

EDUCATION MATTERS

Rockaway Township Public Schools



Superintendent's Message

The PTA General Assembly met on Monday, September 14, with 15 attendees, including Board representative Noel Anderson. Key discussions included a recommendation to survey students regarding their perspectives on the new cell phone policy. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for January. The school year is off to a strong start, marked by well-attended and successful Back to School Nights across the district.

Birchwood Interim Principal Shari Castelli has agreed to remain in her role through the end of the school year. Her leadership continues to support community and staff morale effectively. Establishing a July 1, 2027 start date for a permanent principal offers key strategic advantages for the transition.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Coffee Chat with Superintendent

October 13 6:30 pm
March 16 9:00 am
April 13 6:30 pm
June 8 9:00 am

Please RSVP with the link.

November 6 & 7 - Schools Closed
NJEA Convention



@ROCKAWAYSUPER



Department of Curriculum & Instruction

Preliminary NSLA-A student data is available on the Link It Parent Portal. Each individual school will mail home the Individual Score Report (ISR) on Monday, October 12th. Please be sure to check your mailbox in the coming weeks for the detailed Individual Score Report. If you have any issues logging into Genesis, please contact your individual school.

Curriculum Updates

[District Curricula](#)

[Health & PE Updates/Opt-Out Information](#)

[Health & PE FAQ](#)

[Assessment Calendar](#)

LinkIt!

[How to Register for LinkIt! \(If you have not done so already\).](#)

[LinkIt! Paper Tutorial](#)

[LinkIt! Video Tutorial](#)

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Department of Human Resources

The district is always ready to work with any member of the community in the recruitment and hiring of staff in high-needs positions and we could use your help. We are always seeking the following:

1. Bus drivers
2. Staff Assistants/paraprofessionals
3. Substitute teachers and substitute nurses.

If you or someone you know is interested, please apply on the [district website](#).

If you have any questions, please contact Anita West directly at awest@rocktwp.net or at the school 973-627-8200 ext. 6346

Department of Student Services

The first *Listening Session* was held on Thursday, October 1. Ms. Katie Pietrowski and Ms. Rebecca Garcia did an excellent job explaining the district's approach to student mental health and the support provided. Twelve attended, including Lisa Mezik, Jemila Tourne, and Noel Anderson. The next Listening Session is scheduled for November 16 at 6:00 p.m. in the CMS Library. We will focus on screen time.



Copeland Middle School

Copeland Middle School began the school year with a strong focus on building community, establishing clear expectations, and helping students feel connected to the school. Administrators held grade-level class meetings with all students to review school routines, academic expectations, available supports, opportunities for involvement, and Copeland's H.E.A.R.T. values of Honesty, Empathy, Acceptance, Respect, and Trust. Each meeting was tailored to the developmental needs of the grade level. Sixth graders focused on successfully transitioning to middle school, seventh graders discussed making the most of their Copeland experience through positive choices and growing independence, and eighth graders focused on leadership, finishing middle school strong, and preparing for high school.

The emphasis on school culture continued throughout September. Fifteen students, five from each grade, were recognized as September Students of the Month for demonstrating the H.E.A.R.T. values through their everyday actions and interactions with others. Students also completed the i-Ready Math and ELA diagnostic assessments, and Session 1 after-school clubs began, providing additional opportunities for students to connect with peers and become involved in the school community. Families were also welcomed to Copeland for Back to School Night, where they had the opportunity to meet teachers, learn more about the instructional program, and connect with community organizations.

These efforts reflect Copeland's continued focus on ensuring that students understand expectations, know where to turn for support, and feel a strong sense of belonging within the school community.



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Birchwood Elementary

Birchwood Elementary School students continue to demonstrate enthusiastic engagement across all core subject areas, including English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Beyond the core curriculum, students actively participate in special content areas, including Music, Health, Physical Education, and Art, ensuring a well-rounded educational experience.

Birchwood fosters strong school spirit and community building through a variety of engaging spirit days. Recent spirit day themes include: Patriotism, Crazy Socks, Sports, Sweats, Bright Colors, Class Colors, and School Colors. Additionally, early-year community events such as the Kindergarten Social and a school-wide Dance-Out Day provided wonderful opportunities for students and families to connect and celebrate.

To promote consistent attendance and punctuality, Birchwood launched the new SeaStar of the Day program. Each day, two students are randomly recognized and celebrated for being present and arriving on time to school. Students have also been recognized through numerous Positive Referrals to the Principal, highlighting good choices and helpful behaviors throughout the building. In addition, two outstanding students were selected as Birchwood's "Students of the Month" for September.

This week, Birchwood celebrates the Week of Respect, with lessons and school-wide activities centered on fostering mutual respect, empathy, and positive interpersonal relationships. In recognition of Fire Prevention Month, the local Fire Marshal will visit Birchwood to teach students essential fire safety and prevention practices. Birchwood is excited to welcome a therapy dog to the school twice this month, with visits scheduled for October 8 and October 29, supporting student social-emotional wellness.



Katharine D. Malone Elementary

KDM has had a wonderful start to the school year, with students diving into i-Ready and ELA assessments to provide teachers with valuable baseline data to understand student strengths and areas for growth, and grade-level teams have begun collaborating to use this information to inform instruction and support individual student progress. Many families attended Back to School Night, reinforcing the strong partnership between home and school. The KDM PTA hosted a very successful Candy Bar Bingo for our families. The Week of Respect and annual PTA Walk-a-Thon are exciting future events which will bring our school community together to celebrate teamwork, kindness, and school spirit.



Dennis B. O'Brien Elementary

To start the new school year, **DBO** has focused on establishing strong routines, building positive relationships, and creating a safe, welcoming environment where students feel supported and ready to learn. Classroom instruction includes diagnostic data to help identify student needs and guide instruction. To improve school culture, there is an emphasis on kindness, respect, responsibility, and compassion. In addition, monthly student recognition assemblies include Student of the Month and Caught Bee-ing Good. Family engagement is also a major focus. DBO hosted a successful PTA-sponsored Bee Bash and welcomed families for Back to School Night.

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Catherine A. Dwyer Elementary

Dwyer students have had a wonderful start to the school year and are actively engaged in learning across all grade levels. Kindergarten students are settling into their new school routines and becoming more confident and independent each day. First-grade students have been busy building classroom communities, making new friends, and learning classroom routines and expectations. In second grade, students are strengthening their addition and subtraction fact fluency through engaging activities, including dice games and the use of ten frames. Third-grade students are developing their skills with adding and subtracting three-digit numbers. Students are exploring a variety of strategies, explaining their mathematical thinking, and sharing problem-solving approaches with their classmates. Fourth-grade students are building a strong foundation across all content areas. For example, in Language Arts, students have been developing vocabulary, practicing cursive handwriting, and completing baseline reading assessments. Fifth graders have kicked off the year with a creative application of area and perimeter. Students used their measurement skills to design and create robots, which are now proudly displayed throughout the Dwyer hallways. Across Dwyer, students are building strong routines, developing confidence, and engaging in meaningful learning experiences as they begin the new school year.



Stony Brook Elementary

At Stony Brook School, students and staff arrived on the first day energized and ready to go. Back to School Night was a great success, with many families in attendance. The PTA Family Picnic was another success and gave the school community a wonderful opportunity to come together. Students and staff participated in Red, White, and Blue Day on September 11, proudly showing their patriotism as they remembered and honored the day's significance. The PBSIS Kindness Kick-off was another highlight of the month. Teachers reviewed the school's core values, decorated their new Character Folders, and partnered with a homeroom from another grade level for an activity and snack provided by the PTA. Benchmark assessments have been completed for all students in grades K-5. The data generated through these assessments will help inform instruction and guide efforts moving forward. October promises to be another exciting month at Stony Brook, with many activities and events planned for students and families.

