Dear returning and new OBT School Families,

We look forward to our 2026-2027 annual session. We are pleased to continue our offering of two different programs in our school: the Professional Program and Demi Program. We will also embark upon our third year with the OBT Curriculum and are excited to continue the progress we have witnessed in our students.

OBT aims to prepare students for the diverse qualities a dancer needs to be hired into professional ballet companies. This first-of-its-kind curriculum combines uniquely successful ballet training techniques from American and European disciplines (Vaganova, The Paris Opera, and The Royal Ballet) with scientifically supported strength and flexibility training, and contemporary dance coaching. Each curriculum element builds on the next to prepare our graduates for a professional dance career, college degree programs, or whatever path they choose.

This document includes:

- School Structure Update
- Professional Program and Demi Program Descriptions
- Annual Session Level Descriptions and Benchmarks
- 2026-2027 Annual Session Schedule
- Curriculum Overview
- FAQs

SCHOOL STRUCTURE

Our curriculum levels range from Primary-Level 6.

Schedules are designed to support both pointe work (traditional female ballet roles) and flat technique (traditional male ballet roles). These are labeled as Pointe and Flat respectively. Non-binary dancers are encouraged to choose the training track that best aligns with their individual goals and identity.

If dancers wish to blend elements of both tracks—such as female-identifying dancers wanting to take flat technique classes or male-identifying dancers wishing to train en pointe—please contact the school to customize a hybrid schedule. Our goal is to honor each dancer's preferences and ensure they receive the training best suited to their artistic and technical development.

PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM AND DEMI PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Professional Program

Our Professional Program is designed to align with our curriculum, offering an optimal number of training hours to support the progress of students' technical skill and artistic growth. This program is ideal for students who wish to make ballet a primary focus in their schedule.
Students in the Professional Program are required to perform in the Annual School Performance as a vital part of their training and are eligible to audition for select company productions, such as *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker®*. Professional Program students in Levels 3-6 will also participate in year-end curriculum demonstrations and exams , which supports the importance of technical, artistic and individual growth.

Demi Program

The Demi Program offers a less demanding schedule and reduced financial commitment, making it well-suited for students who are passionate about ballet while also pursuing other academic or extracurricular interests.

Though the pace of advancement may be slower due to fewer training hours, students still gain OBT School's signature discipline, work ethic, body awareness, confidence, and a strong classical foundation that can support future ballet training or other dance styles.

Demi Program students may be invited to participate in selected performance opportunities as they arise, excluding ASP and OBT's Company productions, and will take part in observation weeks.

Students may request to transfer into the Professional Program if their priorities shift.

ANNUAL SESSION LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS AND BENCHMARKS

Understanding Our Ballet Levels

Our curriculum provides every student with a strong, progressive foundation in classical dance. Each level focuses on essential techniques and developmental milestones that support long-term growth, artistry, and physical literacy.

Progression Through Levels

Students advance through the levels at their own individual pace. While some may move quickly, others benefit from spending more time mastering foundational skills, spending anywhere from 1 to 4 years at the same level is normal. Our curriculum includes eight placement levels, and the professional training journey can span over a decade. We celebrate each student's growth as they progress and reach leadership milestones within their level.

Our levels are based on skill proficiency rather than age or school grade. Our priority is to place each student where they can thrive and develop safely.

Evaluations and Level Placement

To ensure every student is in the best level for their development, we evaluate dancers three times a year—in the fall, winter, and spring. Based on these assessments, students may be asked to move to a different level as needed. This helps ensure proper technique is built at each stage and that students are appropriately challenged.

Advanced Sub-Level: "A"

You may see the letter "A" following a level number (e.g., Ballet 2A). This indicates an Advanced Sub-Level, which serves as a flexible, supplementary grouping within a main level.

The "A" designation can be used in two main ways:

- For students returning to a level with a solid foundation, needing additional time to master the content at a deeper level.

- For students newly entering a level who demonstrate strong readiness and are expected to be leaders within their class.

Sub-levels vary year to year and may train separately from the main level, while others participate in blended classes that integrate content from the previous or upcoming level. This flexibility allows us to customize training to support each dancer's needs and maximize growth.

Combined Classes

Class pairings may vary each year based on training needs and scheduling. Students may be placed in combined classes for ballet, pointe, flat technique, contemporary, character, variations, repertory, or strength and conditioning. These combinations support student progress and create balanced, efficient schedules.

Curriculum Observations and Exams

Students Levels Primary and up participate in two observation weeks per year to showcase progress.

Level 3 and above participate in one formal exam per year, which are used to assess readiness for advancement.

Why Ballet Exams Are Important

Ballet exams provide dancers with a valuable opportunity to demonstrate their technical and artistic progress in a structured setting. They help students set goals, build confidence, and develop discipline. Exams also allow instructors to assess each dancer's readiness for the next level, ensuring they are progressing safely and effectively through their training. Most importantly, they celebrate growth and dedication in a supportive environment.

Ballet Level Overview

Primary Level:

Students take class in four segments of learning: mat work, barre, rhythm, and center work. This class introduces students to a more formal class format with professional expectations of ballet

positions at the barre and beginner port de bras and traveling movements in the center. Croisé is introduced for the first time in the center. Students must be able to execute clear barre work with strong knees and feet and understand center arm movements before graduating.

Typical Time Spent: 1–2 years

Level 1:

A thoughtfully curated set class is studied, expanding ballet vocabulary significantly from the prior grade. Character dance is introduced in this level to increase coordination and épaulement understanding for stage. Level 1 ballet serves as a foundational stage where young dancers develop proper body alignment, basic technique, and core ballet vocabulary. Students begin barre and center work, build strength, coordination, and musicality, and are introduced to studio etiquette and artistic expression. The focus is on creating a strong technical base while fostering a love for dance and preparing for more advanced training.

Typical Time Spent: 2–3 years

Level 1A:

This level is a necessary bridge between Level 1 and Level 2, solidifying everything learned in level 1 and slowly introducing some elements of Level 2. Two different classes of work are studied per week, expanding ballet vocabulary from the prior grade. The focus is on strengthening proper rotation and body alignment, the necessary foundation for Level 2. Flat technique curriculum is studied in designated flat technique classes.

Typical Time Spent: 2–3 years

Level 2:

Three different classes of work are studied per week, and basic port de bras at the barre begins in this level. Students continue with character work. An isolated pirouette class is introduced, where the dancer can focus exclusively on turning concepts and improve their spotting and positions for turns. Pre-pointe begins in this level to strengthen footwork and prepare the students for graduation to pointe work. Students are required to do strengthening work at home and keep a notebook to document progress. Batterie is introduced at the barre, as well as demi-pointe pirouettes in the center. Flat technique curriculum is studied in designated flat technique classes.

Typical Time Spent: 2–4 years

Level 3:

A pivotal year of study where the first elements of pointe are introduced. Students continue with Character & Pirouette class. Contemporary movement is added to their weekly schedule. Dancers must be able to demonstrate chaîné, échappé, piqué arabesque and a solid single pirouette on pointe by the end of this year. In center work, dancers must also demonstrate complete clarity in adage (slowly), stability on one leg, double pirouettes en dehors on demi-pointe before graduating. Training for larger jumps and grand pirouettes are introduced at this grade. Flat technique curriculum is studied in designated flat technique classes.

Typical Time Spent: 2–4 years

Level 3 Pointe:

Class length and frequency increase to support the expanded curriculum. Level 3 content is reinforced, with a focused emphasis on strengthening pointe work and expanding pointe vocabulary. Character and Contemporary classes continue, offering opportunities to explore a broader range of movement styles. Dancers also participate in Variation classes, designed to introduce artistry and more complex choreography. To graduate this track, step-over turns, piqué turns, basic grand pirouettes, clear batterie and core control in allegro must be evident before being moved up to the next grade. Flat technique curriculum work continues to be studied in designated flat technique classes.

Typical Time Spent: 2–4 years

Level 4: Advanced Foundation

Level 4 marks the commencement of pre-professional training, emphasizing the refinement of classical technique and the development of individual artistry. Students engage in an intensified schedule, including multiple technique classes per week, to build strength, precision, and expressive quality.

The curriculum encompasses advanced barre and center work, pointe technique, and the introduction of complex allegro and adagio combinations. Variation classes become more demanding with stamina and the study of ménage. Dancers explore Character and Contemporary styles including NIQUE to broaden their movement vocabulary and adaptability. Improvisation and

composition classes encourage creative expression and choreographic understanding. Students who have selected the Flat track, or a hybrid track, begin focused training in flat technique, addressing jumps, turns, and upper-body strength essential for partnering. Progress is evaluated through teacher & student progress and goal setting conferences, exams and faculty assessments, ensuring readiness for advancement.

Typical Time Spent: 2–4 years

Level 5: Pre-Professional Development

In Level 5, students transition into a pre-professional environment, where the emphasis shifts to performance quality, artistic interpretation, and technical mastery. The curriculum demands a higher level of commitment, with increased class frequency and intensity.

Dancers delve deeper into pointe work, focusing on complex sequences and endurance. Repertory classes are introduced to expand their knowledge of classical repertoire, enhancing musicality and stage presence. Supplementary classes in Character, Contemporary, Modern, and NIQUE continue to diversify the dancers' skills. Regular evaluations and increased performance opportunities, including community outreach and showcases, provide practical experience and feedback.

When we have the necessary supporting role flat dancers available, partnering classes are included in the schedule. These classes develop trust, coordination, and the fundamentals of pas de deux.

Typical Time Spent: 2–4 years

Level 6: Advanced Technique & Artistic Refinement

Level 6 is the most advanced level of training, designed for dancers demonstrating a high level of technical proficiency, maturity, artistic expression and commitment to their training. At this stage, classwork demands a deep understanding of classical vocabulary, strong pointe technique, and the ability to execute complex combinations with clarity and nuance.

Dancers refine their work in grand allegro, adagio, multiple pirouettes, and advanced pointe sequences. Emphasis is placed on versatility, musicality, and performance quality across all classes, including Technique, Pointe, Variations, Contemporary, Modern, NIQUE, Character, and

Composition/Improvisation. Flat technique continues to be cultivated with advanced jumps, turns, and strength work as appropriate.

The focus is on precision, stamina, and artistry—preparing dancers to meet the expectations of professional company training.

Performance and enrichment opportunities include participation in community outreach performances, showcases and exclusive master classes led by OBT's Artistic Director, Artistic Faculty, and OBT2 Director.

This Level is intended for dancers pursuing a career in classical ballet or high-level dance college program.

Typical Time Spent: 2–3 years

OBT School Ballet Training Syllabi

At OBT School, our ballet training is rooted in esteemed, time-tested methods while incorporating innovative practices to prepare students for a professional career in dance. Our curriculum evolves with each level, combining respected classical syllabi with contemporary additions that reflect the diverse skill set today's dancers need.

Primary – Level 2

For these lower levels, OBT School has adopted Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet's revered syllabus by Marcia Dale Weary and intentionally incorporated fundamental building blocks of this teaching method to suit our OBT students.

Levels 1–6

Students in Levels 1 through 6 are introduced to a Character Syllabus created by Curriculum Consultant Kate Robbins, as well as a Pirouette Syllabus based on the Royal Ballet School Curriculum in London. Beginning in Level 2 pre-pointe classes, students also begin work in a pre-pointe syllabus that utilizes Australian physiotherapist Lisa Howell's "Perfect Pointe System."

Levels 3–6

OBT School builds off the CPYB syllabi, incorporating elements from both the Paris Opera Ballet School and Royal Ballet School training methods. The stylization goal is to continue training strong leg lines while introducing a European style of epaulement. Students will continue studying the character syllabus, with increased exposure to multiple folk styles that involve learning how to use Spanish fans and tambourines.

OBT School's pre-pointe and pointe syllabi will also be used at these levels, alongside an introduction to the NIQUE Neo-Classical Curriculum, created by Complexions Dance Company, to further enhance students' versatility and hireability upon graduation.
In addition to their core ballet training, modern, improvisation, composition, and choreographic opportunities are a vital part of programming. Levels 3–6 participate in annual exams, adjudicated by a panel of OBT school and artistic faculty, in addition to guest judges.

About the Syllabi

NIQUE Curriculum

NIQUE is the official technique of Complexions Contemporary Ballet and was created in the formative years of the company by its founders Dwight Rhoden and Desmond Richardson. This technique was developed with a total body approach to training and uses a fusion of classical and contemporary-based dance methods to explore both on- and off-center movement. It is geared toward dancers who want to broaden their understanding of the relationship between the upper and lower body, as well as the complexities of moving freely and clearly within a contemporary style.

NIQUE uses a classical ballet structure as its foundation yet allows momentum and the integration of a fully mobile torso, weight shift, and dynamics to enhance the outcome. Contemporary in its perspective, NIQUE places a special emphasis on coordination, physical ignition, precision, efficiency, and clarity of form. The method is designed to take a dancer to the next level through fluid exercises that build strength, stability, and overall placement. From the barre to center floor, NIQUE focuses on versatility and range—with a keen awareness of the fullness in physicality necessary to convey impactful dancing.

Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet Curriculum

Created in 1955, Marcia Dale Weary received her pedagogy influence from the School of Ballet Repertory in New York City under the tutelage of Thalia Mara and Arthur Mahoney. Her impact is known across the globe with over 21,000 CPYB alumni. She personally trained over 50 soloist/principal dancers with major companies including New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, San Francisco Ballet, Boston Ballet, and Miami City Ballet.

Marcia's teaching style was very clear and succinct: breaking things down for her students and focusing on movement and placement. The CPYB training method focuses on shaping the lower leg line of students from the earliest age, beginning at the barre and progressing to port de bras only once lower leg and foot articulation have warranted advancement. The breakdown of vocabulary codified by Marcia Dale Weary is what the syllabus is most well-known for—creating strong, well-placed young dancers with un-mannerized mechanics and clear articulation of technique at a young age.

Character Curriculum

Applicable to Levels 1 through 6, this curriculum focuses on developing the coordination and folk-dance skills required to perform the most common repertoire in classical ballets. These include Polka, Waltz, Polonaise, Mazurka, Czardas, Tarantella, Bolero, Jota, Tango, Trepak, and many more folk styles essential in classical works such as *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*, *Paquita*, *Don Quixote*, and *Coppélia*.

The development of the upper body (epaulement) is vital in the younger levels to ensure correct coordination and classical presentation in later years. Training begins with barre and center work at the junior stage, progressing to longer center studies that incorporate props like Spanish fans and tambourines in the intermediate and senior levels.

Pre-Pointe & Pointe Curriculum

Our pointe and pre-pointe course work is based on a synergy of Lisa Howell's "Perfect Pointe System" and beginner pointe exercises from the Royal Ballet School. This system encourages

student accountability for their pointe readiness and engages them in preparing their motor skills and foot articulation.

Students receive workbooks with benchmarks to accomplish in pre-pointe, leading them toward successful graduation to pointe. The first year of pointe studies, based on the Royal Ballet School syllabus, builds strong placement through slow repetition and progressive vocabulary, helping to inhibit "cheating" and ensuring the development of intrinsic foot muscles. This two-year program sets students up for long-term pointe success and reduces the risk of the most common ankle and foot injuries identified by the International Association for Dance Medicine & Science.

Pirouette Syllabus

The pirouette class, based on the Royal Ballet School's turning syllabus, is offered weekly for students in Levels 2 and 3. This 30-minute class focuses solely on mechanics and coordination for pirouettes. It includes both barre and center exercises designed to improve turning concepts, enhance standing-leg strength for pointe work, and develop faster spotting and choreographic sequencing.

This class has significantly improved pirouette proficiency in our student body and helps faculty avoid having to spend time correcting poor turning habits during regular weekly classes.

Strength & Conditioning

Strength and conditioning continues to be a necessary element in our training goals for students. We will offer these classes at various times throughout the year to support dancers' physical development and injury prevention.

French Ballet Terms for Parents and Students

- Barre: A handrail used during warm-ups where dancers practice balance, strength, and alignment.
- Port de bras: The movement and positioning of the arms through classical ballet poses.
- Croisé: A body position where the dancer faces diagonally with legs crossed to the audience.

- Épaulement: The use of the shoulders and upper body to enhance expression and coordination.
- Pirouette: A turn or spin performed on one leg, either on flat foot or on pointe.
- Demi-pointe: Dancing on the balls of the feet, a position between flat and full pointe.
- Batterie: Jumps that include beats or crossings of the legs in mid-air.
- Chaîné: A series of quick, linked turns performed in a straight line or circle.
- Échappé: A jump where the dancer opens both feet from a closed to an open position.
- Piqué: A step where the dancer pricks or steps directly onto a straight leg, often into a turn.
- Arabesque: A position with one leg extended behind and the other supporting, with graceful arm placement.
- Adage/Adagio: Slow, controlled movements that develop balance, strength, and fluid motion.
- En dehors: An outward circular motion of the leg or a turn away from the supporting leg.
- Grand pirouette: A large turning movement, often from a jump or high relevé, performed by advanced dancers.
- Allegro: Fast, energetic steps including jumps and quick footwork.
- Pas de deux: A partnered dance, usually between a flat and pointe dancer, emphasizing lifts and coordinated movement.
- Grand allegro: Large, sweeping jumping combinations done with strength and grace, usually at the end of class.

FAQs

Q: May a student transfer mid-year into the Professional or Demi Program if they want to do so?

A: Students enrolled in the Demi Program who want to transfer to the Professional Program may do so mid-year by request to the school. Students enrolled in theProfessional Program may transfer to the Demi Program mid-year but tuition cannot be adjusted.

Q: What are the proven results of this curriculum?

A: All elements of this curriculum have years of proven success stories with dancers succeeding in companies all around the world and prestigious college programs.

Q: How many other schools are offering this curriculum?

A: We are the first school to combine all these elements into a formal curriculum.

Q: Is there a difference of instruction or quality of instruction in the different programs, Professional versus Demi?

A: No, both programs will receive excellent instruction of the highest caliber.

Q: What performance opportunities are available for each program?

A: Demi Program students Levels 5 and 6 are included in 5 showcases per year and 8-10 outreach performances. Levels 3, 3P and 4 students are included in our Spring Showcase.
Professional Program students have the same performance opportunities as the Demi Program students and participate in the Annual School Performance and qualify to be considered for Company productions like *The Nutcracker*.

Q: Do you participate in competitions?

A: OBT School does not currently participate in competitions. Students can enter independently however participation cannot interfere with attending classes and rehearsals.

Q: What is OBT's attendance policy?

A: OBT School students are required to prioritize their commitment to their training, and no classes should be missed if it can be avoided. Very few absences (primarily mandatory academic school events) are permitted for the entirety of the Annual Session, and no rehearsals should be missed for any production.