Little Ferry, New Jersey Volume 1, Issue 1

ROYAL RECORD

8th Grade Student Newspaper

LITTLE FERRY'S NEW CHAPTER

The New School

By - Naseem Yousaf, Freddy Blanco III, William Ticona Bustos



Construction of the Liberty Memorial School, planned to be completed in 2027

As you might know, Little Ferry is building a new middle school because the ceiling of the Washington School was falling apart and the building was getting old. The damages were too much to repair, which led to the school having to be closed down. Now the school is getting rebuilt into a new school for middle school students.

According to the Little Ferry school district website, construction on the new Little Ferry school began on March 10, 2025. It started with an initial $2.50 million, followed by an additional $12.75 million, bringing the total funding to a whopping $15.25 million toward a project with a total cost of $38 million.

The new school will be called “Liberty Middle School” for the 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. After the interview with our principal Mr. Peakler he said that the features in the new school are different from our current middle school. For example, there will be a surface of a soccer field on the rooftop of the school which is something most middle schools don’t have. The new school will have a bigger gym, a big cafeteria, and even larger classrooms. The IDs will be similar to the ones here, and the lockers will be in our school colors blue and yellow.

According to Little Ferry's school website on June 5 to June 30 2025, they finished breaking down the school. On August 13 to September 13 2025, the layout and flooring were in process. Soon after work began on the second and third floor on January 19 and March 9, 2026. The school's plan was to have 3 floors, each floor a different grade. 8th on the first floor, 7th on the second, and 6th on the third (but it was not confirmed yet).

Since the middle school is still in process of being constructed the 8th graders might go to the new school for a month or two, which most likely would be after spring break. Once the school is completed the new middle school will be bigger than the memorial middle school for the older kids and Little Ferry will be a new chapter for the future generations.

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A COMMUNITY CONNECTION

A Striling New Town Community Center
by Arianna Cruz and Mason Bayer

During the autumn, and winter months,it's easy for families to be bored and feel like they have no activities to do. Well thanks to the town, a new community center opened in Little Ferry.



Little Ferry's mayor, Mauro Ragueso stands outside the newly constructed community center

September 25th was the grand opening of the new community center. Right off the bat, the community center welcomed guests to a fun filled event including treat, and an exciting time for families to join together. Mayor Raguseo attended the event, and even posted videos online to spread awareness of the new center. This event truly showed what a thoughtful community Little Ferry is when they come together. Even if Little ferry is small it's mighty. According to the LITTLE FERRY BROAD OF EDUCATION, website, the community center will have different fall programs. For example, on November 7 they plan to host a family zumba class. They even hosted a painting class, welcoming in different families to participate

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During an interview with the mayor himself, students were able to really absorb all of the information on the “Why” for the community center. Mayor Raguseo shared that through all of his years in office, he has heard many different people imagining a place where the town could gather and be one.

Mayor Raguseo even shared that the creation of the center wasn't all that easy. The biggest challenge was making it safe for everybody since the center was developed on an older existing building. Mayor Raguseo made his enthusiasm and support clear, showing how determined he is to make this community center great.

“Little Ferry Community Center, a place where the community meets,” says Mayor Raguseo, a truly moving statement which is written on the sign in front of the center to remind the town how connected the community truly is.

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PRINICPAL FEATURE

The Long Game: 23 Years, 0 Intentions, 1 Prinicpal

By - Nitya Nishika Malempati

“So that's a funny story… I'm not sure.”



Mr. Peakler, the principal of Memorial Middle School in Little Ferry New Jersey

Principal George Peakler had never really planned on running this school. In fact, if you had told him a decade ago that he would be in the chair of the principal for Memorial Middle school, the longtime physical education teacher would have told you he was aiming for a completely different field: high school athletic director.Now in his 23rd year in the district - with six years in school administration (four and a half as principal) - we get to hear how he even wound up in this leather chair.

It really wasn’t ever my goal to become a principal,” he shares candidly. After earning his graduate degree in administration and supervision from Montclair University (where he also completed his undergraduate studies), his eyes were set upon running district athletic programs

“.This changed when he realized that the late hours of being a high school athletic director would force him to miss his own children's games. For this reason, he continued in his current role as a P.E. teacher for the next 15 years in Little Ferry until the universe had different plans.

Mr. Peakler possessed a rare passion for something that most educators dread: a love for scheduling. After stepping up to help former administrators with the new school schedule, Mr. Scarafile, Dr. Hayes, and a few other administrators liked the way he thought, and they later recruited him into this role. Before ultimately accepting the reins as Principal, he served as Dean of Students for two years, followed by a stint as Assistant Principal.

“Sometimes, the path you travel takes you to places you weren't expecting" Mr. Peakler reflects.

When Mr. Peakler first assumed the role, he recognized that Little Ferry's greatest strength was its community of students and faculty. However, he also saw room for improvement. While traditional school models heavily focus on helping struggling students catch up, Mr. Peakler felt that the school wasn't doing enough to push those who were already excelling. Under his leadership, the school started to challenge top students while expanding opportunities for everyone. Mr. Peakler started introducing initiatives such as:

- Growing sports programs from just three options to a full roster including volleyball, boys and girls soccer, cheerleading, basketball, baseball, softball, and track.
- Revamping the Gifted and Talented program, backing student government, and encouraging new initiatives like the Green Team, photography club, and an eSports team.
- Implementing the Honor Roll Breakfast to reward students for doing the right thing.
- Initiating the National Junior Honor Society, something we never had in our district.

Every leadership role comes along with a set of hurdles, and Mr. Peakler identifies discipline and technology as his greatest ongoing challenges. He explains that the transition to one-to-one Chromebooks during remote learning was necessary due to thke pandemic, but the aftermath left an unexpected social decline. "Teachers got so comfortable with doing everything on the computer, and students got so comfortable working on the computer, there wasn't enough interaction," Mr. Peakler notes. Cell phones run along the same lines, and he notices this at school dances when students are sitting next to each other texting rather than talking during school dances. To combat this, Mr. Peakler and fellow staff have worked hard to limit chromebook usage to roughly 10-15 minutes per period, pushing teachers to form more interactive activities for students such as math centers and gallery walks, that are already being used today.

Mr. Peakler is incredibly optimistic about our school's future, pointing to a steady upward trend in state test scores and a surprising rate of acceptance to high schools, such as Bergen Tech. He is also especially eager for the opening of the new middle school building, which will officially separate the 6th, 7th, and 8th graders from the elementary students. He believes this physical separation will give the older students a sense of independence and maturity, helping to curb behavioral issues and open doors to new programs.

Ultimately, Mr. Peakler measures his success by the community relationships he builds. Whether it's shaking hands with high schoolers at the bus stop to catching up with a former student who returned to the building as a ventilation technician, you can tell that his biggest reward as his time being a principal is the impact he made with it.

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SCARLET ENLIGHTMENT

Scarlet for a Day

By Emily Perey & Valeria Torres Stand

You are in 8th grade, on the bus to visit a high school with a group of other 8th graders. Getting off the bus, you see Ridgefield Park Junior-Senior High school. The High School you'll be in the whole school day. You're led inside and paired up with a senior student as your guide, you follow them around according to their schedule, you're called a shadow due to you following your guide wherever they go until you're put back on the bus and sent home. This is Scarlet for a Day, but have you ever wondered what someone's experience is like for both the shadow and the guide?

With the schools Little Ferry Middle School and Ridgefield Park High School, both wanted a way to help 8th graders learn about the schedules and routine of high school so they would know what to expect, whether or not to attend Ridgefield Park. decided to start a program called Scarlet for a Day. 8th graders are given a survey where they answer questions that can help the people in charge find out who should be paired together. After a few weeks, batches of students are called down to Ms. Rizzi's office where she gives them a schedule when they'll be entering and leaving, and the buses are available. According to Ms. Rizzi, "Ms. Pinto organizes who people are paired with, their guides, and timing."

The 8th graders can take either the bus from Lake View, Pickens, or the front of Little Ferry Memorial Middle School to travel to the high school. Students will first be going to the office where they wait. Students are given a visitors' ID and a red folder with a ticket stapled on the right side saying free lunch and cookie, although they are allowed to bring their own lunch. When the guides show up, they are told to not bring their shadow off of school grounds. Students follow the guides they're paired up with, following around the high school. At 2:20 PM, the students are brought back to the front office, where they're given a questionnaire about their day here. The students are led outside where they'll take the first bus, being dropped off at either Lake View, or Pickens.

Once they arrive, they'll see the main hall. On the left, there are halls at the beginning and end, and in the middle is the entrance to the library. The right shows the office where they wait until everyone else arrives and their guides come. In the middle on the right side is another hall, while the end of the right is a cafeteria. When entering the office, they'll walk forwards to and walk to their right, seeing a rectangular table with chairs. The right shows the office

where they wait until everyone else arrives and their guides come. In the middle on the right side is another hall, while the end of the right is a cafeteria. When entering the office, they'll walk forwards to and walk to their right, seeing a rectangular table with chairs. The front has a Promethean Board and at the back is a table with many assortment of items. The school has two floors, with stairs at each hall. Many guides will bring their shadow along those stairs many times. For the shadows going to the Gym, they'll first see a room with a large mirror on the wall with an entrance to the Gym. On one side of the Gym shows their mascot facing both directions. They follow their Guide to the locker room, where the guide gets ready. After a while, they're led outside to the track, with chain-link metal fencing. The track is elevated slightly, so the entrance takes a slight climbing to get to it, having a two way entrance. The track is one big oval, the track itself being red with white lines and arrows pointing forwards and backwards on the right side. In the middle is a patch of grass with equipment over it.

From the account of a shadow, Elena, she said, "7/10 to my guide. She was nice, but because of the many tests, we weren't able to talk a lot. I was very bored during them." Elena's experience shows that other shadows may have a good time while others may not. From an account of a Guide, Angie, she said, "My experience was lovely. I went around with my Shadow to Gym, Lunch, and many other subjects. My shadow was lovely, I was walking around with a developing person. Helping them learn about the place." This shows that guides are also having fun with their shadows. When asking Ms. Rizzi about her accounts, she stated, "I wouldn't want to change anything because it already shows what it'll be like. I've been doing this for 3 years, and every student has been enjoying it. The difficult things are dealing with seeing things like after-school clubs." When asked if other schools should do this, both the shadow and guide have agreed that other schools can benefit from this same type of program, while Ms. Rizzi stated that she doesn't organize those types of things, though other schools do that type of program, but are private show-arounds.

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LITTLE FERRY & THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Perserving Liberty

By Elizabeth Urquilla

Have you ever wondered where Little Ferry got its name? Have you seen the small rope-drawn wooden ferry boat in the town's seal? Little Ferry was once part of an escape route for the Continental Army during the American Revolution. Little Ferry is positioned across the Hackensack River and Ridgefield Park making it a valuable tract for strategic movement during the war. According to RevolutionaryNJ.org, "Little Ferry was part of the contested 'Cockpit of the Revolution,' an area of northeastern New Jersey where regular military campaigns, Loyalist-Patriot skirmishes, and foraging parties made daily life perilous from 1776 until the British evacuation in 1783." Furthermore, RevolutionaryNJ.org reveals, "From August 1776, when the British drove the Continental Army out of New York, until 1783, when the British evacuated New York, northeastern New Jersey knew no peace. Between major military campaigns, army foraging parties 'purchased' livestock and crops at gunpoint and neighbors settled political differences through murder and kidnapping. Following the fall of Fort Lee, General George Washington's retreating Continental Army forces passed through the area, marching via Washington Avenue and Liberty Street toward Hackensack as they evaded British pursuit."

Does present day Washington Ave and Liberty Street honor this part of the American Revolution? Little Ferry town historian Steven Royka had this to say, "Washington Ave was indeed named for George Washington; however, Liberty Street was named for the veterans from World War 1." To provide even more insight about Little Ferry itself, Royka reveals, "Little Ferry at the time had 3 main roads and very few houses so the area was not very well known. It really served as just a stretch of land to get Washington's troops to Passaic."

So what is the significance of the ferry boat? As mentioned by littleferrynj.org, "The Ferry played an important part in the revolution. It was used on November 20, 1776, by a detachment of Washington's troops who were fleeing the advancing British army. The troops marched up what is now Washington Avenue and Liberty Street, into Hackensack to join the other troops."

The next time you take a walk to Torino's for a slice, take a moment and remember George Washington's troops may have walked down this very street. Or the next time you ride your bike to Dairy Queen, take a moment to remember to remember that hundreds of Continental army troops traveled down that very path to preserve "Liberty" for America.

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HIGH SCHOOL VISITS

Paramus Catholic vs St. Joseph Regional

By Michael Palmadessa

Attention 8th graders! If you are trying to attend two prestigious high schools in Bergen County, St. Joes and Paramus Catholic, this article is for you. In Montvale New Jersey lies St. Joseph Regional High School. The 33 acre campus has many things to offer throughout the campus. St Joes offers AP classes for advanced students and offers about 50+ other programs such as honors programs, and after school programs such as, Math league and PC post which is the school newspaper. They also have a gym and football field that is used for many sports. Each class includes about 129 students and 100% of graduates get accepted into four year colleges. Austin Taylor, a student at Little Ferry Memorial School who visited St. Joseph, said that he enjoyed the school very much. He was asked questions about his experience and he said, “My favorite part of the day was when I walked around the school and checked out different things the school offers like the football field.” He enjoyed the school and recommended attending that school because of these things.

Paramus Catholic lies across the street from the Orchard Hills Golf Course. According to the Paramus Catholic website, the 27 acre campus includes a 1,500 seat football stadium, and a 900 seat gymnasium. The school includes 33 honors classes and 141 total classes. The football team is currently 5-5 and fell to St. Joseph Regional last week 35-14. Chayse Bayer, a student at Little Ferry Memorial School visited Paramus Catholic and said he loved the school and a chance to meet with some of the football players. He also mentioned that.” The way they taught was fascinating because the students used ipads to do their work.” He thinks the school is reasonable to attend. To conclude, both of these schools are compelling and valuable in their own way because of the different features of the school with Paramus Catholic having many after school activities and St. Joseph has many competitive sports to play against other schools.

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BYE, BYE E-BIKES!

New Jersey's E-Bike Law

By Sunny Li



Example of a popular brand of E-Bikes

The state of New Jersey recently restricted children under the age of 15 from riding electric bikes. There have been many incidents with children getting injured because of these electric bikes that can reach speeds up to 90 mph. To combat this rising issue, Governor Phil Murphy made the e-bike law. The e-bike law states that riders 15 and 16 need a special license to ride e-bikes, and riders 17+ require a standard driver's license. We were fortunately able to interview Officer Jen and Officer Montemurro, who gave us more information about this law and what they do. When asked how they would act if they saw a child on an e-bike, Officer Montemurro replied, "Since it's so new, I'll tell them, listen, you need to wear a helmet; safety is a priority."

On the evening of June 30, 2026, on Passaic Street in Hackensack, two teens were severely injured and rushed to the hospital. The two teens were on e-bikes, while the other party involved was a 22-year-old man in a Nissan Rogue from Union City. The collision happened at the intersection of Passaic and River Streets. This accident fueled the anger of parents already worried about their children's safety. The e-bike law is to protect our youth, and these accidents cannot be completely avoided, but the e-bike law can help this issue. Even though the e-bike law is a great idea, it is heavily criticized by observers who have noticed that accidents and dangerous riding have still continued. With help, the e-bike law can actually save lives, but we are yet to see.

A 22-year-old man was charged with multiple offenses under the e-bike law on Martin Luther King Avenue, Morristown, where he suffered serious injuries such as road rash and possibly a head injury. This crash happened on August 1st, 2026, around 11:39 a.m. The police stated he lost control of the e-bike and crashed into a crosswalk. He was cited for operating an unregistered e-bike without a valid license. The e-bike law was made to protect and encourage safe riding. Hopefully, people will see accidents like the ones mentioned and will learn. We asked Officer Montemurro what he thinks about the e-bike law, and he replied, “I do agree with some of it, but I do think it's a bit harsh for the kids.” The e-bike law is definitely harsh for children that can ride safely, but in the end, the e-bike law is for our youth’s safety which will always be the priority.

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FAVORITE TEACHERS

My favorite teacher who impacted me the most was Ms C. Quinn. She always helped me when I was stuck on my work and she sometimes pulled me out when I needed to finish some work that I didn't do for homework.
I always stayed on top of my work, and she got me ready for my upcoming grades like 7th grade and 8th grade i am sometimes on top of my work but not all the times so i just want to say thank you to Ms. Quinn for what she did and what she improved of me.

Jaden Daniel Tejeda
8th Grade

A person I appreciate and am most thankful for in this whole school is Ms. Lago. Ms. Lago has always seen the good in my eyes and soul while those around me might've seen the opposite. She has allowed me to grow into the person I am today. I am thankful for her more because she would allow me to talk to her about my problems in general and would help me with my schoolwork. She is mostly the reason why I didn't fail. She let me stay and let me understand the work. Ms. Lago might be the only teacher who understands me. Regardless of my side of how I see her, she is an amazing, heartfelt, and loving person.

Mia Muteverria Alen
8th Grade

One teacher that impacted my school year was Ms Deamer because she did a lot of fun things, like making a box with sticks that connect, and did fun things that would help us with math
Davien Gonzalez

The teacher I appreciate the most is Ms. Slade. Ms. Slade was my 3rd grade teacher. Even though I was really young, she prepared me for the situation I am in today. If something was bothering me throughout the school day, she would always be the person I would run to, and I know I can still do that to this day because she will always listen to what I have to say to her. If I was struggling with the assignment in class, she would walk me through it and help me as much as she could. When Ms. Slade was my teacher, I would actually be excited to come to school because I loved the way she taught and her classes were always so fun.

Santina Bonelli

Little Ferry, New Jesery

Volume 1; Issue 1

ROYAL RECORD

INAUGURAL EDITION | 2026

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SPECIAL THANKS

Thank you to the teachers, school staff, administrators, and community members who shared their time, knowledge, and stories to help make our inaugural edition possible.

Little Ferry Memorial Middle School • November 2026 • https://www.littleferry.k12.nj.us/

The Royal Record is a student-produced publication dedicated to informing, connecting, and celebrating our school community.