



Welcome to

# Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts (TAPA)

Providence, RI

A school cultivating the artist's mindset with academic rigor and love.

How They Came to Be

## TAPA's XQ Super School Journey

In 2019, XQ and the Rhode Island Department of Education launched the XQ+RI Challenge as part of XQ's first statewide partnership. All 64 school communities across the state were invited to reimagine and redesign high school, expand educational equity, and prepare today's students for tomorrow's world. 20 high school teams received planning grants and began an intensive design process. The TAPA team delved deeply into the strengths of their arts-oriented model, identified opportunities to amplify academic rigor, and produced a powerful new school design. TAPA is one of two Rhode Island schools chosen to become XQ schools and serve as beacons for what's possible in America's smallest state.

**Building on its successful performing arts program, TAPA is prioritizing relationships and rigor to further strengthen its academic programs and support college and career readiness.**



## Discover Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts (TAPA)

Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts (TAPA) is a creative powerhouse in Providence, Rhode Island, a city that cultivates the arts in all their forms. TAPA leverages the strengths of its community by inviting adjunct artists to teach and by cultivating the “artist mindset” as a means to drive students’ academic, career, college, and social-emotional success. At TAPA, students experience interdisciplinary learning that aligns the arts with core subjects like math, science, and literacy. Students learn to use skills like self-reflection, continual practice, creation, collaboration, critical thinking, and community making to become artist-scholars who use their voices, talents, and a lifelong love of learning to fight for social justice and transform communities and the world.

**TAPA is a public, urban performing arts charter school that opened in 2010 and serves 220 students in grades 7-12.**



## TAPA Design Features

### 1. Cultivating the Artist-Scholar With Interdisciplinary Learning

At the core of TAPA’s model is the artist mindset. Through the development of this artist mindset, students learn to use artistic skills like self-reflection, creativity, continual practice, creation, collaboration, critical thinking, and community-making in their academic classes. They also learn resilience through a “show must go on” mentality that makes them better artists and scholars, who have the ability to see setbacks and failures as opportunities to grow and strengthen their craft. The school builds artist-scholars who use their voices, their talents, and their lifelong love of learning to transform communities and the world. Leaning on the artist’s mindset, TAPA educators create interdisciplinary teaching and learning experiences that are rigorous and supportive. These experiences are particularly focused on delivering a college-preparatory math curriculum aligned to rigorous standards. TAPA makes math and other core subjects come alive for students by infusing the arts and social justice into core content and leveraging community partners.



## 2. Arts and Academics

TAPA fosters a sense of belonging and love for all students. TAPA intentionally works to bring together high rigor and high love through a college-ready academic curriculum that's centered around cultivating the artist's mindset. The TAPA program gives each student the academic preparation needed to thrive in college and careers, while also building strong and deep relationships between students and educators. Social-emotional skills and capacities are at the core of TAPA's curriculum. The school has embraced the need for challenging teaching and learning across the curriculum and works to push students to achieve at their highest potential. Part of TAPA's high love approach includes seeing the school community as an ensemble, with parents, siblings, grandparents, cousins, aunt, uncles, caregivers, and beyond as a critical part of the whole and an important decision-maker.

“The artist mindset is a process of comprehension that allows students to close boundaries and think critically; it's a mindset that creates equitable outcomes for all. TAPA has a variety of educational experiences that include the core academics like math, science, history, and ELA, and allows for students to use their artistic strengths to combine the artist and academic brains into one.”

— **Ammar Zia**, Director of Teaching and Learning



### Hi, I'm Raymond

"We're trying to meet the students where they're at, building projects based on their passions. Our 9th graders are working on a proposal to put a café in the school, and we brought in a local business owner who shares that same passion. The mentorship piece really sticks with the students, because it gives them a chance to see what it's like firsthand from a professional."



### Hi, I'm Nia

"All staff at TAPA hold high expectations for students because they see our potential. They support and help us seek out opportunities and connections for success. The high expectations and support definitely show how much the staff cares about us."

## 3. Strong Social-Emotional Supports

Drawing creativity from emotion is a central part of creating art and so central to TAPA's arts-aligned mission. Educators at TAPA are committed to supporting students to process their emotions productively with the guidance of trusted adults—especially students who may experience trauma outside of school. At TAPA, students may process emotions through art by writing a play about a family members' deportation, composing a song to grapple with racial injustices, or choreographing a dance to work through grief related to the pandemic. TAPA educators built a safe space for students by expanding on-site social work programs, offering more opportunities for support during the week and on weekends, and utilizing data to approach and bolster social-emotional support. Social-emotional support extends to the entirety of TAPA's ensemble. A family-community liaison at TAPA consistently goes the extra mile for families, including taking calls and texts late at night and on the weekends, connecting families with resources and human services, and dropping off meals and toiletries.



**Ammar Zia**

Director of Teaching and Learning

“By holding our students to high rigor, the TAPA team sends them a message of love that they deserve and will master high expectations. You can’t have one without the other.”



**Zuleika Vidal**

Family-Community Liaison

“There’s no way we can be successful as an ensemble if we don’t include families. We must include them in everything and communicate everything because they make us better and stronger. They know their children better than anyone. They must be part of the decision-making and their voices elevated and heard.”



**Andy MacMannis**

Assistant Head of School

“At the core of our social-emotional support is our advisory program. At TAPA, teachers in advisory roles know that this is not solely a “homeroom” experience, but rather, a time to work with students in a way that is unique and special. All students deserve a champion: someone who’s advocating for them and helping them in times of need.”



## 4. Establish the Arts Through Community Mentors and Collaborative Capstones

Creativity is a skill of the future. A skill that will be in high demand in our evolving economy. Located in Rhode Island, a state where the arts are a top economic driver, and in Providence, a city dubbed the creative capital, TAPA explicitly builds the skills and strengths of creativity, showcases the arts as a career path, and connects students with mentors already working in the local arts community. TAPA employs full- or part-time artists-in-residence to match TAPA's arts majors. The arts majors include film, dance, theatre, and music and are the foundation of students' daily schedules for all four years of high school. Students conclude their time at TAPA with a senior thesis and performance assessment called the Collaborative Capstone. Artists-in-residence work with students for all four years, forge strong mentorship relationships, and help students with their senior year capstones. Additionally, TAPA collaborates with guest artists and enrichment program providers, who offer career exposure for students and show them what's possible. TAPA also serves as a vibrant community arts hub, opening its doors to the community to use its facility.

“I believe that we must go the extra mile for our students and families. To me, truly educating a student means getting involved.”

— **Zulieka Vidal**, Family-Community Liaison



## Andy MacMannis

Assistant Head of School

“We’re in a position to be the capital building in the creative capital. We can be a common place for all of the arts organizations to work with us and work with the pipeline of artists who will be working with them in the future. Also, with our black box theater, we are always open to community groups and artists.”

## Theory Into Action

### Student Work: Scholar-artists in action

TAPA has a performance-based graduation requirement in each student’s art major with specific assignment criteria created by each art department that includes a written research thesis, reflection, and public performance or screening. In addition, senior thesis projects must integrate one or more of students’ academic core courses into the research and creation of the performance or screening. Check out the Class of 2020’s Senior Performances in [Film](#), [Dance](#), [Theatre](#), and [Music](#).

### National Core Arts Standards:

- ✓ Create: Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Enduring Understanding: Artists rely on intuition, curiosity, and critical inquiry.
- ✓ Create: Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. Enduring Understanding: Artists work to discover different ways of communicating meaning.
- ✓ Create: Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work. Enduring Understanding: Artists refine their work and practice their craft through rehearsal/revision.
- ✓ Performing: Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation. Enduring Understanding: Artists develop personal processes and skills for a performance or design.
- ✓ Connecting: Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding. Enduring Understanding: Artists understand and can communicate their creative process as they analyze the way the world may be understood.

### 21 Century Skills Met:

- ✓ Creativity
- ✓ Collaboration
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Flexibility
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Initiative
- ✓ Productivity
- ✓ Social Skills



## Elizabeth Richards-Hegnauer

Head of School

“The education that we give here will continue to be second to none because we effectively prepare students for both college and career. Neither the arts nor academics exist in a silo and we bring in working artists to teach and show that.”

## Who is TAPA?

Who is TAPA? What does the artist mindset signify to students and staff? What does it mean to be part of an ensemble? Explore these questions and more in the TAPA Portrait, a video created by Artist-in-Residence Nick Marcoux.

## Student data

TAPA serves 220 students in grades 7-12.

<b>68%</b>	<b>Latinx</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>Free/Reduced price Lunch</b>
<b>19%</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>Special Education</b>
<b>9%</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>English Language Learners</b>
<b>3%</b>	<b>Multi-Racial</b>		
<b>&gt;1%</b>	<b>Asian</b>		

## Blogs and Media

- [How Rhode Island Is Using Remote Learning Insights to Rethink High School](#)
- [XQ + RI Update: 2 New XQ Schools and 18 Awards in High School Design Challenge](#)
- [No Walls: My School's Journey to XQ+RI](#)
- [Remote Learning Insights: The Role of the Student Is Shifting](#)
- [How One High School Teacher is Staying Connected with Students](#)
- [XQ+RI's TAPA Is on a Journey to Create a School that Is High Love and High Rigor](#)
- [This RI School Places Families at the Center of the School "Ensemble"](#)

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<https://xqsuperschool.org/school/trinity-academy-for-the-performing-arts/>

