

# PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



*Paterson – A Promising Tomorrow  
Together We Can*

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## **RODNEY MARSALIS INTRODUCES SCHOOL 28 STUDENTS TO THE MUSIC AND HISTORY OF JAZZ**

*Member of world-famous jazz family gives workshop at district's gifted and talented academy*

PATERSON – The different instruments of a brass ensemble, the unique characteristics of jazz, and the history of the great Marsalis family were among the lessons learned during a special workshop on March 22 provided by jazz trumpet virtuoso Rodney Marsalis at Public School No. 28/The Paterson Academy of the Gifted and Talented (PAGT).

The workshop, initiated through a partnership with the Berrie Center of the Arts at Ramapo College of New Jersey, was made possible through the Arts Education Special Initiative Program (AESI), a two-year grant program within the New Jersey State Council on the Arts that will provide \$11,670 annually to support innovative arts education projects that make substantial contributions to arts education in New Jersey. The Marsalis workshop was the first live event introduced to Public School No. 28 as part of the grant.

“This was a wonderful experience for our students at School 28,” said Superintendent of Schools Eileen F. Shafer. “For our students to be exposed to a live performance of jazz, America’s native-born artform broadens their horizons and sparks their musical interests. To have today’s lessons brought to our students by such an accomplished virtuoso who happens to be a member of America’s first family of jazz is truly a wonderful experience for them. I want to thank Mr. Marsalis for taking time out of his busy schedule to be with our students today, as well as everyone at the Berrie Center of the Arts at the Ramapo College of New Jersey who made this event possible.”

“The goals of this project are to create direct encounters between students at School 28 and a Berrie Center guest performing artist and to present a diverse group of artistic disciplines that support the learning goals of the school’s art curriculum,” said Berrie Center Director Lisa Campbell. “The program also hopes to provide opportunities for students to engage with artists from different cultural backgrounds exploring content from different life experiences and expose students to the opportunities provided by an education in the arts and how those experiences can lead to careers.”

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During the workshop, Marsalis taught the students the different instruments of a brass ensemble: the trumpet, the French horn, the trombone, and the tuba.

Marsalis also gave a bit of the history of his world-famous family whose notoriety began with its patriarch, Ellis Marsalis. His motel, which opened during the segregation of the Jim Crow era, hosted many notable African-Americans including Ray Charles, Cab Calloway, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Thurgood Marshall.

The New Orleans-based Marsalis family is also revered as jazz royalty. Ellis Marsalis' first son, Ellis Jr., became a renowned jazz pianist and teacher. His sons, Wynton and Branford, achieved their own notoriety as a trumpet player and a saxophone player, respectively.

Rodney Marsalis is also a New Orleans native who began taking classical trumpet lessons with his cousin, Wynton, at the age of 11. A graduate of one of the world's leading conservatories, The Curtis Institute of Music, Rodney Marsalis has worked under the guidance of many world-renowned conductors including Leonard Bernstein, and he received national attention at the age of 19 when he performed as a soloist with John Williams conducting the Boston Pops Orchestra.

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