

MIDDLETOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE



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BOE Holds Reorganization Meeting

The Board of Education held its annual reorganization meeting on January 3. Three members were sworn in: Frank Capone, Jacqueline Tobacco, and Catarina Skalaski. Mr. Capone was re-elected as the President and Mrs. Tobacco was re-elected as the Vice-President. Congratulations!

Staff Members of the Month: December



Congratulations to our December Staff Members of the Month. Their dedication to the district and to the school community has been recognized. We celebrate their contributions this month!

Special Education Parent Forums Held

Special Education Parent Forums were held on January 24 and January 25. These forums presented the opportunity for parents to share their experiences related to special education with administrators in the district. There were many positive stories shared and such great feedback and dialogue among the group. Parents who did not get the chance to attend can share their thoughts using the link below:

[Special Education Parent Feedback](#)

Pre-Kindergarten Open House

The Middletown Pre-Kindergarten Open House will be held on Wednesday, January 31 at 7 pm. This will be a virtual event in which parents will get to meet the PK staff, learn about enrollment/lottery procedures, get insights into the curriculum, and take a virtual tour of a PK classroom. For more information, including the virtual log-on information, please click on the link below:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jCJMAHFKsTjdBZJZ22MYmQoZmrpKdHBw/view?usp=sharing>

Inclement Weather

When inclement weather is forecasted, please know that there are many local agencies working together to make decisions for the safety of our school community. This includes district officials, the township's DPW, and the MTPD. We try and make this decision as quickly as possible so families can plan accordingly.

Parent University Series Schedule

If you haven't had a chance to join one of our virtual Parent University sessions, there are still plenty of opportunities throughout the school year. Below you can click on the link to see the schedule or access one of the links to see a previously conducted session.

Schedule:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PvVFWYecxMOR9UfXvNLuW-WH7Lvqgqo1wqZJUkAT3t4/edit?usp=sharing>

Session 1: [DIBELS/iReady](#) and [Welcome to PK](#)

Session 2: [Digital PSAT and SAT](#)

Session 3: [Educating the Whole Child](#) and [Mental Health and SEL](#)

Session 4: [Course Offerings](#)

School Calendar for 2024-2025

The School Calendar Committee met on January 23 to begin setting the calendar for the 2024-2025 school year. This committee was comprised of Administrators, representatives from the various employee groups, Board of Education members, and parents. The goal is to have next year's school calendar approved during the February BOE meeting.

Kindergarten Registration Information

There will be a Kindergarten Parent Registration Information session on Tuesday, January 30. This will be a virtual session where parents can get more information about the registration process and our kindergarten program. Kindergarten registration will be held from February 1 - February 29. Please see more information by accessing the link:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1h967G40wFpS3ThjLFB0iaFWfL8dMF7Er5D9jPYvy-U/edit?usp=sharing>

Early Release Reminder: February 7

Just a reminder that all students will have an early release on Wednesday, February 7 for staff professional development. Dismissal times for each level are as follows:

- High School: 11:40 am
- Middle School: 12:15 pm
- Elementary School: 1:10 pm

***No lunch is served on early release days



What's New at Our High Schools



Scheduling Information for 2024-2025

Scheduling for the 2024-2025 school year has started. All students in grades 9 - 11 will have individual appointments with their guidance counselors to select their core courses, electives, and World Language for next year. Scheduling will be ongoing through March 1. Guidance counselors will be sending individual student invitations to students' email addresses. Please be on the lookout for the invite. Students should use the calendar invitation as their pass to leave class during their scheduled appointment time.

Digital SAT Information for 2024

Starting in 2024, the SAT will be digital. Registration is now open for the March, May, and June test dates. Students can register for the SAT through their College Board account. See dates below:

Test Dates	Registration Deadlines	Late Registration Deadlines
March 9, 2024	February 23, 2024	February 27, 2024
May 4, 2024	April 19, 2024	April 23, 2024
June 1, 2024	May 16, 2024	May 21, 2024

Middletown North Earns Advanced Placement Female Diversity Award

Middletown North has been awarded the College Boards Advanced Placement Computer Science Female Diversity Award. This award acknowledges 1,127 schools for expanding young women's access to computer science coursework. In order to be eligible for the award, the school had to demonstrate more than 50% enrollment of females representation in one of two AP Computer Science classes.



High School Program Changes

For the 2024-2025 school year, there are many beneficial changes to the high school programming that will take place. You can view a snapshot of these adjustments in the following presentation. As we continue through the second half of this school year, more information will be shared.

[High School Programming](#)

Freshmen Frontiers Information

The Freshman Frontiers Program is designed to acclimate incoming 9th graders to the high school experience. Students will be exposed to essential foundational courses needed for graduation. More importantly, they will be engaged in a year-long course to help them get the most out of their high school experience. Students will learn more about our high school pathways so they can make an informed choice for their sophomore year if they have an interest.

[Freshman Frontiers Program](#)

Senior Open Campus Update

On January 8, HSN and HSS began the Senior Open Campus Program. This program provides the opportunity for Seniors to leave campus during blocks 3 and 4. The rollout of this initiative has been extremely positive and feedback from the students has been terrific. Students sign out via computer kiosks and sign back in upon return to the school. Students have been adhering to the processes and expectations responsibly.

Marking Period End Date/Report Card Release

The 2nd marking period will end for high school students on Monday, January 29. This is a change due to the snow day. Report cards will still be released on Friday, February 2.

Arts Pathway to Replace Arts Academy

For the 2024-25 school year, the Arts Pathways will replace the Arts Academy track at HSN. This will provide a specified arts experience at both high schools. Click on the link to see the newly structured pathway. [Arts Pathway Information](#)



What's New at Our Middle Schools

Middle School Elective Redesign

To better support our students at the middle school level, we have been examining the current activity arts (elective) cycle. The current activity arts teachers have been a part of providing feedback regarding the course content, length of courses, and sequencing. It is always sound practice to evaluate these factors every 3-5 years. The middle school group has also been reflecting upon the Advisory period and how to better utilize this time within the schedule. In examining this feedback, there will be some structural and content changes to the middle school activity arts (electives) for the 2024-25 school year. This will provide our students a greater degree of flexibility and choice in their non-core courses. More information will be forthcoming to parents as the middle schools begin to schedule for next year. The middle school course guide will also be updated as a point of reference for parents.

Freshmen Frontiers for Incoming 9th Graders

The Freshman Frontiers Program is designed to acclimate incoming 9th graders to the high school experience. Students will be exposed to essential foundational courses needed for graduation. More importantly, they will be engaged in a year-long course to help them get the most out of their high school experience. Students will learn more about our high school pathways so they can make an informed choice for their sophomore year if they have an interest.

[Freshman Frontiers Program](#)

Freshman for a Day Program

The Middle School Freshman for a Day Program will be held for incoming 9th Graders starting in February and continuing through mid-March. This is an opportunity for incoming 9th graders to visit the high school they will be attending and see what a typical day is like. Students who are interested in participating should speak with their middle school guidance counselor to set up a time. Below you can access both HSN and HSS's informational flyers.



Kindness Challenge at Bayshore

On January 22, 2024, Bayshore Middle School kicked off the annual Kindness Challenge which will run from this date through Friday, January 26. The Kindness Challenge recognizes students' efforts in spreading a message of kindness and gratitude throughout the school community. The kickoff event was spearheaded by Bayshore's counseling staff and included peer leaders, the Bayshore band, and the Bayshore Cheerleading squad. Councilwoman Kimberly Kratz also represented the township and presented a proclamation to the school on behalf of the Mayor and Township Committee. Throughout the week, students will be awarded tickets when caught being kind. They will be able to trade these in for prizes all week.



NAEP Assessment at Bayshore

Bayshore Middle School has been selected for 8th Grade students to take the NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress). The selection is randomized and includes 25 students. Parents do have the ability to opt out of participation. Results from this assessments are part of the Nation's Report Card. More information can be found here: <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>

Middle School Exchange Program

Students from all three middle schools will be participating in an exchange program where they have the opportunity to spend some time in one of our other middle schools. Initiated by each school's student government, this will be an opportunity to build connectivity across our school community and collaborate on the overall middle school experience in Middletown.

iReady Benchmark Winter Administration Window

Our Winter iReady diagnostic and DIBELS8 administration will be held during the following windows:

- *iReady Diagnostic (6-8)* = February 1 - February 7



What's New at Our Elementary Schools



Girls in Motion

The district's *Girls In Motion* Program will be starting in the spring. The program serves to support girls in 3-5th grades in using the vehicle of physical activity to understand themselves better, embrace healthy social interactions, and empower them to better their school community. Girls that participate will have the opportunity to run in a local 5K race at the conclusion of the program. More information can be found by contacting your child's school.

Middle School Principal/Guidance Visits

Over the next couple of months, the middle school principals will be visiting the 5th grade students at the 11 elementary schools to start discussing the transition to 6th grade. Guidance counselors will be accompanying the principals to share information about class scheduling and the courses and other opportunities available to our middle school students.

Therapy Dog Program Continues to Grow



Our therapy dog program across the district continues to grow. Our newest addition is a cutie named, Conway at Bayview Elementary School. Conway is a Therapy Dog in training and is named after the 1992 movie, *The Mighty Ducks*. The students at Bayview adore Conway and can't wait until he can spend more time with them once he achieves his therapy dog license.

Harmony to Hold "Super Bowl" of Reading



Harmony is excited to begin its annual "Super Bowl of Reading" event. This is a voluntary activity designed to encourage reading at home for all students at Harmony in grades pre-k through five. The class that reads the most at each grade level will be recognized, as well as the student who reads the most in the entire school! This year, students will still complete ONE football pattern for every 7 books or chapters that they read. Students should bring their completed footballs to the school where we will display these touchdowns outside their classroom doors. Assigned reading, buddy reading, and listening to a story are all reading experiences that count towards touchdowns! The Super Bowl of Reading begins Friday, February 2nd and ends on Sunday, February 11th at 5:00pm (Super Bowl Sunday).

Orton Gillingham Trainings

The district has been working toward getting all of our K-2 teachers trained in Orton-Gillingham. Orton-Gillingham is a multi-sensory approach to instructing foundational literacy skills that relies heavily on the Science of Reading. This highly structured approach to teaching reading, breaks reading and spelling into smaller skills over time. The approach is explicit, direct, sequential, and systematic. While this approach is ideal for all students, it is particularly important in remediating reading difficulties, such as dyslexia. You can find more information about Orton-Gillingham here: <https://www.ortonacademy.org/resources/what-is-the-orton-gillingham-approach/>

iReady Benchmark Administration Windows

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Elementary Conferences Parent Survey

Thank you to those parents who completed the Elementary Conference Parent Survey. We will use this valuable feedback to improve our elementary parent-teacher conference structures moving forward. It is our goal to continue to cultivate a strong and positive home-school connection where parents and educators are partners in the child's learning.



Fit Clubs Up and Running in Elementary Schools

One of the after school activities that our elementary students can participate in is *Fit Club*. This extra-curricular opportunity promotes overall wellness and movement. Students engage with their peers in a variety of fun games and activities that not only foster movement, but cooperation, teamwork, and the development of gross motor skills.