



**Board Report**  
**August 9, 2024**



# BOARD UPDATE

From the desk of Dr. Alexandra Estrella, Superintendent  
*August 9, 2024*

## EXCELLENCE, EQUITY & INCLUSION

### Communications

#### Quick Links

- [BMHS & NHS Host Freshman Transition Programs](#)
- [NPS Completes Phase 2 of Career Z Challenge Grant to Expand Workforce Development](#)

#### Xerox Donates Backpacks to NPS



Thank you to Xerox for their generous donation of 500 backpacks stuffed with school supplies! These backpacks will make it easier for many of our students to return to school confident that they have the tools to be successful in the classroom.

We appreciate CEO Steve Bandrowczak and President and COO John Bruno supporting our schools and the Xerox employees who volunteered to stuff the backpacks at their headquarters right here in Norwalk!

Assistant Superintendent of School Rob Pennington (center), Margaret Costa, Executive Director of the Norwalk Education Foundation (left), and Carol Wiltshire-Toth, Education Administer for School Counseling & Workforce Development (right), accepted the backpacks for Norwalk Public Schools from Bandrowczak (second from right) and Yvonne Hickey, GM, Public Sector Center of Excellence at Xerox (second from left) on Aug. 7.

## NPS Summer Academy at Maritime Aquarium



Thank you to The Maritime Aquarium for hosting our Summer Academy students and their families to celebrate the end of this year's program! Students were able to show their families everything they learned this summer and check out all the cool exhibits.

## NPS Summer Graduation



Congratulations to our 83 scholars from Brien McMahon High School and Norwalk High School who celebrated their high school graduation last month!

These graduates completed their diploma requirements by participating this summer in the district's Twilight and Virtual Academies, the Multilingual Learning (MLL) Accelerated Summer Program, and the Credit Recovery Program.

[Click here to read more about NPS Summer Graduation 2024.](#)

## Dr. Estrella Joins Youth Mental Health Panel



Superintendent Dr. Alexandra Estrella was honored to join an esteemed group of area experts to discuss the critical topics of access to mental health care and the youth mental health crisis at a special mental health event hosted by Silver Hill Hospital on July 24.

The event also featured former U.S. Representative Patrick J. Kennedy (D-RI), author of “Profiles in Mental Health Courage,” who brought his deep understanding of mental health and substance use disorders and the extraordinary challenges they bring to the conversation.

## Norwalk Night Out



We had a great night at Norwalk, CT Police Department's annual Norwalk Night Out last week. We love being a part of these amazing community events and connecting with our families outside of school.

Thank you to Kendall College and Career Academy's Principal Jennifer Sweeters and Magnet Recruiter Megan Robinson, and MSAP "Accelerate Excellence" Project Director Dr. Victor Black for joining us in the booth! This was a perfect opportunity for them to spread the word about our 50 Open Choice Seats at their schools and Ponus Ridge STEAM Academy.

## In Case You Missed It

### Why I Teach (VIDEO PLAYLIST)



### Important Dates

Wednesday, Aug. 21 - Convocation

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

### Upcoming Events

*Back to School Nights*

Monday, Sept. 9 - High School Open Houses

Wednesday, Sept. 11 - Middle School Open Houses

Thursday, Sept. 12 - Elementary School Open Houses

### Testing & Accountability

The Testing Office is preparing for the release of 2024 state testing results and Next Generation Accountability Indicators for performance and growth. We will continue to compare Norwalk's achievement trends to state results and to other large cities. The proficiency of matched cohorts, students who were with us for multiple years, will be displayed overall and by high needs. We plan to compare ELA and math growth by grade using the CSDE accountability measure, average percent of target achieved. Elementary and school leaders received detailed SBAC ELA and math subgroup results by grade level. They use these results as they develop goals for their 2024-25 School Improvement Plans. CSDE requests that districts do not share any state assessment results publicly until the CSDE public release later in August.

### Research & Analytics

The portrait of a graduate video filming sessions took place in collaboration with the communications department at Jefferson Elementary, Ponus Ridge STEAM Academy, and Brien McMahon High School.

Principals are being contacted regarding granting licenses to key staff in their schools including coaches, school deans, and other stakeholders who would benefit from access. The dashboard connections to the RISE Warehouse and testing data repositories are being reconfigured as the data is rolled over to the new school year.

## CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION & SPECIALIZED LEARNING

### Humanities

This week, the Humanities department continued to work on the new social studies inquiries for grades K-8. We also hosted 17 teachers for a professional learning experience around the Writing Cycle and other writing strategies to engage students. Teachers became students and worked on creating their own narrative. They left with new strategies and tools to use in their classroom.



Next week, we will be hosting 3 Professional Learning Opportunities for teachers across the district.

### Multilingual Learners

The Multilingual Learner department is proud to announce 39 Multilingual Learners who completed their graduation requirements during Summer Academy and graduated on Wednesday, July 31st. These students could participate in info sessions regarding post-secondary plans, including a visit from Norwalk Community College and Norwalk School Resource Officers regarding the Cadets program.

The Multilingual Learner department is conducting an ongoing Dual Language Professional Learning Community focused on planning for elementary Spanish Language Arts curriculum and its alignment with English Language Arts. Our Dual Language programs in Norwalk promote biliteracy in English and Spanish.

### Counseling/Support Services

The NPS Risk Assessment & Intervention Guide is currently being updated, and the School Counselor Scholar Meeting Data is being refined. NPS has submitted a proposal to present our SHAPE Assessment work at the CT State Performance Matters Conference. The work continues on the School Counseling Grade 7 Developmental Guidance Lessons in Social-Emotional Learning, as the curriculum that our School Counselor committee has written is being synthesized into classroom lessons. In Partnership with the RISE Network, FAFSA Clinics are being held this summer at our high schools for the Class of 2024 and their families.



The Attendance Team has convened to review helpful resources and support for families and staff and is currently asking for leadership feedback. I continue to meet with area colleges and universities to expand and grow our School Counselor Practicum and Internship Program in support of our K - 12 School Counseling Team.

### Workforce Development

The Workforce Development Guide is currently being updated, as well as all of the opportunities on our Workforce Development website. The work continues on the School Counseling Grade 2 Developmental Guidance Lessons on Workforce Development, as the curriculum that our School Counselor committee has written is being synthesized into classroom lessons. The Internship Program is expanding and looking to include more Career Clusters for the upcoming school year. A system is being developed for PowerSchool to note our Seniors selected Career Pathway.

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

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

### New Leader and Educator Evaluation Trainings

District and school administrators have been attending a two-day orientation to understand the new evaluation and support plans for leaders and educators. The first day of orientation took place on July 10th and was repeated on July 24th. The second day of orientation was held on July 31st and will be offered again on August 14th. Part one of the orientation focused on (1) understanding the vision for the new evaluation and support plans and how they are aligned with the NPS strategic priorities, (2) developing a shared understanding of the [Professional Standards for Educational Leaders](#), and (3) understanding the processes and elements of the new evaluation and support plan for leaders. Part two of the orientation focused on goal setting and the elements of the educator evaluation plan.

### School Improvement Plans

School leaders had the chance to participate in SIP (School Improvement Plan) Clinics on July 25th and July 30th to receive support with crafting their School Improvement Plan. The first draft of these plans was submitted to the Leadership Development Team and are being reviewed. Next week, school leaders will meet with Leadership Development team members to receive individualized feedback on their plan and will provide support with the implementation of it.

## BUSINESS & OPERATIONS

### Food Services

The Chartwells Catering Catalogue and order form are available on [our website](#)

The summer meals program was a success.

We reached out to local farms to share locally grown produce with our learners.

Please join us to learn about our local growers and to close the summer meals program off with some fun healthy bites. [Dip into Summer presentation](#)

### Facilities

Kendall & Rowayton - The parking lot and driveway milling and paving projects have been delayed due to weather and will take place during the week of Aug. 12 and will be completed in advance of Convocation.

Rowayton & Brookside - Vase Management is substantially complete with the cafeteria flooring replacement at Rowayton and converting classroom C-9 at Brookside into a Montessori classroom. These projects will be 100% completed by August 16.

All schools - Summer deep cleaning is in full swing, and all schools will be completed on time.

### Transportation

Our partners at Durham are busy getting the buses prepared for school to begin. Preventative maintenance, deep cleaning inside the bus and the exterior has begun and will continue through next week.

#### [Bus Prep](#)

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Bus route schedule review is under way as we prepare for our scholars to return in a few weeks. We have completed our Magnet, Non-Public, Vo-Tech and Parochial schools' routes. In addition, our middle school routes with added bussing to support middle school choice programs. Routes are scheduled for publication on the Norwalk Public School website the week ending August 16<sup>th</sup>.

The week prior to school starting we will provide bussing for our middle school orientations at Nathan Hale, Ponus STEAM, Roton and West Rocks. Durham has also partnered with Norwalk Public School to provide shuttle service for staff attending Convocation on 8/21.

### Health Services

Health Assessment Records and sports physicals continue to be processed throughout the summer. All students entering the 7th and 10th grade, and those playing sports, need updated physicals. Don't delay! These may be sent to [SHS@norwalkps.org](mailto:SHS@norwalkps.org).

On August 7, School Health Services met with the Norwalk Risk Manager to review and update the OSHA exposure plan. OSHA Bloodborne Pathogen training of staff by school nurses is scheduled.

School Health Services is working with "In A Heartbeat" to determine a Fall screening date at Brien McMahon High School. In a Heartbeat is an organization that works to identify those students at risk of sudden cardiac arrest. Click [here](#) for more information about this organization.

The Norwalk Community Health Center mobile medical unit will be at Kendall College and Career Academy on 8/26 and 8/27 to promote their school-based health center services that will be established at KCCA this year.



## Grants

The grants team has been working diligently to pursue grant opportunities to support schools for the 24-25 school year. We are excited to share that we have received a \$30,000 grant to provide summer FAFSA support for students and families. This includes rising seniors as well as recently graduated seniors who have yet to fill out the financial aid form. Additionally, we have been awarded a \$400,000 grant to support our SEL partnerships with Mid Fairfield, Positive Directions, and Triangle Community Center. We have also been awarded a \$25,000 grant to promote our high school internship program through the Career Z Challenge. We hope to announce newly awarded grants in the coming weeks.

## DIGITAL LEARNING & TECHNOLOGY

### Enterprise Software/Data

The Edgenuity Online Learning platform is being finalized with courses specifically aligned to the High School Program of Studies and will be ready for the start of the new school year. Our team is focusing on new hire onboarding meetings to ensure these accounts are activated promptly before the New Teacher Orientation date.

### Infrastructure/Operations

The team continues to prepare student devices throughout the elementary schools for the start of school, with four schools already completed. Our new Next Generation Firewall (NGFW) is operational, with the transition going smoothly and minimal issues. Monitoring is ongoing. We are also setting up new training and phishing software, aiming to roll it out by the end of September.

### Digital Learning

Plans for the Digital Promise Rollouts are underway. Devices will begin arriving next week, with the first rollout scheduled at Roton and Brien McMahon on August 20th. Additional schools will begin their rollout the following week.

## FINANCE

### FY24 Closeout & Audit Preparation

We are pleased to announce that over the past two weeks, The Finance Team, Payroll & Benefits, Budget, Purchasing/Accounts Payable and Grants teams have been hard at work closing out the FY24 fiscal year. Their dedication and meticulous efforts have been essential in preparing for the upcoming annual audit and financial reporting. During this period, the NPS Finance Team has collaborated closely with the City Finance Team.

This process is critical to ensure the accuracy and transparency of our financial operations. We extend our gratitude to everyone involved for their hard work and commitment to maintaining the highest standards in our financial practices.

As we move forward into the new fiscal year, the team will continue to focus on upholding our values of integrity and accountability in all our financial management.