ the @-@ Rhine since Music Hall . Civic leaders have called construction of the school " key to renovation of Over @-@ the @-@ Rhine " and development plans for the area include the renovation of Music Hall , a new parking garage and public plaza nearby , and a major expansion of Washington Park .

A reflective stainless steel panel with a diapering pattern curves around the L @-@ shaped building and an " urban curve " of zinc wraps the main theater at the front of the building , contrasting with the brick walls of the school , the design and materials of which reflect those used in the building 's neighborhood . The box office is a red , smokestack @-@ shaped structure that projects a beam of light up into the sky . The four @-@ story , disabled accessible building of 250 @, @ 000 sq ft (23 @, @ 000 m2) combines arts and academic spaces on each floor , arranged by grade , with the youngest students on the lowest floor . The main entrance features student sculptures selected by contest . An " Avenue of the Arts " , with gallery space for more student artwork , links the 750 @-@ seat main Corbett Theater , the 350 @-@ seat Mayerson Theater , and a 120 @-@ seat black box theater . The Corbett Theater has an 80 @-@ foot @-@ high (24 m) stage , a hydraulically operated orchestra pit , and is acoustically isolated from the rest of the building . An outdoor amphitheater is also planned .

The music facilities include rooms for band , orchestra , jazz ensemble , and vocal music , along with a music library , a grand piano studio , and twelve soundproof practice rooms . Other arts @-@ specific spaces include specialized drama rooms , four rooms for painting and sculpture , and a photography studio with adjoining darkroom . The technical theater facilities include labs for lighting and sound engineering , as well as costume , scenery , and stage prop shops . The main 5 @, @ 500 sq ft (510 m2) gymnasium is augmented by a fitness center and six multipurpose spaces for gym and dance . Academic facilities include four project labs , two chemistry rooms , two biology rooms , and a 4 @, @ 300 sq ft (400 m2) library , with 45 academic classrooms designed around flexible " extended learning areas " where students from different classes can study in groups .

= = People = =

SCPA has produced notable graduates in a wide range of artistic fields . Alumni include Cyrus Vorhis , producer of Bulletproof Monk , Kung Fu Panda , Robin Hood and the Emmy @-@ nominated miniseries Sleeper Cell and Todd Louiso , director of Love Liza and actor in Apollo 13 , High Fidelity and other films . Andy Biersack , lead vocalist of Black Veil Brides also attended this school .

Emmy- and Golden Globe @-@ winning Sex and the City star Sarah Jessica Parker attended SCPA , as did four @-@ time Emmy nominee Rebecca Budig of soap opera Guiding Light , Emmy @-@ nominated Chicago Hope and NCIS star Rocky Carroll , film and TV actor Jeff Sams , and Baywatch actress Carmen Electra . Nick Lachey , Drew Lachey , and Justin Jeffre of the multi @-@ platinum album group 98 Degrees graduated from SCPA , as did Canadian Jazz Vocalist of the Year nominee George Evans , Broadway star Ron Bohmer , and nationally known Barack Obama impersonator Iman Crosson .