



# EXCELLENCE NEWS

EVERY CHILD, ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE

## 2024 Winter Wonderland

The entrance of the James P. Mitchell Building has been transformed into a magical Winter Wonderland, showcasing the incredible creativity of the students and team members from Elizabeth Public Schools. Each district school and administrative department was invited to craft a decorative piece that reflects the winter and holiday season, embodying the goodwill, thoughtfulness, and festive spirit of Elizabeth Public Schools during this special time of year. A variety of contributions, differing in size, medium, and theme, were submitted from across the Elizabeth Public Schools community, creating a truly festive ambiance. This display magnificently illustrates the imagination, inspiration, and passion that thrive in the classrooms and offices every day. Team members of the Mitchell Building also joined in the holiday spirit.



### DECEMBER'S HIGHLIGHTS

- **Holiday Cheer**
- **Early Childhood**
- **Elementary**
- **High School**
- **Upcoming Events**

### Important Dates:

**December 23 - 31**  
**Christmas Recess**  
**Schools & District**  
**Closed**

**January 1**  
**New Year's Day**  
**Schools & District**  
**Closed**

**January 2**  
**Schools Reopen**

**Quick Links:**  
**School District Website**



**District Social Media**



**Back To School**







## Santa's Visit

On December 13 and 16, EPS team members, Board Member Diane Barbosa and Board Member Iliana Chevres visited classrooms at J. Christian Bollwage Finance Academy, Elizabeth High School - Frank J. Cicarell Academy, Elmora School No. 12, George Washing Academy School No. 1 and Juan Pablo Duarte- Jose Julian Marti School No. 28 to spread holiday cheer across classrooms. Together with a special visit from Santa Claus, students and team members shared holiday greetings and cheers! Students enjoyed the opportunity to share their holiday feelings and aspirations while welcoming Santa Claus into their classrooms.



## Robert Morris School No. 18



Students participated in afterschool dances this month to help spread joy this holiday season. Students in grades K-2 danced the night away at their Snowflake Dance while students in grades 3-5 put their dancing shoes on at their Snowball Dance. Cheerful holiday fun was had by all!







## Dr. Orlando Edreira Academy School No. 26 @ 31



School No. 26 celebrated the season in grand style with its 27th annual winter concert. The event showcased the remarkable talents of 245 student musicians from fifth through eighth grade, who performed a vibrant selection of holiday music. The evening's repertoire included cherished traditional Christmas carols, lively holiday tunes, and songs honoring Kwanzaa, offering something for everyone in the audience. The students' dedication and the hard work of their music instructors shone brightly throughout the concert. One unexpected highlight came courtesy of Mr. Long, who delighted the crowd with a special

appearance as part of a theatrical performance, Santa the Barbarian and the Pirates of the North Pole. His comedic fight scene added a whimsical twist to an already magical night, leaving attendees in fits of laughter.

This cherished tradition not only brought festive cheer but also highlighted the incredible community spirit of Dr. Orlando Edreira Academy. Families, friends, and staff came together to celebrate the season and the students' artistic achievements, setting a joyful tone for the holidays ahead.

## Juan Pablo Duarte – José Julián Martí School No. 28



To kick off the dazzling holiday season, School No. 28 hosted its annual Tree Lighting and Reading Night.

During this event, teachers read stories to represent different holiday traditions and then completed an activity relating to the story. The tree lighting event is a beloved tradition at our school, bringing the community together to celebrate the spirit of the season. As they counted down to light the tree and the lights turned on, students, staff, and families were reminded of the warmth, joy, and unity that define the holidays.







## Chessie Dentley Roberts Academy School No. 30



*For more  
photos, please  
visit  
[www.epsnj.org](http://www.epsnj.org)*

The Chessie Dentley Roberts Academy community came together for an unforgettable evening at its Annual Winter Concert. Featuring outstanding performances by the Band, Choir, Jazz Band, and Rock Band, the event was a celebration of our students' incredible talent, dedication, and hard work. Under the expert guidance of Ms. Murro (Band Teacher) and Mr. Jaccoi (Choir Teacher), our students captivated the audience with a diverse repertoire that showcased their musical growth and passion. From the harmonious melodies of the choir to the energetic rhythms of the jazz band, each group demonstrated a level of artistry and teamwork that made us all proud. This concert was not just a performance but a testament to the hours of practice, perseverance, and commitment our students have invested. Their success is a reflection of the vibrant arts program at Chessie Dentley Roberts Academy, where we strive to inspire creativity and excellence.

Congratulations to all the performers and a sincere gratitude to the families and community members who joined us to support our young musicians. This magical evening will undoubtedly be cherished by all who attended.

## Joseph Battin School No. 4

Teachers and students have created a heartwarming new holiday tradition. Each class collaborated to decorate a unique ornament that reflects the spirit of their homeroom. These beautiful ornaments are proudly displayed on our holiday trees, bringing our school community together. This cherished tradition will be enjoyed and admired for years to come! In keeping with the spirit of the season, the Joseph Battin School No. 4 community embraced the season of giving by collecting donations of socks, hats, gloves, and scarves to support the Elizabeth Coalition. This generous effort reflects our commitment to spreading warmth and kindness to those in need.







## John Marshall School No. 20



John Marshall proudly hosted its first-ever "Elf Day," an exciting initiative led by sisters Erin and Kelly Rasmussen. On December 6<sup>th</sup>, eighth graders embraced the holiday spirit by dressing as elves and helping to "deck the halls." This joyful event fostered a sense of community as the students decorated the school with their creativity. Highlights included K-8 student artwork, festive elves crafted during art class, and holiday decorations generously donated by teachers. "Elf Day" brought festive cheer and showcased the collaborative spirit of the school!

## City Hall Miracle



Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy students performed at the City Hall Miracle on Winfield Scott holiday festivities outside of Elizabeth City Hall on December 11. Elizabeth Board of Education Vice President Stanley Neron and Board members Maria Carvalho, Iliana Chevres, and Stephanie Goncalves Pestana also participated in the community event.



Elizabeth Public Schools and Elizabeth Board of Education joined Senator Joseph Cryan, Assemblywoman Annette Quijano, Mayor J. Christian Bollwage, members of Elizabeth City Council, and other city departments and community partners to bring holiday cheer to the residents of Elizabeth at the City Hall Miracle on Winfield Scott, which included a tree lighting, a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Claus, ice skating, a train ride, performances, vendors, and giveaways.







## Dr. Albert Einstein Academy School No. 29

This holiday season kicked off at Dr. Albert Einstein Academy School No. 29 with a Gingerbread Construction Competition. This festive and fun-filled event showcased the incredible creativity and craftsmanship of students. The competition included students from all grade levels, with three coveted categories up for grabs: Best Student Creation, Most Unique, and Best Overall. A huge congratulations to Mr. Mavety's classroom for Most Unique, Ms. Cierpial's classroom for Best Student Creation, and Mrs. Mazzella's classroom for Best Overall!



The competition not only provided an opportunity for students to demonstrate their artistic talents but also fostered school spirit and teamwork. It was a heartwarming reminder of how creativity, collaboration, and a touch of holiday magic can come together to make something truly special.

## Abraham Lincoln School No. 14

School No. 14 held their Winter Wonderland on December 13. Parents, students and team members filled the hallways. Everyone enjoyed the great holiday celebration.







## Madison-Monroe School No. 16



School No. 16 kicked off the holiday season with a festive Thanksgiving Day parade. Students transformed the school hallways into a parade route, showcasing their creativity through decorated balloons and personalized floats. The vibrant atmosphere captured the essence of Thanksgiving, and the appearance of Mr. and Mrs. Claus added a touch of holiday magic to the event.

## iPrep Academy School No. 8

The "Winter Wonderland" concert swept through iPrep Academy in the month of December. Students in elementary and middle school performed a variety of holiday jingles and musical ensembles. The music production was carried out thanks to the production of Mr. Troiano, Ms. Benamy, and Mr. Gargiulo. The show also featured the artwork of Mr. Fajardo. It was enjoyed by parents, students, and team members.

*For more photos, please visit [www.epsnj.org](http://www.epsnj.org)*







## Skating with Santa

This weekend, students and team members were excited to participate in Union County's annual Skating with Santa event for persons with disabilities and special needs. Gathering at the Warinanco Sports Center, students had the opportunity to skate with volunteers to support them through all levels of experience. The most important of these volunteers was Santa Claus, who supported students on the skating rink, as well as offering photos and presents after they wrapped up for the day. Among the special guests was Board Member Maria Carvalho. It was a wonderful day for all of our students and for our dedicated volunteers!



## William F. Halloran School No. 22

Winter Wonderland had over 700 people in attendance, what a great turnout! The annual event included breakfast, photos with Santa, a band performance, arts and crafts, & the opportunity to write letters for soldiers serving overseas for the holidays. Among the special guests was City of Elizabeth Mayor J. Christian Bollwage.







## Donald Stewart ECC School No. 51

On December 10, Lisa Lee of EZ Ride, 'Safe Routes to School' provided parents and students with valuable information to make biking and walking to school safer and more appealing. The New Jersey Safe Routes to School Program supported by the NJ Department of Transportation, is a statewide initiative with a mission to partner with schools and communities to prioritize and implement opportunities for people to walk, bike, or travel by other wheeled devices. By focusing on improvements to support active travel by youth, we believe we can create conditions that are safe, healthy, equitable, and appealing for all.



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



The children and families enjoyed an evening filled with festive cheers at *Cookies, Cocoa & Crafts with Santa*. The school's gym was transformed into a winter wonderland, where the atmosphere was filled with the sweet aroma of freshly baked cookies and the rich, comforting scent of cocoa. Families were welcomed with smiles and warm greetings as they arrived, excited to join in the holiday fun.

The highlight of the evening was, of course, the chance to meet Santa Claus. The children lined up eagerly to chat with Santa, sharing their holiday wishes and posing for pictures in front of a beautifully decorated backdrop. Santa's warm presence added a magical touch, making the evening even more memorable for everyone.







## Winfield Scott School No. 2



Students from kindergarten through third grade had the opportunity to receive a free dentist evaluation provided by A Children's Oral Health Improvement Program. The mobile unit arrived at school and provided free dental check for all students with permission slips. They attended an assembly that informed them of all the healthy habits of great dental hygiene before being seen by a dentist and provided with toothbrushes, floss, and toothpaste. The Winfield Scott School Community would like to thank everyone at A Children's Oral Health Improvement Program and School 2 Nurse, Ms. Castro, for making this event possible!

## Mabel G. Holmes School No. 5

On December 17, Councilman Nelson Gonzalez visited School No. 5 and met with middle school students. Councilman Gonzalez presented students with holiday gifts and congratulated them for their performance at the Winter Concert. School No. 5 is extremely thankful to the Councilman for his generosity.







## Terence C. Reilly School No. 7



The fifth-grade students at Terence C. Reilly are currently working on their new PBL for the marking period. Students are creating cereal box biographies of prominent individuals who were involved with the Underground Railroad in the mid 1800's.

Aside from researching, writing and designing physical products, students are planning to create a museum exhibit which they'll open to students in other grades to display and present their works in January. Seeking guidance on the specifics of operating an exhibit, students were excited when Ms. DeJesus, an EHS alumni and a docent at the NYC Intrepid Museum, visited

with two fifth-grade homerooms. Ms. DeJesus demonstrated techniques for speaking to a visiting audience, instructed the students on the need for specificity in understanding the content displayed and explained potential layout options for constructing the exhibits. Following her presentation, DeJesus fielded student questions from an enthusiastic audience. Having an expert speak with them from our Elizabeth community about their upcoming endeavor ignited student interest in the project. Through modeling, students were exposed to an authentic experience which they plan to replicate in the coming weeks.

## Woodrow Wilson School No. 19

The Mental Health Team recently collaborated with NJ4S to host an interactive workshop for first through third grade students. The session was titled "Getting to Know Your Feelings," aimed to help children understand anxiety, recognize its signs, and learn strategies to manage it. The workshop included a presentation on the origins of anxiety, along with simple tools like deep breathing techniques and guided meditation. Students also had the opportunity to make their own stress balls, which they can use to relieve stress when needed. It's essential that we help them build emotional resilience at a young age. Students enjoyed participating in the activities and learning how to calm their minds. This workshop is part of ongoing efforts to integrate mental health education providing students with the skills they need to handle their emotions both in and outside of school. School No. 19 is dedicated to promoting both academic and emotional growth, creating a supportive environment where students can thrive.







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



On December 11<sup>th</sup>, the International WeLoveU Foundation presented winter coats to students at Jerome Dunn Academy through *WeLo's Winter Coat Giveaway!* Students learned about the foundation and all the wonderful things they do throughout the world. Among the special guests who attended were City of Elizabeth Mayor J. Christian Bollwage, Superintendent Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer and Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Dr. Jennifer Cedeño. School No. 9 is thankful to all the volunteers that spent time with each of the students and made the event so memorable. "We Love You!"

## Victor Mravlag School No. 21

In celebration of both National Family Literacy Month and Family Day of American Education Week, School No. 21 hosted its first Family Literacy Night. This camping themed event brought the school community together to celebrate the magic and adventure of reading. The gymnasium was transformed into a camp- complete with tents, a river, forest, bear cave, bug den and cabin. Students and their families took home books, resources, new reading skills, games, and most importantly- the inspiration to read s'more!







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

Students in eighth grade Algebra 1 have been working with graphing linear equations in slope intercept form, standard form, and point-slope form. For this stain glass window project, students were given 18 linear equations.

They were responsible for identifying the slope and y-intercept of the equations, then graphing all 18 lines. Students were able to decorate their stain glass window anyway they'd like. What an amazing job was done by all!



## Chessie Dentley Roberts Academy School No. 30



On December 16, former pro NFL players Dede Dorsey and Bobby Jackson visited CDRA and provided mentorship to our students.

During the mentorship program, students will have the opportunity to learn about teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. Their time and expertise can inspire students to work hard and pursue their goals both academically and personally.

## Elmora School No. 12

On December 12, School No. 12 hosted the first marking period Mathletes Luncheon for the seventh and eighth grade students. Students that received 90 or higher in Math for first marking period were invited for pizza with their math teachers, Mr. King and Mr. Litchfield. The top three averages in each class received a gold, silver, or bronze medal. School administration also took part in the festivities and provided sweet treats for the Mathletes as well. We look forward to having even more students participate after second marking period grades are finalized.







## J. Christian Bollwage Finance Academy



On December 5, seniors participated in an on-site instant decision day for New Jersey City University (NJCU). Students engaged in interviews with NJCU Admissions Counselor Shamara Lannaman. Prior to the interviews students needed to be academically prepared and be able to provide evidence of a minimum 3.5 cumulative GPA (with no Ds or Fs and minimal Cs), show evidence of college-level work with attempting an advanced curriculum (either through honors, AP, Dual Enrollment, or IB courses). Students were awarded scholarships ranging from \$2000- \$8000 dollars.

## John E. Dwyer Technology Academy

Ten students have been selected for a paid after school internship program. In partnering with United Way, the Dwyer Eagles will work alongside the Elizabeth Public Schools IT department in assisting with hardware repairs, laptop reimaging, and servicing tickets submitted to the department. The proud Dwyer students will have opportunities to use their technology skills for two months and receive hands-on training that they can use in their future careers.

*Waldo Alexandre  
Lynce Leticia Beja  
Jeremie Crespo  
Djennie Fleurimond  
Jessica Gamboa  
Mackendy Hermann  
Sofia Quintana  
Shamara Remy  
Maria Jose  
Sinisterra  
Martine Thelusma*







### John E. Dwyer Technology Academy Annex



Nothing brings out the holiday spirit better than a friendly competition! Students at the Dwyer Annex stepped up to the task of bringing the spirit of Christmas into the school community with a classroom door decorating contest. Students were asked to produce ideas and decorate their classroom doors for the prized crown of being in the top 3 most festive decorated doors. Teachers happily gave community service as students developed their unique take on the holiday. Student creativity is bountifully displayed while the spirit of the season has been unlocked and joyfully unleashed for the school to admire.

### JVJ STEM Academy

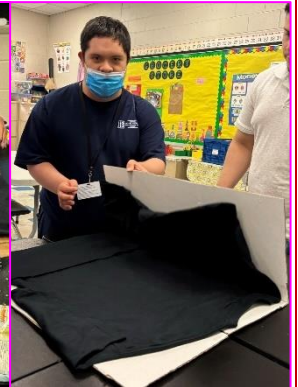
On November 22, the JVJ Academy Student Government along with the JVJ Transitional Program successfully hosted a Thanksgiving food drive and a coat drive for our community. We were able to accomplish all this with the help and contribution of our students, staff members and organizations such as the Elizabeth Police PBA Local #4, and the Elizabeth Education Association. The boxes of food were distributed by Student Services to families in need, providing relief to families during the holiday season. They also collected over 44 coats with many other winter items. These drives were not only able to make an impact on people, but also demonstrated the power of compassion and unity within our school and the community. A heartfelt thank you goes out to everyone who contributed to making this event a resounding success!







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



Team members were surprised by hand-delivered notes with compliments from students in the Multiple Disabilities Program. Many of the staff and students were also wearing *Down Right Awesome* T- shirts, which were sorted, folded, and delivered by the students. The teachers in the MD Program wanted to showcase the students' skills and abilities while showing their appreciation to everyone for their support. MD students are encouraged every day to look for positive ways to show others they care via the "Give Someone a Reason to Smile Today" compliment bulletin board that is maintained by the students and located outside the Halsey Main Office. Over the past few weeks, our Halsey seniors have been working hard completing their FAFSA applications, with support from a representative from the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA). The HESAA representative has been hosting workshops to guide students through the FAFSA process, helping them access crucial financial aid for college. These workshops provide an invaluable opportunity for students to ask questions and receive personalized assistance in securing grants, loans, and other financial aid options to support their post-graduation plans. In addition, the members of our Multicultural Club had a wonderful time creating festive decorations to celebrate the holiday season. Their creativity and teamwork brought holiday cheer to our school, highlighting the diverse traditions and cultures that make the community special.







***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](mailto:enews@epsnj.org)

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