

# *Bucks County Shakespeare Festival*

## Information for Administrators

The study of Shakespeare can often be an onerous task—for student and teacher. Students sit at desks, reading aloud in a monotone, and the teacher tries to explain, encourage, and excite.

The Bucks County Intermediate Unit will facilitate a student performance festival open to high school students across Bucks County. Troupes from schools will perform self-selected scenes and participate in inter-school workshops. Students will interpret, memorize, design, create, and perform Shakespeare's original text. Participation in the festival will give students an authentic, real-world experience interpreting complex text, collaborating, creating, experimenting, and making.

The Royal Shakespeare Company and the Folger Shakespeare Library have led the way in challenging and changing the traditional teaching of Shakespeare in classrooms. As the RSC says, "We believe that young people get the most out of Shakespeare's plays when they work on them actively, speaking the text aloud." Their research supports that a performance-based study of Shakespeare increases student understanding, appreciation, and creativity. In addition to the academic gains, students also develop key traits such as confidence, leadership, resilience, and empathy for diverse people and approaches. The Folger Shakespeare Library promotes a philosophy of teaching that encourages teachers to get students on their feet, emphasizing that students need to connect to the language directly and kinesthetically.

The Folger holds a Student Shakespeare Festival each year during which thousands of Washington, D. C. area kids perform scenes from Shakespeare's plays. The productions are simple, with primary focus on the language. Sets, costumes, and props are minimal and suggestive of time, place, and symbol. The students perform for each other, with the audience enjoined to be supportive. It is a celebration not a contest.

The inaugural Bucks County Student Shakespeare Festival will be held on May 30, 2017 at William Tennent High School. The Festival will run from 8:00 to 4:00, in order to ensure that all participating schools will be able to perform. RELA teachers will receive additional updated details about the requirements, registration, fees, and schedule. Information will be available on the Bucks County I. U. webpage.

For more information, please contact Janemarie Cloutier [clouja@centennialsd.org](mailto:clouja@centennialsd.org)



*The Play's the Thing*

