

"This was a great experience that each kid my age should have."

- Bartlett Ninth Grade Academy student



EVALUATION SUMMARY 2019-20

PERFORMANCES OF ROMEO AND JULIET IN THE PROJECT

		# of	# of Total	# of Total
	School	Performances	Students	Adults
1	Germantown HS (SCS Title 1)	3	491	5
2	White Station HS (SCS Title 1)	1	508	6
3	Bartlett Ninth Grade Academy (Title 1)	2	694	6
4	Soulsville Charter School	1	108	1
5	East HS (SCS Title 1)	1	163	2
	Hope Academy (Partnership between SCS			
6	and Shelby County Juvenile Court)	1	25	6
7	Houston HS	1	466	4
8	Avon Lenox HS (SCS, Special Education)	1	100	30
9	Hutchison School	1	87	1
10	Bolton HS (SCS Title 1)	1	169	2
11	Kingsbury HS (SCS Title 1)	1	380	4
	Martin Luther King College Preparatory HS			
12	(Charter School)	1	167	2
13	Craigmont HS (SCS Title 1)	1	210	2
14	Concord Academy (Special Education)	1	58	3
15	A. Maceo Walker MS (SCS Title 1)	1	817	20
16	Campus School *SM	1	33	3
17	Grahamwood Elementary (SCS Title 1) *SM		55	3
18	Panola Homeschool Co-op *SM		22	1
19	John P. Freeman (SCS Title 1) *SM		18	2
	Memphis Academy of Science and			
20	Engineering (Charter School) *SM		26	3
21	Homeschool *SM	1	70	6
	TOTALS	20	4,667	112

^{*}SM- Student Matinee (1 performance for all listed schools)

SCS: Shelby County School. Title 1: As stated by the US Department of Education, "Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended (ESEA) provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards."

ROMEO AND JULIET PROJECT COMPLETED/ CONFIRMED PARTNER SCHOOLS

	School # of Performances		# of Total Sessions	# of Total Students
1	Germantown HS (SCS Title 1)	3	72	491
2	White Station HS (SCS Title 1)	1	75	508
3	Bartlett Ninth Grade Academy (Title 1)	2	87	694
4	Ridgeway HS (SCS Title 1)	0	36	236
5	Soulsville Charter School	1	15	108
6	East HS (SCS Title 1)	1	30	163
7	Hope Academy (Partnership between SCS and Shelby County Juvenile Court)	1	6	25
8	Hamilton HS (SCS Title 1)	0	12	141
9	Houston HS	1	60	466
10	Hutchison School	1	15	87
11	Collierville MS	0	17	292
12	West Collierville MS	0	17	363
13	Sheffield HS (SCS Title 1)	0	18	176
14	Bolton HS (SCS Title 1)	1	21	169
15	Martin Luther King College Preparatory HS (Charter School)	1	27	167
	TOTALS	13	508	4,086





PROJECT TOTALS

Total # of Project Performances:	20
Total # of Schools Performed for:	21
Total # of Students Performed for:	4,667
Total # of Project Schools Completed:	24
Total # of Project Schools (Completed & Confirmed):	26
Total # of Sessions (Completed):	430
Total # of Sessions (Completed & Confirmed):	
Total # of Unique Adults Served:	145
Total # of Unique Students Served:	

HOW PROJECT STUDENTS RESPONDED ON THE COMPASSION SCALE

Total of 4,728 Assessments

1. I am equipped with some tools to help avoid a violent situation.

There was a 58% increase in the percentage of students who answered "Yes"

2. If I ever have thoughts of harming myself, I know where I can find help to get me through the moment alive.

There was an 11% increase in the percentage of students who answered "Yes"

3. The struggles of the characters in Romeo and Juliet are relevant to me.

There was a 24% increase in the percentage of students who answered "Yes"



ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT

Out of 16 Project Educators surveyed, all 16 said their students were more engaged in their study of *Romeo and Juliet* as a result of TSC participation. Out of those same 16 Educators surveyed, four said that their students had a full-letter grade increase due to participation in the Project, six said students had a half-letter grade increase, and one said students had a two-letter grade increase.

<u>Data Comparison from Bartlett Ninth Grade Academy Educator, Dolly Staten</u> *Hope, Despair, and Memory* Culminating Essay vs. *Romeo and Juliet* Culminating Essay Project

Class Period	HDM Essay Project	R+J Essay Project	% Increase
	(class %)	(class %)	
2 nd (honors)	99	100	1
3 rd (honors)	97	100	3
4 th (standard)	80	92	12
5 th (standard)	83	88	5
6 th (standard)	83	93	10

[&]quot;This chart shows the comparison of scores for similar culminating projects that students completed for two units of study. Both assignments required students to participate in discussions about the texts that were read, and then complete an essay task.

"Even though the essay prompt for the *Romeo and Juliet* unit was more difficult, there was evidence of an increase in the students' overall level of success, engagement in discussion, and reasoning in every class period. This increase was more obvious in the standard classes, where students tend to struggle the most on writing tasks.

"In addition to quantitative data, I observed deep conversations between the students about the text that were not observed with the previous unit. The students' overall engagement was higher. Students cared more about the characters. They cried for the fictional characters and were able connect this text to other relevant texts, as well."

Data Provided by Kelly Geer, Educator at Bartlett Ninth Grade Academy

"My students worked on collaborative kinesthetic projects that tied the thematic interpretation of the play to direct citation to reinforce standards of analysis, synthesization, and evaluation of text using direct citation and my scholars (126 in total) all completed the project with 80% earning above a 90%.

"Scholars at the academy must take a semester one midterm exam at the close of the semester in December, and 80% of my midterm was on Renaissance literature and these types of questions are called "strategic thinking questions;" they require scholars to utilize their higher-order thinking skills. The data for the midterm reflects approximately 80% of my scholars earned above an 85% with a straight grading scale. The informal and formal assessment data supports and proves the instrumental role TSC plays in the academic and instructional process."

MINORITY PERCENTAGES BY PROJECT HIGH SCHOOL

(for entire school population; participating Freshman minority student percentage is higher)

- 1. Germantown HS 85%
- 2. Bartlett Ninth Grade Academy 41%
- 3. Bolton HS 85%
- 4. Ridgeway HS 98%
- 5. East HS 99%
- 6. Kingsbury HS 89%
- 7. Craigmont HS 98%
- 8. White Station HS 69%
- 9. MLK Prep 99%
- 10. Hamilton HS 100%
- 11. Houston HS 30%
- 12. Concord Academy 20%
- 13. Hope Academy -Unknown estimated 100%

- 14. Soulsville Charter 100%
- 15. Hutchison School 21%
- 16. Collierville MS 27%
- 17. West Collierville MS 45%
- 18. Sheffield HS 99%
- 19. Avon Lenox HS 91%
- 20. A. Maceo Walker MS 100%
- 21. Campus School 33%
- 22. Grahamwood Elementary 67%
- 23. Homeschool Groups Unknownestimated 60%
- 24. John P. Freeman 100%
- 25. Memphis Academy of Science and Engineering 99%

Average: 74.2%

WHAT THE TEACHERS SAY:

"TSC is a fundamental part of keeping our students engaged, interested, and motivated on a literary text that for many of our scholars would otherwise be considered 'uncool'! After the first lesson with TSC, my scholars kept asking me, 'When are they coming back?' They were so excited and inspired by the process. I even had scholars preclude absences because they did not want to miss the coming lessons with TSC. What this organization does for our student community is beyond words. They bring historical context and literature to life and they engage young imaginations and support the development of their creative intelligence. It's an unforgettable experience." - Kelly Geer, Bartlett Ninth Grade Academy

"This experience is definitely needed. The arts are a critical part of the learning experience. Students need to internalize plays not only in the readings, but performances as well."

- Fredricka Vaughn, Bolton HS

"The TSC program is a huge asset to the instruction of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Students who are normally distracted or uninterested will actively participate and engage in the lesson. In fact, one student, who has not completed any assignments in the last month, volunteered every time to play a character and even made a B on the exam for the play, a feat I was surprised to see. The TSC presentation was the most successful and helpful activity in my teaching of Freshman English each year." - **Tracy Duckworth**, **White Station HS** "This class tends to be very quiet and resistant to speaking out loud. The actors were able to pull them out of their shells. The students were excited to participate, and the actors were able to get even the quietest students up and participating. The students were all smiles when they left the class." - **Dolly Staten**, **Bartlett Ninth Grade Academy**

"The Project brought our study of Shakespeare to life! It made the students relax and enjoy the story and the language. I had one student who was afraid to act, and after she did, she felt so brave. At this point, I can't imagine teaching the play without the support of the project." - Amy Lawrence, Hutchison School

"The Romeo and Juliet Project is a highly beneficial program that increases engagement, comprehension, and personal investment in students' study of the play. They have fun while studying the complex language of Shakespeare. The Project makes the issues, decisions, and emotions of the characters relevant to students as they discuss topics from young love and parental



relationships to more serious topics like grief, death, and suicide. I see students wear their 'stay not, be gone, live' bracelets, knowing that the play has had a significant impact on them well past our study of the play." - Quinn Kathrineberg, East HS

"The Romeo and Juliet Project is the highlight of my students' unit on *Romeo and Juliet*. I feel like students who do not get to have this experience miss out on enrichment that is vital."

- Elizabeth Fitzgerald, Ridgeway HS

"This is truly a wonderful opportunity to provide not only active engagement in studying Shakespeare, but it also provides my students of color a wonderful opportunity to see actors and actresses of color playing Shakespearean roles, and provides crucial conversation starters about gender roles and norms that facilitate defeating stereotypes and assumptions my students have about themselves and others." - Samara Francisco, Soulsville Charter School

WHAT THE STUDENTS SAY:

"Students are different individually and have different needs. Tennessee Shakespeare helps fulfill those needs for each student: for kids that need hands-on learning, Tennessee Shakespeare acts out scenes; for the student who needs a visual aid, Tennessee Shakespeare offers the play; and for the child who needs to hear the play to understand, seeing the play and acting out scenes help them. Every student gains from this experience. Tennessee Shakespeare makes learning Shakespeare fun. As a student with Dyslexia and ADHD, it is hard for me to process information I read, and with Shakespeare being written in old English, it makes it even harder for me to process. Many kids, including myself, feel frustrated because it is hard to read, causing a student not to pay attention or give it their all. Having a person act out the play makes it more entertaining and easier to understand. Tennessee Shakespeare offers a fun learning experience for all types of students. It is a helpful program that I hope the grades below me get to have."

- Hutchison School student



STUDENT PROMPTS:

Choose one character from the play that made decisions that led to negative outcomes. Please help that character by offering alternate choices that might lead to a positive outcome.

- Tybalt. If Tybalt could have put away his pride and stepped away from the fight with Romeo, everyone would probably still be alive. **Bolton High School student**
- Romeo He did not have to fight with and kill Tybalt, which led to other events in the play. Stop and think about whether you should fight. Just cool off and back away.
 - White Station High School student
- Romeo killed himself instead of going to find help. I would tell him to find a trusted adult and tell them what's going on. White Station High School student
- Tybalt, take deep breaths and use your mind in more perspectives than your own. Know that hate and fury often lead nowhere. Bartlett Ninth Grade Academy student

What did you learn from The Romeo and Juliet Project experience?

- Stay Not, Be Gone, Live. Soulsville Charter School student
- I learned that holding grudges is never a good idea, especially because it can lead to unnecessary violence. White Station High School student
- That I never want to do what Romeo and Juliet did. Soulsville Charter School student
- Not to do things off impulse. Soulsville Charter School student
- I learned that your choices impact you in the future. Soulsville Charter School student
- Life is worth living. White Station High School student
- You might not think it, but you do matter. White Station High School student
- From the Romeo and Juliet experience, I learned that death is never the answer. You should never want to harm yourself or others. Soulsville Charter School student
- That all situations can have a positive outcome as long as you keep a calm mind and think before you act. **Bolton High School student**
- Shakespeare IS relevant today. Hutchison student
- I learned that I can find help and not harm myself. White Station High School student
- I learned the meaning of many phrases from Shakespeare and learned the experience of the characters. White Station High School student
- You can't let temporary feelings and situations cause you to make a permanent and detrimental decision. Bartlett Ninth Grade Academy student

Is there a character in the play you identify with? If so whom, and will you please share with us why?

Tybalt, because he is seen as hotheaded and violent, but maybe if someone saw past that
and guided him he would realize he is a good person. - White Station High School
student

During this last prompt, we received a student response that said, "I identify with Juliet in the end of the scene killing herself." TSC immediately scanned and emailed the response to the Project School Educator. The Educator also acted immediately to identify the student and send them to the Guidance Counselor. We received this response from the School: "The student admitted that they have been thinking about suicide but did not have a plan. They had been thinking about the break coming up but were not sure what or how to do it. The Educator was able to get them to the counselor and she was able to get them to talk. They will be getting services when we come back after break. Without your project, we may have never known. They used the survey and got the help that they needed."

What did you enjoy about TSC's presentation of *Romeo and Juliet*? (Bartlett Ninth Grade Academy Students)

- It was great. Most of the time I stuttered because the language is hard but I really wanted to put my best into the performance because I didn't want that once in a lifetime day to go to waste. They helped me get out of my comfort zone in 3 days.
- I really enjoyed getting to act out each scene, and it made learning the material easier. I learned to see from the perspectives of each person and not just who did something wrong and who was innocent.
- I learned that Friar Lawrence can actually be scared of something. At first, just reading the book, it didn't seem like he would be but with them acting it out you could feel how scared he was.
- They brought the words to life.
- I learned that every single life matters and is important, no matter who you are.
- It was enic.
- They encouraged kids to stand up and act while creating a safe and comfortable environment.



Student Quotes regarding Performance:

"The performance of *Romeo and Juliet* was exciting and fun to watch. The actors did such a splendid job of captivating me and pulling me into the story." - **Avon Lenox 9th Grade student**

"I was nervous but you changed me. It was hilarious! TN Shakespeare Co. is the best."

- Concord Academy 6th Grade student

"This has probably been the best play I've ever seen! One way to describe it is a mini-hidden Broadway." - Concord Academy 7th Grade student

"Everyone's performance in the play was excessively exquisite. Everyone did a marvelous job. They really breathed life into the characters they played." - Concord Academy 10th Grade student



(First Row, Left to Right: JD Jenkins, Symone Williams, Emily Edwards and Harrison Blount; Second Row, Left to Right: Simmery Branch, Alison Letsos, Marquis Archuleta, Emily McCormick, John Ross Graham, Brianna Roche, and Ural Grant)

WHAT PROJECT TEACHING-ACTORS SAY:

"One of the things I loved about The Romeo and Juliet Project was that it allowed me to do what I love in a positive environment while also allowing me to introduce younger people to the world of theatre. The biggest reward came from watching students learn how to work through their feelings and tough situations through the arts." - Simmery Branch

"When the show ended at Avon Lenox High School, the students rushed up on stage to give us hugs, ask questions, and take selfies. They literally welcomed us with open arms. On that day, to those students, we were all superheroes." - **Brianna Roche**

"RJP was truly a game-changer for me! It not only challenged me as an actor but also helped to develop me as an educator. Thanks RJP...I am a better artist because of you!" - Ural Grant

"Once when teaching session 2, I had a student who was very quiet the entire class period. As I tried to engage the entire class during discussion, it seemed to me that he was uninterested in the material. However, at the end of class when I needed someone to play Lord Montague, his hand was the first to shoot in the air. It may have taken him a little longer than others, but as he saw more and more of his classmates get on their feet and speak the text, he became more comfortable and confident himself. I believe that our sessions empower students like this young man to be heard, and approach classical text with confidence." - Emily McCormick

"Towards the end of my class when I was teaching Session 3, we talked to the students about resources they can connect with if they ever feel at risk of being suicidal, or even if they just need someone to talk with them about anything they are going through. I always tried to focus on how much they matter to me and to their community, and how special they each are. After class, one of students came up to me and said, 'Thank you for being here today. I really needed to hear that' and gave me a hug. I think that's what this project is all about. Connecting with each other through Shakespeare's words, and using his words to help us find our own so that we can use them for the good of each other." - Emily Edwards

