



DENVER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DPS Students Perform in Largest Student-led Shakespeare Festival in the Nation

Thousands of DPS Students Celebrated Shakespeare with Nearly 108 Hours of Performances

DENVER– Wearing theatrical costumes and practicing their best Elizabethan accents, thousands of Denver Public Schools (DPS) students in grades K-12 took over the Denver Performing Arts Complex for the [34th Annual DPS Shakespeare Festival](#), despite the nearly statewide cancellation of classes on Friday.

The day-long festival is held in downtown Denver each year. The event 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. Student-performers provided nearly 108 hours of performances organized on 18 stages throughout the Denver Performing Arts Complex. Students also competed in the "Challenge Bow," a trivia contest that tested their knowledge of the life and times of William Shakespeare, watched fencing demonstrations and saw a "Shakespeare in the Parking Lot" performance by Denver Center for the Performing Arts (DCPA) actors.

The festival kicked off with an opening ceremony at Skyline Park (16th St. and Arapahoe St.), featuring DPS student actors as Queen Elizabeth I and William Shakespeare. DPS Associate Chief of Academics Ann Whalen delivered remarks. Announced by student buglers, DCPA President and CEO Janice Sinden, Denver Arts and Venues Deputy Director Ginger White and DPS Foundation Board Chair-Elect Priya Burkett also took part. Riding in a horse-drawn carriage led by student-performers, the speakers travelled from the park, down the 16th Street Mall to the Denver Performing Arts Complex.

"The DPS Foundation believes our city is strengthened by every student who graduates prepared to lead a successful life," said Burkett. "The Shakespeare Festival is a key component, offering our students an incredible opportunity to learn about literature, culture, politics, as well as creative expression. It literally provides a stage for our students' future development."

"I want to recognize the inspiring outpouring of support from our community in achieving this festival," said Whalen. "We are so fortunate to live and work in a city that values the significance of quality arts education."

"We are so excited to have a partnership with the City of Denver, Denver Public Schools and the Denver Public Schools Foundation," said Sinden. "This is a rich tradition. Shakespeare and the theater show us the power of

language and gives us the ability to see the world in metaphor and paint with images. The DCPA is committed to arts education and applauds each and every one of you for your efforts today.”

The DPS Shakespeare Festival is the oldest and largest student Shakespeare festival in the country. It is co-produced by The Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Denver Public Schools and the Denver Public Schools Foundation.

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Unified Purpose

The Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Denver Public Schools and Denver Public Schools Foundation are proud to co-produce the 34th annual DPS Shakespeare Festival. Our 30+ years in the community offers a common history. Our focus on great theatre classics provides a shared vision. And our commitment to engage youth through theatre education motivates us with a unified purpose. Together we will combine history’s greatest plays with passionate teachers and inspired young actors to expose thousands of students and spectators to the joy of live theatre.

About the DPS Shakespeare Festival

The mission of the DPS Shakespeare Festival is to provide a whole child experience in the arts that is available to 100% of DPS students. The Festival will present a joyful, rigorous, and fun exploration of Denver’s rich culture of collaboration and community. Learn more: shakespeare.dpsk12.org.

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 engaged with more than 1.1 million guests through 49 productions, 937 performances and 233 events. Learn more: denvercenter.org.

About Denver Public Schools

Denver Public Schools 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 K-12. DPS is comprised of more than 200 schools with an enrollment of 90,000+ students. It is the fastest-growing urban school district in the U.S. in terms of enrollment and the fastest-growing large school district in Colorado in terms of academic growth. Learn more: dpsk12.org.

About Denver Public Schools Foundation

The Denver Public Schools Foundation is the strategic fundraising partner to DPS and catalyzes change for our students and schools. We invest in accelerating progress; we connect the community to our classrooms; and we inspire confidence in the promise of public education for DPS’ more than 92,000 students and nearly 200 schools. Learn more at dpsfoundation.org.