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Largest Student Shakespeare Festival in Nation Kicks Off 33rd Annual Event Friday
More than 5,000 DPS students perform works of Shakespeare, compete in Elizabethan-era trivia

DENVER— Wearing theatrical costumes and practicing their best Elizabethan accents, more than 5,000 Denver Public Schools (DPS) students in grades K-12 from 75 schools will take over the Denver Performing Arts Complex, April 28 as the 33rd Annual DPS Shakespeare Festival gets underway.

The day-long festival is held downtown every year and provides the opportunity for students to perform scenes and sonnets from the works of William Shakespeare, as well as demonstrate the dance, vocal and instrumental music of the era.

DPS students will also have the opportunity to compete in the “Challenge Bowl,” a trivia contest that will test their knowledge of the life and times of William Shakespeare, as well as about the play “Much Ado About Nothing,” which is this year’s festival theme play.

The DPS Shakespeare Festival will kick off with an opening ceremony at 10 a.m. at Skyline Park (15th St. and Arapahoe St.), featuring DPS student actors as Queen Elizabeth I and William Shakespeare. DPS Superintendent Tom Boasberg will channel his inner-thespian to deliver Shakespearean remarks. Mayor Michael Hancock and First Lady Mary Louise Lee, Denver Center for the Performing Arts President & CEO Janice Sinden, Denver Arts and Venues Deputy Director Ginger White and DPS Foundation President and CEO Verónica Figoli will also take part. The group will be led from the park by horse-drawn carriage and parade down 16th Street Mall to the Denver Performing Arts Complex, where students will perform at 18 stages throughout the day. Performance schedules by stage can be found at <http://shakespeare.dpsk12.org/event-details/>.

“The DPS Shakespeare Festival brings together students of every grade level, from our youngest students to high school students, and from diverse Denver neighborhoods, to perform together. They learn classic literature, but they also learn invaluable lessons about culture and coming together, literally setting the stage for their future development,” said DPS Foundation President and CEO Verónica Figoli.

“Simply studying Shakespeare in the classroom is in itself a rich lesson in literature, culture, language and politics. And having the opportunity to stage or act in a production of Shakespeare’s work at a world-class

venue like the Arts Complex takes those lessons a step further, giving students a chance to experience the thrill and personal rewards of creative expression, which is such a critical part of a well-rounded education,” said DPS Superintendent Tom Boasberg.

“I think the DPS Shakespeare Festival is important because not only do you learn about Shakespeare’s plays and acting, you also learn about speaking in front of people which gives you more confidence,” added Serenity, a fourth-grade student from Fairview Elementary.

“The Denver Center for the Performing Arts is proud to partner with Denver Public Schools and its Foundation to elevate student achievement through this fantastic event,” said DCPA President & CEO Janice Sinden. “By providing in-school workshops, adjudication, facility and financial support to DPS, we collectively improve academic success, produce leaders and cultivate creativity. Plus it’s fun!”

The DPS Shakespeare Festival is the oldest and largest student Shakespeare festival in the country and is co-produced by The Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Denver Public Schools and the Denver Public Schools Foundation in order to combine history’s greatest plays with passionate educators and inspired young actors, exposing thousands of students and spectators to the joy of live theater.

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About the Denver Center for the Performing Arts

The Denver Center for the Performing Arts is the largest non-profit theatre organization in the nation, presenting Broadway tours and producing its own original theatre, cabaret, musicals, and innovative, multimedia plays. Last season the DCPA entertained more than 1.2 million visitors through 41 productions, 887 performances and 342 events. Learn more: www.denvercenter.org.

About Denver Public Schools

Denver Public Schools (DPS) is committed to meeting the educational needs of every student with great schools in every neighborhood. Its goal is to provide every child in Denver with rigorous, enriching educational opportunities from preschool through high school graduation. DPS is comprised of approximately 200 schools, including traditional, magnet, charter and pathways schools, with a current total enrollment of over 92,000 students—77.5% of which are minorities. DPS is one of the fastest-growing urban school districts in the country in terms of enrollment, and is the fastest-growing large school district in Colorado in terms of academic growth. Learn more: www.dpsk12.org.

About the Denver Public Schools Foundation

The Denver Public Schools Foundation is Denver Public Schools’ fundraising partner, generating resources, building relationships and championing public education to impact system-wide achievement in order to realize the vision of *Every Child Succeeds*. The DPS Foundation engages the entire community in support of DPS’ more than 92,000 students and nearly 200 schools. Learn more at www.dpsfoundation.org.