



Matthew Keegan
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August 22, 2024

Dear Norwell Families:

We are looking forward to the new school year and welcoming back all of our students. One of our main initiatives this year will be embarking on the creation of a new five year Strategic Plan. We have partnered with the *Teaching and Learning Alliance* (TLA) to conduct focus groups, surveys, and to lead the Strategic Planning Committee through the process.

Norwell Public Schools looks forward to engaging our students, parents, staff, administration, community and community leaders. Throughout September, TLA consultants will hold several focus groups with all of our stakeholders. Participants will be given the opportunity to identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities for the community, schools, and students. Through the Strategic Planning process, we intend to:

- Engage the public;
- Create a clear Mission, Core Values, and a Vision for Norwell Public Schools;
- Establish action plans with strategic objectives and initiatives to realize the Mission and Vision; and
- Focus on continuous improvement and systemic renewal.

Parents and community members are invited to the High School on Monday, September 9, at 6:00 p.m. to participate in a focus group and share their thoughts.

Norwell Public Schools offer many opportunities for families and students to engage in activities, events, and celebrations. The Principals' newsletters will provide information regarding opportunities for students and families such as co-curricular activities, celebrations, events, and academic presentations. The PTOs hold many events for families to come together to celebrate our schools and students. We hope that you will participate in school activities throughout the year.

Below are a few points to be aware of as we start the year:

Attendance:

- Attendance is extremely important to student learning and engagement. A student is considered chronically absent when they have missed 18 days during a school year. Two years ago, 8.7% of our students were chronically absent. Last year 6.2% were chronically absent and our daily attendance rate was 95.3%, similar to our rates before COVID-19. We hope to continue to improve our attendance rates as much as possible. Please reach out to your school nurse or refer to the student-parent handbooks regarding when a student should stay home for illness. We sincerely ask that families try not to take vacation during school days. If your child is having any difficulty with attending school, please reach out to your school administrator or school counselor so that we can help support your family and child.

Student-Parent Handbooks:

- Annually parents are asked to complete a sign off via ASPEN that they have read the handbook, give various permissions to share information and complete the health information update for each of their children attending Norwell Public Schools. The handbooks are now available on the [NPS website](#). Please take some time to read the handbooks, and complete these sign offs for each of your children by September 6, 2024.

Website Resources:

- Please visit the [Student Services](#) tab on the NPS website for information regarding bullying prevention and intervention, discussing racism, tiered focus monitoring reports, special education eligibility, home school information, suicide prevention, and LGBTQ resources.

Meals:

- The first school breakfast and lunch will continue to be free throughout the school year. Additional meals or a la carte items will be available for purchase. Your child's school will have specific instructions for ordering lunch which will be explained during the first week of school.
- For more information regarding the school lunch program, please email Judy Crooks, Food Service Director at judith.crooks@norwellschools.org.
- If you are interested in a part-time job with the NPS Food Service Department, please contact Ms. Crooks.

Buses:

- Bus routes have been created, and the drivers have done their test drives. All students requesting a bus have been accommodated. Bus stops are published in the ASPEN portal.
- For inquiries about whether you requested a bus, please check the ASPEN portal. Any other bus questions or concerns, please contact Janet Asnes at janet.asnes@norwellschools.org.

We look forward to welcoming your child to school on September 3.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Keegan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'M'.

Matthew A. Keegan
Superintendent of Schools