

## I champion Albany public schools because...

### **The opportunity:**

“What may have started as unfocused talent flourished into a successful career in music composition and performance, thanks to the City School District of Albany and community opportunities. Educators recognized the passion early on and offered lessons and the chance to bring home instruments to practice. Music education and performance in ensembles exposed me to other cultures and genres.

“The broad education I received in the Albany public schools has served me in all aspects of my life. A memorable math teacher transformed trigonometry struggles into a lifelong fascination with mathematics. As a member, and eventually captain, of the wrestling team, I learned important lessons in discipline, drive and healthy competitiveness.”

### **The achievement:**

“Every day I do what I love. I write music, I play music, I teach music. I believe that you’re born with raw talent and intellect, but it’s the broader community – school, family, community organizations – that identifies this potential and provides the tools and opportunities to manifest it in a fulfilling and productive way. I was lucky to have a supportive family, a connection with church and youth organizations (like the Empire State Youth Orchestra) and a school district that guided me.”



**Stefon Harris, Albany High School, Class of 1991  
Grammy Award-Nominated Vibraphonist and  
Composer**

**The *Los Angeles Times* has described Stefon Harris as “one of the most important young artists in jazz.”**

**While earning his undergraduate and graduate degrees at the Manhattan School of Music, Mr. Harris secured his first professional gigs with legendary artists Max Roach, Wynton Marsalis and Cassandra Wilson. He since has toured nationally and internationally as a band leader and played in some of the world’s most celebrated concert halls, including Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall, The Kennedy Center, San Francisco’s Herbst Theater, Chicago’s Symphony Center and the Sydney Opera House.**

**The award-winning musician has released six CDs, three of which earned Grammy nominations. He has premiered commissioned works by the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall and the Wharton Center for Performing Arts at Michigan State University. He is an active educator, conducting more than 100 clinics and lectures annually at colleges and universities throughout the country.**