

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Nelson Mandela

EPS Celebrates Return to In-Person Learning

PK-3 Students Return to Classrooms in District's Phased-In Reopening

Elizabeth Public Schools is opened once again for in-person teaching and learning! The district welcomed back nearly 4,500 students in grades PK -3 on Monday, April 19 as it continues to advance in its reopening for all students.

A strong and resilient Elizabeth community celebrated the milestone occasion as City of Elizabeth Mayor J. Christian Bollwage joined Elizabeth Board of Education members and members of the district's central administration in welcoming back students as they entered their respective schools.

Principals, teachers, and families all rejoiced as students entered schools and went to their classrooms for the first time since March 16, 2020, when public schools throughout New Jersey closed at the onset of the pandemic. Thanks to the district's outstanding support staff, schools were all in pristine condition and ready to welcome back students, teachers, and administrators into their buildings. Their work has been invaluable in creating the safest possible environments for students to return to their classrooms.

The reopening was the first time most students attended school in-person. For the district's youngest students who entered preschool in September, the return to in-person instruction served as a welcome to school.



Preparations Underway Throughout all Schools

Elizabeth Board of Education President Jerry Jacobs and his fellow Board Members are touring schools throughout the district as Elizabeth Public Schools continues its preparations for the reopening of buildings to team members and students for in-person teaching and learning. Among the recent measures that have been taken by the district is the installation of air purifiers in each district classroom and office. Classroom desks have also been arranged to provide a safe distance between students as well as between teachers to students. Custodians have continued to conduct daily cleaning protocols, including cleaning various touchpoints and surfaces, sanitizing school environments with electrostatic sprayers, wet mopping floors, and maintaining hand sanitizing stations. Teachers are preparing to provide both in-person and remote instruction while creating an inviting learning environment for students. After more than a year, Elizabeth Public Schools is excited to open its doors again to welcome back students and team members for in-person instruction.



For more photos, please visit www.epsnj.org





EPS Celebrates Autism Awareness Month

In recognition of Autism Awareness Month, Elizabeth Board of Education President Jerry Jacobs, Board members Diane Barbosa and Iliana Chevres, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Dr. Jennifer Cedeño, and Director of Special Services Diana Pinto-Gomez visited several schools that house the district's autism program. Among the schools visited were Toussaint L'Ouverture – Marquis de Lafayette School No. 6, Elmora School No. 12, Victor Mravlag School No. 21, and Chessie Dentley Roberts Academy School No. 30. Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication. According to the Centers for Disease Control, autism affects an estimated 1 in 54 children in the United States today, including 1 in 32 children in New Jersey.



For more photos and information, please visit [EPS Celebrates Autism Awareness Month \(epsnj.org\)](https://epsnj.org)





Planting Trees

Using seed germination kits, students from **Toussaint L'Ouverture-Marquis De Lafayette School No. 6** planted trees in honor of Autism Awareness. Just like trees, everyone needs love and patience to grow strong.



Making Bubbles

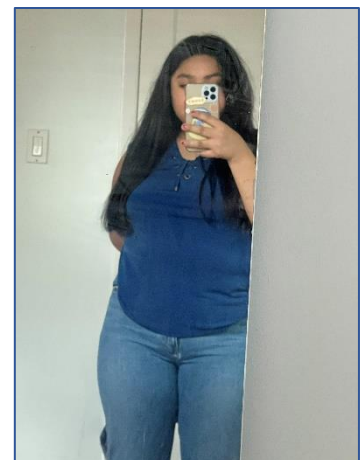
In honor of Autism Awareness Month, students and team member at **Abraham Lincoln School No 14** wore blue as part of the "Light It Up Blue" Initiative to raise awareness about Autism. Additionally, students in Mrs. Navas and Ms. Almonte's classes participated in a special STEM activity where they made their own bubble solution in honor of Autism Awareness Month. The students used water, dish soap, and sugar to make their own bubble solution and aluminum foil to make a bubble wand. The students were also joined by their Speech Therapist Ms. O'Leary as they learned how to better understand autism spectrum disorder and appreciate and accept those who are "on the spectrum." Finally, the students blew bubbles together in support of their friends with autism spectrum disorder and to celebrate their unique talents and gifts.



Autism Awareness

To celebrate Autism Awareness, students at **Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr. Health & Public Safety Academy** participated in discussions in their English classes after watching educational videos that explained what Autism is and what it is like to live with Autism. What better way to celebrate Autism Awareness, than to raise awareness about people with autism spectrum disorders?

In addition, Halsey students wore blue on Friday, April 16th to show support. The hope was to increase understanding and acceptance of people with autism, and to inspire a kinder, more inclusive community.

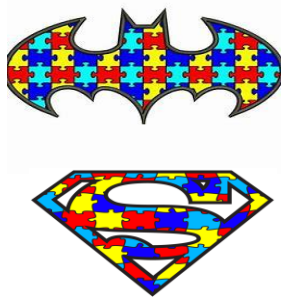


Lighting it up Blue

Elmora School No. 12 celebrated Autism Awareness Month on April 1st, 2021. Students, staff, and administrators participated in "Lighting it up Blue" by wearing blue, changing their virtual backgrounds to blue and drawing a picture of kindness to bring Autism Awareness. The students participated in arts and crafts projects to share the love that this month brings. Acceptance, understanding, and awareness is the focus of daily classroom discussions as all continue to show compassion for Special Needs students.



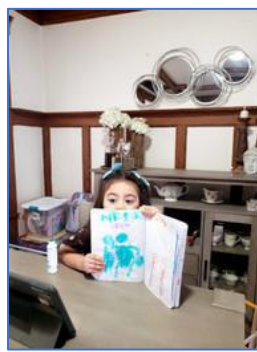
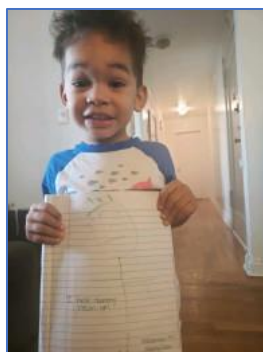
Embracing Differences



Madison-Monroe School No. 16 celebrated Autism Awareness Month by embracing differences and how if someone looks, acts, or sounds different than you, it's a good thing. Differences are what makes everyone special. Students learned about autism and how a friend or classmate with autism may not look at people or answer them right away but that does not mean he or she isn't listening. Students also took turns embracing and discussing their individual differences and how it makes them special.

Virtual "Light it Up Blue" for Autism Awareness 2021

To celebrate World Autism Awareness, children from **Donald Stewart Center for ECC School No. 51** participated in a virtual '**Light It Up Blue**' celebration on April 1, 2021. The students read stories about being kind and accepting of others, engaged in discussions about treating others kindly and participated in a virtual sing a long celebration. Students and staff members also dressed in blue in honor of World Autism Awareness.



Welcome Back Students

Nicholas M. Butler School No. 23

Kindergarten through 3rd grade students were welcomed on April 19th. They were so happy to be back and it was so exciting for teachers, faculty, staff, and their parents to “see” their big smiles! School No. 23 is looking forward to 4th and 5th grade students return to the building as well!



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

City of Elizabeth Mayor J. Christian Bollwage visited the children and staff of School No. 52. During his visit, he was able to visit as classes were enjoying their outdoor snack time in the garden and play area. He welcomed back the children and staff to in-person teaching and learning and also greeted the children learning virtually from home via the iPad.

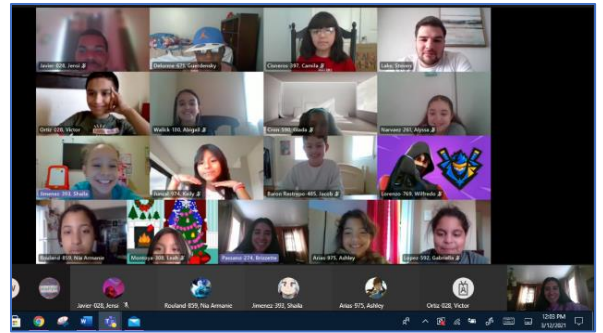


Stay Connected with your Elizabeth Public Schools!



High School Heroes Collaborate and Teach Vivacious Virtual School No. 27 Students Lessons on Financial Literacy

During the month of March, High School Heroes from **Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy's** Introduction to Education class and New Jersey Future Educator Club have been teaching vivacious virtual learners from third to eighth grade classrooms at **Dr. Antonia Pantoja School No. 27**.



High school juniors have partnered with Junior Achievement to design, plan, and prepare financial literacy lessons for the elementary school students. Overall, it has been a great success for both the classroom teachers, elementary school students and High School Heroes from Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy.

Brizzette Passano, a high school junior at Hamilton Preparatory Academy exclaimed, “I learned so much on becoming a future teacher. I enjoy and love my third-grade class right now.” For the past month Brizzette and Jensi Javier, also a junior from Hamilton, have been teaching lessons to Ms. Olmo’s students.

Emely Abad, a junior at Hamilton Preparatory Academy, describes her experience in Ms. Haase’s 4th grade virtual classroom. “Ms. Haase’s 4th grade class was a dream to work with. They were respectful and very responsive to the lesson. Mrs. Haase made it very easy to get the necessary tools to the kids. Everything was effortless and efficient. Amazing teacher and class!”

All in all, Hamilton Preparatory Academy’s partnership with Dr. Antonia Pantoja School No. 27 has remained strong despite the obstacles of remote learning. School No. 27 students learned new lessons in financial literacy and Hamilton students learned how teaching can touch their lives, students’ lives, and lead to a rewarding career.

Week of the Young

Dr. Orlando Edreira Academy School No. 26

Pre-school students celebrated The Week of the Young Child (WOYC). The WOYC is an annual celebration hosted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), celebrating early learning, young children, their teachers, and families.

Among the activities prepared by the teachers, parents were motivated to cook with their youngsters. Pictured Camila Meneses from Pre-K 127 making cupcakes at home with her mother Alejandra Molano.





Benjamin Franklin School No. 13

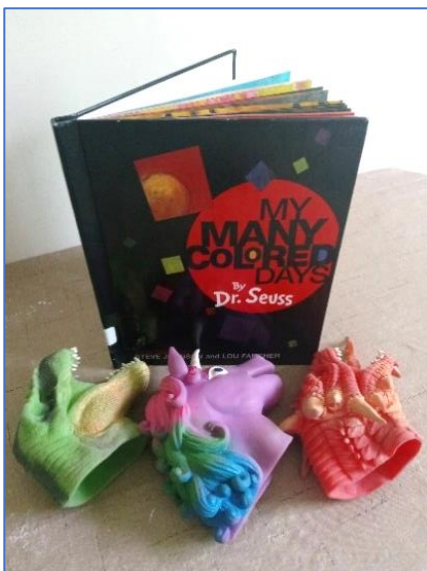
In honor of National Library Week, Mr. Kmec, Library Teacher read a wonderful story to students in kindergarten and first grade called, *Be A Tree* written by Maria Gianferrari.

Mr. Kmec was able to share and incorporate Earth Day by reading a book about trees. The students learned various similarities of humans and trees. They also found out some interesting things we can learn from trees. Through this amazing story students were able to learn how trees are social, just as they are social.



Woodrow Wilson School No. 19

In celebration of School Library Month, students took time to study various topics. Examples of topics examined were diversity in support of an inclusion curriculum as well as examining various feelings and emotions in support of Social Emotional Learning program. At School No. 19, students are often introduced to print rich culturally sensitive materials and are invited to engage in robust discussion. In an effort to further promote a love for reading and learning, librarian Ms. Scarpa cheerfully greets students on a daily basis as well as utilizes her famous library reading buddy puppets.



Celebrating National Poetry Month

Elmora School No. 12



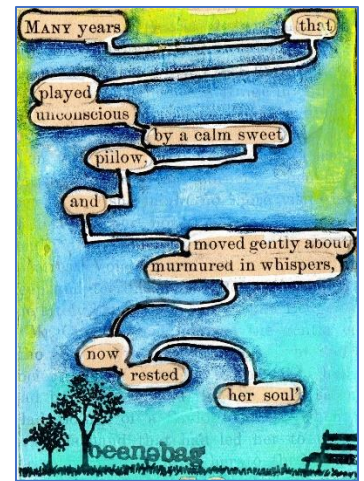
Eighth grade students at Elmora School No. 12 wrote a mini saga, a story told in 100 words on the theme of “A Wander in the Woods.” 8th Grade Teacher Mrs. Lopes met with students daily during virtual support to provide students with guidance and writing suggestions. We are proud to share that we have four young writers that were selected and will have their work published in The Young Writers of New Jersey Book. The publication of the book will begin on April 30, 2021, and we cannot wait to get a copy! Congratulations to the young writers at Elmora School No. 12!

Abraham Lincoln School No. 14

Students and team members took advantage of this very special time to celebrate the importance of poetry and all that it brings to everyone’s lives. National Poetry Month was celebrated in a variety of ways such as reading favorite poems together and independently, participating in the Arbor Day Poetry Contest, and sharing quotes from poets during the morning message. Students also practiced their rhyming skills; discussed the importance of poetry and explored poetry styles; making comparison between poems.

Christopher Columbus School No. 15

This April for Poetry Month middle school students are working on Found Poetry. Found poetry is taking meaningful and powerful statements and phrases from other sources such as videos or another poem to create your own poem to give it an all-new meaning. Students watch a video and then read another poem of their choice. They then choose phrases and statements that are important to them to create their poem and present it to their classmates.



William F. Halloran School No. 22

Five Senses Poem	
Name	Pamela
Topic	Spring
Spring is nature.	
Spring tastes like fresh fruits.	
Spring sounds like a breezy day.	
Spring smells like flowers.	
Spring looks like rain.	
Spring makes me feel active and happy.	

The elementary students engaged in poetry activities on Ed puzzle and wrote Earth Day poems. They also explored various types of poetry such as acrostic poems, sensory poems and bio poems. Eighth grade students analyzed the poetry of Amanda Gorman, a 23-year-old Harvard graduate, Youth Poet Laureate and the youngest inaugural poet. Students analyzed the writer's use of metaphors and imagery while critiquing her poems, including the poem that she recited at the Biden Inauguration.

Dr. Orlando Edreira Academy School No. 26

Eighth grade students from Mr. DeMarco's and Mrs. Pires' class read the novel, *The Outsiders*. Students were inspired by the novel and discussed the meaning of friendship, family, loyalty, and empathy. Afterwards, students wrote poems.

"The Five Faithful Fighters" by Chase Gonzalez

Beings, treated like garbage by their peers
They found each other in the open world, for they are alike
The world, is big but they see themselves as bigger
The end of the land they see is nigh a change is coming,
A pack of wolves who stick together
Not only united but also a family.

"True Friends" by Kimberly Martinez

True friends are always by your side.
Those friendships will bloom like a flower.
They will eventually turn into a family.
And that family will have your back no matter what.
Your true self will come out when you are with them.
That friendship will be your light in the darkness.

"Sadness Is Not Forever" by Giancarlos Orantes

Sadness is a void of darkness creating different emotions.
Do not let it consume you into it. Stop it.
Using a very strong weapon called Positivity.
This weapon is its only weakness, and it will scare the darkness away.
Sadness does not mean that you've lost everything in life.
Something leaves at one point in our lives.
When someone leaves this cruel world, they go to a better place.
They are happy there, in the eternal life.
Sadness is normal. You will get through it with prayer and positivity.

Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr. Health & Public Safety Academy and John E. Dwyer Technology Academy

Students participated in a poetry contest called *Poetry and All That*. Jeremiah LaPorte came in first place for his poem below titled, "The Black Box". LaPorte stated, "It was very fun and enjoyable."

THE BLACK BOX

Is it a Moment, An Object, A Prefix of fear?
From once placed inside all is undone
No light, no sight of the sun
For what once hid in the shadows, Comes through here.
A veil of pure darkness, A lift of thee unseen.
But now seen, A barrier broken
Now open, for what purpose
What purpose does this box of pure untapped darkness have?
That's just it, there is no purpose.
For such darkness as this, not withered.
Pure evil, cursed willed
Has not a visual, no light nothing but
Its wicked power, a blight
For it has been forged in the soul of the soulless
But how, will we ever know.
Will it grow, will it die?
Shall we live, shall we strive?
Will thee unknown become known.
We shall never know.
Or Shall we
The black box.



TJAA's Twelfth Night and Merchant of Venice Dominates MSU Theater Night Awards Nominations

Receives 11 Foxy Award nominations, including Outstanding Production, Actor and Actress



Two Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy virtual winter plays have received critical acclaim, receiving a combined 11 Foxy Awards nominations from Montclair State University for the annual MSU Theater Night Awards.

The Theater Night Awards promote the commitment to high-quality straight play production in New Jersey's secondary schools. The awards given at the ceremony, known as Foxy Awards, are named in honor of former Mahwah High School theatre teacher JoAnne Fox, co-founder of Theatre Night Awards, who passed away suddenly in 2009 following a rehearsal at her school shortly after the inaugural Theatre Night Awards. Fox, along with MSU Theatre and Dance Department professor Susan Kerner, created the event to celebrate and advance the popularity of the high school play as well as those who performed exceptionally in them.

The event honors the individual achievements of students and educators in the areas of performance, direction, design, and technical theatre as well as outstanding productions in the drama, comedy, classical and new work genres.

The Jefferson Arts Academy productions of William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night and Merchant of Venice received six nominations for production and five individual performance nominations.

The production nominations are Outstanding Achievement in Virtual Background Design, Outstanding Achievement in Editing, Outstanding Achievement in New Media / Special Effects, Outstanding Achievement in Live or Original Music, Outstanding Production of a Virtual Play with Cinematic Editing, and Outstanding Achievement by an Acting Ensemble of a Virtual Play with Cinematic Editing.

Individual nominations are Jefferson Arts Academy students Lucas Luchsinger (Malvolio- Twelfth Night; Bassanio- Merchant of Venice), who received two nominations, and Josiah Perez (Antonio- Merchant of Venice) for Outstanding Performance by an Actor in a Virtual Play with Cinematic Editing and Jefferson Arts Academy students Diana Benenaula (The Clown- Twelfth Night) and Zoe Rivera (Portia- Merchant of Venice) for Outstanding Performance by an Actress in a Virtual Play with Cinematic Editing.

The winners of each category will be announced by MSU during a virtual awards ceremony in May. The success of the productions is particularly impressive considering through auditions, rehearsal, production, and post-production, the casts and crews had never assembled in the same room, producing the performances entirely virtual.

EPS Receives Best Community for Music Education Recognition

District recognized by NAMM Foundation for fourth time in six years



Elizabeth Public Schools has once again been honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from the NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education. Elizabeth joins 686 districts in 40 states, which represents just 4 percent of the nation's school districts, in receiving the prestigious award in 2021.

The Best Communities Music Education designation is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students. Districts that have been recognized by the NAMM Foundation are often held up as models for other educators looking to boost their own music education programs.

Elizabeth Public Schools answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program, and community music-making programs to qualify for the Best Communities designation. Responses were verified with school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

This award recognizes that Elizabeth Public Schools is leading the way with learning opportunities as outlined in federal education legislation, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which designates music and the arts as important elements of well-rounded education for all children. During the pandemic, many school districts have found that music and arts education has provided a valuable way to keep students engaged in school.

Research into music education continues to demonstrate educational/cognitive and social skill benefits for children who make music: After two years of music education, researchers found that participants showed more substantial improvements in how the brain processes speech and reading scores than their less-involved peers and that students who are involved in music are not only more likely to graduate high school, but also to attend college as well. Everyday listening skills are stronger in musically trained children than in those without music training. Significantly, listening skills are closely tied to the ability to: perceive speech in a noisy background, pay attention, and keep sounds in memory.

The value Elizabeth Public Schools places on music education and being a music community is reflected in being recognized by the NAMM Foundation.



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

Science classes watched educational videos and held discussion on demonstration that took place during the first Earth Day observed in 1970. Students discussed how humans have made many advances but in doing so, have done a lot of harm to mother nature. Students also learned different ways how people can treat the world better. Topics discussed included the importance of recycling, animal extinction, climate change and pollution.

Elmora School No. 12

Kindergarten students celebrate Earth Day by reading stories about the Earth, how to keep it clean, and what we can do to keep Earth safe. Student then drew pictures of the Earth and discussed why they loved their planet so much. Students and teacher Mrs. Calixto joined in songs about the Earth and unity.



Abraham Lincoln School No. 14

Ms. De La Rosa's 8th grade class is creating a class newsletter on the topic of honeybees and their importance to everyday life. Articles will discuss the environmental challenges and what actions people can take to support honeybees. The class intends to write to legislatures urging them to restrict the use of certain pesticides and to plant certain plants that support honeybees. Mr. Oliwa's Art classes celebrated by participating in a Poster contest sponsored by the Port Authority NY/NJ. Classes explored solutions to global warming and recognized practical things they could do save the environment.



Christopher Columbus School No. 15



Mrs. Raghavendra's science classes are embarking on celebrating Earth Day by learning through sustainable activities. These activities include a Flipgrid video, developing and completing sustainable activities created by students for students, and a fun-filled lesson on making a solar oven at home. Sustainability at School No. 15 is truly a hands-on and engaging journey for students!

Madison-Monroe School No. 16

In recognition of Earth Day, students learned about different small ways each of us can take to protect the big blue marble we call planet earth. Students were asked to take the earth day pledge to do their part in helping save the earth. I will reduce, reuse, and recycle to make everyday earth day. Students also learned about using everyday household items that would normally have been thrown out in the garbage by creating or using them to serve a different purpose, thereby reducing the amount of trash they would have normally thrown out.



Woodrow Wilson School No. 19



Students in Ms. Ortiz's class had the opportunity to participate in a fun Earth Day activity, by learning how to use simple shapes to create an artwork with a positive message. Students were given step by step directions while listening to the popular art teacher and Instagram personality, Cassie Stephens. These young K-3 artists created a world with cartoon style face on it and added a portrait of themselves holding this world in their hands. Each student wrote personal messages of love for the earth on their artworks. Featured artists are Marco Guevara, Valentina Valdes Martinez, Lianna Rivera, and Isabella Smith.

Dr. Orlando Edreira Academy School No. 26

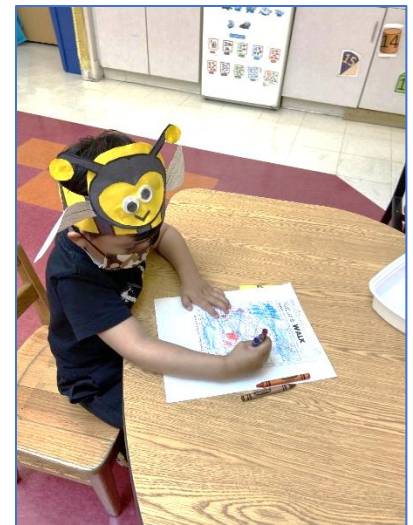
In honor of Earth Day, homeroom 4-231 has been discussing the 3 R's: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. Ms. Flynn and her students shared examples of how they utilize these principles in their homes. One student created a place to hang her masks up out of an egg container. Another student shared a closet she made to store doll clothes out of a shoe box. Their amazing ideas inspired the whole class to think more about creative ways to upcycle before throwing things in the trash.



Frances C. Smith ECC School No. 50

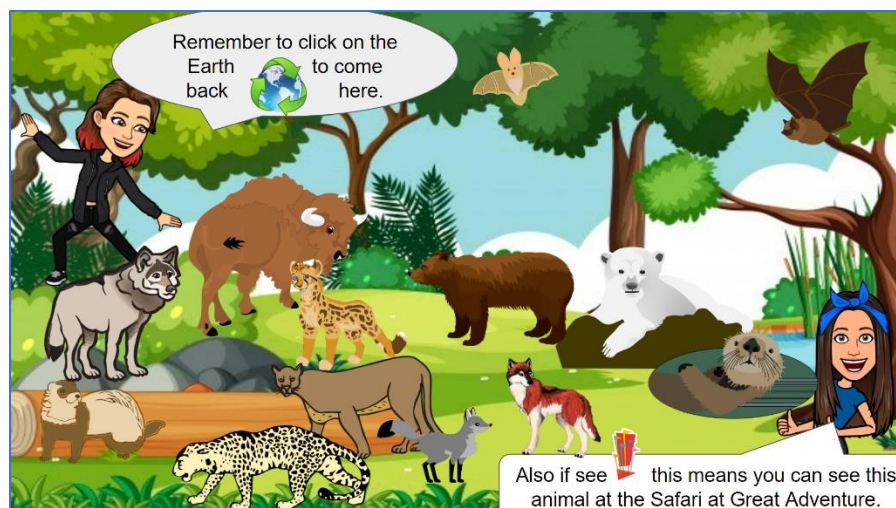


For Earth Week, students dressed up as a different plant or animal each day: Monday-a tree, Tuesday- an insect, Wednesday- a flower, Thursday- a fish or sea creature (think baby shark!), Friday- a bird. In addition, plant journals were used to observe, sketch and report on the school outdoor environment; a nature scavenger hunt was held, and the sheets used were colored in afterwards in classrooms; students painted with mud; students made instruments with items from nature: stones, dried rice, beans, corn, and lentils; and an abbreviated, distanced Earth Day Fair in classrooms culminated the week's activities. Many books were read about conservation, biodiversity, and about the wonders of the natural world. Students look forward to planting in the school garden in a socially distanced way.



Woodrow Wilson School No. 19

The students of Ms. Edmonds's science classes created a virtual zoo for their fellow students for Earth Day. The idea was to recreate a field trip that would allow the classmates to explore and discover new and unusual mammals that we may see in the wild. They research mammals of the Americas that are currently threatened or in danger of going extinct. Then the students planed an inactive format that would make it easy for the youngest classmates to use and highlight animals that students could see at Great Adventure.



ELIZABETH ATHLETICS



Congratulations to EHS Sophomore Wrestler, Jasiah Queen for advancing through the challenging North 2 Region in the 138 lbs. weight class and earning 2nd Place.

Congratulations to the Elizabeth High School Varsity Cheerleaders! They competed virtual in ImpAct Cheer & Dance Competition Broadcast and earned 1st Place in the High School Game Day Division!
#GoEHS



Congratulations to Elizabeth High School's Sophomore Wrestler Isabella Santos. Competing in the 100lb weight class, she made history by becoming the first State Champion in Elizabeth High School, as well as receiving her recognition as the best in the state.





Congratulations to Jaelynn Johnson and Sara Fleming for finishing 1st and 2nd respectively in the Union County Bowling Tournament.



Congratulations to the EHS Boys Basketball Team for finishing the season. Further commendations go out to the four All-Union County Conference selections.

Al-Fatir Conner (First Team)
 Evan Perez (Second Team)
 Zyree Beverly and Etienne Richelieu (Honorable Mention)



Kindergarten Buddies

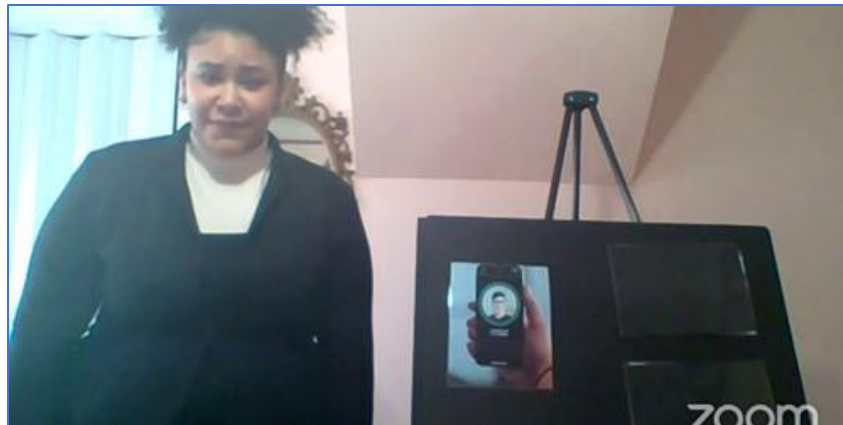


What would Fridays be without time for Kindergarten Buddies? For more than twenty years, the students in Mrs. Phyllis Taub's fifth grade class at **Madison-Monroe School No. 16** have enjoyed the Kindergarten Buddies program with students in Mrs. Diane Kennedy's kindergarten class at **Victor Mravlag School No 21**. The two teachers created the program to help students both correspond with each other and enjoy trips to visit each other's classrooms. Virtual learning did not end the program but served to enhance it.

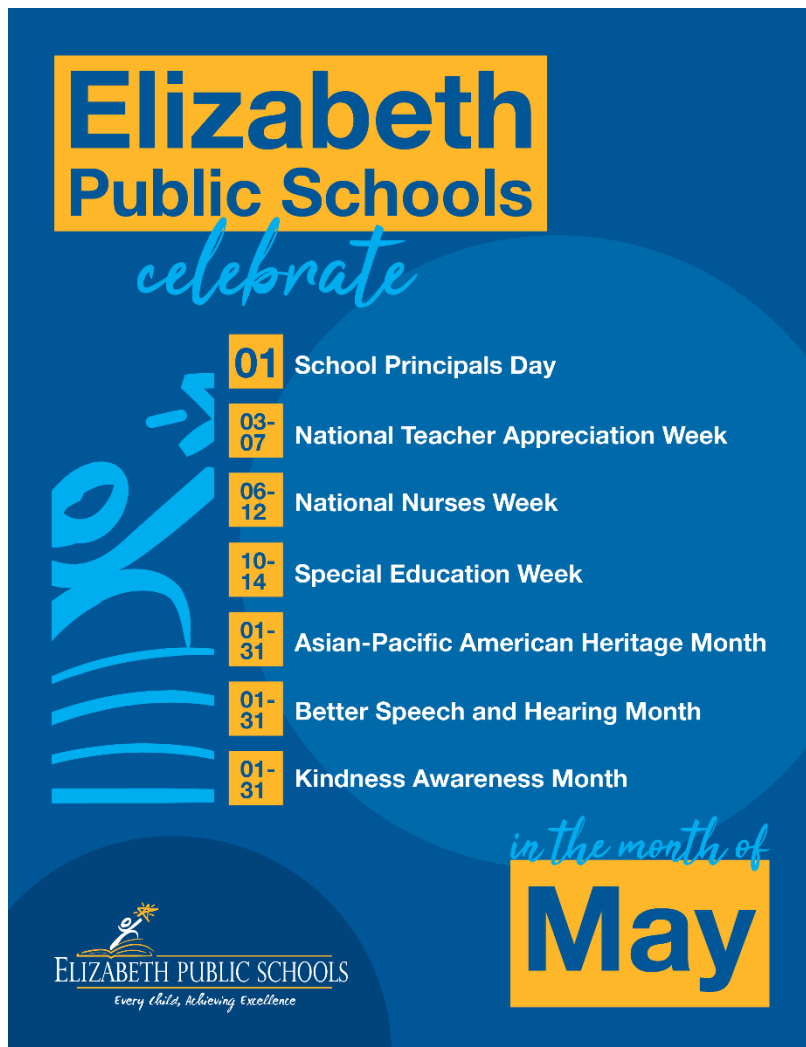
The students now spend time together on Friday mornings via a giant joint Teams meeting. The fifth graders gain an opportunity to take pride in their learning as they share and explain directed drawings they have created or recite newly-learned information—such as a list of the presidents or the Gettysburg Address. Their younger counterparts are able to showcase their academic activities and share songs they have learned. All students gain the opportunity to practice being good digital citizens as they practice being respectful participants online.

47th International Harvard Speech and Debate Tournament

Layla Sayeed from **Elizabeth High School – Frank J. Cicarell Academy** competed at the 47th International Harvard Speech and Debate Tournament for two grueling days against 300 competitors and made it to the finals. She placed 6th place in Information Speaking. EHS – FJC are o proud of her accomplishment. If you would like to see her speech, please visit [Layla Sayed Harvard Finals Informative Speaking - YouTube](#)




Stay tuned for next month's Excellence News!



Elizabeth Public Schools
celebrate

- 01** School Principals Day
- 03-07** National Teacher Appreciation Week
- 06-12** National Nurses Week
- 10-14** Special Education Week
- 01-31** Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month
- 01-31** Better Speech and Hearing Month
- 01-31** Kindness Awareness Month

in the month of
May


ELIZABETH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Every child, Achieving Excellence



You are empowered to achieve excellence!

Send us excellent news on the great things happening in your school to Delilah Sousa email: **enews@epsnj.org**

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