



# Elizabeth Public Schools Press Release

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## **Two EPS Schools Named 2024 NJ School of Character**

*Dwyer Technology Academy, LaCorte – Peterstown School No. 3 Earn Distinction for Second Time*

**Elizabeth, N.J., January 29, 2024** – John E. Dwyer Technology Academy and Nicholas S. LaCorte – Peterstown School No. 3 were among 25 schools to be designated as a 2024 New Jersey School of Character by Character.org.

Character.org, founded in 1993 and formerly known as the Character Education Partnership, is a worldwide network of educators, researchers, and civic leaders that empowers people of all ages to practice and model the character strengths and core values that shape the hearts, minds, and choices of every person.

Each year, Character.org and its state affiliates select schools and districts that have developed and implemented an intentional, proactive, and comprehensive approach that embeds character into all aspects of school life. There were 87 state-level schools and one district in 17 states, along with two international schools, selected as state schools and district of character for 2024.

"We are excited to announce today the 2024 State Schools and Districts of Character," said Dr. Arthur Schwartz, Character.org's President. "Each of these schools and districts have put into place an initiative that equips and empowers their staff to reinforce and model a range of positive core values that will shape and form the hearts, minds, and choices of their students."

The 25 schools selected as 2024 New Jersey Schools of Character are in the national evaluation process for consideration to be 2024 National Schools of Character. The National Schools of Character will be announced in May.

Elizabeth Public Schools is home to twelve district schools that have been designated as state schools of character, nine of which received national school of character honors as well. Dwyer Technology and School No. 3, with their 2024 designations, became the fourth and fifth district schools to have received State School of Character honors twice, previously earning the distinctions in 2020 and 2016 respectively.

Past and present recipients include Nicholas S. La Corte-Peterstown School No. 3 (2016, 2024), which also received the National School of Character designation; Terence C. Reilly School No. 7 (2018, 2023), which also was named a National School of Character; Jerome Dunn Academy of Mathematics, Technology, and the Arts School No. 9 (2019); Victor Mravlag School No. 21 (2020); William F. Halloran School No. 22 (2020), which also received National School of Character honors; Juan Pablo Duarte – José Julián Martí School No. 28 (2015, 2020), which also received National School of Character honors twice; Dr. Albert Einstein Academy School No. 29 (2019), which also was named a National

School of Character; Frances C. Smith Early Childhood Center School No. 50 (2019), which received State and National School of Character honors; Donald Stewart Center for Early Childhood School No. 51 (2016, 2021), which also received the National School of Character designation twice; Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Early Childhood Center School No. 52 (2020); Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy (2021), which also was named a National School of Character; and John E. Dwyer Technology Academy (2020, 2024), which also received the National School of Character honor.

Dwyer Technology Academy and School No. 3 will retain the NJ School of Character status for a period of five years, through 2029.

Additionally, Dwyer Technology Academy Principal Sulisnet Jiminez has been invited to participate in the 2024 New Jersey Alliance for Social, Emotional, and Character Development (NJASECD) Conference as a member of the keynote panel. The theme of the conference is "Character is the Core: Reconnecting with Respect, Responsibility, and Resilience". The sub-themes are "A Vision for Student Success, Revisiting Respect - New Tools for the Golden Rule", "SECD and Wellness for Educators", and "Grow and Glows: Best Practices for Building SECD Competencies". NJASECD is the New Jersey affiliate of Character.org.

"Elizabeth Public Schools seeks to support the social emotional wellness of all students and staff to promote a safe environment in which all feel a sense of belonging," said Elizabeth Public Schools Superintendent Olga Hugelmeyer. "John E. Dwyer Technology Academy and Nicholas S. LaCorte – Peterstown School No. 3 are doing an exceptional job of creating a sense of belonging within their school communities and achieving a positive climate through character education as reflected in this honor from Character.org"

"Congratulations to the students and staff of John E. Dwyer Technology Academy and Nicholas S. LaCorte – Peterstown School No. 3 for being selected as a New Jersey School of Character for the second time," said Elizabeth Board of Education President Charlene Bathelus Dorgely. "It is very important to me that every student have every opportunity to succeed and building a safe, caring school environment through character education goes a long way towards making that happen."

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For further information on Elizabeth Public Schools, please visit [www.epsnj.org](http://www.epsnj.org)