

PM RAIDER CONNECTION

PATCHOGUE-MEDFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT

Welcome Back!

As a new school year got underway, our vibrant halls were once again filled with the unmistakable energy and excitement that can only come from students eager to learn, explore, and grow. This newsletter will introduce our goals and theme for the upcoming year as well as update you on some developments from the summer. Please enjoy this beautiful collage below that captures the joyful moments from our first days back, showcasing smiling faces, engaged classrooms, and the strong sense of community that defines the Patchogue-Medford School District. Here's to a year of new adventures, lasting friendships, and academic success for all!



MANY STORIES...ONE COMMUNITY

The start of a new academic year is always a special time, filled with excitement and anticipation. All of us in the Patchogue-Medford School District administration and on the Board of Education are thrilled to once again join forces with our bright and talented students, dedicated staff, and supportive community. It is with that spirit of collaboration that we proudly introduce our new District theme for the 2024-2025 school year: **“Many Stories...One Community.”**

This theme celebrates the rich diversity of our community, honoring the unique stories, cultures, and experiences that come together to form the fabric of Patchogue-Medford. Throughout the year, we will highlight these stories through student achievements, artistic endeavors, and various media—such as social media posts and newsletters like this one—showcasing the extraordinary spirit that defines us.

In alignment with our theme, Superintendent Dr. Donna Jones has unveiled her newest superintendent goal, **Goal VII: Increase Community Engagement and Outreach in Order to Strengthen Relationships Between Stakeholders**. You can read an in-depth description of this goal below. Our District’s success is built on strong collaboration, and your involvement is essential to our continued growth. We look forward to deepening our connections and working together to create the best possible experiences for our students.

As we look ahead to a year filled with opportunities and achievements, we want to express our gratitude for the community’s ongoing support and engagement. Here’s to a successful and inspiring year ahead!

INTRODUCING OUR NEWEST SUPERINTENDENT GOAL, GOAL VII:

Increase Community Engagement and Outreach in Order to Strengthen Relationships Between Stakeholders

For those in educational leadership, particularly in public school districts, establishing clear and strategic goals is essential. Doing so provides a targeted plan for advancing academic success, drives overall school improvement, and allows us to more effectively track progress. By setting measurable and achievable goals, we can steer our schools toward specific outcomes and a shared vision that brings together all stakeholders in the pursuit of educational excellence.

As superintendent, Dr. Jones has long-established Superintendent’s Goals that are used to guide administration. And as time and best practices are always changing, so too are her goals and strategies. This year, reflecting on our growing knowledge of the incredible importance of community collaboration, Dr. Jones is unveiling Goal VII, *Increase Community Engagement and Outreach in Order to Strengthen Relationships Between Stakeholders*.

For a complete list of Superintendent’s Goals, scan the following QR code:



DEVELOP PLAN

- Develop a Stakeholder Advisory Council to improve engagement strategies.
- Develop subgroup surveys to solicit input.
- Develop opportunities to expand community engagement.

COMMUNICATE PLAN

- Utilize social media, ParentSquare and community outreach.

EXECUTE PLAN

- Utilize communication devices and translation software at Board of Education meetings and other District events.
- Increase visibility within the school community.
- Continue to offer multicultural productions to increase engagement of stakeholders.

EVALUATE

- Use qualitative and quantitative data to assess progress.
- Seek student, parent and employee feedback.
- Modify plans as necessary based on feedback.

PROMOTIONS AND NEW APPOINTMENTS

Of the thirteen administrative and leadership positions that will have new faces this year, twelve will be familiar to the Patchogue-Medford School District family – they are current faculty receiving promotions or selection for new leadership roles. They have each earned their new position as a result of their exceptional skills, expertise, and commitment to the students and families of the Patchogue-Medford community. To our newest administrative member, Christopher McLeod, we welcome you to our family.



***JoAnn Luisa, Principal,
Saxton Middle School***

Previously an Assistant Principal at Oregon Middle School, Ms. Luisa brings passion and dedication to her new role as Principal of Saxton Middle School.



***Raymond Ruiz, Principal,
Canaan Elementary School***

Formerly the Director of Career and Technical Education, Mr. Ruiz has been appointed Principal of Canaan Elementary School.



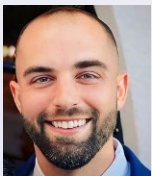
***Christopher McLeod, Director of CTE,
Business, and Technology***

New to Patchogue-Medford, Mr. McLeod previously taught in East Meadow and brings experience in curriculum writing and CTE approvals.



***Frances Cardenas, Director of ENL
and Bilingual Education K-5***

Ms. Cardenas previously worked as an instructional coach at Bay Elementary School and is well-versed in bilingual education and professional development.



***Kevin Petrosino, Assistant Principal,
Oregon Middle School***

Mr. Petrosino transitions from his role as Elementary STEM Chairperson, bringing his expertise in data analysis and curriculum development.



Barbara Lassen, CSE Chairperson

With over 20 years of administrative experience, Ms. Lassen will serve as the new CSE Chairperson.



Stephen O'Brien, CSE Chairperson

Mr. O'Brien, a passionate educator, has worked in special education at both River and Barton elementary schools.



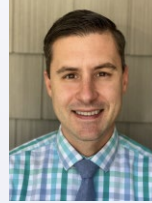
***Dr. Kimberly Hochberg, Administrator on
Special Assignment, Alternative High School***

Dr. Hochberg will lead the new Alternative High School program supporting students with severe anxiety. Dr. Hochberg was formerly director of special education at the high school.



***Aimee Keller, Director of
Special Education, High School***

Ms. Keller will serve as Director of Special Education, ensuring a smooth transition following Dr. Hochberg's leadership. Ms. Keller was a former CSE chairperson.



***David Renahan, Director of
Special Education, Elementary***

Mr. Renahan, with over 10 years of administrative experience, will oversee special education at the elementary level. Mr. Renahan was a former CSE chairperson.



***Matthew Hanley, Director of
Secondary Humanities***

Mr. Hanley, a former English teacher, will lead the Humanities Department, enhancing education across our secondary schools.



***Stephen Santacroce, Principal,
Barton Elementary School***

Mr. Santacroce, formerly an Assistant Principal at Eagle Elementary School, brings extensive leadership experience to Barton Elementary School.



***Christine Padolecchia, Assistant Principal,
Eagle Elementary School***

Previously the Elementary STEM Chairperson, Ms. Padolecchia has over 10 years of experience and looks forward to supporting Eagle Elementary School.

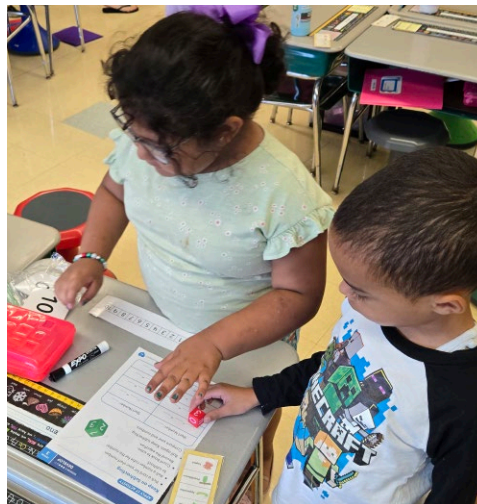
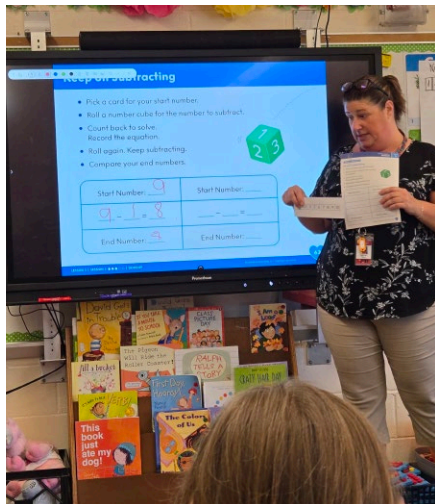


LOOKING AHEAD

New Programs for the 2024-2025 School Year and Beyond

Expanding Reading Program in the Middle Schools

Reading and writing is a foundational component of any curriculum—without a strong base in both, students will struggle in every aspect of education. Because of this, we place a great emphasis on reading and writing, and we are excited to expand our reading programs in our middle schools. The new programs and initiatives will build strong literacy skills through a blend of traditional and digital reading materials, targeted interventions for struggling readers, and enrichment opportunities for those excelling. The goal is to foster a lifelong love of reading and ensure all students achieve literacy proficiency. These updates represent a significant investment in the safety and academic success of students across the District, reflecting the school’s dedication to providing a secure and supportive learning environment.



Students at work on their new math curriculum.

New Math Program

For the 2024-2025 school year, we are introducing a comprehensive new math curriculum aimed at—among other goals—improving math proficiency across all grade levels and enhancing student engagement with this critical core subject. The curriculum is designed to align with state standards, offering differentiated instruction to meet the diverse needs of students, including advanced learners and those requiring additional support.

Patchogue-Medford High School Launches New Unified Physical Education Program

Unified Physical Education (UPE) is a new program that brings together students with and without disabilities for a shared learning experience in physical activity. UPE provides students with a unique opportunity to collaborate through a variety of activities, promoting physical fitness, social inclusion, and leadership development. Course alignment with both New York State and National Physical Education Standards ensures students are meeting essential educational outcomes, including increased physical fitness, leadership growth, and improved understanding of game strategies and sportsmanship. The inspiration for this program stems from the incredible success of Patchogue-Medford’s unified sports teams, including Unified Bowling, Unified Basketball, and last year’s enthusiastically received Unified Top Golf event.



Expanding ENL Nights Through Community Partnerships

For any public school district to function properly, there needs to be a level playing field for all students. Events and programs such as ENL (English as a New Language) Nights help to foster inclusivity and provide tools that help those who are still learning English prosper in their schools.

We recently hosted a successful Back to School ENL Night at our public library in Patchogue. We welcomed over 200 Spanish-speaking families from across the District. The event provided an opportunity for families to meet ENL staff, learn about academic programs, and explore available resources to support their children's education. The strong turnout demonstrated the District's dedication to engaging all families and ensuring every student has the tools and support needed to thrive academically.



ENL Night at Patchogue Public Library

Security Updates

Security and safety remain of the utmost importance in every corner of our District. We have implemented several new security measures as part of a Districtwide initiative to create a safer learning environment. Key security enhancements include the installation of vape detectors, new doors with advanced locking systems, new state-of-the-art portable metal detectors, and screens on exterior facing windows. These measures aim to prevent unauthorized access, detect harmful substances, and ensure quick responses to any potential threats. The extensive security updates have been made possible through a special grant awarded to the District specifically intended for enhancing school safety. This grant covers the costs of purchasing and installing new security equipment.

New Security Measures:

1. Vape Detectors

Vaping, unfortunately, continues to be an area of concern at all middle schools and the high school. To combat this, the District is installing vape detectors in key areas such as restrooms and other high-traffic locations. This initiative aims to deter vaping on school grounds and promote a healthier environment for students.

2. New Doors with Locks

As part of the security upgrades, all school buildings are having their doors equipped with advanced locking mechanisms, which are designed to be more secure and can be locked from the inside during emergencies. These locks will be installed on classroom and office doors, and the District is considering introducing them to other areas where staff, students, and visitors may be present. Classroom doors are also being outfitted with opaque lockdown shades which are designed with a quick release mechanism. These shades provide further protection by eliminating visibility into the rooms in an emergency situation.

3. Portable Metal Detectors

The District is also replacing all existing portable metal detectors, and adding additional ones, with new state-of-the-art versions. These metal detectors can be used for random screenings or at specific events. These detectors help in identifying and preventing the entry of weapons or other prohibited items into school premises. The flexibility of these portable units allows the District to adapt security measures as needed.

4. Screens on Exterior Facing Windows

All exterior windows on District buildings are having window screens installed. These screens, similar to screens found on residential windows, will allow the opening of windows for enhanced fresh air circulation when deemed necessary while keeping out insects and debris. The screens will also provide another measure of deterrence against any unauthorized attempt to enter a school building through an exterior window.



Vape Detectors



Portable Metal Detectors



Exterior Facing Window Screens



New Doors with Locks

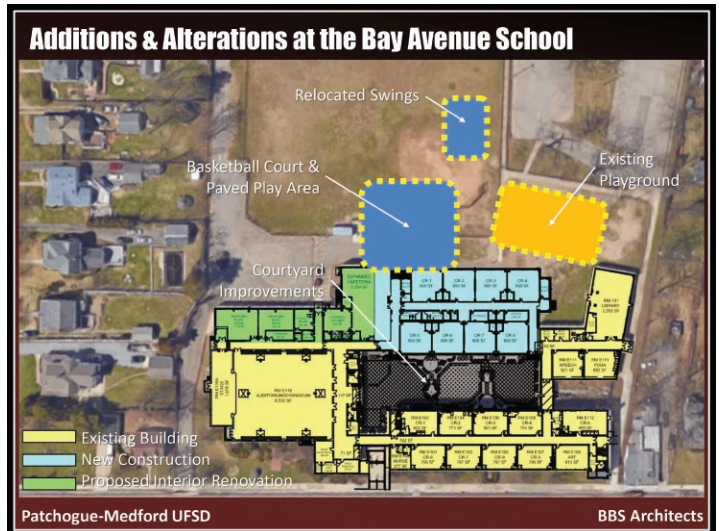
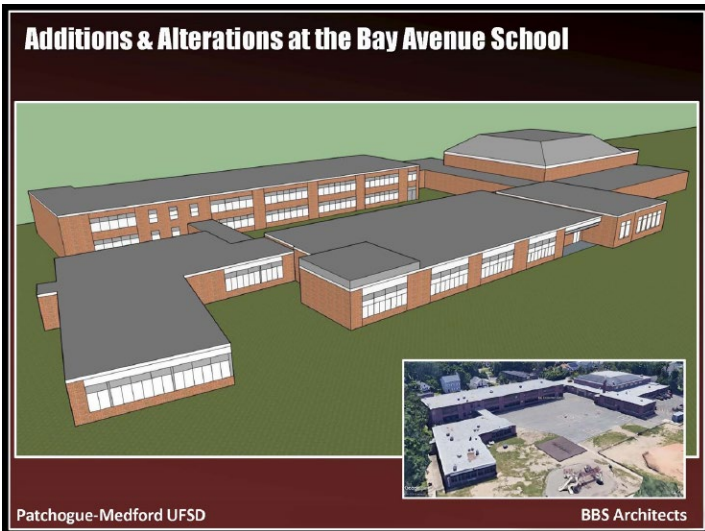
LOOKING AHEAD

Bay Elementary School Expansion

This project will add eight new classrooms, along with two renovated music rooms, and other spaces to support the school's music program. The kitchen and cafeteria will be expanded, with improved ventilation to ensure a more efficient and comfortable space for students and staff. Additionally, the new building layout will feature an internal courtyard, providing a safe and functional outdoor learning environment for all.

The project will also include new paved play areas, a new basketball court, and the relocation of the swings to optimize the recreational spaces on school grounds.

This project was made possible through the District's Capital Reserve Fund and prudent District financial management. The total cost of the project is \$15 million and was saved over time through our Capital Reserves Fund.



Bay Elementary School Additions/Alterations



To keep up to date on the Bay Elementary School project, visit the project page of the District's website.

LOOKING AHEAD

What's in Store for Our Bond Referendum Work

When the Patchogue-Medford School District community approved our bond referendum last May, it was done with the confidence that it would enable the District to bring state-of-the-art climate control technology into all of our classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias in our schools; significantly upgrade our high school athletic facilities; and transform the music and theater sound and lighting systems at our middle schools and high school to professional grade. While we all would like to see work begin tomorrow, the implementation of bond projects is contingent on several factors not entirely in the control of the District. For example, no work can commence before architectural and engineering plans are approved by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Current experience indicates NYSED's approval turnaround time can be upwards of 210 days. Following NYSED approval, bids go out and contracts are awarded. However, supply chain issues are still a factor in the construction industry, and depending on the availability of materials needed for our projects, there may be delays in the start dates of some projects. Additionally, work must be done so as not to interrupt student class time or other activities normally scheduled at our schools. This is why the majority of the work needs to be done over the summer, during holiday breaks, and other times students are not in our schools. Having noted all this, assuming all goes as planned, **we anticipate being able to commence work on the new turf field at the high school and start the installation of new sound and lighting assets at our secondary schools in July 2025. We anticipate completion of all this work in November 2025.**

The big project is the installation of the heating/cooling unit ventilators and related equipment in all our schools. We have broken this down into four phases, with Bay Elementary School and South Ocean Middle School in Phase 1. The reasoning for these two schools coming on board first was that the capital project work will be started at Bay Elementary School in June, and it makes sense to do the heating/cooling installations at the same time. In a similar vein, South Ocean Middle School recently had new unit ventilators installed for the heating component, so it makes sense to complete work at that building by installing the cooling elements during this first phase.

Phase 2 will include Eagle and Tremont elementary schools, with an anticipated start date of January 2026 and completion in time for the 2026-2027 school year. Phase 3 includes Canaan, Medford, Barton, and River elementary schools. The projected start/completion dates for these schools is January 2027/September 2027. Phase 4 includes our secondary schools, with anticipated start/completion dates of January 2028/September 2028 for the middle schools and January 2028/December 2028 for the high school.



A new, multipurpose turf field with new lighting will be installed directly west of the main stadium field.



New scoreboards will be installed at the new turf field and the stadium field. An LED video jumbotron will be installed at the stadium field.



State-of-the-art lighting and sound systems will greatly enhance and provide for more creative student productions.



Detailed timelines for all bond-related work can be found on the bond pages of the District's website.

Patchogue-Medford Schools
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www.pmschools.org

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WELCOME NEW EDUCATORS



On behalf of all of us in the Patchogue-Medford School District and on the Board of Education, we'd like to welcome our newest educators, coaches, counselors, and support staff to our dedicated team! We're so thrilled to have you join our Patchogue-Medford family, which is committed to fostering a positive and enriching learning environment for our students. We're excited for you to bring your fresh perspectives and enthusiasm to our schools, and we look forward to seeing the incredible impact you'll make. Welcome aboard!

SUPERINTENDENT'S CONFERENCE DAY

As we kicked off another exciting school year, Superintendent Dr. Donna Jones held her annual Superintendent's Conference Day to provide a space for our entire District team to come together, share important updates, and engage in collaborative professional development. Our featured speaker was the Reverend Dr. Bryant Thomas Marks, founder and Chief Equity Officer of the National Training Institute on Race & Equity, who energized and inspired us all. We are looking forward to the challenges and opportunities that await us in this new school year.

