

Canada's National Ballet School

Toronto, Canada



Talent is the sole entry ticket to this Toronto campus fusing full-time ballet training, academics, and boarding life under one roof.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	49/100
Academic outcomes	50/100
University placement	35/100
Prestige & heritage	52/100
Alumni network	2/100
Facilities	54/100
Transparency	55/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Canada’s National Ballet School occupies a narrow, serious niche: full-time classical ballet training for young dancers who want the art form at the centre of daily life, not bolted on after school. This is not a conventional independent school with a strong dance department. It is a specialist institution in Toronto for ages ****11-18****, offering the Ontario Secondary School Diploma alongside an intensive professional ballet track, with day and boarding options under the same roof. Entry turns on talent and trainability. That single fact defines the place. For the right child, that is **electrifying**. For the wrong child, it is **claustrophobic**.

What sets NBS apart is the integration. Ballet training, academic study, physiotherapy support and residential life sit inside one ecosystem, built for students whose schedules and physical demands do not fit ordinary schooling. The school also has wider reach than a pure conservatoire model: the public footprint includes community dance work, educator resources and a research institute, which gives the institution cultural weight beyond its student body. Still, parents need to read the proposition clearly. This is a classical ballet school first. The academics matter because they must; the ballet matters because it is the point. That hierarchy will suit families who want *single-minded training* and a *professional atmosphere*, and it will deter those seeking broad sixth-form optionality, mainstream school sport, or a looser adolescence.

In market terms, NBS sits at the top of the Canadian pre-professional ballet pathway, alongside only a tiny number of institutions with comparable purpose. Its boarding offer matters because elite dance training depends on time, routine and proximity; long commutes and piecemeal timetables waste energy that dancers need in the studio. The school's standing also rests on scarcity: there are few places in Canada where a student can pursue elite classical ballet and an OSSD within one specialist structure. That makes it *hard-edged*, *demanding* and attractive to families who value focus over breadth. We have not seen aggregate academic outcomes published, and parents should ask direct questions about exam performance, university destinations and injury management before committing.

The student who will thrive here is disciplined, physically resilient, coachable and happy to have identity tied closely to ballet. A child who needs a broad menu of subjects, a big-house sports culture, or room to drift between interests will chafe. A young dancer who wants exacting daily training, peers with the same priorities, and adults who understand the mechanics of a life in dance will find a rare fit. For that student, NBS belongs on the shortlist because it offers something few schools can: a *clear runway* from adolescence to the professional ballet world, inside a school structure built around that ambition.

STRENGTHS

- Founded in 1959 by Celia Franca and Betty Oliphant, giving it a long, well-documented history as a specialist ballet institution in Toronto.
- Combines professional dance training with the Ontario Secondary School Diploma through a partnership with the Toronto District School Board.
- Alumni include prominent Canadian dancers such as Karen Kain, Veronica Tennant and Evelyn Hart, later leaders in the National Ballet of Canada.
- Purpose-built campus (the Celia Franca Centre, opened 2005) provides dedicated studios, a health centre and on-site residence for boarders.
- Offers both day and boarding options, allowing local Toronto families and international students to attend the same program.

TRADE-OFFS

- Curriculum is narrowly focused on classical ballet training; academic breadth and extracurricular variety are limited compared with generalist schools.
- Admission is by competitive audition assessing physical suitability for ballet, which excludes students without prior dance training or aptitude.
- Boarding and tuition fees are significant, and detailed current fee schedules are not fully published on the school's public website.
- The intensive daily training schedule alongside academics demands a high physical and time commitment unsuitable for casual dance students.

ADMISSIONS

Entry is by audition, held annually at NBS in Toronto and at satellite audition tours across Canada and internationally, generally for students in grades 6 through 12. Auditions assess physical aptitude, coordination and prior training rather than examination results; academic transcripts are also reviewed. Places are limited each year, making admission selective, particularly for older entry points. Need-based financial assistance is available, though full fee schedules require direct inquiry with the school's admissions office.

WTS RATING 

This profile summarises editorial research by World's Top Schools. Verify all admissions dates directly with the school before submitting. Sources are cited in the full online profile at WorldsTopSchools.com/schools/sch_11fbd07bc7.