



Fontana Unified School District

Every Student Successful, Engaging Schools, Empowered Communities

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NEWS RELEASE

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Fontana Unified Theatre CTE Program Earns Top Honors at CETA High School Theatre Festival

FONTANA, CA – Kaiser High School’s Career Technical Education (CTE) Visual and Performing Arts Theatre students turned months of creativity and collaboration into statewide recognition, earning first place at the California Educational Theatre Association (CETA) High School Theatre Festival with their production of “The Adventures of Pericles,” by William Shakespeare, where Fontana students surpassed 20 performing arts programs from across the region.

Kaiser’s CTE students transformed their school’s multipurpose room into a reimagined, immersive theater space, where they brought the production to life. The award reflects three intensive months of student-led work, including designing and constructing the set, creating costumes, engineering lighting, and managing front-of-house operations. Additional Fontana Unified School District competing schools also performed strongly at the festival, with Jurupa Hills and Fontana high schools each earning second-place finishes in their respective divisions.

“This program proves that theater isn’t defined by the building you’re in, it is defined by the work you do inside the space,” Kaiser High School Theatre Director Wendi Johnson said. “Our students created a professional-level experience from the ground up, and they did it by committing to one another, honoring the text, and taking ownership of every detail. To have that recognized at the state level is incredibly meaningful.”

Johnson, the sole instructor overseeing Kaiser’s theater program, led students through more than 200 hours of rehearsal and production work, including extensive study of Shakespearean language and performance technique. Approximately 60% of the cast had never performed on stage before, yet students navigated complex staging, multiple sword-fight sequences, and a condensed adaptation of Shakespeare’s rarely produced play due to its notorious staging and story difficulties.

Judges evaluated productions on acting, directing, technical execution, professionalism, and overall audience experience, ultimately naming Kaiser’s performance a standout and must-see for all festival attendees.

Kaiser High School junior, Silver Martinez, who performed as part of the ensemble, said the experience was transformative.

“This is the first time I’ve ever gotten first place in anything,” Martinez said. “It took a lot of work, but being part of this program has helped me build confidence and find a community where everyone supports each other.”

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Kaiser's theater program is a student-driven company, emphasizing collaboration, leadership, and professional standards while preparing students for careers in the performing arts and related fields. The award-winning production will be performed to the public again on Jan. 17, at Fullerton Union High School.

"Here we are in a cafeteria with kids who are struggling – students in foster care, students dealing with extreme shyness, anxiety, and learning challenges – and every single student is working together to create something bigger than themselves," Johnson said. "At the end of the show, every student was in tears with big smiles, because they knew they had done something bigger than themselves, and the audience stood without hesitation. To have all three judges give a standing ovation in a cafeteria was profound and awe-inspiring."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

KAISER_CETA_FESTIVAL1: Kaiser High School's CTE Theatre program earned top honors at the CETA Theatre Festival, outperforming 20 theatre programs in the region with their production of "The Adventures of Pericles" by William Shakespeare.

KAISER_CETA_FESTIVAL2: Kaiser High School's CTE Theatre students transformed their multipurpose room into a fully functional and immersive theatre experience.

KAISER_CETA_FESTIVAL3: Kaiser High School's Theatre CTE program functions as a student-led company that emphasizes collaboration, leadership, and industry-aligned professional standards in preparation for careers in the performing arts.

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