

EXCELLENCE NEWS

EVERY CHILD, ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE

Elizabeth Board of Education, Elizabeth, NJ

February 2023

"In your life's blueprint you must have as the basic principle the determination to achieve excellence in your various fields of endeavor." – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Reilly School No. 7 Named 2023 NJ School of Character

Terence C. Reilly School No. 7 was among 23 schools to be designated as a 2023 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.

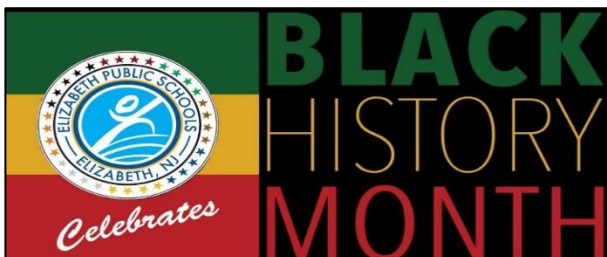
Each year, Character.org and its state affiliates select schools and districts that have developed and implemented an intentional, proactive, and comprehensive approach that embeds character into all aspects of school life. There were 73 schools and two districts in 13 states overall selected as state schools and districts of character for 2023.

The 23 schools selected as 2023 New Jersey Schools of Character are in the national evaluation process for consideration to be 2023 National Schools of Character. The National Schools of Character will be announced in May and honored at Character.org's 30th Anniversary International Forum next fall in Washington D.C.

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. School No. 7, with its 2023 designation, became the third district school to have received State School of Character honors twice, previously earning the distinctions in 2018.

Past and present recipients include Nicholas S. La Corte-Peterstown School No. 3 (2016), 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), which also received the National School of Character honor.

School No. 7 will retain the NJ School of Character status for a period of five years, through 2028.



During the month of February, teachers and students throughout Elizabeth Public Schools are participating in lessons and activities sharing, celebrating, and honoring the societal contributions of prominent figures in Black History.

EPS Celebrates Black History Month

Juan Pablo Duarte – José Julián Martí School No. 28



Mr. Donadio, Ms. Gaines' 2nd grade class and Ms. Barnes' 4th grade classes thoroughly enjoyed working together to complete this year's *Black History Month* banner. The students worked collaboratively to complete the banner which includes an interactive, *Who Am I?* component.

Additionally, Ms. Gaines' class had the privilege of having the story, *Chessie Dentley, Student of the Month*, written by Lisa Michelle Tucker, read to them by Board Member, Jerry D. Jacobs. The story is about a nine-year-old African-American girl who wanted to receive an equal education during the 1930s. Due to her perseverance, Chessie Dentley grew up to become a teacher, paving the way for other African American girls just like her.

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

To celebrate the accomplishments and contributions African Americans have made to society, students have been busy with Black History Month activities and lessons. Some of the activities include a Black History Month door contest, taking pictures with the Black History Month display, learning about African American inventors, watching inspirational speeches by important activists, creating civil rights freedom movement posters, and reading books written by African American authors. Halsey students also enjoyed a visit from Elizabeth Board of Education President Iliana Chevres.



Christopher Columbus School No. 15

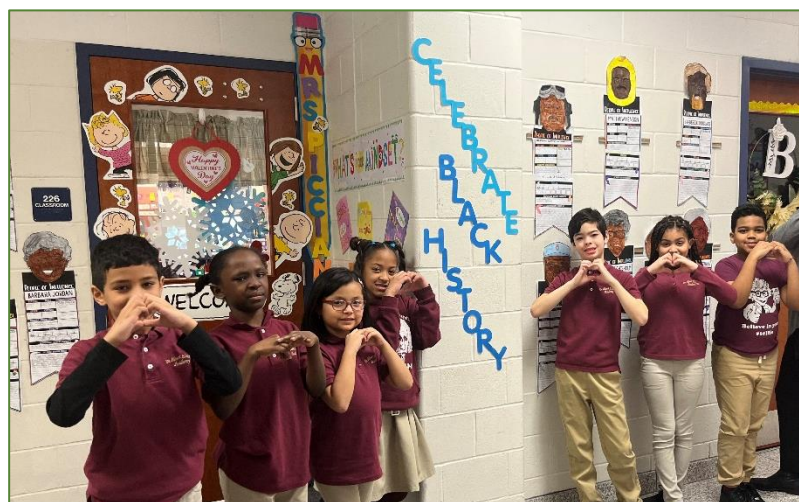
Black History Month was celebrated across the grades. Students are learning about the contributions of famous Black Americans through projects, books, and a school wide bingo.

Seventh and eighth grade students are preparing for Jeopardy where they will test their understanding and recall of many historical contributions. Special thanks to Ms. Dobkowski for your hard work organizing the events!



Dr. Albert Einstein Academy School No. 29

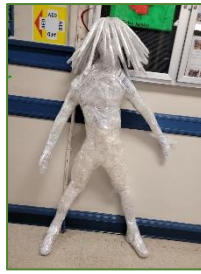
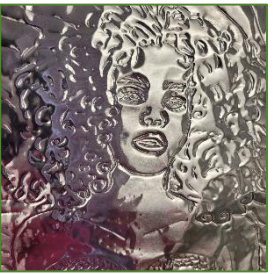
This year, the school honored Black History Month through a unifying theme: Generations of Music. During morning announcements, students shared facts about significant African American artists. An audio clip was also shared to highlight each artist's musical contribution. Throughout the month, students and staff will celebrate the 50th anniversary of hip hop, the kings and queens of pop and the foundational rhythm and blues musicians through weekly trivia contests. In classrooms, teachers and students engaged in various Panorama lessons to develop social and emotional learning allowing, students the opportunity to reflect on the African American experience in the United States. The month-long celebration will culminate with School 29's Black History Month Show in which students and teachers will perform songs, poetry, and dances from various eras through African American history to celebrate the theme "Generations of Music."





JVJ STEM Academy

For Black History Month, students created embossed images of historical African American figures, then colored them with Mrs. Serralheiro's Sculpture class. In addition, students worked in groups to create life size tape figures for an installation display in the building.



Madison Monroe School No. 16



Students and staff celebrated Black History month with a special guest speaker Patricia Perkins-Auguste, the first African-American woman elected to the Elizabeth City Council in its 355-year history. Mrs. Perkins-Auguste was greeted by Principal DiFonzo, Vice Principal Gaeta, and kindergarten teacher Mrs. Gilliam and read to kindergarten students. Mrs. Perkins-Auguste read the book entitled *I Promise* written by LeBron James and a story about Jackie Robinson. She encouraged students to make a promise to themselves to always work hard, set small goals, and always stand up for what's right.



Frances C. Smith ECC School No. 50

Teachers are celebrating Black History Month with their students by studying an accomplished black individual – singer, actor, athlete, politician/activist, or inventor – and then creating 3-D art related to that individual to display in the hallway. Students will then parade the hallway visiting the displays.

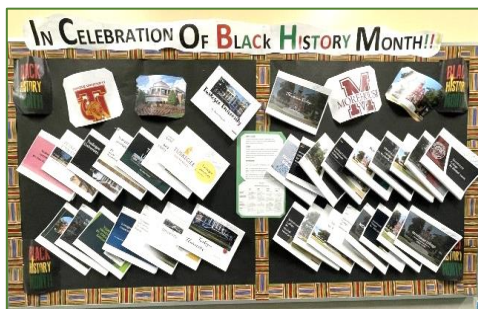
Ms. Harris' class became inventors like Robert Fleming and created guitars and shakers out of recycled materials. They also learned about George Crum, the African American Inventor who created the potato chip. They tasted chips, created graphs and charts, and went on a virtual field trip to explore a potato chip factory.

Her students made Peace Murals, a Unity Wreath, Dream Collages, and Instruments. They also held a Sunglass Party, with children singing and dancing to the rhythms of Stevie Wonder.



Mabel G. Holmes School No. 5

Students learned all about Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). Teachers educated students about HBCUs legacies and accomplishments. Classrooms were assigned a specific HBCU to research and decorate their doors. From Howard University to Florida A&M, to Tuskegee University, to Hampton, to Morehouse and beyond, the doors included notable alumni and the rich history of each respective school. For the school performance entitled, *It's a Different World, HBCU-Know*, students will highlight important facts about HBCUs as well as perform the work of various HBCU alumni. Students will also create a banner representing the college and participate in a parade at the end of the month to show off their work!



John Marshall School No. 20



The annual Soul Train concert was held on Thursday, February 9. Ms. McClinton opened the production by providing a thorough history on the origins of Black History Month. She explained that Black History Month is a federally recognized celebration of the contributions that African Americans have made to this country, and it is a time to reflect on the continued struggle for racial justice.



Under the direction of Ms. Fidalgo, students in grades K-8 and the John Marshall Concert Choir sang and danced to the works of Louis Armstrong, Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell, The Jackson 5, Michael Jackson, Rihanna, Pharrell Williams, and many other African American artists.

Elmora School No. 12

Students are working intensely to prepare for the Black History Month Assembly which will take place on Friday, February 24.

Middle school students, under the direction of prekindergarten assistant Cindy Noel and social worker Kailey Monteiro, are practicing a dance to Cynthia Ervio's song "Stand Up," a powerful song that honors Harriet Tubman's legacy. The song describes Harriet Tubman's heroic actions in helping thousands of slaves escape to freedom through the Underground Railroad. The song alludes to Tubman's struggles and unwavering spirit. Students interpret the words of the song through moves that represent heroism and bravery.



Students are inspired by Harriet Tubman's determination and are proud to bring her story to life through dance.





Principal Tooth

On February 10, Principal "Tooth" Mendes, from **Joseph Battin School No. 4** visited the PreK through 3rd grade classes to hand out toothbrushes and dental charts.

The importance of good brushing was also discussed. Each child received a toothbrush that was donated by Global Smile/Colgate in honor of National Children's Dental Health Month.

Having Healthy Habits



Students at **Benjamin Franklin School No. 13** celebrated National Children's Dental Health Month with Nurse McDowell. Nurse McDowell presented to the kindergarten and first grade classes about good oral habits to ensure a lifetime of healthy smiles. Some of the topics they discussed were how to take care of your teeth over a lifetime and how to properly brush and floss your teeth. The students were able to ask and answer questions about baby teeth & adult teeth, how many teeth someone gets in a lifetime.

Ally the Alligator

The best way to protect a child's teeth is to teach them good dental habits. During the assembly, students of **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. School No. 52** learned about the benefits of proper brushing, flossing, and tooth care, presented by our very own school nurse, Mrs. Ann Green. With the help of Ally the Alligator (aka Bonnie Narciso, PE Teacher), Mrs. Green demonstrated proper teeth brushing techniques. The children were also engaged in a short, animated video about the importance of going to the dentist as well as a song about 'brushing teeth'. Board President Iliana Chevres visited and had the opportunity to meet and greet the children and staff. Each child received a toothbrush and toothpaste pouch compliments of the school's PTO. Teaching good dental habits in preschool can help adopt good oral hygiene and become part of their daily routine.



The Traveling Trophy Award



Nicholas Murray Butler School No. 23 announced *The Traveling Trophy Award*. This initiative was started for the month of January and will continue until the end of the school year. The award encourages friendly competition between homerooms to achieve the highest attendance rate for the month. At the end of each month, the homeroom in each grade level with the best attendance has the honor of displaying “The Traveling Trophy” in their classrooms. Each also receives a banner to proudly display on their room doors along with a treat. January winners were K-105; 1-202; 2-205; 3-102; 4-201; 5-214B; 6-304; 7-305 and 8-306. The goal is to continue to convey that attendance matters!



Special Olympics Bowling Competition

Thirteen special education scholars from **Victor Mravlag School No. 21** were selected to participate in the 2023 Area 5 Special Olympics Bowling Competition. Students bowled against other children from Union and Middlesex. Victor Mravlag students took home 11 medals including two gold, seven silver, and two bronze Medals. Scholars were treated to a hero's welcome with a victory parade around the school to celebrate their effort.



Giving Back to St. Joseph Social Service Center

Elizabeth High School-Frank J. Cicarell 9th Grade Academy

In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s mission of being of service to others, the students organized a food drive to benefit St. Joseph Social Service Center. Students and staff were generous with their donations and a trunk full of food was delivered to the local Elizabeth agency at the end of January.



Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy



Students in the Multicultural Club expressed a strong desire to support families in need in the diverse Elizabeth community. During the month of December, students raised money through various activities promoting cultural inclusion. On January 20, students presented a check for \$500.00 to St. Joseph Social Service Center. The members of the center presented students with information about the services offered there and ways to get involved and earn community service hours. The special meeting highlighted the importance of helping people, no matter their circumstances or where they are from.

Chick Hatching Project

Farmer Tom from Quiver Farm greeted new mother hens, Ms. Tulko, Ms. Maria, Ms. Haustein and Ms. Batista at **Mabel G. Holmes School No. 5 Annex**. Twelve little eggs were placed in their warm bed at 99 degrees for two weeks. New mother hens each took a peek and within the week, each little egg broke open and said *Cheep Cheep*. Ms. Tulko and Ms. Maria taught them to eat and socialize among their new peeps. Ms. Haustein checked once a day to hear them say "Peep, Peep" and Ms. Batista the secretary took their first chick pic. The kids are now completely transfixed that these new little chicks have become part of the mix. A special thanks to Farmer Tom and to Vice Principal Ms. Haustein for making this a wonderful treat.





Students Spread Kindness

Kindergarten and first grade students at **Nicholas S. LaCorte – Peterstown School No. 3** were eager to respond to the call to action from Gianna Garrow, Health Center Activity Director of Harrogate Retirement Community. The Harrogate Retirement Community requested that students send Valentine's Day and birthday cards to the residents of the care center. Students went to work creating beautiful cards to spread joy and kindness to these deserving people.

Kindness is My Superpower

Winfield Scott School No. 2 celebrates Kindness Week in a big way. Teachers will be implementing daily activities, which include read aloud, videos, crafts, and simple acts of kindness throughout each school day. On February 14, Winfield Scott's NJHS students visited K-2 classrooms to talk about kindness with their younger peers. They watched "Kindness is My Superpower" and discussed how everyone can show kindness to themselves, others, and the world. Afterwards, they completed a kindness chain craft, which will be displayed in the hallways. In addition, students in grades K-8 designed their own kindness stickers which will be sent to other schools within the district to spread KINDNESS across the City of Elizabeth.



The Great Kindness Challenge

During the week of January 23 - 27, students at **Madison-Monroe School No. 16** took part in *The Great Kindness Challenge*. The Great Kindness Challenge's aim is to improve school climate and increase student engagement. During the weeklong challenge, students were challenged to perform as many kind acts as possible. School social worker Mr. Luciano assigned a kindness challenge for each homeroom to complete by the end of the week. Students also took part in the various Kindness Station activities, theme days such as *We Don't Hide from Kindness*, and even got a chance to win various prizes and giveaways.



Dwyer Seniors Receive Full Scholarships Through QuestBridge

Pedro Ennes to attend Swarthmore College, Bryan Diaz to Stanford University in Fall '23

John E. Dwyer Technology Academy seniors Pedro Ennes and Bryan Diaz have been awarded full scholarships to prestigious postsecondary academic institutions through the 2022 QuestBridge National College Match, a national program that connects high-achieving high school seniors from low-income backgrounds with full four-year scholarships to 48 of the nation's best colleges.

QuestBridge is a national nonprofit that connects the nation's most exceptional, low-income youth with leading institutions of higher education and further life opportunities. By recruiting, developing, and motivating these students — beginning in high school through college to their early career — QuestBridge aims to help talented, low-income students attend the nation's best colleges and to support them to achieve success in their respective careers and communities.

Ennes and Diaz were among 1,755 seniors of the Class of 2023 from throughout the nation who were recognized as Match Scholarship Recipients. The process included the selection of 5,613 finalists among more than 17,900 applicants to be considered for the QuestBridge National College Match Scholarship. Match Scholarship Recipients are admitted early to QuestBridge college partners with full four-year scholarships that are provided by colleges and universities, ensuring for these students and their families that an education at a top college can be affordable. This is the highest number of Match Scholarship Recipients to-date for QuestBridge.

The Match Scholarship is offered as part of a generous financial aid package provided by the college that covers the full cost of attendance, including tuition, room and board, books and supplies, and travel expenses.

Pedro came to the United States from Brazil in February 2018 and began his high school career at John E. Dwyer Technology Academy in September of 2021. He quickly rose to the top of the student ranks in the school through his focus and commitment to success. Ennes is currently President of the English National Honor Society, Vice-President of the National Math Honor Society, and a member of the National Honor Society and Student Government. In Pedro's spare time, he works at Make the Road New Jersey as a Fellow for the Student Success Center and a leader in the Youth Power Project.

Bryan came to the United States from Colombia in February 2020 and began his high school career at John E. Dwyer Technology Academy in March 2022. Through hard work and determination, he also quickly became one of the highest ranked students in the school and is currently President of the Spanish and Portuguese Honor Society, Vice-President of the English National Honor Society and Science Honor Society, and a member of the National Honor Society, National Math Honor Society, and National Art Honor Society. Diaz works at Make the Road New Jersey as a person for the Student Success Center and a leader in the Youth Power Project.

All Finalists who ultimately matriculate to QuestBridge college partners join the QuestBridge Scholars Network, which provides ongoing support and resources through nationwide opportunities and campus communities. QuestBridge also provides enriching programs for their Alumni, including the opportunity to apply for full-tuition scholarships to top business schools through the Graduate School Match: MBA. For more on this story, please visit [Dwyer Seniors Receive Full Scholarships Through QuestBridge \(epsnj.org\)](https://www.epsnj.org)



A Special Event

Seven of Elizabeth's finest musicians in grades 9-12 from **Elizabeth High School - Frank J. Cicarell Academy** joined Kean University Wind Ensemble as part of the Kean High School Honors Band. Ms. Foreman and Mr. Bolivar nominated these students to be a part of a three-day intensive workshop to learn collegiate level music from Dr. Thomas Connors and faculty of the Kean University Music Department who were impressed at the level of students' musicianship. The performance took place on Sunday, January 29 at the Enlow Recital Hall alongside other area high schools participating in this event. Congratulations to the students on a fine performance!



Financial Literacy Fair



J. Christian Bollwage Finance Academy held its annual *Financial Literacy Fair* on January 20. The Financial Literacy Fair was led by ninth grade students under the guidance of their business teacher, Ms. Taqwa Hakeem and school counselor Ms. Safiyyah Howell. Students presented their trifold displays and talking points on various financial topics including discussions on cashflow, stocks, bonds, pension funds, banks, and business structures. The exhibition was a major success, allowing other teachers and students from other classes to contribute to the discussion.



Life's A Journey Performance at Terence C. Reilly School No. 7



On Feb 3, under the direction of Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Camuccio, Ms. Coachman and Mrs. McHugh, the **Terence C. Reilly School No. 7's** Dance and Performing Arts department produced their annual winter showcase.



This year's theme was *Life's A Journey* and featured Dance and Performing Arts students in grades 4-8 as they performed dances reflecting traveling journey's (by ship, car, planes, etc.) as well as original skits created by middle school performing arts students about life and familial journeys we experience (graduation, moving, friendships, etc.).



The show was closed out with a preview of the afterschool program's (grades 2-8) upcoming musical, *The Lion King, Jr.* which will be performed in its entirety in April.

Hamilton's National Women in Sports Day

National Girls and Women in Sports Day was first observed in 1987 to remember the Olympic volleyball player Flo Hyman and acknowledge her as the best female volleyball player of her time and her work in promoting equal representation of women in sports. Twenty female athletes from **Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy** were honored in sports such as softball, track and field, soccer, swimming, volleyball, basketball, tennis, color guard, wrestling, and martial arts. Guest speakers included collegiate athletes and current Hamilton staff, Ms. Craven, Ms. Labrador, and Ms. Sofranko. Students received important lessons on historical figures/events in women's sports history as well as information for the NCAA and NJCAA.



Future Biomedical Professionals



Students in **JVJ STEM Academy** explored human medicine, public health, the human body system, and medical careers in a hands-on environment. As opposed to sitting and learning the subject, students have a fantastic opportunity to play the role of a future biomedical professional. They will explore and investigate the Medical Investigation unit, Clinical Care unit, and finally, Outbreak and Emergency unit.

Students can learn based on project-based learning and as part of the PLTW Program. Some of the activities they worked on recently are DNA analysis by Gel Electrophoresis, presumptive toxicology lab, dissection of a fetal pig for exploring the digestive system, and much more. STEM scholars are on the path to becoming phenomenal future healthcare professionals!

Hamilton Annex Students Tour Felician University

Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy's ninth grade AVID students went for a college tour at Felician University on January 20, 2023. Hamilton Annex's Mr. Ayd, Ms. Kane, and Mrs. Guiducci accompanied the students. During their tour, the current ninth grade students were able to listen to a former Hamilton student, Cynthia Contin, share her college experience. Cynthia graduated from Hamilton in 2016. By having this time to speak with a former student of Hamilton, the ninth graders were able to get a good glimpse of being a student at Felician University.





PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION INSCRIPCIONES PARA EL PROGRAMA PRE-ESCOLAR

Register February 22, 2023 - March 24, 2023
Inscripciones abiertas del 22 de febrero al 24 de marzo del 2023
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