

ROMEO AND JULIET PROJECT PARTNER SCHOOLS

School	Sessions	Students	Performances
1. East HS (Memphis-Shelby County Schools Title 1*)	24	122	1
2. Bartlett Ninth Grade Academy (Title 1)	87	713	0
3. Concord Academy (Special Education)	3	7 for Teaching Sessions	72 students in 1 Performance
4. Rossville Christian Academy	15	84	1
5. Fayette Academy	9	33	1
6. Hope Academy (Partnership between Shelby County Juvenile Court and MSCS)	3	16	1
7. Memphis Business Academy (Charter School)	18	121 for Teaching Sessions	236 students in 1 Performance
8. Houston HS	57	437	2
9. Crosstown HS (Charter School)	18	131	1
10. University HS (Laboratory School of the University of Memphis)	12	76	0
11. Avon Lenox HS (MSCS Special Education)	0	80	1
12. Harding Academy	9	52	1
13. Southwind HS (MSCS Title 1*)	0	650	1
13 Total Partner Schools	255 Sess.	2,702 Students	12 Perfs.

STUDENT MATINEES OF *ROMEO AND JULIET*

School	Students	Performances
1. Horn Lake HS	22	March 1 Matinee
2. Homeschoolers	3	“
3. Coleman Elementary (Charter School)	45	March 8 Matinee
4. Classical Conversations	15	“
5. Tipton-Rosemark Academy	41	“
6. Senatobia HS	13	“
7. Homeschoolers	3	“
8. Hanley School (Charter School)	37	March 10 Matinee
9. Mississippi Homeschool Life	43	“
10. Anchor Point Academy	16	“
11. Homeschoolers	5	“
11 Total School Groups	243 Students	3 Matinees

PROJECT TOTALS

OF SCHOOLS SERVED 24
OF SESSIONS TAUGHT 255
OF UNIQUE STUDENTS SERVED 2,945
OF PERFORMANCES 15
OF POINTS OF CONTACT 8,321

WHAT EDUCATORS HAVE TO SAY

Out of 11 Project Educators surveyed, all said that students were more engaged in their study of the play as a result of TSC's participation. Six Educators said that their students had a half-letter grade increase, and one said that their students had a full-letter grade increase due to participation in the Project. All Educators said that they would like to participate in the Project again next year.

"I have only taught *Romeo and Juliet* with Tennessee Shakespeare Company, so I can't really imagine teaching this play without them. RJP is an essential piece of scaffolding in students' understanding of the play. RJP offers highly engaging experiences and academic learning which is especially important for some of my struggling readers who rely on the sessions for the majority of their content knowledge. In today's ELA teaching context, there is much discussion around 'disrupting the canon' by scaffolding with contemporary texts or altogether eliminating texts because these canonical texts typically do not reflect the identities and experiences of today's students. I have come to rely on RJP as my justification for teaching *Romeo and Juliet* because of the ways they disrupt the canon with their pedagogy through interactive learning, emotional engagement, and academic rigor. At the end of our RJP experience, students are highly knowledgeable of the plot of the play and relevant connections to their own lives."

- Quinn Kathrineberg, Crosstown HS

"*The Romeo and Juliet Project* affected my students academically in that they succeeded in their assessments regarding information covered in the workshop; they were better at identifying characters that they had played out during the project, and the final play helped them succeed in their unit test. It is so important to the students and crucial to their learning. It is immeasurable how the Project impacts the students and stands out to them as a beacon of learning during their high school years." - **Camille Maynard, Memphis Business Academy**

"I believe the students were engaged more with *Romeo and Juliet* due to the actors visiting our class. Their test grades trended higher than normal for this unit! This experience brings the play *Romeo and Juliet* to life and allows a field trip experience for students. The actors are phenomenal and do a wonderful job explaining the delicate themes of the story. I think the experience is valuable for all students." - **Hannah Harris, Bartlett Ninth Grade Academy**

"Thank you for supporting Tennessee Shakespeare Company. Their work is meaningful, and it is making a difference with students' interest in Shakespeare. It did spark more discussion about teenage dating and suicide." - **Sheron Hicks, Bartlett Ninth Grade Academy**

"The Project is a boon to our study of the play. It increases students' engagement with and enjoyment of the play. At the end of the year, students often cite *Romeo and Juliet* as their favorite unit of the year, with Tennessee Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet Project* being a key factor. Outside of COVID interruptions, we've participated in the Project every year I've been at Houston, and I want all our 9th graders to have the opportunity to participate in the experience." - **Houston HS Educator**

“I love this experience! This is the second year my school has participated in this project. My students love having TSC actors from outside the school come and teach them. They say it is so much easier to understand and they enjoy it. I learn something new about the story every year, and I believe my students are better off because of this project.” - **Emmy Lutrick, Fayette Academy**

“I wish I would have had access to this kind of thing when I was in school. Not only do the students love it and learn to appreciate Shakespeare and his writing more, I have benefitted from the fun educational aspect of it as well! The discussions we had were GREAT! Everyone participated, offered opinions, stated points that would have been relevant to the history as well as points relevant to youth today. I love how you help bring Shakespeare to life for today’s students (especially those who are sure they don’t like him and end up loving him). For some of our students, this is their only exposure to live theatre. I can’t think of a better experience for them to have!” - **Christi Marin, Concord Academy**

“Students were undeniably more engaged with the text and storyline in *Romeo and Juliet*. They enjoyed working with the actors and actresses, who were so skilled at engaging students meaningfully. Thank you so much for this awesome opportunity!” - **Lauren Moore, Rossville Christian Academy**

“Having students on their feet acting out scenes from the play is valuable to their understanding, not only of the play itself but also of the actor's craft. Students will remember this experience long after they have forgotten class lectures. I believe they will remember this experience positively and therefore will feel more confident in the future when reading or seeing any Shakespeare play. *Romeo and Juliet* was made relevant for them, and therefore Shakespeare is now more accessible to them. I think the impact of this experience will be far-reaching for my students in the most positive of ways -- encouraged them to think through conflicts took the mystery out of reading and understanding Shakespeare and gave them opportunities to discover a potential new passion. This made the play come alive for my students.” - **Melissa Ammons, Harding Academy**

“The students love this! They actually look forward to exploring the play and acting out the scenes with the actors and their peers. A play is meant to be seen and heard, not just read. This is the best way!” - **Mary Frost, Bartlett Ninth Grade Academy**

WHAT TSC TEACHING-ARTISTS HAVE TO SAY

“In one of the classes I taught at Houston, there was a quiet student who sat in the corner of the classroom for most of Session 3. When it came time for us to call up our last group of student actors, they volunteered to play Romeo and offered really insightful thoughts as we discussed the end of the play. Watching their transformation, even over a 50-minute period, was a testament to the comfort and opportunity this text/module can provide.” - **Kellan Oelkers**

“After one of the shows, some students came up to talk to the cast. I remember them saying how cool it was to have a black Juliet and to be represented.” - **Marquis Dijon Archuleta**

“I am honored to teach *The Romeo and Juliet Project* at Concord Academy, a Special Education school in Memphis. All students are able to participate fully in our classroom sessions. Witnessing the joy that is sparked by acting out Shakespeare's words is unparalleled. Confidence is built throughout the three sessions and these students have the chance to just be and know that they too can relish in the power of role-play and performance. Inclusion is at the core of TSC's mission and this Project is truly accessible to all.” - ***Cara Geissler***

“What was extremely meaningful to me was watching the students’ reactions in the classroom. Seeing them connect the dots of characters’ thought processes, realizing the outcomes that could have been avoided, and commenting on how they understood the language better all show a wonderful amount of engagement. The work we do resonates with these students. There are true moments of realization and enlightenment that occur within the classrooms. Verbal exclamations, expressions of shock and wonder, and active questions. Seeing and hearing these students react to performances showed that our messages and modules got across to them. I believe that this project has the power to influence these young people to improve and reflect upon their communities and themselves.” - ***Allison Hesselberg***

WHAT STUDENTS HAVE TO SAY

Total of 676 Assessments:

- 95% of students rarely or never see any live theatre performances.
- 99% of students rarely or never see Shakespeare performances.
- 88% of students said they were more interested in the study of *Romeo and Juliet* due to TSC’s classroom-led sessions.
- 90% of students were able to see Shakespeare as more relevant than before due to the *Romeo and Juliet Project*.

Student Responses to the following prompt:

Please share one thing you learned from The Romeo and Juliet Project:

“Thanks for helping me excel in the role of Juliet and teaching us all about the play. We love and appreciate you so much.” - ***Concord Academy student***

“Thank you for coming. You made me come out of my comfort zone and no one has done that before. I felt safe around you.” - ***Concord Academy student***

“I have learned to view Romeo and Juliet as real people, not just fictional characters, but rather people who experience emotions and events just like me!” - ***East High School Student***

“It's easier to pay attention and learn when you're not sitting at a book and reading.” - ***Bartlett Ninth Grade Academy Student***

“One thing I've learned from the Project was there are resources to get help if you're in a dark place.” - ***Bartlett Ninth Grade Academy Student***

“I've learned A-LOT more in The Romeo and Juliet Project from TSC than what I was used to and I really appreciate it. When I got volunteered to play a role, I was a bit nervous because the lines were hard, but I enjoyed every minute of it.” - ***Bartlett Ninth Grade Academy Student***

“Shakespeare is more interesting and funny than I could've imagined.” - ***Houston High School Student***

“I did learn more about the characters, and it was easier to understand the story when you're seeing it in action or even playing in it for yourself. Makes it a whole lot more fun and experience-able.” - ***Houston High School Student***

“I learned that I really love the theatre.” - ***Fayette Academy Student***

###