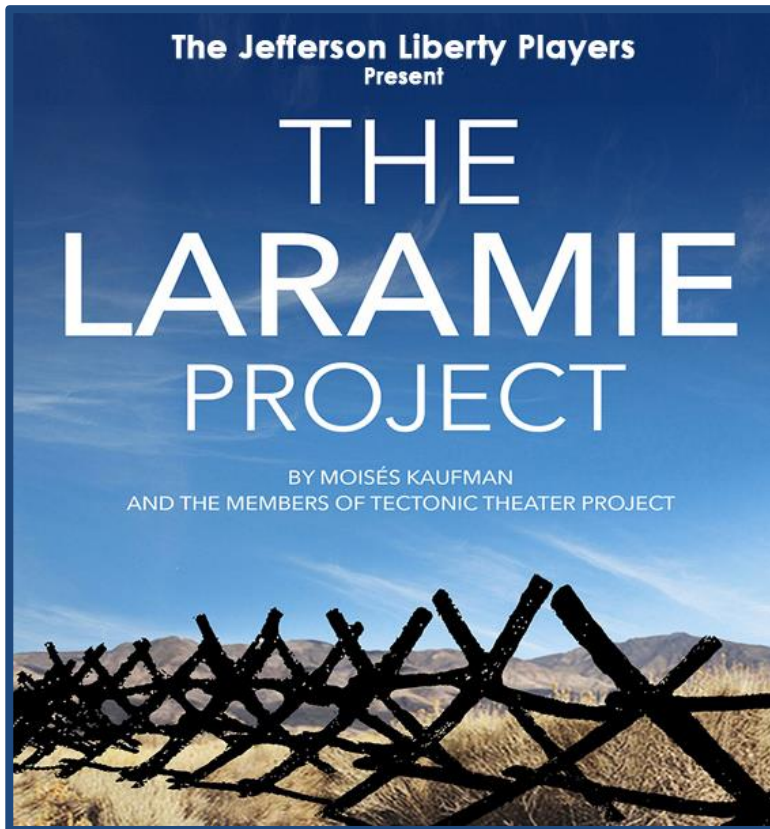


From Laramie, Wyoming to Elizabeth, New Jersey *A Lesson in Bigotry and a Pledge to Stand Up for the Other*



The Jefferson Liberty Players of Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy, through classroom instruction and theater performance, spent several weeks submerged in a deep learning experience inspired by a tragic event that opened the eyes, minds, and hearts of all who were involved.

Laramie, Wyoming and Elizabeth, New Jersey, are about as opposite as two cities can be, not only because of their geographic locations within the United States. According to U.S. Census July 1, 2017 data estimates, Laramie is home to 32,306 people that are 81.4% White, non-Hispanic, 10.3% Hispanic or Latino, 3.2% Asian, and 1.7% Black while Elizabeth has 124,969 residents that are 14.1% White, non-Hispanic, 63.1% Hispanic or Latino, 1.7% Asian, and 19.7% Black. However, a series of events that took place in Laramie starting October 6, 1998 offer lessons that will forever transcend time and connect people at the most basic level of humanity.

From Laramie, Wyoming to Elizabeth, New Jersey (cont.)

The Tragedy

Nearly two decades before the 2016 Orlando Pulse nightclub mass shooting, the largest in U.S. history at the time and still the largest and deadliest attack involving predominantly LGBT people, were tragic events that took place in Laramie, Wyoming that captured the nation's attention and shined a light on the subject of hate crimes. Akyra Monet Murray, the youngest victim of the Orlando attack, was just months old when 21-year-old Matthew Shepard was brutally beaten and left to die on the plains outside Laramie, Wyoming because he was gay. Shepard's death six days later drew widespread outrage and national media coverage questioning the role Shepard's sexual orientation played as a motive for the attack as well as calls for federal hate-crime laws that were debated and resisted by some western states at the time, including Wyoming whose legislators had voted down hate-crime legislation in the three years prior because they saw no hate in Wyoming. During the investigation, the Laramie police believed robbery was the primary motive for the attack, but also stated Shepard's sexual orientation was a factor.

CASPER
Star Tribune
 WYOMING'S STATEWIDE NEWSPAPER
 FOUNDED IN 1891

Inside:
 3 AMERICANS WIN NOBEL IN MEDICINE **A3**
 SMOKING ORDINANCE SUGGESTED **B4**

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1998

Laramie beating victim succumbs

By KERRY DRAKE
Star-Tribune staff writer

LARAMIE — A gay University of Wyoming student's fight for life ended shortly before 1 a.m. Monday at a Fort Collins, Colo., hospital, where he had been on life support since he was brutally beaten and tortured five days earlier in Laramie.

The death of 21-year-old Matt Shepard at 12:53 a.m. Sunday at Poudre Valley Hospital has sparked calls from many individuals and human rights organizations for Wyoming to pass a hate-crime law.

He was to be cremated, and his memorial service will be held at 1:30 p.m. Friday at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Casper.

Shepard, his skull severely fractured, had been in a coma since two bicyclists found him tied to a buck-and-rail fence a mile northeast of Laramie last Wednesday evening. He was pistol-whipped 18 hours earlier and left for dead.

Poudre Valley Hospital spokesman Rulon Stacey said Shepard's family was grateful they did not have to make a decision regarding whether to continue life support for their son.

Albany County Coroner Julie Heggie said Monday that Shepard sustained lacerations to his face from the blows with the pistol but, contrary to earlier reports, he had not been burned.



A basket of flowers hangs from the fence where Matthew Shepard was found tied and beaten last week. Shepard died Monday morning at Poudre Valley Hospital in Fort Collins, Colo.

Wyoming
 Saturday, October 10, 1998
 OCTOBER 10, 1998

Laramie tragedy in media glare
 Lights back on in Lusk

By KERRY DRAKE
Star-Tribune staff writer

LARAMIE — The tragedy that has gripped the nation since the death of a gay University of Wyoming student was the subject of a front-page story in the Saturday edition of the New York Times. The article, which was the lead story on the front page, was a 1,000-word piece by Michael Sauter. It was the first time the tragedy had been covered in such detail by a major national newspaper. The article was a significant step in the national conversation about hate crimes and the role of the media in covering such events. It was a powerful statement that the tragedy in Laramie was not just a local story, but a national one. The article was a call to action for the nation to confront the issue of hate crimes and to ensure that such tragedies do not happen again. It was a powerful statement that the media has a responsibility to cover such stories and to ensure that the public is informed about what is happening in the world. The article was a powerful statement that the media has a responsibility to cover such stories and to ensure that the public is informed about what is happening in the world. The article was a powerful statement that the media has a responsibility to cover such stories and to ensure that the public is informed about what is happening in the world.

CASPER
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 WYOMING'S STATEWIDE NEWSPAPER
 FOUNDED IN 1891

Inside:
 NUCLEAR PRIZE IN ECONOMICS AWARDED
 STATES' PLAZA AT PAUL SMITH FOR HIGHWAY PATROLMAN
 LAMP EMPLOYMENT DOWN ACROSS WYOMING

Thursday, October 15, 1998

Mourners push for hate-crime law
Vinich slams governor on oil royalty claims

By JAMES WAGNER
Star-Tribune staff writer

LARAMIE — The tragedy that has gripped the nation since the death of a gay University of Wyoming student was the subject of a front-page story in the Saturday edition of the New York Times. The article, which was the lead story on the front page, was a 1,000-word piece by Michael Sauter. It was the first time the tragedy had been covered in such detail by a major national newspaper. The article was a significant step in the national conversation about hate crimes and the role of the media in covering such events. It was a powerful statement that the tragedy in Laramie was not just a local story, but a national one. The article was a call to action for the nation to confront the issue of hate crimes and to ensure that such tragedies do not happen again. It was a powerful statement that the media has a responsibility to cover such stories and to ensure that the public is informed about what is happening in the world. The article was a powerful statement that the media has a responsibility to cover such stories and to ensure that the public is informed about what is happening in the world. The article was a powerful statement that the media has a responsibility to cover such stories and to ensure that the public is informed about what is happening in the world.

Over the next year, playwright, director, and Tectonic Theater Project founder Moisés Kaufman and a team of writers and actors from Tectonic took six trips to Laramie, where they interviewed citizens of the town — some not connected to the tragedy, and some intimately involved. Using content from those interviews, Tectonic company members' own journal entries, and published news reports, Tectonic created The Laramie Project, a stunning theatrical examination of the immediate reactions from Matt Shepard's community to his murder and to the underlying bigotry and hatred that enabled it.

From Laramie, Wyoming to Elizabeth, New Jersey (cont.)

The Production

Twenty years after the horrific tragedy in Laramie, Jefferson's theater arts company thought the issues explored in the play were still relevant to current events in the United States and throughout the world. Through the performance of this piece, The Liberty Players at Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy hoped to communicate the personal responsibility we all carry in the eradication of bigotry of any kind.

"One of the great qualities about Jeff's culture is that students here exercise acceptance of each other's differences. This is an attribute that the cast hopes to see reflected in the larger world once they become independent adults," said Jefferson Arts Academy drama teacher and play director Erika Hicks.



Among the many valuable learning experiences for students during the production was a Q-and-A session with Barbara Pitts McAdams, a company member of the Tectonic Theatre Project and an original cast member/co-creator of The Laramie Project. She attended the school-time performance of The Laramie Project by the Jefferson Liberty Players on Wednesday, October 24. Jefferson students in attendance had the opportunity to interview McAdams, Hicks, and the Jefferson Liberty Players. While they were free to ask about any aspect of production, many students were deeply emotional and affected by the story of Matthew Shepard. The discussion centered on the historical, political, and social aspects of the story.

"This play stimulated so many discussions with the young audiences that came to our matinees. That's exactly what we were hoping to experience in our Q & A. We made sure to encourage everyone to keep having conversations even after the close of the show. In addition to this being a very significant year to produce this show in recognition of it being 20 years since this tragedy, the messages in this story still have relevance in our society today," said Hicks.

From Laramie, Wyoming to Elizabeth, New Jersey (cont.)

The play also inspired the audience to question their own roles in society as silent bystanders.



"The Laramie Project provides a variety of perspectives regarding the murder of Matthew Shepard. We hear characters expressing feelings and ideas that spread an attitude of intolerance. We also hear from community members who regret not having taken action when they could have," said Sandra Toll, Jefferson Arts Academy theater arts teacher and producer of Jefferson's The Laramie Project.

"These silent bystanders question how the murder may have been prevented if they had spoken up against statements, attitudes, or behaviors that perpetuate a culture endorsing bigotry. The play highlights the way small and seemingly insignificant interactions can lead to violent acts of hatred. This inspires audience members to reframe their view of daily interactions."

The Pledge

In March 2015, Dr. Mohammad Ali Chaudry during the quarterly meeting of an Interfaith Advisory Council of the NJ Department of Homeland Security and Preparedness (OHSP) held at Drew University, introduced the Stand Up Pledge to confront bigotry and hate toward other groups that came from their own inner circles. Dr. Chaudry was elected as a member of the Township Committee of Bernards Township, Basking Ridge, New Jersey in November 2001, less than two months after the 9/11 attacks, before ultimately serving as Deputy Mayor in 2003 and as Mayor in 2004, which made him the first Pakistani-American town mayor in U.S. history.

His legacy as the creator of the pledge grew on December 19, 2016 when all New Jersey state senators, led by retired Senator Raymond J. Lesniak and Assistant Majority Leader Senator Linda R. Greenstein, took the Pledge with him on the floor of the New Jersey Assembly at the State House in Trenton.

The pledge states, "While interacting with members of my own faith, or ethnic, or gender community, or with others, if I hear hateful comments from anyone about members of any other community, I pledge to stand up for the other and speak up to challenge bigotry in any form."



From Laramie, Wyoming to Elizabeth, New Jersey (cont.)

Senator Lesniak felt the pledge to stand up for the other was important to spread as far as he could and wanted to bring it to his hometown of Elizabeth, New Jersey. He approached Elizabeth Public Schools to see if there was a possible opportunity to bring the pledge to the learning community. It just so happened that the Jefferson Liberty Players decided to take on The Laramie Project.

At a meeting between Lesniak, Toll and Hicks from Jefferson's The Laramie Project production, Elizabeth Public Schools Superintendent Olga Hugelmeyer, and Jefferson Arts Academy Principal Michael Ojeda, they all agreed that the performance of The Laramie Project would be an excellent forum to deliver the pledge to the community.



While interacting with members of my own faith, or ethnic, or gender community, or with others, if I hear hateful comments from anyone about members of any other community, I pledge to stand up for the other and speak up to challenge bigotry in any form.

Stand Up for the Other Pledge -
<http://www.standupfortheother.org>



On October 25, the opening night of The Laramie Project, Senator Lesniak and Dr. Chaudry led the cast and audience through the pledge. Community leaders, including Union County Superintendent Daryl Palmieri, Elizabeth Mayor J. Christian Bollwage, and Danni Newbury, Coordinator of the Union County Office of LGBTQ services, and Hugelmeyer attended the performance and joined the cast in taking the pledge. The LGBTQ office represented by Newbury was the first of its kind in the State of New Jersey.

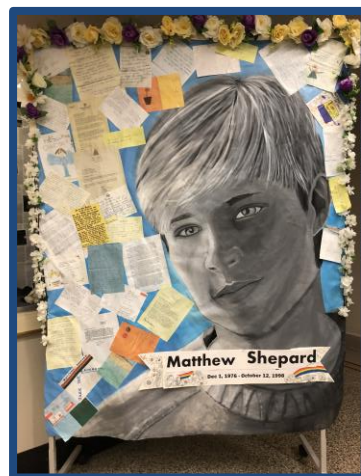
"It was a very moving experience to see our students take center stage among local, regional, and state leaders as well as members of the Elizabeth community to help lead a pledge to stand up for those who experience hate," said Hugelmeyer. "In a society where it seems opinions and feelings are becoming increasingly polarizing and divisive, it is heartening to see our students take the initiative to help connect people and bring them closer together."

From Laramie, Wyoming to Elizabeth, New Jersey (cont.)

The Interment

On October 26, during the four-day run of the Laramie Project at the Jefferson Theater and a couple weeks after the 20th anniversary of his death, Shepard's ashes were laid to rest at the Washington National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. following a ceremony of prayer, speeches, and hymns.

In preparation for and during the run of performances, Jefferson Liberty Players were engaged in classroom discussions about the events of Shepard's death and were asked to read the New York Times article about his ashes being interred and the ceremony held to remember his life. Students wrote reflection pieces and shared their ideas through those discussion. The writing assignment and dialogue provided a meaningful way to bridge learning about the play to real world current events while offering the opportunity for students to share their feelings about sensitive and emotional topics. Students also gained a sense of awareness of how understanding history can help them better connect to the present.



An important lesson on the impact of bigotry came to Elizabeth, New Jersey courtesy of Laramie, Wyoming. Two cities with populations that are stark in contrast but harmonious in their yearning for basic human dignity and acceptance. The Jefferson Liberty Players and Senator Lesniak hope the message and pledge they have passed to others also work to bridge the gaps, offer important lessons, and make positive changes in their own community and throughout society.



Members of Jefferson's production of The Laramie Project, including director Erika Hicks and actors Jayleen Camargo Ojeda and Cooper Mendonssa, were interviewed for Our City, the local cable show hosted by Mayor Bollwage that highlights events taking place in Elizabeth. The interview included discussion about the events on which the play is based and aspects of rehearsal and production in preparation for performance. Check your local listing for air times. You may also view all Our City shows at:

www.youtube.com/CityofElizabeth

NY Jets PLAY 60 Returns to EPS

Nearly 4,000 EPS students participate in kickoff event



Elizabeth Public Schools hosted a two-session New York Jets PLAY 60 program kickoff event for nearly 4,000 students at the Dunn Sports Center on Friday, October 19.

Play 60 is an initiative of the National Football League that encourages kids to be active for 60 minutes a day in order to help reverse the trend of childhood obesity. The kickoff event, equipped by Modell's Sporting Goods, featured Taneka Bowles, wife of Jets head coach Todd Bowles, Jets legend and former All-Pro running back Tony Richardson, Jets Flight Crew cheerleaders, and a special video from the Jets coach.

Elizabeth Public Schools' fourth and fifth grade students were treated to a fun presentation introducing them to the PLAY 60 program for which they receive a Jets backpack along with a game planner to track their fitness. Each participating student is challenged to complete 60 minutes of activity every day over a four-week period.

NY Jets PLAY 60 Returns to EPS (cont.)



Elizabeth Public Schools Superintendent Olga Hugelmeyer and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Jennifer Cedeño joined the Bowles family and Richardson to encourage students to participate in physical activity by the Jets organization.

A video featuring Coach Bowles was played to encourage students to take part in the program and strive to be their best. Students from each school participated in a relay race, for which the winner received autographed Jets footballs signed by Richardson. Select students also received autographed footballs for answering questions about the lessons taught at the kickoff event. Participating students will enter an essay contest at the end of the program with the chance to win tickets provided by Todd and Taneka Bowles to attend a Jets game this season.



"We are happy to continue our partnership with the New York Jets and provide our students with the valuable lesson of being active," said Hugelmeyer. "Staying active not only helps our students to achieve excellence on the athletic fields and in physical education, but also provides the energy for them to achieve excellence in the classroom."

"On behalf of the Elizabeth Board of Education, I would like to thank the Bowles family for their tremendous investment in the children of Elizabeth Public Schools," said Elizabeth Board of Education President Maria Carvalho. "Over the past four years, they have contributed their time and resources to help so many of our students and programs, especially our Special Olympics program, and we have an incredible amount of gratitude for all they have done to help our students thrive."

Dwyer Technology Academy in Spotlight as AVID Showcase School



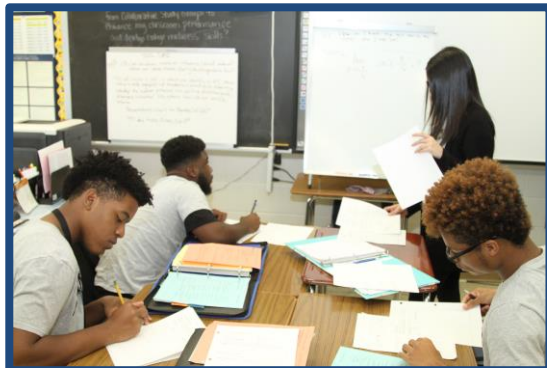
Forty educators from Elizabeth Public Schools and several other districts, including assistant superintendents, directors, supervisors, principals, and teachers visited John E. Dwyer Technology Academy to observe its very successful AVID Program.

In 2018, Dwyer Technology Academy was among a handful of schools throughout the country, and the only school in New Jersey, to be selected as an AVID Showcase School for AVID's Fall 2018 showcase schedule. The showcase allows for selected AVID schools to show how they are succeeding in institutionalizing the AVID system and demonstrating a commitment to college readiness.

AVID Secondary equips teachers and schools with what they need to help students succeed on a path to college and career success. Dwyer Technology Academy students take the AVID elective, a one period course each day offering the additional academic, social, and emotional support that will help them succeed in their school's most rigorous courses.

Director of Curriculum and Instruction Aaron Goldblatt and Dwyer Technology Academy Principal Sulisnet Jimenez welcomed visitors to the school and shared with them who they would hear from as well as the events for the day. AVID Coordinator and School Counselor Aimee Saluccio organized the showcase event with the assistance of the AVID Site Team and AVID administrators and facilitated the agenda, presenting on the AVID System at Dwyer Technology Academy. AVID Site Team Members Solomon Victor, Monika Grzegorzek, and Edmee Valentin also presented on how they incorporate AVID strategies in their Classrooms and how they contribute to the school culture. AVID Center State Managers Tamara Gilliam and Clay Stewart were in attendance.

Dwyer Tech in Spotlight as AVID Showcase School (cont.)



Dwyer Technology Academy students were also central to the showcase activities, serving as tour guides, showing their college going culture, displaying the use of AVID strategies in the classroom, presenting a closed one-hour panel about how their experiences with AVID have helped them to be successful, and answering any and all questions throughout the day.

Overall, educators in attendance were able to see how John E. Dwyer Technology Academy implements the AVID System and AVID strategies; experience the AVID Elective class and tutorials in action; learn how Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading (WICOR) strategies are used in content area classes as well as how data is being used to improve student achievement; and gain insight from AVID site team teachers, students and alumni.



Dwyer Technology Academy Student-Athlete Named a 2018 Wendy's High School Heisman School Winner



John E. Dwyer Technology Academy senior Ya-Sha-Rah Brathwaite was recently selected as a 2018 Wendy's High School Heisman School Winner.

Nearly 42,000 applications were received for this year's competition from high school scholar-athletes graduating with the class of 2019. Eligible students had to be graduating with the class of 2019, have a cumulative high school grade point average of a B (3.0) or better, participate in at least one of the 47 sports recognized by the International Olympic Committee and/or the National Federation of State High School Association and be a leader in his/her school and community.

Brathwaite was one of more than 7,500 from throughout the country to be named a 2018 Wendy's High School Heisman School Winner.

The current captain of the Elizabeth High School Girls Track & Field Team, Brathwaite has enjoyed a remarkable career as a three-sport athlete in cross-country track as well as indoor and outdoor track and field. She currently holds five individual records and six relay records, including last season's record-breaking performances of 56.32 in the outdoor 400m, breaking the old record of 58.25 by almost two seconds; 24.92 in the outdoor 200m, breaking a 19 year-old record; and anchoring a 48.25 in the 4x100m relay, breaking an 18 year-old record. She also qualified for an unprecedented four events at the 2018 NJSIAA Meet of Champions.

Dwyer Technology Academy Student-Athlete Named a 2018 Wendy's High School Heisman School Winner (cont.)

During the summer, Brathwaite competed in the Johnson and Johnson Invitational and USATF qualifying meets, for which she qualified for 3 events. At the USATF Hershey National Junior Olympic Championships, she had the 26th fastest time in the 400m (57.78), the 39th fastest in the 400m hurdles (1:10.69), and the 46th fastest in the 200m (25.93).

As great of an athlete as Brathwaite is on the track, she excels equally in the classroom, carrying a 3.86 grade-point average while serving as an Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) tutor, a member of the Dwyer Environmental Club, and a member of the Union County Student Training and Enrichment Program (UC STEP). She plans on continuing her track and field career in college while majoring in Criminology or Business Administration.



The Wendy's High School Heisman was created by Wendy's founder Dave Thomas in 1994. Dave Thomas dropped out of high school when he was 15 years old in order to work full-time and went on to become one of the most successful entrepreneurs in history. While this nontraditional path led to his prosperity, it always worried Thomas that others would follow in his footsteps and expect to achieve similar fame and wealth by not finishing high school or attending college.

Since 1994, Wendy's High School Heisman has honored more than 600,000 of the nation's most esteemed high school seniors who share Wendy's values of giving back to their communities, treating people with respect, continuing education and excelling on the athletic field.

"Ya-Sha-Rah has demonstrated exceptional characteristics that we hope all of our students aspire to," stated Elizabeth Public Schools Superintendent Olga Hugelmeyer. "She has revealed great leadership qualities in the classroom and on the track while maintaining the Elizabeth Public Schools standard of excellence through her hard work, dedication, and determination. Our learning community is very proud of this wonderful achievement and we look forward to celebrating more of Ya-Sha-Rah's successes in academics and athletics during her senior year and beyond."

"We have so many students who are having a positive impact on their school community through their outstanding achievements, whether in the classroom, on the athletic fields, or out in the Elizabeth community," said Elizabeth Board of Education President Maria Carvalho. "I am happy to see that Ya-Sha-Rah's outstanding efforts in all three of those areas has been recognized by Wendy's and, on behalf of the Board, congratulate her for earning this prestigious honor."



ELIZABETH ATHLETICS

Elizabeth Boys Soccer Team Wins State Sectional Championship

The Elizabeth boys varsity soccer team defeated Scotch Plains-Fanwood 2-1 on November 8 to claim the NJSIAA North 2, Group 4 final in Scotch Plains.

Elizabeth's Henry Chavez opened the scoring against Scotch Plains-Fanwood early in the second half before Youkendu Pacius headed in what turned out to be the game-winning goal.

Elizabeth came into the game ranked No. 14 while Scotch Plains-Fanwood was ranked No. 4 in the state. They had played to a 1-1 tie earlier in the season and have often met in important games over the past several years, with Scotch Plains providing some painful defeats. In 2018, it was Elizabeth who had upper hand in winning their first sectional championship in ten years.

For a gallery of pictures of the sectional finals victory, visit: <https://www.nj.com/expo/sports/erry-2018/11/ab40a93f755078/index.html>

ELIZABETH
Excellence...



SOCCER
It's Not a Game

NJSO Concerts for Young People Series Returns to EPS



Elizabeth High School's Band and String Orchestra performed with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (NJSO) in a special concert at the district's Thomas G. Dunn Sports Center on Wednesday, November 14. The performance, part of the NJSO's Concerts for Young People series, is one of the orchestra's "side-by-side" concerts which feature student musicians performing alongside members of the professional orchestra.

Under the direction of NJSO Education and Community Engagement Conductor José Luis Domínguez, the high school's band and string orchestra performed with the NJSO orchestra in a dress rehearsal prior to the fifty-minute performance. The performance marked the fourteenth annual side-by-side concert the NJSO has held with Elizabeth High School.

The EHS portion was Beethoven's Fidelio overture from his only opera. Over 60 student musicians participated in this special event.



EQUITY

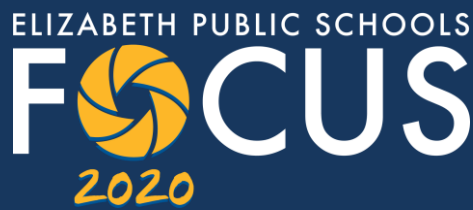
As a nation, America's Promise is that every child, regardless of race, ethnicity or social class, should receive a high quality, academically rich and rigorous public education.

EXPECTATIONS

The concept of high expectations is premised on the philosophical and pedagogical belief that a failure to hold all students to high expectations effectively denies them access to a high quality education, since the educational achievement of students tends to rise or fall in direct relation to the expectations placed upon them.

EXCELLENCE

Educational Excellence is defined as students performing at high levels or where students are making significant gains in academic achievement helping to prepare every child for global competitiveness.



Student

We believe ALL students can learn and achieve at high levels regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, neighborhood, household income or home language.

ALL Means ALL. We will narrow the achievement gaps of students by providing a high quality education to ensure that ALL of our students are college and career ready.

Teacher

We believe teachers make a positive difference in student achievement. Teachers will prepare ALL students for success in college, career, and our technological global society.

We believe that teachers are central in a child's life. Having an effective teacher is the single most important factor in student success.

Leader

We believe that effective leaders demonstrate unwavering commitment to high levels of achievement for ALL students.

Leaders will exemplify and support practices that promote high levels of achievement for ALL students.

Family

We believe that parents and caregivers are both valued partners and active participants in their children's learning. A shared sense of mutual responsibility for learning is the foundation for family involvement to ensure student success.

We are committed to engaging parents and caregivers in their children's education. We will develop a coordinated strategy that enables parents and caregivers to play an active role in building and sustaining family support for their children's learning and academic success.

Team

We believe that every member of the Elizabeth Public Schools Team has a responsibility in producing and supporting high levels of achievement for ALL students.

Every member of the Elizabeth Public Schools team will make a measurable contribution to the success and achievement for ALL students by ensuring equitable distribution of resources throughout the organization.