



Board Report
May 31, 2024



BOARD UPDATE

From the desk of Dr. Alexandra Estrella, Superintendent

May 31, 2024

EXCELLENCE, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Communications

Quick Links

- [NPS in the News](#)
- [Roton & West Rocks Students Earn Promising Young Writers Contest Designations](#)
- [BMHS Hosts First-Ever Norwalk Orchestra Festival](#)
- [BMHS Seniors Appointed to Service Academies](#)

Norwalk Awarded \$21.5 Million in State Grants for HVAC Improvements

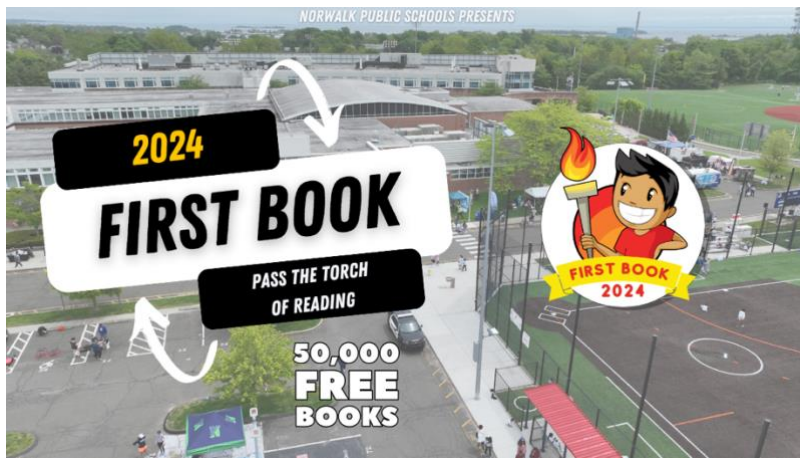


On Monday, May 13, Mayor Harry Rilling, Superintendent Dr. Alexandra Estrella, and CT Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff proudly announced that the State of Connecticut's Department of Administrative Services awarded \$21.5 million in grant funding to the city to improve the heating and cooling systems in six Norwalk Public Schools.

This investment underscores a commitment by the State and the City to help maximize student success by fostering optimal and equitable learning environments. The schools set to benefit include Brien McMahon, Brookside, Marvin, Naramake, Rowayton and Silvermine.

[Click here to read more about this significant investment in our school infrastructure and to watch the latest edition of Inside NPS.](#)

First Book 2024



Thousands streamed through the doors of Brien McMahon High School on May 18 to celebrate First Book 2024. We hope everyone who attended enjoyed a wonderful day.

The incredible success of our event stands as a testament to the dedication and tireless efforts of our amazing team! For months, they planned, organized, and executed the distribution of an astounding 50,000 books to our community. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who made this possible!

We captured all the fun from just about every angle. Check it all out below:

- **[First Book 2024 Recap \(REEL\)](#)**
- **[OVER 3,000 PEOPLE SHOWED UP! - First Book 2024 \(VIDEO\)](#)**
- **[First Book 24 - Recap in Photos \(VIDEO\) - Featuring original music by Ponus Ridge STEAM Academy eighth grader John Vann](#)**

Excellence in Education



We enjoyed a wonderful evening on Thursday celebrating our amazing educators and support staff at the 7th annual Excellence in Education celebration, hosted by the Norwalk Education Foundation in collaboration with Norwalk Public Schools and the Norwalk Federation of Teachers.

[Click here for a complete list of this year's honorees and to watch the full program.](#)

In Case You Missed It

Why I Teach Campaign (VIDEOS)



Brien McMahon at Norwalk Orchestra Festival (VIDEO)



West Rocks Middle School Teacher Appreciation (VIDEO)



Superintendent Book Club (VIDEOS)



More NPS Shorts! (VIDEOS) Be sure to watch more of our NPS Shorts.

- **MBK & MSK Visit Philadelphia (VIDEO)**

Important Dates

Thursday, June 13 - 2-Hour Early Dismissal

Friday, June 14 - Last Day of School (2-Hour Early Dismissal)

Wednesday, June 19 - Juneteenth (Central Office Closed)

July 15-19 - NPS Leadership Retreat at Center for Global Studies

July 22-23 - Central Office Retreat at Center for Global Studies

Upcoming Events

NEW DATE!

Norwalk Open Streets: Bike, Walk & Roll Festival

Saturday, June 1 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Calf Pasture Beach Road in Norwalk

Come experience Norwalk's streets in a new way. The Norwalk Open Streets is a fun and free opportunity for recreation and community building by opening Calf Pasture Beach Road to walk, bike and roll. The event is FREE and open to the public. Come and enjoy a bike rodeo, bike tune-ups, kids activities and food trucks.

Be sure to stop by the Norwalk Public Schools table with our friends from the NPS Family Center.

Norwalk Public Schools Diversity Career & Services Fair

Thursday, June 6 from 3 to 6 p.m.

Brien McMahon High School, 300 Highland Ave. in Norwalk

Norwalk Public Schools is Fairfield County's #1 School District for Diversity and we're hiring!

If you know someone interested in joining a team that thrives on celebrating its many cultures and backgrounds, then Norwalk Public Schools is the place for them. NPS is hiring in all areas

that make our district run. At the career fair, prospective employees can meet some of our administrative staff and learn about some of the services the City of Norwalk has to offer.

For more information, email jamesk@norwalkps.org. To pre-register for the event, use this link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfmoL8Vj3sA38DvUvyleYhZQmXcui2JwvqlYeQt_Ad48rKlzw/viewform

Kindergarten Registration Informational Fair

Thursday, June 6 from 4:30 to 6 p.m.

NPS Family Center, 1 Park St. in Norwalk

Do you have questions about kindergarten registration? Norwalk Public Schools, Norwalk ACTS and the City of Norwalk's Early Childhood Office are hosting an information fair on Thursday, June 6 from 4:30 to 6 p.m. at the NPS Family Center to answer all your questions.

Bring your kids! There will also be FREE ice cream, a ticket raffle for the children's museum, sensory activities, FREE books and bubbles.

Pride in the Park

Saturday, June 8 from 12 to 8 p.m. (NPS Booth open from 12 to 4 p.m.)

Veteran's Park, 42 Seaview Ave. in Norwalk

Norwalk Public Schools is proud to be returning to Norwalk's Pride in the Park on June 8. Join us for a day of unity, love and celebration filled with laughter, music and the collective spirit of the LGBTQ+ community and its allies.

Volunteers needed! Please contact Emily at morgane@norwalkps.org if you are interested in volunteering at our booth.

Testing & Accountability

The State testing window for Smarter Balanced and Next Generation Science will close on Friday, May 31. Students in grades 3-8 are tested in ELA and math. Students in grades 5,8, and 11 are tested in science. Participation has been carefully monitored at both the school and district level using the Connecticut Portal's monitoring tools. The state requirement is 95% participation. The secure Centralized Reporting System (CRS) will populate state test results on a rolling basis as scoring is completed. This provides a preview for school and district leaders. Per CSDE, results may not be shared publicly until the official state release in late summer.

Spring NWEA district and school level reports and reports by selected subgroups have been distributed to school and district leaders. They are a resource for schools and the district as goals are set for the 2024-25 school year. For students in grades 1-8 who took NWEA in fall 2023 and again in spring 2024, 69% met their fall-to-spring growth projections in math and 57% in reading. The national average is 50%. Families of students in grades K-10 received a Student Progress report via Parent Square. The report graphically displays the student's NWEA achievement and growth over multiple administrations.

Research & Analytics

The team hosted the final Data Leads session of the year. These sessions, which happen quarterly, bring together a representative from each elementary and middle school, to build fluency with data tools, share promising data practices and build consistent practices around the use of data to

support continuous improvement. This session focused on reflecting on the school year to identify and share data practices to be brought into the next school year, as well as on preparing for the 2024-2025 School Improvement Planning by developing an understanding of the process and front loading the data work needed to engage in a Needs Assessment.

The team also facilitated a full day session on Portrait of a Graduate for cabinet and central office employees. This session, which was led collaboratively with our partner for this work, Digital Promise, developed a shared understanding of the desired outcomes for the implementation of NPS's Portrait of Graduate and articulated an implementation plan to integrate the first selected competency, Critical Thinker, into curriculum and instruction.

CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION & SPECIALIZED LEARNING

Humanities

The PD offerings for the summer have been created and will be shared with teachers this week. There are several offerings in SS, ELA, and 1 in mathematics. The team is beginning to plan for these experiences and gather materials for each of the offerings. The team continues to support the middle school ELA teachers in choosing new books for the new Historical Fiction Unit for next year. Music teachers are meeting on Monday, June 3 for curriculum writing. The Art Show was a great success! Student artwork is always a great way to showcase creativity and ingenuity.

Curriculum writing will take place during the weeks of June 17 and June 24.

Mathematics/STEM

Last week, the STEM department coordinated professional learning for 5 teachers, 4 coaches, and 3 administrators with mathematician and author Peter Liljedahl and the Partners for Educational Leadership. The workshops allowed teachers to introduce the research and practices in Building Thinking Classrooms for Mathematics. Coaches joined teachers on Day 2, to support further pedagogical impact, and Central Office staff, admin, and a teacher who has been implementing the practices attended Day 3 where there was an emphasis on assessment. The team is very excited to see how this professional learning impacts students and staff.

The team is meeting with teachers and coaches about curriculum needs. Work has begun on some Algebra 2 enhancements and restructurings. Additional work for K to 5 and Grades 6 to 8 is taking place this week and throughout June.

Workforce Development

The work continues on the Career Z Challenge Grant as we attend their community of practice and required working group sessions. The team is now in the third grant submission stage, which is to write the grant's third iteration and submit it in June. The team has also been attending the online office hours for grant support. The Career Z Challenge hosted a two-hour celebration online meeting that we were required to attend. Lastly, the team is having a final meeting with the cohort lead to review grant data.

"First Book" was a huge success and the district is so very excited about how it has positively impacted the NPS and Norwalk Community! CT State Norwalk and NPS Workforce Development continue to partner to bring our Junior and Senior scholars Workforce Certification Courses for the Fall. The team is identifying courses for the fall and will start to update the scholar application in June. CT State Norwalk and NPS have further partnered on their "College for Kids" Summer Programming. This is a great place for scholars in Grades 2 to 12 to take some light and fun summer classes across many career clusters! CT State Norwalk is offering a Free 2 Week Summer Trade Boot Camp for our Juniors and Seniors for the first time ever. The Perkins Grant committee has met and

is now turning their attention to the structure and grant changes for next year. The Dual Credit Expansion Grant Committee has created a teacher application, and teachers have begun to apply. The grant has been expanded to teachers writing their college courses and ECE syllabi, which is exciting. The team also attended a webinar on how to assist scholars facing homelessness through career technical education. A Workforce Development Workshop was hosted for interested Juniors and Seniors at BMHS and CGS. A School Counselor committee has been created for June in which school counselors will write Workforce Development curriculum.

For all NPS Workforce Development Opportunities and more, visit www.norwalkps.org/careertraining. Please be sure to bookmark the site and check back regularly for new and exciting opportunities!

Counseling/Support Services

The team continues to work with our 10 cohort schools and EduSolve to align data with best practices, and the last coaching session for the school year has been hosted. The district attendance committee continues to review policies, practices, and procedures in other districts. The team is now working in a sub-committee fashion in which the group is to explore a K to 12 attendance protocol. A School Counselor committee has been created for June in which school counselors will write Social-Emotional Learning curriculum. The work continues on the SHAPE Assessment in partnership with the Child Health and Development Institute. The district's RISE partners and the team met with other RISE team members and another school district to explore adding the technical schools on Naviance. The team has also created a K to 8 District Wide Comprehensive Mental Health & Wellness Team in which they are currently working with Cooperative Educational Services for the foundational committee meetings. The K to 8 School Counselors received many resources this week in our district meeting including SHAPE, PBIS World, Trails, Harmony, 2nd step and DESSA. The team is looking forward to visiting the Career & Wellness Fair today that will be hosted by Roton Middle School.

Specialized Learning

ESY planning is underway. Hiring is wrapping up, materials are being ordered, and staff training is being planned. To date, the team has received nearly 50% of responses from parents with their decision to send their child to ESY services. The team anticipates receiving all back by May 31. School teams will work with families to gather this information by that day.

On Monday, May 27, 2024, individuals from the Norwalk Next Steps transition program participated in the Norwalk Memorial Day Parade.



About a month ago, two great events occurred at our elementary schools—one at Wolfpit Elementary School and the other at Fox Run. Wolfpit celebrated Neurodiversity on April 25, 2024, during Autism Awareness Month.



Fox Run held a Celebrating Differences Day on April 26, 2024. Staff members held stations throughout the gym. The event's purpose was to celebrate everyone's uniqueness and foster understanding and appreciation for the diverse ways in which people think and process information. Eight sessions were set up in the gym, and classes rotated through the stations. A great day of learning was had by all!



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

2023-24 Learning Walks: Reflections

This year, the team launched a system of learning walks to monitor the implementation and impact of professional learning at the district and school levels. 191 classrooms were visited as part of the 3 district learning walks. 628 classrooms were visited as part of the 3 rounds of school-based learning walks. The learning walk data was used to share patterns and trends and to inform next steps. From September to April, evidence of teachers planning standards-based instruction increased from 58.3% to 82.9%. From December to April, evidence of student engagement increased from 50.5% to 62%. Here is a testimonial from an NPS Principal: “The district’s Instructional Look Fors document has proven to be an invaluable resource. It has streamlined the data collection process, has shaped our professional learning plan, helped to establish a common language among the staff and has promoted consistency and collaboration in our approach to improvement. As a principal, this tool has allowed me to focus on top priorities and has helped me to lead with clarity and purpose.”

NPS Teacher of the Year

Each year, each NPS school identifies a teacher to be celebrated at the Excellence in Education celebration at the Shore and Country Club. Those teachers are then invited to be considered for the Norwalk Teacher of the Year award. The Leadership Development team is currently interviewing the teachers interested in pursuing the award and two candidates will be selected for a classroom visit. After those visits are conducted, the finalist will be announced and the NPS Teacher of the Year will speak at Convocation in August 2024. Special shout out to all of the certified and uncertified staff who were celebrated last night at the Shore and Country Club!

Food Services

All the grant funds for the 2023-24 Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program have been spent and the students enjoyed the delicious options which the team was able to provide each week using those funds. Applications were collected for seventeen schools for next year's grant.

The team wants to say thank you to all the principals who completed the SY24-25 Fresh Fruit and Vegetable application and a big thank you to Dr. Estrella for approving the grant applications for submission to the state for all seventeen schools.



FILL PLATES. NOT LANDFILLS.

#BETHERESCUE

NPS has successfully teamed up with [Food Rescue](#) this year and every Friday any leftover cooked food from the week was donated to [The Salvation Army](#) of Norwalk and the [Gillespie Center](#) in Norwalk Cheers to BMHS, NHS and Nathan Hale for donating each week. The team hopes to add more sites next year.

The Food Service Department was obligated to go out to bid this April and the team is happy to report that Chartwells will be back again for five more years to continue serving our students.

Thank you to Scott Maxwell and Outdoor Sports in Wilton for the generous donation of bike helmets. The total value of the helmets is \$825.00. These helmets will be given to 15 lucky children at our Open Streets event this Saturday, June 1st from 9:00am-1:00 pm.

Facilities

The Facilities Department is ready to take full advantage of the upcoming summer weeks! Here is a sneak peek at a few of our projects:

The replacement of the cafeteria floor at Rowayton is to be completed by the start of the 2024-25 school year and is currently out to bid until June 14.

Conversion of a second-grade classroom for the Montessori program at Brookside is to be completed by the start of the 2024-25 school year and is also currently out to bid.

Removal of the decommissioned underground fuel storage tanks at Brookside and Tracey as the final step in the conversion from oil to natural gas fuel is to be completed by the start of the 2024/25 heating season. These projects are part of a CT State grant application. This work is scheduled to be performed after the start of the 2024/25 school year but on extended weekends outside of school hours with little to no impact.

Planning has begun for upgrading of the electrical service to increase available power for future air conditioning improvements at Tracey.

Removal of the portable classrooms at West Rocks is being explored.

Health Services



On May 15, the team met with the Healthy For Life project, a community coalition formed more than a decade ago as part of the Greater Norwalk Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan. This group tackles big community health challenges like healthy eating, nutrition security, physical activity, active transportation, access to healthcare, chronic disease prevention, and more to improve community health in Norwalk together.

Additional information may be found [here](#).

On May 22, NPS received a donation from the Lion's and Kiwanis Clubs to support eyecare and vision needs of NPS students.

Emergency medications in all 22 nurse's offices were recently inventoried to ensure the highest quality in terms of storage and expiration dates.

DIGITAL LEARNING & TECHNOLOGY

Enterprise Software/Data

Collaboration has been undertaken with the Norwalk Health Department, sharing enrollment data and historical student demographics to support annual health assessments analytics project. End-of-year procedures for K to 12 software applications and platforms are underway to ensure a seamless transition.

Infrastructure/Operations

New VILS devices for teachers have been secured at P-Tech, NHS, CGS, BMHS, and Roton, with 90% of these devices already distributed. A device collection plan for this year has been finalized and shared with all principals, ensuring a smooth transition for students to the next grade level.

Digital Learning

Verizon Innovative Schools in the district are now hiring digital learning coaches, providing additional support for our staff and students as we continue to integrate technology to advance our digital equity initiative.

Last week, Fox Run Elementary proudly hosted Senator Bob Duff for an interview conducted by the 5th grade broadcasting team. Following their recent visit to NCC, the students gained a comprehensive understanding of broadcast studio operations and professional standards. The students skillfully set up three cameras and external lavalier microphones, executing the interview in a single take. The team had dedicated roles for camera operators, scriptwriters, teleprompters,

and editors. Under the coordination of Stefanie Dean. Dan Wabno instructed the students on equipment usage, and Jodi Nathanson assisted with editing in WeVideo.

As part of an ongoing collaboration between the assistive technology and digital learning departments, the West Rocks Student Tech Team, led by Dr. Dan Kreiness and supported by Dan Wabno, both instructional coaches for digital learning, employed 3D printing technology to create keyguards for iPads used by students with disabilities. These keyguards, designed with separate holes that simulate the layout of a tablet's virtual keyboard, assist students in accurately pressing the correct keys, thereby aiding those with fine motor control challenges.

FINANCE

Payroll

Payroll has just finished processing the biweekly payroll for this week. The team is now gearing up for the final payroll of the school year, which will be on June 14. In addition, the team is also getting ready to handle payroll for summer school and summer pays. Right now, benefit enrollments are being reviewed and are being wrapped up for open enrollment for the 2024-25 school year, which will end on May 31. On May 30, the last information sessions for Lincoln Life Short Term and Long-Term was held. Stay tuned for more information in the coming days!

Grants

The Grants team has been hard at work collaborating with schools and community partners to gather data and write narratives for our year-end reports to the State. The team has seen some amazing achievements in projects supported by the Extended School Hours Grant, including school musicals, health and wellness programs, and district-wide enrichment programs. Now, the focus is on planning the budget for next year's grants, making sure it aligns with our Strategic Plan and District Priorities. We are also actively pursuing other competitive grants at the local and federal levels for Fiscal Year 2025. Also, we are working on reconciling and utilizing any grants set to expire by June 30.

Purchasing/Accounts Payable

The team recently sent out a year-end memo to the district regarding final purchase orders and requisitions. The memo contains important deadlines and instructions on reviewing all open purchase orders, Pcard charges, and grant payments. The team is working closely with the schools to process, pay, and close out all pending items over the next few weeks.

Capital

The Capital Team has been working with the State on new projects eligible for reimbursement. Two additional projects were approved, totaling \$650,000. Progress payments to the State construction team were processed. Just recently, the district received a payment of \$4,707,127.00 for Norwalk High School. Main priorities in the coming weeks will be finalizing the Jefferson Elementary School project and submitting progress payments for SONO, Cranbury and Norwalk High School.