



Board Report
June 14, 2024



BOARD UPDATE

From the desk of Dr. Alexandra Estrella, Superintendent

June 14, 2024

EXCELLENCE, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Communications

Quick Links

- [Roton Middle School Launches Dippin' Dough Cookie Co.](#)
- [7 BMHS Students Honored for CT Lt. Governor's Computing Challenge](#)
- [Concord 6th Grader Competes at Invention Convention Nationals](#)
- [Nathan Hale Principal Selected Outstanding First Year Principal by CAS](#)
- [Brien McMahon & Norwalk High Honored at 21st Annual Halo Awards](#)
- [NPS in the News](#)

Important Dates

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

Wednesday, June 19 - Juneteenth (Central Office Closed)

Thursday, July 4 - Independence Day (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

Wednesday, Aug. 21 - Convocation

Monday, Aug. 26 - First Day of 2024-25 School Year

Pride in the Park



On Saturday, we enjoyed another wonderful experience at Triangle Community Center's Pride in the Park. We welcomed everyone into our tent for fun giveaways, bracelet making, painting with FiveFingaz and friends, and oh so many balloons and bubbles!

Thank you to everyone who stopped by our booth to show their Pride and to everyone who helped us participate in another successful community event.

[Click here to see all the fun!](#)

Cranbury Walk Audit



On June 7, Johanna Zanvettor, NPS Transportation Logistical Administrator, joined the Norwalk Bike/Walk Commission, Norwalk's Departments of Transportation, Mobility & Parking and Public Works, and CTDOT's Safe Routes to School to conduct a walk audit at Cranbury Elementary School.

A walk audit is when a group of people walk through a neighborhood to see how safe and easy it is for our community members to walk or bike to school. They look for things like safe crosswalks, sidewalks, and areas where improvements are needed. The goal is to make the journey to school safer and more enjoyable for everyone.

Why I Teach - Odalis Garcia Cruz Interviews...

Why I Teach - Odalis interviews Diana DiMarino



"It is hard to pinpoint a specific moment where I have felt proud of being an educator as I am continually rewarded by the success stories of my students, the acts of kindness that occur at school, and the visits or emails from my alumni sharing wonderful stories of their lives after high school."

DIANA DIMARINO | SPANISH TEACHER | NORWALK HIGH SCHOOL

We've received so many great contributions to the Why I Teach campaign, and the videos and interviews continue rolling in. This past week, we launched another great series with the newest NPS Communications' intern Odalis Garcia Cruz who has a great series featuring staff at her school, P-TECH Norwalk, and Norwalk High School.

[Click here to read the latest "Why I Teach - Odalis Garcia Cruz Interviews..."](#)
[Click here to watch all the Why I Teach video interviews.](#)

Middle School Spring Athletics Champions



Congratulations to our Spring 2024 Middle School Athletics Champions!

Roton Middle School's Coed Volleyball team defeated Nathan Hale Middle School in the championship game on May 28. West Rocks Middle School's Coed Soccer team defeated Ponus Ridge STEAM Academy in the championship game on June 4.

In Case You Missed It

[NHS/P-TECH Graduation Ceremony \(VIDEO\)](#)

[Marvin Elementary School Teacher Appreciation \(VIDEO\)](#)



[First Book Photo Recap - ft. original music by Ponus Ridge 8th grader John Vann \(VIDEO\)](#)



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

- [NY Rangers and NPS @ the SONO ICE HOUSE \(VIDEO\)](#)
- [SoNo School 1st Grade Insect Publishing Party \(VIDEO\)](#)
- [Cranbury Cubs Garden \(VIDEO\)](#)
- [Fox Run Celebrating Differences \(VIDEO\)](#)

Upcoming Events

Juneteenth Community Celebration
 Saturday, June 15 from 12 to 4 p.m.
 Norwalk Historic Green, 8 Park St. in Norwalk

Celebrate Juneteenth with art, music, culture, food, family and more at Norwalk’s 3rd annual Juneteenth Community Celebration on the Green. This is a FREE family event!

NICE Festival
 Saturday, July 6 from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.
 Oyster Shell Park, 95 N. Water St. in Norwalk

Celebrate different world cultures through music, food and performing arts at the 8th annual NICE Festival supported by the Norwalk International Cultural Exchange (NICE), the Norwalk Department of Recreation & Parks, and sponsors and vendors.

Two stages will host live performances including dancers exhibiting Flamenco, Asian and African styles and rock, reggae, rhythm and blues and Latin music. Children’s activities will be available between 12 and 5 p.m.

Norwalk Night Out
 Thursday, Aug. 1 from 5 to 8 p.m.
 Norwalk Police Department, 1 Monroe St. in Norwalk

Norwalk Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie. Join the NPD for family fun, activities, games, and giveaways all on the plaza in front of police headquarters.

Testing & Accountability

2023-24 Norwalk DIBELS
BOY to EOY Composite Scores - Percent by Level

Grade	Percent of students in each DIBELS instructional category					
	Students at/above benchmark level		Students below benchmark level		Students well below benchmark level	
	BOY	EOY	BOY	EOY	BOY	EOY
Kindergarten	47.0%	67.1%	18.8%	9.6%	34.3%	23.2%
1 st Grade	52.5%	65.9%	16.5%	12.1%	30.9%	22.0%
2 nd Grade	56.3%	63.5%	13.3%	14.7%	30.3%	21.8%
3 rd Grade	58.3%	61.7%	17.9%	16.1%	23.8%	22.2%
Across Grades	53.4%	64.6%	16.6%	13.1%	30.0%	22.3%
	+11.2		-3.5		-7.7	



An end of year data report was presented to the Board of Education on [Friday, June 7](#). A comparison of DIBELS8 early literacy outcomes for fall (BOY) and spring (EOY) showed an 11.2-percentage point gain in the percent of students at/above benchmark. The year began with 53.4% of K-3 students meeting the benchmark and ended with 64.6% at/above the benchmark. For NWEA, achievement and growth results from spring 2023 to spring 2024 were measured by NWEA percentile rankings and compared to growth from spring 2022 to spring 2024. The largest gains in reading were from grade 1 to grade 2. In math there were large gains moving from grades 2 to 3 and grades 3 to 4.

Using preliminary 2024 state results, proficiency trends by content and grade are being reviewed. As with NWEA, we will also look at results by matched cohorts for students who tested in both 2023 and 2024. Proficiency results by major subgroup will be calculated and compared to prior years.

School Quality Review (SQR)

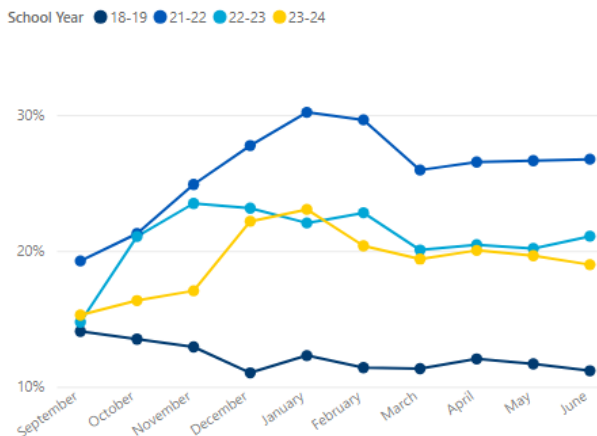
All schools receiving an SQR in 2023-24 are complete, and all principals have received their reports. Two schools are completing the SQR Report Verification Form. If there are any factual errors, then the Education Administrator for School Quality Review will correct any and resend it directly to the principals. The principal shares the SQR Report with the school community. Data analysis of the Anonymous Parent/Guardian and Teacher SQR Surveys 2023-2024 will be conducted.



On a fun note, the New York Rangers have continued their partnership with NPS. This winter and spring, they provided FREE physical education (PE) field trips to the SoNo Ice House for students to learn how to play ice hockey. The buses, ice-time, and equipment were all donated by the NY Rangers at no cost to NPS. Students and staff alike had a wonderful time and received NY Rangers t-shirts. Ten schools, K-12 elected to participate and ensured consistent communication from the PE teachers and principals. The collaboration between the Transportation Logistical Administrator and Durham Bus Company made these trips a success.

Research & Analytics

District CA Rate by Month and School Year



As the 2023-24 school year draws to a close, the team is focused on the 2024-25 school year. The School Improvement Planning process kicks off with a Needs Assessment in which each school analyzes data from the current school year to identify trends and identify causes of those trends. Over the past couple of weeks, this process has been facilitated at several schools. All schools will engage in the process before the next school year starts. In addition, meetings are taking place with school leadership to gauge the useability of the data dashboards that were built by the team. Information gathered will be used to refine the dashboard layout and functionality over the summer.

CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION & SPECIALIZED LEARNING

Humanities

We continue to gear up for the summer work around curriculum development. The middle school teachers will be writing a new historical fiction unit that is aligned to the new SS framework. The K-5 teachers will be focusing on adjusting the formative assessments. The K-8 social studies teachers will be working on creating inquiries to support the new SS units. We are very excited to offer 7 professional learning opportunities as well this summer. Teachers have signed up and we are continuing to prepare for those learning opportunities.

Mathematics/STEM

The STEM department has been gearing up for transitioning to summer! We have been reviewing several year-end data pieces to reflect and refine curricula over the summer. Coach teams began adapting end of unit assessments in grades 2-8 to adjust to teacher feedback provided this year. A few teachers are working on supporting adjustments to Algebra 2. Teams will continue to meet through June as revisions are completed.

Middle school science teachers at NHMS, WRMS, and Ponus got a day of science training last week to support implementation of Open Sci Ed for next year, the state model curriculum.

Additionally, Naramake completed a cycle focused on student engagement in mathematics with a focus on implementing Building Thinking Classrooms practices.

We are also working to support the start of Summer Academy (K-5) and some High Dosage Tutoring (Middle School) for summertime.

Multilingual Learners

The Multilingual Learner Department is excited for the 2024 Multilingual Learner Accelerated Summer program. This year the summer program will be held at Brien McMahon High School and offers our Multilingual Learner scholars the opportunity to take up to 2 courses for original credit. We have 298 MLL scholars enrolled.

Dual Language PLC Revisions: The Dual Language Professional Learning Community is actively revising Unit 2 of the curriculum to enhance instructional strategies, content delivery, and student engagement. The revision process aims to align unit 2 with best practices and the specific needs of MLL students in the Dual Language program.

Workforce Development

The work continues on the Career Z Challenge Grant as I am in the final writing, editing, and review stage prior to the upcoming submission date in June. CT State Norwalk and NPS Workforce Development continue to partner to offer our Junior and Senior scholars Workforce Certification Courses for the Fall. We are identifying courses for the fall and will start updating 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! The Dual Credit Expansion Grant Committee created a teacher application, and teachers have begun to apply and can get teaching credentials toward teaching college-level courses funded by the grant. The refinement work continues the Portrait of a Graduate with the committee. The Workforce Development Advisory Board met in June to review our work at NPS since December 2023. 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

Roton Middle School hosted its Career & Wellness Fair, in which various careers were represented, including a cosmetologist, a physician, and a graphic and information technology company. This was a great way the school counseling department brought Workforce Development into the schools! The district attendance committee is working to explore attendance protocols and policies. We have created a K-8 District Wide Comprehensive Mental Health & Wellness Team in which we are currently working with Cooperative Educational Services for the foundational committee meetings. We have hosted three committee meetings to date and look forward to scheduling the next meeting. The work continues on the SHAPE Assessment in partnership with the Child Health and Development Institute. A School Counselor committee has been created for June in which school counselors will write Social-Emotional Learning curriculum.



Specialized Instruction

As we wrap up the 2023-24 school year, the Department celebrates so many areas of progress and growth. Last Friday and Saturday, accomplishments toward annual goals were shared with the Board of Education. Highlights include ending the year with near-perfect compliance with all K-12+ IEPs in CT SEDS. We look forward to the feature of CT SEDS that will allow us to align goals and objectives to state standards going live on July 1, 2024. The department has developed new programs for the 24-25 school year including the expansion of the LEAP and Literacy programs and the addition of a new 5th to 6th grade transition program that will be at Nathan Hale Middle School. We look forward to summer work and preparing documents for publication for the start of the school year, including a District Procedures Manual for parents and one for staff, staff professional learning plans, and an updated program description book.

The past two weeks have been busy planning for teacher, related service provider, and paraeducator assignments for the 2024-25 school year. We have completed ESY rosters and transportation planning. Confirmation will be sent to parents in the coming days.

In addition to graduation and promotion ceremonies at each school, our transition programs celebrated our students aging out of public-school services as they graduate and move on to future endeavors. Project Search culminated the year with a promotion ceremony on June 11, 2024, and Norwalk Next Steps held their celebration on June 14.



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

MSAP Grant

As was announced in the fall, Norwalk Public Schools received a five-year grant administered through the federal Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP). The program's funding intends to dismantle obstacles and create a more inclusive educational setting by strengthening curriculum and teaching strategies. The funding also provides the opportunity to increase the appeal and accessibility of magnet programs to a wider spectrum of students. The schools involved in the grant are Kendall College & Career Academy, serving students in grades K-5, Ponus Ridge STEAM Academy, serving students in grades 6 to 8, and P-TECH Norwalk, serving students in grades 9 to 12.

On June 4 to 6, the school-based implementation teams attended a three-day professional learning series with the grant partner, eMints. The session descriptions are outlined below.

- **Session #1** - Participants develop an understanding of the eMINTS Instructional Model and learn about the eMINTS National Center and the core programs and personnel. Constructivist learning theory is defined and applied to experiential learning. Affiliate Trainers are introduced to the eMINTS Facilitator Model and the components and practices that fall within and across the 4 quadrants.
- **Session #2** - This session builds on the importance of developing a safe and trusting learning community. The participants are introduced to the characteristics of adult learners in relation to the eMINTS Facilitator Model. The cohort extends their participation in an experiential activity exploring how to create a more rigorous learning experience for their participants and students.
- **Session #3** - Participants are introduced to eMINTS materials by comparing facilitator and participant agendas. They transfer their knowledge by analyzing an agenda and creating a facilitation plan for activities to be presented during the teacher kickoff with their individual schools. AT participants engage in a trust-building activity and consider how they might begin building trust with their participants.

Norwalk Teacher of the Year

The Leadership Development Team has been interviewing and observing the finalists for the Norwalk Teacher of the Year. Announcement to be made soon!

Food Service



The summer program will begin on July 1 and what would summer be without local fresh fruits and vegetables? So, [Dip Into Summer](#) event with tastings from local CT farmers. Sites and dates to be determined.

Our summer sites open to families are listed in our [Public Release](#) for 2024. Families can also reach out to 211 for state information.

The blitz promotion will be held in the last week in June, and we hope to have a big turn out to promote summer meals. Come join us at South Norwalk School where we will begin the promos. More information to follow.

Finally, the **Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (S-EBT) Launches in Late June for a one-time summer drop of \$120.00 for families enrolled in the program.**

The Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (S-EBT) program will launch in late June with the first set of benefits reaching more than 270,000 children in Connecticut. The student level data that local educational agencies submit to the CSDE's Public Student Information System is what the CSDE and DSS will use to automatically issue benefits to eligible students.

Facilities

The removal of contaminated soil at Naramake will begin on Monday, June 17 and is expected to be completed on Wednesday, June 26. The gas service will be temporarily shut off by Eversource on Friday, June 14 and restored on Thursday, June 26.

The removal of temporary classroom units at West Rocks is currently being explored.

The installation of dividing doors for the stages at Marvin, Tracey, and Naramake is currently being planned.

Bids are due back on Tuesday, June 18 for:

- o Replacement of Cafeteria floor at ROWAYTON
- o Montessori classroom (one classroom) conversion at Brookside

The feasibility of installing a Community Health Center annex space at Kendall is currently being planned.

School Safety

The School Safety Team held its last District Safety Committee Meeting of the 2023-24 school year. In review the district finished 100% in compliance of the district and school safety plans and 100% of compliance for emergency drills for the third straight year. The meeting presentation can be found below.

[Safety Committee Meeting 6.12 End of Year.pptx](#)

We also reduced student behavior incidents by nearly 11% compared to last school year.

Transportation

Jill Kress, NPS Wellness Chair and Johanna Zanvettor, Transportation collaborated with the City Bike/Walk Commission to hold the 2nd Annual Open Streets Festival at Calf Pasture Beach on Saturday, June 4. Over 500 families attended the event which started with a Bike Rodeo (sponsored by the Kiwanis Club) at Marvin Elementary School. Families received free helmets, assisted helmet fittings and bicycle maintenance. Families were then able to walk/bike/stroll or roll down Calf Pasture Beach Rd via the open lane. Jill and Johanna were on site at the beach with a free helmet giveaway (contributions by Outdoor Sports, thanks to Jill's partnership). Families were able to have the helmets fitted at the next tent with CT DOT Safe Routes to School (SRTS) members. Free education and bike/walk safety information was also provided by SRTS. The Wellness Committee and Transportation Office will work with SRTS to provide free education/curriculum for schools this fall. The City of Norwalk Health Department and CT See Me organization also participated, providing free services.

The Transportation Office participated in a Safe Routes to School Walk Audit at Cranbury Elementary School Friday, June 7. State of CT DOT Safe Routes to School (SRTS) team, City of Norwalk Transportation, Mobility & Parking (TMP) team, Norwalk Bike/Walk Commission members and Cranbury administrators and students walked the perimeter of the school campus observing arrival procedures. The group traveled north of the school on Grumman Av and just south beyond the Merritt Parkway overpass, observing sidewalk conditions, walkability and travel to school. Based on the findings and team input the SRTS team will provide a comprehensive report for the TMP to request state funding for improvements.

[SRTS Cranbury Walk Audit #](#)

[SRTS Cranbury Walk Audit # 2](#)

[SRTS Cranbury Walk Audit # 1](#)

The Transportation Office collaborated with NHS Administration to provide over 20 buses to service the Norwalk High graduation on June 12th at Total Mortgage Arena. Over 460 seniors, 30 staff members, 150 band, choir, orchestra students, and a dozen Honor Society members and families were transported. It was a successful day for all! Thank you to the drivers who made it possible! Durham School Services has welcomed 2 more drivers to the team this week, Jennifer and Mario! Training and testing will continue through the summer to increase the driving team, to ensure we are fully staffed for the fall.

Health Services

On June 3, Nancy on Norwalk featured an article, found [here](#), spotlighting the collaboration between school health services and our school-based health center partners, the Human Services Council and the Norwalk Community Health Center. The article includes ways to enroll your WRMS, NHS, NHMS, Ponus, CMS, and BMHS students.

The School-Based Health Alliance recently awarded \$231,619 to the Norwalk Community Health Center to establish a school-based health center at Kendall College and Career Academy. Planning is currently underway. The Hour article can be found [here](#).

The Norwalk Community Health Center School-Based Health Center at BMHS has increased its summer hours to accommodate the needs of incoming NPS students for physicals. Availability is by appointment.

DIGITAL LEARNING & TECHNOLOGY

Enterprise Software/Data

Operational and department software analytics have been distributed to Central Office department leaders for review and continued adoption in the fiscal year 2024-25. We have ensured that homebound instructors have received the necessary software set-up and support to continue their homebound student assistance throughout the summer months.

We continue to enhance our Data Governance practices. The next phase involves informing all end users about the importance of data governance and its implications for their daily tasks. We recognize the importance of clarity and accessibility in communicating this information and are committed to using straightforward language to ensure understanding.

To gauge understanding and gather feedback, a quick poll will be included regarding data governance. The responses will play a role in shaping the agenda for our upcoming committee meeting, ensuring that our data governance efforts align with the needs and expectations of all stakeholders.

Infrastructure/Operations

The Firewall upgrade project has commenced, with a planned cut-over date set for July 13 and a push date of July 20. The firewalls are installed, and configuration is underway. The VDI project is progressing well, with virtual desktops currently being tested.

Library Media

Nathan Hale Middle School's Library Media Specialist/Media Arts teacher, Thomas Kodel, collaborated with his students to create podcasts on social media issues of their choice, website logos, video ads, and epic object videos. In Immersive Media, students embarked on virtual field trips and designed and explored VR projects.

Brookside Elementary School's Library Media Specialist, Audra Good, worked with students in the Makerspace where they created projects for Earth Day. Their finished projects were showcased in the District Earth Day Celebration.

See what other great things the Library Media Specialists are doing! Click below:
Google Slide--LMS [April and May Grows and Glows Slidedeck](#)

FINANCE

Budget

The budget team continues to refine the 2024-25 projection details in Munis. Finance is collaborating with Human Resources, Special Education, and the schools to fine tune the details, including updating any transfers, new hires and employee impacts due to bumping. All current job vacancies are being reviewed and posted so the district can review the vacancies available across the schools to ensure proper assignments and accounting for the new school year. Supporting budget files and documents are being finalized to match the approved budget. In addition, the budget book details are currently being updated to reflect the 2024-25 budget and school organizational updates.

Munis position control and employee salary screens were updated to be ready for the new payroll as of July 1.

Billing of other districts for students studying in Norwalk belonging to another district Nexus has been completed.

A review of the financial FMLA tracker created by benefits and HR has occurred and will provide more timely and accurate information when approving job postings and accounting for substitutes at the school.

Finance is also preparing to close the 2023-24-year end by assisting schools and central office in paying bills, adjusting purchase orders, reviewing the health insurance balances and the overall status of the budget so a timely and accurate closing of the books can occur.

Purchasing/Accounts Payable

Purchasing and Accounts Payable continue to work with the schools and central office departments to get everything processed, paid and closed out as we end the fiscal year. Two weeks ago, there were 1,300 purchase orders and \$8.5 million open and we have pared that down to 970 purchase orders and \$6.4 million outstanding with 300+ checks processed for payment to vendors this week.