

Excellence News

September 2025



EPS Welcomes Back Students



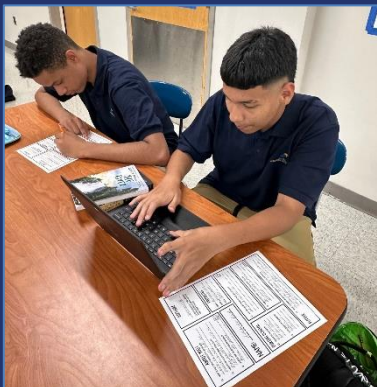
Elizabeth Public Schools launched the 2025-2026 school year on September 4 with a warm welcome for all students and staff. To celebrate the first day, city leaders, including representatives from the Elizabeth Police and Fire Departments, the Board of Education, and central office administrators, spread out across the district to personally greet students as they arrived.

This collaborative effort highlights the community's commitment to education. Elizabeth Public Schools and the Elizabeth Board of Education extended their best wishes for a productive and successful academic year to everyone in the learning community.



EPS Welcome Back Students

Victor Mravlag School No. 21



Mabel G. Holmes School No. 5



EPS Welcome Back Students

Woodrow Wilson School No. 19



Elmora School No. 12

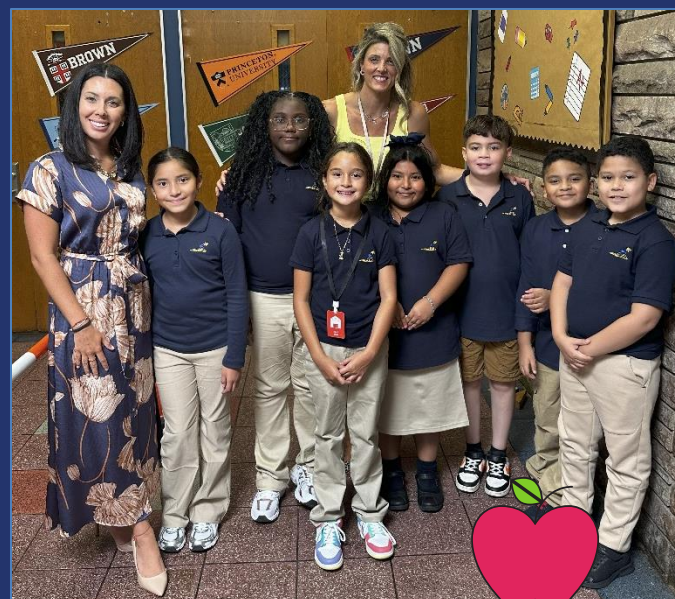


EPS WELCOME BACK STUDENTS

William F. Halloran School No. 22



Joseph Battin School No. 4



EPS WELCOME BACK STUDENTS

J. Christian Bollwage Finance Academy

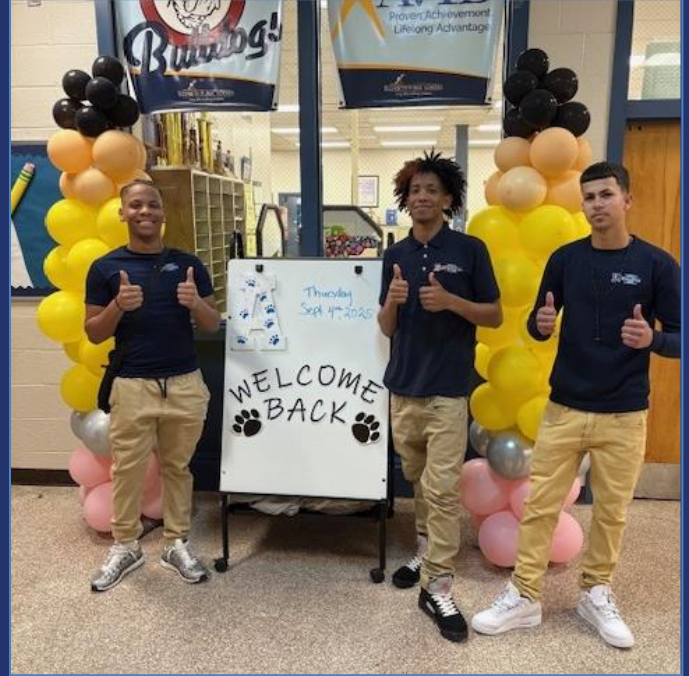


Robert Morris School No. 18

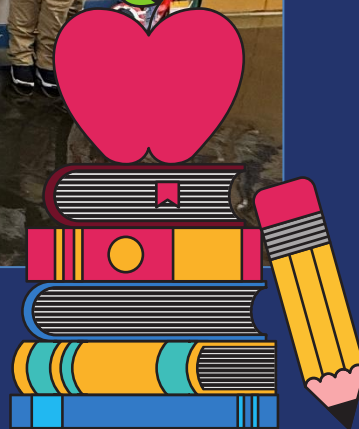


EPS WELCOME BACK STUDENTS

Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr. Health & Public Safety Academy



Winfield Scott School No. 2



EPS WELCOME BACK STUDENTS

Nicholas Murray Butler School No. 23 Annex



Winfield Scott School No. 2



EPS WELCOME BACK STUDENTS

Terence C. Reilly School No. 7



Jerome Dunn Academy of Mathematics, Technology and the Arts School No. 9



EARLY CHILDHOOD

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. ECC School No. 52

School No. 52 students have been exploring the captivating life cycle of a butterfly. By engaging in hands-on observations, they've uncovered the incredible process of metamorphosis, following the journey from egg to caterpillar, chrysalis, and finally, an adult butterfly.

This engaging study is helping them develop a greater appreciation for nature and the concepts of growth and transformation.



Frances C. Smith ECC School No. 50



School No. 50, opened its doors on September 4, greeting over 300 students for the new school year. The first day included a mix of fun, learning, and some emotional goodbyes. Returning 4-year-olds quickly got back into their classroom routines, showing their excitement to be back at school.

Madison-Monroe School No. 16



In a solemn ceremony, students and staff gathered to observe a moment of silence in remembrance of the September 11th attacks. The school community reflected on the profound loss of life in New York City, Shanksville, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C., and honored the many acts of heroism that emerged on that day. Kindergarten teachers Mrs. Gilliam and Mrs. Chang, along with their teacher assistants Mrs. Santiago and Mrs. Aviles, guided their students in a patriotic display. The young students proudly held the American flag, a powerful symbol of national unity, resilience, and collective memory. The observance served as a poignant reminder of the enduring values of compassion, courage, and community.

Chessie Dentley Roberts Academy School No. 30



On 9/11, the Chessie Dentley Roberts Academy community honored a significant day in our nation's history. Students and staff paid tribute to the first responders—firefighters, police officers, and other everyday heroes—who bravely risked their lives to help others. To symbolize their appreciation, many wore superhero shirts.

The ceremony included a moving performance of "Taps" by band students Erick Celi and Noemy Diaz, who played on their trumpets under the direction of Miss Murro. This was followed by a moment of silence observed by the entire school. Ms. Ortiz's art students also contributed to the event by creating and distributing windmills of peace for students to hold during the tribute. The observance was a heartfelt and respectful reminder of the courage, sacrifice, and unity that define the spirit of 9/11.



Mabel G. Holmes School No. 5

Students and team members at School No. 5 came together to commemorate the anniversary of 9/11 and honor the victims. The school held a moment of silence to remember those who were lost. Eighth-grade students, Javid Cano and Jae'Yanna Zamora, recited the poem "Forever Remember" by Grace Frost. In a display of patriotism and respect, students attached red, white, and blue ribbons to the front of the school building.



Jerome Dunn Academy of Mathematics, Technology and the Arts School No. 9

On the morning of September 11, 2025, School No. 9 gathered outside to commemorate the tragic events of 9/11. This event was planned by Mrs. Belvin-Flowers, an EPS educator of over 40 years who continues to make a difference in the Jerome Dunn Academy school community. Members of the local fire department stood alongside students and staff, their presence honoring the bravery of first responders. Many students held small American flags. School principal, Ms. Viegas opened the ceremony, delivering a speech reflecting on the bravery, loss and unity that this day brings. Students of all ages stood respectfully as Dr. Thomas-Jones led a moment of silence honoring the lives lost and the heroes who emerged, reminding everyone of the importance of resilience. To conclude the ceremony, Mr. Taylor played "The Star-Sprangled Banner" on the violin, filling the air with soft notes in a final moment of remembrance.



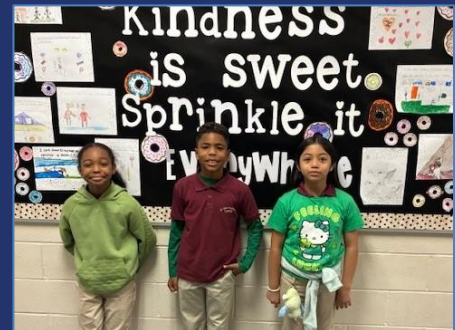
Abraham Lincoln School No. 14

On September 11th, School No. 14 came together to honor and remember the victims and heroes of 9/11. As a special activity, second-grade students created "September 11th Memorial Ribbons." This project served as a symbol of unity and patriotism, allowing students to reflect on the importance of courage and community. By displaying their ribbons, the students showed their deep respect and gratitude for those who sacrificed so much on that day.

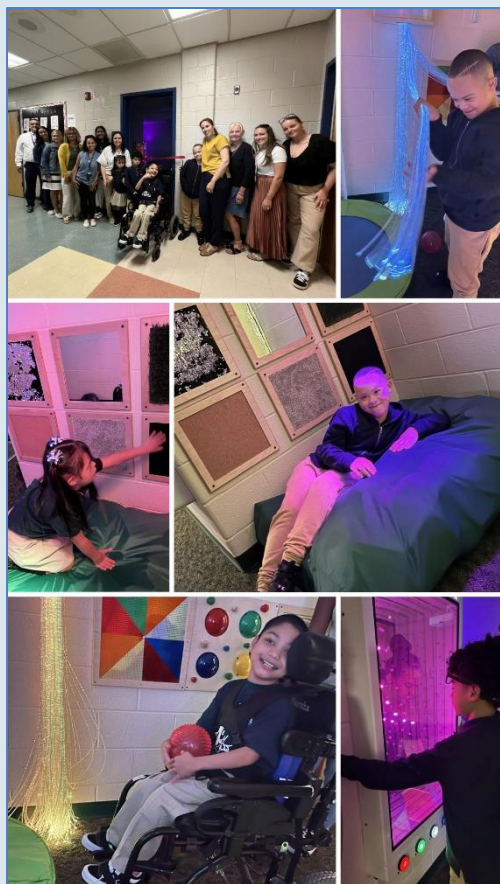


Dr. Albert Einstein Academy School No. 29

Team members and students joined the "Start with Hello" week initiative, sponsored by The Sandy Hook Promise. This program aims to transform tragedy by fostering a sense of belonging and connection within the school community. To achieve this, students and teachers took part in activities designed to help them feel more connected. On September 17, the school wore green to show its collective unity.



Juan Pablo Duarte – José Julián Martí School No. 28

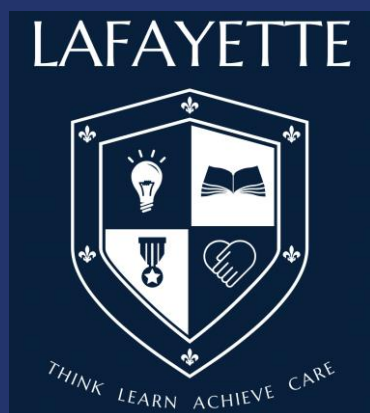


School No. 28 is excited to announce the opening of the new sensory room—a calming, inclusive space designed to support students’ emotional and sensory needs. Equipped with soothing lights, tactile tools, and quiet zones, the room offers a safe environment for students to self-regulate, recharge, and refocus. This initiative reflects the commitment to fostering a supportive and responsive learning environment for all.



Toussaint L'Ouverture - Marquis de Lafayette School No. 6

At School No. 6, Ms. Shea’s fifth-grade class recently participated in an engaging science design challenge inspired by the work of engineers. Students began by brainstorming and sketching ideas in their science notebooks, then collaborated in teams to design and build miniature bridges using plastic straws and modeling clay. Afterward, they reflected on their creations by listing materials, clarifying the project’s objective, and sketching their results. This hands-on activity sparked creativity, teamwork, and problem-solving skills.



Elmora School No. 12

On Thursday, September 11, School No. 12 welcomed families for its annual Back to School Night. The evening was filled with excitement as parents eagerly entered the building, ready to meet their children's teachers and learn more about the engaging activities planned for the school year. The event provided a wonderful opportunity for parents and educators to connect, fostering a strong home-school partnership. Teachers shared classroom expectations, curriculum highlights, and upcoming events, giving families a glimpse into the enriching experiences their children will enjoy. With such a strong start, it's clear that Elmora School No. 12 is on track for an excellent and inspiring school year ahead!



Dr. Antonia Pantoja School No. 27

Dr. Antonia Pantoja (1922–2002) was a Puerto Rican educator, social worker, feminist, and activist who dedicated her life to advancing opportunities for Puerto Ricans and other Latinos in the United States. Born in San Juan, she moved to New York City in 1944, where she earned advanced degrees in social work and education.

For School No. 27's annual celebration of Dr. Antonia Pantoja's birthday, students wrote their goals or aspirations on a birthday candle and placed it on Dr. Pantoja's cake. This school wide activity was inspired by the organization Pantoja created in 1961, ASPIRA (aspire) which empowered young Latinos through leadership development and advocacy for bilingual education. She also helped establish the Puerto Rican Forum and the Universidad Boricua (now Boricua College). Her tireless work in education and civil rights earned her the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1996. Dr. Pantoja's legacy continues to inspire efforts toward equity, cultural pride, and educational access for Latino communities.



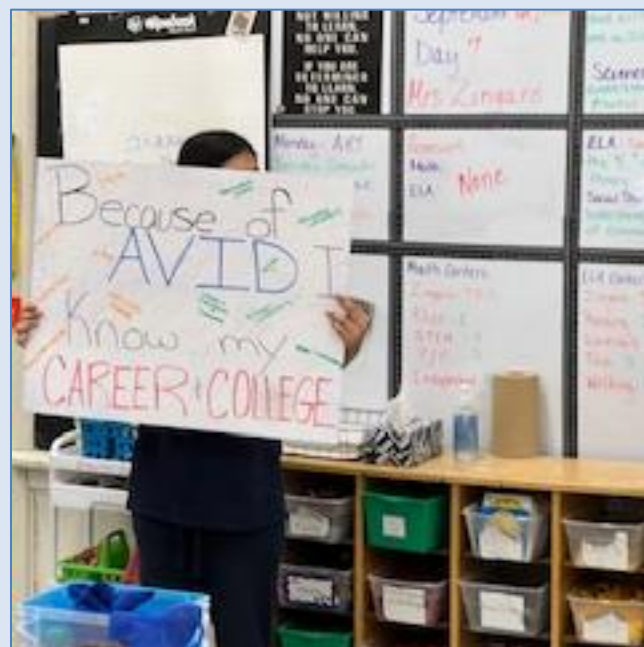
Benjamin Franklin School No. 13

This week our students proudly celebrated National AVID Day! They shared their personal AVID goals and reflected on how AVID supports their success in school. From staying organized with binders and planners to using strategies like Cornell Notes and collaboration, students highlighted how AVID helps them stay focused, build confidence, and prepare for the future. It was an inspiring celebration of determination and achievement!



John Marshall School No. 20

School No. 20 celebrated AVID Day on September 12. Eighth grade AVID students from Mr. Vicente's class dedicated several class periods to researching various colleges and careers and creating display boards. On AVID Day, these eighth graders led presentations in the fourth and fifth grade classrooms. The elementary students learned about the AVID initiative, the importance of AVID, as well as information on various New Jersey colleges and universities. Additionally, the children were able to learn about the founders of the various institutions, their locations, career choices, academic majors and required GPAs for admission. These eighth graders are leaders at School 20 and are serving as models and mentors in the hopes of inspiring other students to commit to AVID.



Joseph Battin School No. 4

School No. 4 kicked off the year with a fun and energetic PBSIS rollout pep rally! Students learned all about showing kindness, respect, and making positive choices each day. They cheered each other on during exciting relay races that highlighted teamwork and good sportsmanship. Smiles, laughter, and Bulldog pride filled the gym as everyone came together to celebrate. It was the perfect start to a year of positivity and school spirit!



Sonia Sotomayor School No. 25

School No. 25 kicked off "Security Guard Appreciation Week" with a special breakfast for its three security guards: Ms. Graham, Mr. Montalvo Puig, and Mr. Street.

The morning announcements included a schoolwide thank you, and students and team members were asked to take time this week to express their appreciation for all that the security guards do to keep everyone safe each day.



Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, Mary Jackson STEM Academy & Annex

This week, JVJ STEM Academy's AVID seniors celebrated AVID Day by sharing their "BECAUSE OF AVID, I" statements. Seniors expressed that AVID has equipped them to prepare for their futures, succeed in college and beyond, and reach their goals. All students acknowledged the impact of AVID in supporting success after high school.



The JVJ STEM Academy Annex community honored Mr. Davis, a staff member whose commitment extends beyond the classroom.

Recognized for his daily efforts to maintain student safety, Mr. Davis also carries the distinction of having served as a firefighter during the September 11, 2001, tragedies. The school expresses its sincere appreciation for his bravery and sacrifice during that critical time.



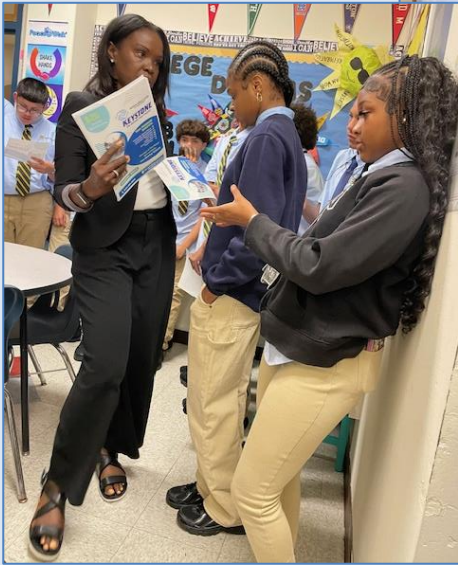
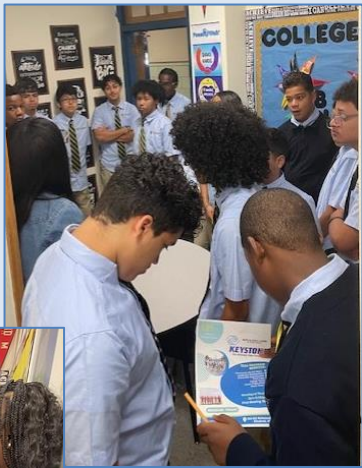
Elizabeth High School – Frank J. Cicarell Academy



Former ninth grade art students from EHS-FJC Annex demonstrated their creativity and talent by painting vibrant murals that welcomed their new freshmen class and now brighten the hallways of the 9th Grade Academy.

J. Christian Bollwage Finance Academy

Guidance Counselors and School Social Worker were excited to welcome the new Freshman 2029 class on September 8 and 9. Students were welcomed with warm smiles and given information on how to contact their Guidance Counselors and School Social Worker. They were also given information on how to obtain community service hours with community outreach programs such as the Boys & Girls Club, Kean University, Proceed and Make the Road. Students were eager and excited to learn more about how they can contribute to their community and looking forward to learning more about registering for schoolwide clubs on Club Day. Overall, the introduction cultivated a strong sense of community and excitement among the Freshman class for their upcoming school year!



Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy

Hamilton Academy celebrated the power of AVID to change lives. AVID Day honors the incredible impact of educators, students, and the community working together to ensure all students are prepared for college, careers, and beyond. This year, the school also celebrated a 45-year legacy of belief in every student's potential.

To honor and celebrate the AVID program, the school organized several activities:

- A photo booth with AVID-specific props was available for students during lunch in both buildings.
- The AVID Site Coordinator, Ms. Wells, collected testimonials from alumni for a "Lion's Legacy" campaign on social media. These inspiring stories will also be displayed in both buildings to encourage future students, and they were shared on projectors during lunch.
- Seniors in the Class of 2026 recorded their own testimonials in the lunchroom all week, sharing their experiences with the program.
- AVID Elective classes from grades 9-12 participated in "Fun Friday" activities to build connections and reflect on why they appreciate and are grateful for the AVID program.



Mark Your Calendar!!!



SENIOR SEMINAR
COLLEGE APPLICATION BOOT CAMP & MINI COLLEGE FAIR

SEPTEMBER 27, 2025

ELIZABETH HIGH SCHOOL
FRANK J. CICARELL ACADEMY
40 MORRELL STREET | ELIZABETH, NJ

9:00AM – 1:00PM

>> PLEASE BRING YOUR LAPTOP FULLY CHARGED! <<

REGISTER NOW

CONTACT:
Aimee Saluccio
District College & Career Coordinator
(908) 436-6669 | saluccioa@epnj.org



Graduation is on the horizon! Are you thinking about college? Learn about the next steps at the College Application Boot Camp. There will also be a mini college fair featuring local colleges and universities.

This event is for Seniors only. Parents are invited to attend.

SESSIONS INCLUDE:

- THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS
- ESSAY WRITING WORKSHOP
- BUILDING YOUR COLLEGE LIST & SCOR
- HOW TO NAVIGATE THE COMMON APP
- SCHOLARSHIPS

SESSIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH & SPANISH.



THOMAS JEFFERSON ARTS ACADEMY PTO PRESENTS

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS

Book & Lyrics by **Howard Ashman**

Music by **Alan Menken**

Based on the Film by Roger Corman. Screenplay by Charles Griffith


Originally produced by the WPA Theatre. Producing Director

Originally produced at the Orpheum Theatre, New York City by the WPA Theatre, David Geffen, Cameron Mackintosh and the Shubert Organization

OCTOBER 30 & NOVEMBER 1, 2025 AT 7PM
NOVEMBER 2, 2025 AT 2PM

THOMAS JEFFERSON ARTS ACADEMY THEATRE
27 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. PLAZA
ELIZABETH, NJ 07208

TICKETS ON SALE NOW
IN PERSON OR ONLINE



SCAN HERE FOR TICKETS

Presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI (mtishows.com)

A Visit from Taiwan

On September 8, Dr. Orlando Edreira Academy School No. 26 hosted a delegation of 20 educational and government representatives from Taiwan. This visit, arranged after a discussion between a School 26 Mandarin teacher and a local Mandarin teacher association, aimed to strengthen cross-cultural collaboration.

During the visit, the Taiwanese delegates observed classes and engaged in discussions with school staff and students. The exchange highlighted the importance of international partnerships in fostering innovative educational experiences, aligning with the school's focus on global citizenship through its International Baccalaureate Program.



For more photos, please visit www.epsnj.org

New Playground Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

On Wednesday, September 10th, Mabel G. Holmes School No. 5 celebrated the opening of its new playground—a true testament to the power of community. This project, which will bring so much joy, laughter, and connection, was the result of a shared vision.

The school thanked all who helped make this dream a reality, including Board President Stanley Neron, Board Vice President Maria Carvalho, and Board members Isaias Rivera, Ileana Chevres, Diane Barbosa, Charlene Bathelus, Jerry Jacobs, Stephanie Goncalves Pestana, and Rosa Moreno Ortega. The school also expressed its gratitude to Superintendent Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Dr. Jennifer Cedeño, and Plant and Property for their advocacy, planning, and belief in the project. This playground is a symbol of what can be achieved when a community unites for its children, and it is a reminder to let the space be more than just a place to play.



For more photos, please visit www.epsnj.org

WeLoveU Foundation



WE ♥ U Intl. WeLoveU Foundation
NGO Associated With the UN DGC

The International WeLoveU Foundation visited George Washington Academy School No. 1 on September 8 as part of its Packs on Backs and Tools for Schools initiative. The organization presented School No. 1 with the donation of 202 school backpacks to equip students with the tools necessary to be successful in the classroom. City of Elizabeth Mayor J. Christian Bollwage and Elizabeth Board of Education President Stanley J. Neron addressed the audience and presented a board resolution to WeLoveU recognizing their partnership with Elizabeth Public Schools and the kind and generous donations they have made to the school district in the past year.

In addition to representatives of the WeLoveU Foundation, among those in attendance to support the School No. 1 learning community were City of Elizabeth Mayor J. Christian Bollwage, Elizabeth Board of Education President Stanley J. Neron, Elizabeth Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer, EPS Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Dr. Jennifer Cedeño, EPS Director of Student Services Dr. Anthony DiDonato, EPS College and Career Coordinator Aimee Anne Saluccio, EPS Supervisor of Guidance Melanie Padilla, EPS Supervisor of Anti-Bullying/EEOC Peter Vosseler, EPS Teacher-Student Activities Tatiana Gallego, School No. 1 Principal Shawn Black, and School No. 1 Vice Principal Christina Marie Madeira.

For more photos, please visit www.epsnj.org



Celebrate

NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

SEPTEMBER 15 – OCTOBER 15



ELIZABETH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Every Child, Achieving Excellence

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