



**Thomas Jefferson**  
**Arts**  
**Academy**

Olga Hugelmeyer, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Mona Wanis, Principal  
Fatimah Bey, Administrator  
Alexandra Mickens, Administrator

August 13, 2024

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

We, the entire staff here at *Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy*, are honored and elated to welcome all of our new students, returning students, and their family members to the 2024-2025 school year *beginning on Friday, September 6<sup>th</sup>*!

Our promise is to provide an innovative and personalized learning environment that ensures that every child achieves excellence. Within a safe, rigorous, and welcoming environment, we believe that every student can and will learn at their optimal level to reach their highest educational potential.

Please take the time to visit our district website and the *Back-to-School* link at <https://www.epsnj.org/Page/4374> for additional information regarding your child's return to school. Many of the important topics addressed in detail on the district website are also provided below for your immediate review:

**FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL / ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES**

*The 2024–2025 school year will begin on Friday, September 6, 2024.* Educational instruction will be conducted during the hours of 7:45 a.m. to 2:29 p.m. In order to help facilitate a smooth and orderly mode of transition during the times of arrival and dismissal, please adhere to the following safety procedures:

Due to traffic, many families may find it more convenient to drop off/pick up students 1-2 blocks away from the school. Please be mindful that Martin Luther King Boulevard and Morrell Street are one-way streets. Any families wishing to drop off a student may do so by 7:30 a.m. at the following locations:

- For Grade 9: At Martin Luther King Boulevard side entrance of our Freshman Academy (between Jefferson Arts and FJC Main Entrances).
- For Grades 10-12: At our Main Entrance on Martin Luther King Boulevard (center building entrance).

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**EPS SCHOOL CALENDAR**

We ask that you guide and support your child's learning by ensuring that he/she attends school daily, arrives on time, and is ready for the day's learning experience.

To review the EPS School Calendar for the 2024–2025 school year, please visit the following link: [School Calendar for 2024-2025.pdf \(epsnj.org\)](#)



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**POWERSCHOOL PARENT PORTAL INSTRUCTIONS**

PowerSchool is an electronic management system that is utilized by the Elizabeth Public Schools to collect, store, and maintain pertinent student data and records. The application provides parents with real-time access to information that pertains to a student's schedule, attendance, grades, and academic progress. It also offers a convenient and accommodating way for both parents and teachers to communicate as needed; therefore, everyone stays connected. Schedules for the upcoming 2024-2025 school year will be available to view on PowerSchool on **Thursday, August 29<sup>th</sup>**.

**NEW AND RETURNING PARENTS TO EPS**

Parents of new students must request a new account to input all information required to navigate the PowerSchool Parent Portal. Parents of existing students will need to log in, input, and update any information changes that has occurred for their child.

To obtain instructions on how to navigate the PowerSchool Parent Portal, please visit the EPS website at [Student and Parent Sign In \(powerschool.com\)](https://powerschool.com).

If you experience technical difficulties while accessing your child's PowerSchool information, please contact our school at 908-439-6767 or visit the EPS website at [Student Support Services / Student Registration \(PreK-12\) \(epsnj.org\)](https://epsnj.org). From there, please click on the "**PowerSchool Parent Portal Help**" tab. Please scroll down and click on Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy. You will then be directed to complete an online contact form. After clicking the **Save** and **Done** buttons at the bottom, your request will be submitted and someone from the school will be in contact with you as soon as possible.

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**POWERSCHOOL STUDENT PORTAL INSTRUCTIONS**

To obtain instructions on how to navigate the PowerSchool Student Portal, please visit the EPS website at [Student and Parent Sign In \(powerschool.com\)](https://powerschool.com).

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**UNIFORM POLICY**

The intended purpose for the EPS dress code is to promote a positive self-image and to enhance school pride amongst our students. Health, safety, and educational well-being are the primary objectives for the dress code with the goal of fostering an environment that is conducive to discipline as well as to education. School uniforms are expected to be worn on a daily basis.



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The uniform and dress code requirements at Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy are provided on the EPS website at <https://www.epsnj.org/Page/4374>. Please refer to the “*Uniform and Dress Code Policies*” tile and follow the instructions provided.

Parents, we are asking for both your cooperation, as well as your support regarding your child’s adherence to the uniform policy. Students who do not adhere to the school uniform policy will not be permitted to enter the building on **Friday, September 6<sup>th</sup>** or any school day thereafter. Please do not hesitate to contact the main office if you should have any questions with respect to the uniform policy.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

**For the past few years, our school has operated as a 1:1 technology school; and as a result, all students will continue to utilize a laptop computer for their daily classroom instruction.** Students should make every effort to take excellent care of their laptops throughout the school year, as this is a very special privilege. Our 1:1 technology implementation will continue to ensure that our students attain the competitive standards that are needed to foster both college and career readiness. ***All students are required to bring their charged laptops and power cords to school daily.***

### **NEW ENTRANTS**

All new students to the district will receive their laptop during the first week of school.

### **9<sup>TH</sup> GRADE STUDENTS**

Freshmen will continue to utilize their Middle School laptops until their laptop is exchanged by the Department of Technology.

## **STAY CONNECTED**

### **Receive School Reminders/Updates via Text Message!**

Sign up to receive messages from the Elizabeth Public Schools and Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy school messaging system:

Text the site provided below to 81010

Remind	Class of 2025	Class of 2026	Class of 2027	Class of 2028
Parents	@tjp25 to 81010	@tjp26 to 81010	@tjp27 to 81010	@tjp28 to 81010
Students	@tjaa25 to 81010	@tjaa26 to 81010	@tjaa27 to 81010	@tjaa28 to 81010



### **NEW AND EXISTING PARENT INSTRUCTIONS**

It is extremely important that we have the most up-to-date home address and/or phone numbers so that we may contact you in the event of an emergency or to discuss your child's progress. Please be sure to update your contact information by logging into your PowerSchool Parent Portal and filling out the Emergency Information form found under the Forms link. Should there be a change in either your home address and/or phone number throughout the course of the school year, please log into your PowerSchool Parent account, update the Emergency Information form and notify your child's school guidance counselor. Open communication between the home and the school is expected and is one of the more pertinent keys to academic success in school.

Our Notification System enables staff members to contact parents through email, text, and through verbal messages recorded on the phone. Through this system, parents are immediately alerted of urgent information, major events, and/or upcoming dates. To ensure that this system will continue to operate in a highly effective manner, it is very important that we have **the most current and accurate information on file for each and every student.**

To obtain information on how to keep your contact information up-to-date, please visit the EPS website at <https://www.epsnj.org/Page/4374>. Please refer to the "Stay Connected" tile and follow the instructions provided on how to update your information on PowerSchool.

Additionally, please consider volunteering your services and supporting the Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO) at Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy. The PTO provides many opportunities for families within the school community to get involved and *stay connected*. Please be sure to sign up and learn more about the many resources that are available for your child here within the Elizabeth Public Schools.

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### **DISTRICT / SCHOOL INFORMATION**

Please ensure that all the required documents listed below are reviewed and completed by the first day of school and that all personal information is updated regularly.

- Emergency Information Form
- Notice Regarding Physicals
- Media Release Form
- Student Internet & Network Permission Form with Elizabeth Internet Use Policy
- Acceptable Use For Technology – Electronic Mobile Device Form
- Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF)
- Lunch Application



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In order to obtain access to the required documents that are indicated above, please visit the EPS website at <https://www.epsnj.org/Page/4374>. Please refer to the “*Forms and Applications for Your Child*” tile and follow the instructions provided.

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**TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation will be available for the following students:

- Elementary students who live more than 2.0 miles from their school
  - High school students who live more than 2.5 miles from their school
  - Students whose IEP include transportation services
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**GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

Both the State of New Jersey Department of Education and the Elizabeth Board of Education require all students meet high standards to receive a high school diploma.

Please visit the EPS website at <https://www.epsnj.org/Page/4374> and refer to the “*Graduation Requirements*” tile to obtain pertinent information regarding graduation requirements.

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**ABSENCES**

Any student who accumulates more than nine (9) absences during the school year, in a subject area, may have credit for that course withheld even if absences are medically excused. Students who attain four (4) or more absences during the 4<sup>th</sup> marking period may have credit withheld.

Any student who is unprepared for physical education nine (9) times or more may have credit for that course withheld.

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**REPORT CARDS**

Approximately every five weeks (8 times per year) either a progress report or a grade report will be mailed home. Each report lists important information. Class attendance and tardiness are also noted on both reports. Throughout the school year, please help us by staying on top of your child’s attendance and tardiness.



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Guidance counselors and administrators are available to meet with you throughout the school year. Please call ahead for an appointment to discuss your concerns.

The 2024-2025 Marking Period Calendar for grades K-12 can be found by visiting the EPS website at <https://www.epsnj.org/Page/4374> and clicking on the “*Marking Period Schedule*” tile.

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**ORIENTATION DATE**

**Wednesday, August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024 - 10:00 a.m.**  
Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy Theatre  
27 Martin Luther King, Jr. Plaza, Elizabeth, New Jersey 07201

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**BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT**

**Wednesday, September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024 - 6:00 p.m.**  
Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy Theatre  
27 Martin Luther King, Jr. Plaza, Elizabeth, New Jersey 07201

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We hope that you will continue enjoying the remainder of the summer. Let’s maintain our shared mission to reaffirm equity, reestablish expectations, and reclaim excellence!

We look forward to starting another journey together on *Friday, September 6<sup>th</sup>*.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mona Wanis  
Principal