



VOLUME 6
FEBRUARY 2024

MIDDLETOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE



Staff Members of the Month: JANUARY



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

School Calendar for 2024-2025 & 2023 - 2024 Adjustments

At the February Board of Education meeting, the 2024 - 2025 school calendar was approved. You can access a copy of it by clicking on the link below. Due to the weather-related emergency closings, there will be an adjustment to our current school calendar. This will likely be determined by the end of March once the bulk of the winter weather threat is over.

[2024 - 2025 School Calendar](#)

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-WH7Lvgqko1wqZJUkAT3t4/edit?usp=sharing>

Session 1: DIBELS/iReady and Welcome to PK

Session 2: Digital PSAT and SAT

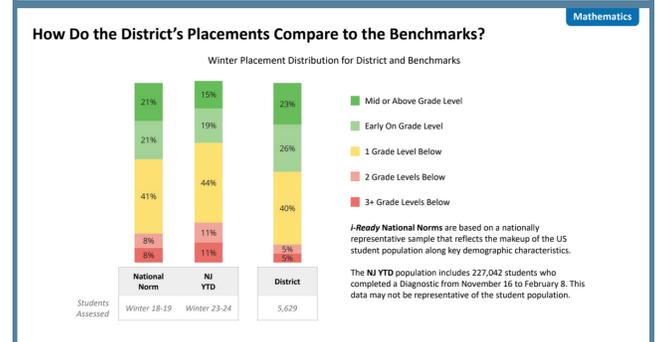
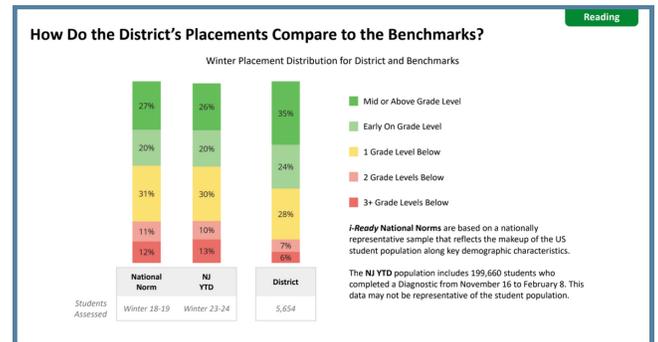
Session 3: Educating the Whole Child and Mental Health and SEL

Session 4: Course Offerings

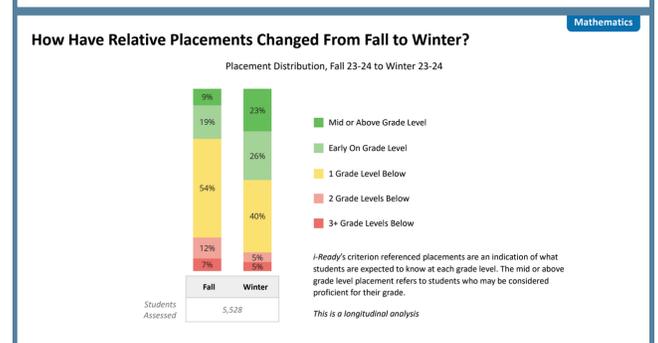
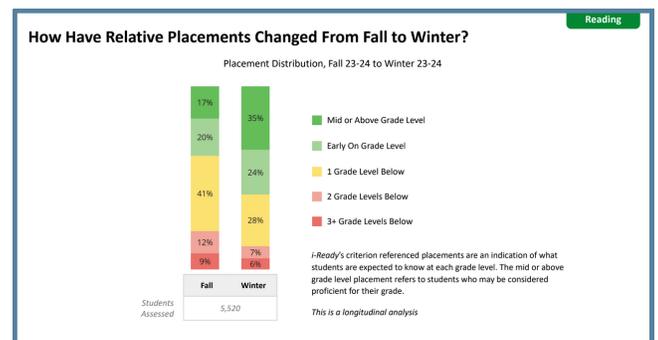
Session 5: Mechanics of a HIB Investigation

iReadyWinter Benchmark Data K-8

The district's winter administration of the iReady benchmark assessment (K-8) showed that our performance is higher than both the State YTD and national norm.



The winter benchmark also showed marked growth in both Reading and Math from the fall benchmark assessment.



[Click on any picture above to see a more detailed presentation of the winter benchmark results.](#)



What's New at Our High Schools



North Wins Basketball Coach's Cup



The High School North Boys' Basketball Team won the Shore Conference Coach's Cup. They beat a tough High School South team in a close, nail-biting battle. Congratulations to both teams on outstanding performances! Way to represent the district well!

Freshman for a Day Program

The Freshman for a Day Program is underway at both High School North and High School South. The program is run through the Guidance Department and affords 8th graders the opportunity to experience a taste of high school before they return as freshmen in the fall. During the program, 8th graders shadow a 9th grade student for two blocks on their assigned day. More information can be obtained through the school's guidance department.

Seal of Biliteracy Awarded to High School Students

17 students from High School North and 3 students from High School South recently earned the prestigious Seal of Biliteracy. This award is given by the NJ Department of Education in recognition of students that have studied and obtained proficiency in at least one language, in addition to English, prior to high school graduation.



Internet Safety Presentations

Special Agent Jesse Trail from the United States Secret Service is scheduled to deliver an engaging presentation to the freshman classes at Middletown High School South and Middletown High School North, shedding light on the National Childhood Smart Program. Developed in collaboration with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), this initiative aims to equip students with essential knowledge on computer and personal safety. Leveraging the expertise of NCMEC's child safety professionals, the program provides invaluable resources tailored specifically for students, covering a range of topics crucial for safeguarding against online threats and exploitation.

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

NJGPA Testing for Class of 2025

On March 11 - 14, the Junior Class will take the NJGPA (New Jersey Graduation Proficiency Assessment). Students taking the exam will report to school at the normal start time. Special Class Programs and Vocational Students will also report at the normal start time. *Students in 9, 10, and 12 grades will have a delayed start to the school day. (**Please note the delayed start time is 9:20 am)*

Unified Basketball Game Held at High School South



Middletown's Unified Basketball Team played Neptune in their final game of the season at High School South. The students from both teams put on a fabulous display of their basketball skills and had a lot of fun. Middletown's Unified Cheerleading Squad entertained the crowd and cheered on the team.

Winter Athletic Signings at High School South



Three student-athletes from High School South signed their National Letters of Intent to continue to their academic and athletic careers at the collegiate level. Congratulations to Colin Gallagher, University of Delaware Football, Taryn Gonzales, St. Bonaventure University Rugby, and Robert Grant, The Citadel, Track and Field.



What's New at Our Middle Schools

Middle School Elective Redesign

To better support our students at the middle school level, we have revamped our middle school elective structure. Each elective will be offered for a full semester instead of for a quarter (marking period) of the school year. The mandatory grade level courses have been eliminated and the courses reframed to capture a broader spectrum of skills and standards. This will allow our middle school students to have more choice than ever in their middle school electives (dependent on availability). Advisory has also been revamped and is now entitled *Academic Opportunities*. After getting feedback from our students, it was evident that some found the former Advisory block to be very beneficial while others did not find as much value in the time. Therefore, we have decided to also make the *Academic Opportunities* block an elective. Students would have the option to schedule this course or to take something else they are interested in. Students who receive intervention or attend Gifted and Talented (6th Grade) may be scheduled for *Academic Opportunities* to provide a time for these services to occur. You can view the new design of the course selection guide for middle school here:

<https://sites.google.com/middletownk12.org/mtps-course-offerings-2024-25/middle-school-course-guidebook/middle-school-course-offerings>

Thorne Wins Shore Conference Middle School Cheer Competition

Congratulations to the Thorne Middle School Cheerleading team who took home 1st Place in the recent Shore Conference Middle School competition. The girls worked hard to take home the title. Thompson Middle School also placed in the competition coming in at 3rd Place.



iReady Winter Reports Accessible in Genesis



The iReady winter benchmark assessments are now available for viewing in the Genesis Parent Portal. This mid-year benchmark is an important indicator of growth in the first half of the school year. Specific questions related to your child's program can be directed to your child's teacher and building administration. Please visit iReady's Family Resource page to get insights into the iReady diagnostic results and suggestions for how to support your child at home:

<https://i-readycentral.com/familycenter/>

Bayshore Middle School Coffee Cart



Students in Mrs. Ramos's class have started a small business at Bayshore Middle School to engage in life skills. The business affectionately referred to as "Echo's Cafe" serves coffee and pastries to staff members. The students in Mrs. Ramos's class are very excited for the opportunity and had a terrific first week in business!

NJCIE Delivers Staff Development on Supporting Inclusion

The New Jersey Coalition for Inclusive Education has been partnering with our middle schools to continue to expand our efforts related to inclusion in the district. At a recent professional day, staff members had the opportunity to learn more about strategies to support inclusive learning environments. The district is continuing to advance inclusive instruction and foster our capacity to support students in all learning environments.



Bayshore Band Visits Elementary Schools



The Bayshore Band, under the leadership of Mrs. Alexandre, visited the various sending elementary schools to share information about the middle school band program. Band members got to perform for the elementary students and promote their participation in the program at Bayshore.

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. Students will get the chance to meet with one another to discuss their experience.



What's New at Our Elementary Schools



L.E.A.D. Program Visits 5th Graders



5th Grade students in our elementary schools are having the opportunity to participate in our L.E.A.D. Program. L.E.A.D stands for Law Enforcement Against Drugs. This program provides our MTPD the opportunity to come into the schools to discuss the dangers of drugs and provide students with proactive means for handling stress, peer pressure, and potentially dangerous situations. The officers also discuss the use of pro-social behaviors and the responsible use of social media.



Lunch with the Superintendent

Superintendent Alfone has been visiting each of the district's 11 elementary schools to have lunch with groups of students. During these visits, Superintendent Alfone is talking with the students about their elementary schools. Students have had the opportunity to share what they love about their schools, what they would want to change, and what they wish they had. These discussions have been so informative in understanding our students experience and looking for ways to make positive changes and connect with our students.

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Elementary Schools Hold "Super Bowl" of Reading



Elementary school students across the district participated in the "Souper Bowl". This initiative supported *Middletown Helps It's Own* and students who brought in a canned good to donate got to vote for who would win the Super Bowl. Our elementary schools made significant donations to this cause.

New Parent-Teacher Conference Structure for 2024 - 2025

Thanks to the feedback of the school community, our elementary teaching staff members, and administration, there will be a new parent-teacher conference structure for the 2024-2025. As you may know after seeing next year's approved school calendar, the early release days that were in December have been eliminated from the school calendar. Conferences will now be held in January to provide parents the opportunity to see their child's first trimester report card prior to the conference. For the 2024-2025 school year, conferences will be on a staggered schedule which will be building-dependent. All elementary schools will hold night conferences on the evening of January 22. By moving to this new structure, the district has also been able to extend the K-3 conference timeframe to 20 minutes and the 4-5 conference timeframe to 15 minutes. It is our hope that these changes make our conferences a more beneficial experience for all. Please look for your school's specific conference schedule when we return in the fall.

Read Across America Week



March 2 is celebrated across the nation as Read Across America Day. Each year, the school district celebrates the wonder of reading with a week of celebratory events aimed at instilling a love of reading in our children. Parent organizations across the district have partnered with our elementary schools to make this week special for our students and recognize the importance of reading.

