

Northwood School Board Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2026

Welcome Back, Northwood Families!

The Northwood School Board welcomes students and families back for the 2026–2027 school year. We are excited for another year of learning, growth, connection, and discovery at Northwood School. We are grateful for Northwood School's learning environment where the goal is for every student to feel supported, challenged, and known.

One important part of understanding student learning is assessment. While assessments are only one piece of the larger picture, they provide valuable information about academic progress and help teachers, families and administrators make informed decisions about instruction, resources, and supports. When students participate, we gain a more complete understanding of our school community's learning and growth.

New Hampshire law ([RSA 193-C:6](#)) gives parents and guardians the right to exempt their children from annual statewide assessments in grades 3–8 and 11. Families who choose this option may complete the school's exemption form, and the student will participate in an alternative learning activity during the assessment. The decision and its reason remain confidential.

The Northwood School Board encourages families to consider having their children participate in all assessments. Broad participation helps ensure that the information we use to guide our work accurately reflects our students and their achievements. Federal requirements also call for schools to reach a 95% participation rate, making broad participation important at the school level as well. Below the 95% threshold, non-participating scores are recorded as zeros and skew meaningful data analysis and accurate public reporting efforts.

Thank you for partnering with us as we begin a new year. Together, we will work to use every available resource to support the success and growth of every Northwood School student. Additional technical assistance (TA) has been provided by the New Hampshire Department of Education: [Exemptions TA](#) and [Additional Targeted Support Schools TA](#).

Entering my 10th year working with Northwood, I am continuously amazed by our incredible community. I'm truly grateful to our outstanding Northwood teachers, families, and students for making the start of this school year so wonderful. It's your shared dedication and energy that truly set us apart. A special thanks to our maintenance staff and their amazing ability to have the school ready for the start of the year. Here's to another great year! ~ Dr. Nate Byrne, Superintendent



Meeting Student Needs

Thanks to the efforts of Student Services Director Jill LaVallee and the Student Services team at Northwood School, we are grateful to report that New Hampshire Department of Education (NHED) 25/26 monitoring finds that Northwood School District meets the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The Local Educational Agency (LEA) Determination is an annual monitoring process implemented by the NHED Bureau of Special Education Support which measures the district's compliance with targeted IDEA measures and other state focused area of need. The monitoring rubric has four sections:

- ✓ The Results Based section includes Graduation and Drop-out rates among students identified with special education needs, the continuum of Education Environments, and Preschool outcomes.
- ✓ The Assessment section includes Participation and Proficiency rates among students identified with special education needs as measured by state-wide testing.
- ✓ The Compliance section includes Suspension/Expulsion, Disproportionality rates, Compliance with Child Find requirements and Early Childhood Transitions.
- ✓ The Additional/Other Factors section includes Use of Allocated Grant Funds, Monthly Grant Reporting and History of Substantiated Special Education Complaints.

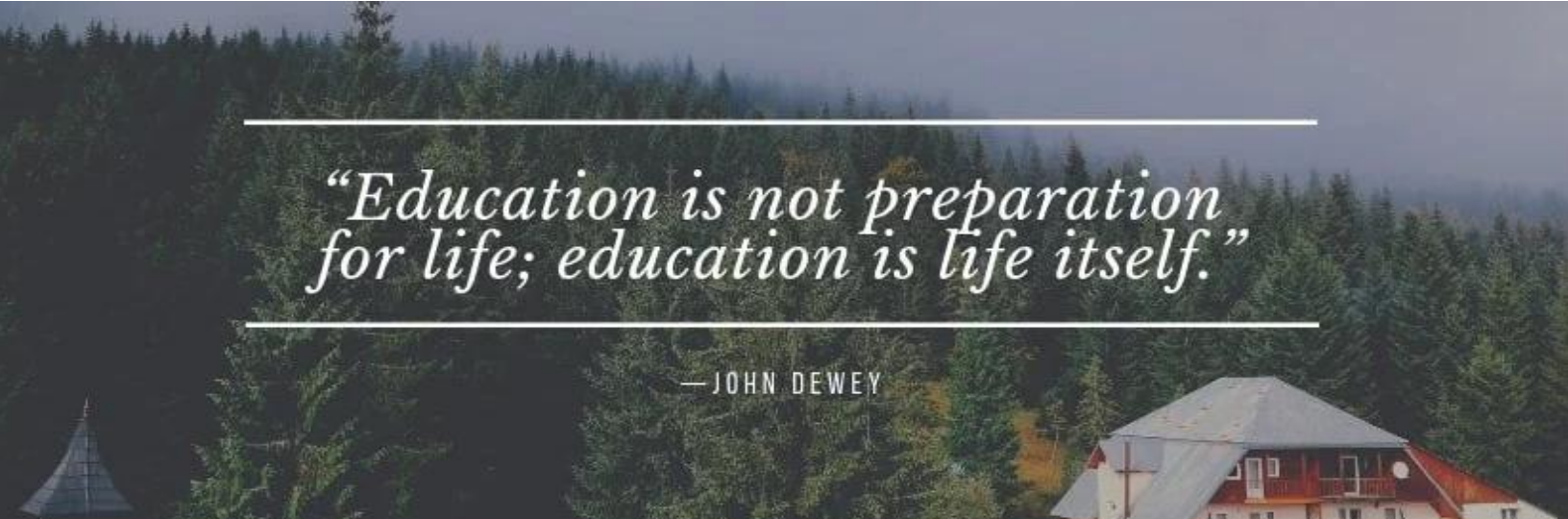
Board Updates

- Closing out 2025-2026 Financials
 - SAU 44 submitted its annual required financial report to the New Hampshire Department of Education ahead of schedule. The Board is happy to report that \$375,000 will be returned to taxpayers of Northwood, applied toward tax rate reduction for future property tax calculations. This return is approximately \$75,000 greater than originally anticipated. Using the remaining fund balance from 2025-2026, Northwood School District will enter 2026-2027 with \$80,050.48 in the Retained Fund Balance account to be maintained for District contingencies in the coming year. The Board keeps fiscal responsibility at the forefront of all such decisions. Please reach out to us with any questions you may have at schoolboard@northwood.k12.nh.us.
- Northwood School Strategic Plan
 - Northwood School's Strategic Plan contracted service provider, Cognia, will convene multiple community engagement sessions in the fall and winter. Family, community, teachers, staff and student input will play a vital role in these sessions. If you are interested in participating, please email schoolboard@northwood.k12.nh.us.
 - October 1: Focus Groups
 - January 26-27: Guided Facilitation for Envisioning and Planning

Welcome to New Northwood Faculty and Staff

The Northwood School Board is sincerely grateful to school and district leaders who prioritize caring for existing faculty and staff as well as thoughtful recruiting of new members of the school community. We welcome the following new members of Northwood School faculty and SAU 44 district staff.

- Cassandra Micucci, Business Administrator
- Beth Vorrone, 2-4 Special Educator
- Tracy Williams, K-2 Special Educator
- Beth Struthers, Pre-school Assistant
- Tracey McLaughlin, Speech Language Pathologist
- Olga Purington, NECC Tutor
- Kelsey Forbes, Grade 6 Science & Social Studies
- Jay Gallipo, Grade 8 Math
- Katie Rainville, NECC Tutor
- Ashley Desilets, Paraprofessional
- Vickie Thibault, Paraprofessional
- Jennifer Larson, Special Educator
- Michelle Castellon, Behavior Support/Alt Ed
- Cameron Adams, Seventh Grade ELA



*“Education is not preparation
for life; education is life itself.”*

— JOHN DEWEY

Unique Impact Awards:

Contact Us:

schoolboard@northwood.k12.nh.us

The Northwood School Board proudly supports innovative classroom practices by funding classroom grant awards to Northwood educators. The Board looks forward to reviewing applications for the upcoming school year! Teachers, please contact Ms. Young for an application.