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Detroit public school students learn dance from Alvin Ailey Dance Theater

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DETROIT (FOX 2) - Students at Detroit Public Schools Community District put books and computer screens aside to learn about dance Thursday.

At the renowned Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, students are learning to dream big.

"I love dance and I like when I'm feeling low, I like to dance my way out of my feelings," said Janiya Kennedy, Thurgood Marshall Elementary School.

The backstory:

Students at the Detroit Public Schools Community District's Thurgood Marshall were learning techniques from the dance theater on Thursday before the Alvin Ailey dance theater hits the stage at the Detroit Opera, March 14-16th.

"This residency is a week-long residency, and the students get well-rounded knowledge of both the organization and creative movement as just as Mr. Ailey did," said Kim Smith of Detroit Opera.

"Young people are learning about Alvin Ailey," said Nasha Thomas, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. "His life, his legacy, his signature ballet revelations. They are dancing, thinking, they're writing and expressing themselves."

Alvin Ailey was an African American dancer and choreographer who helped document the Black experience through dance.

These workshops in schools help continue Ailey's legacy and provide students with a ticket to an upcoming dance theater's performance at Detroit opera.

"We're looking at middle school students right now but this is our next generation of dancer," said Andrew McGuire, DPSCD.

The partnership also shows students that dance is more than movement - it's an outlet that shows them what is possible, if they believe.

"When I was younger all I wanted to do was dance and all I did was dance," said Adrianna McMullen, Thurgood Marshall student. "And now that I'm older, I'm able to do that- and I'm proud that I can."