



THE COLTS CHRONICLE

Stay informed! Visit the CNBOE website to explore our goals and vision for our schools!

https://www.coltsneckschools.org/board_of_education



MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

April 23 📅 – BOE Meeting
April 24 🎉 – CDMS 60th Celebration
April 29 🎵 – CDMS Chorus Concert @ 7 PM
April 30 🏀 – CDMS Student-Faculty Game @ 5 PM
May 1 ❤️ – CRPS/CRES Mental Health Day (Wear Green)
May 1 🔍 – CRES Science Expo
May 2 💙💛 – CRPS/CRES Spirit Day (Wear Blue & Gold)
May 20 🎵 – District Chorus Festival
May 22 🎨 – CDMS Art Show
May 29 🎵 – CDMS Hershey Park "Music in the Parks" Trip
June 2 🎭 – CRPS Evening of the Arts @ 6–8 PM
June 3 🎵 – Chorus "AYV" Trip @ Prudential Center, Newark
June 6 💙💛 – CRPS/CRES Spirit Day (Wear Blue & Gold)
June 9 🌳 – Eighth Grade Picnic @ Frogbridge
June 10 🏆 – CRPS Field Day
June 11 👶 – CRPS Kindergarten Preview
June 12 🎵 – CDMS Subs & Sounds Concert @ CNHS 5:30–8:30 PM

SWITCHING POLICY PROVIDERS: WHY CNBOE IS MOVING FROM STRAUSS ESMAY TO NJSBA

School boards across New Jersey are making a strategic shift in their policy management by transitioning from Strauss Esmay to the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA). This move is driven by a combination of cost effectiveness, enhanced support, and greater alignment with evolving state regulations.

Why the Change?

- **Cost Savings** – NJSBA offers policy services at a lower cost, freeing up district funds for educational initiatives.
- **Customized Support** – As an organization dedicated to school board governance, NJSBA provides tailored guidance that aligns with local district needs.
- **Legislative Compliance** – With frequent policy updates required due to changing laws, NJSBA ensures school boards remain compliant with the latest mandates from Trenton.
- **Member Benefits** – Districts gain access to a broader network of resources, including training, legal insights, and advocacy support.

What This Means for Schools?

Shifting to NJSBA means school districts will receive streamlined policy updates, better integration with board governance training, and access to statewide best practices. While Strauss Esmay has long been a go-to provider, many boards see NJSBA as a more comprehensive and cost-efficient alternative.

As districts continue to prioritize fiscal responsibility and regulatory compliance, this transition signals a growing trend in New Jersey's education landscape.

Celebrating Academic Excellence

The Colts Neck Board of Education proudly recognized the outstanding achievements of over 90 Cedar Drive Middle School students who earned a place on the High Honor Roll for marking periods 1, 2, or both. To achieve this distinction, students maintained a 93 or higher in every subject, demonstrating exceptional dedication and perseverance.

"This is a proud moment for our school community," said BOE President Volpe. "These students have shown incredible dedication to their studies, and we are honored to recognize their hard work. We look forward to seeing all they accomplish in the future."

The BOE also acknowledges the invaluable support of teachers, staff, and families, whose guidance and encouragement help students thrive. Congratulations to all High Honor Roll recipients—your success is an inspiration to us all! Keep striving for excellence! ✨



FROM HALLWAYS TO HOME: JEAN'S JOURNEY TO RETIREMENT



After 25 years of dedicated service, Jean Pierre—a beloved custodian in the Colts Neck Township School District—is hanging up his keys and preparing for a well-earned retirement, effective April 1, 2025.

Jean, originally from Haiti, emigrated to the United States in 1975 and soon after began building a life rooted in hard work, devotion to family, and quiet leadership. Known affectionately throughout the district simply as "Jean," he has served across all three of our schools, becoming a familiar and friendly face to students, staff, and administrators alike.

"I've had the opportunity to work with some very nice people," Jean shared when speaking with Nick Moretta, who recently sat down with him to learn more about his journey. "I'll miss the people I've had the pleasure of working with."

A devoted husband of 45 years and proud father of three, Jean's love for his family shines through in every word and action. He looks forward to this next chapter of life—spending more time with his loved ones and traveling back to Haiti to reconnect with his extended family.

Jean's presence in our schools has always gone beyond the tasks of cleaning and maintenance—his warm smile, gentle manner, and steady work ethic have made our schools better places for both students and staff. On behalf of the entire Board of Education, we extend our gratitude and congratulations to Jean Pierre. Thank you for your many years of service, dedication, and kindness. You will always be a part of the Colts Neck Schools family. Enjoy your retirement—you've earned every minute!

CNBOE: PROTECTING WOMEN'S SPORTS

BOARDROOM LIVE: BRINGING BOE MEETINGS TO YOUR SCREEN

Stay informed and engaged
as all Colts Neck BOE
meetings are livestreamed
on our official YouTube
channel

[https://www.youtube.com
/@ColtsNeckBoardMeetin
gs/streams](https://www.youtube.com/@ColtsNeckBoardMeetings/streams)



Simply visit to watch
discussions and decisions
in real-time from the
comfort of your home!

Contact the BOE @
[https://form.jotform.co
m/petrillo/boardofeduca
tion](https://form.jotform.co/m/petrillo/boardofeducation)



In a bold move to uphold fairness, safety, and equal opportunity in athletics, the Colts Neck Board of Education has passed a proclamation urging the State of New Jersey and the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) to comply with federal executive orders protecting women's sports.

The resolution, authored by Policy Chair Rob Scales, reinforces the district's commitment to maintaining the integrity of women's sports, ensuring that female athletes have a level playing field. *"The Colts Neck Board of Education is committed to ensuring fairness, safety, and equal opportunities in athletics for all students,"* the proclamation states, highlighting the district's adherence to Title IX, which was enacted to protect female athletes from discrimination.

The Board's stance aligns with executive orders issued by President Donald J. Trump, which affirm that biological males should not be permitted to compete in women's sports. *"President Donald J. Trump has issued Executive Orders and policy directives aimed at preventing biological males from competing in women's sports, reinforcing the principle that female athletes should have a fair playing field,"* the resolution reads.

Scales and the Board also pointed to the financial implications of noncompliance, emphasizing that Governor Phil Murphy's administration has a history of costly legal battles over education policies. *"The Board is mindful of its fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayers of Colts Neck and recognizes that Governor Phil Murphy has a record of vexatious litigation in our courts, which has resulted in the blatant waste of state tax dollars."* To avoid unnecessary legal expenses, the Board will implement policies reflecting federal mandates once the state confirms compliance.

The resolution also underscores the impact on young female athletes, emphasizing that allowing biological males to compete in girls' sports is a *"disadvantage biological female students by hindering their ability to achieve their athletic goals, which could, in turn, impact their academic progress and discourage their continued participation in sports."*

The Colts Neck Board of Education is now calling on Governor Murphy and the NJSIAA to comply with federal law, reaffirming that they "are not above federal law" and urging them to meet their legal obligations to protect women's sports. The resolution has been formally adopted and will be sent to state and local officials, including the Governor, the NJ Commissioner of Education, and the office of the President of the United States.

With this action, Colts Neck joins a growing movement to defend fairness and competitive integrity in school athletics. The Board remains steadfast in its mission to protect opportunities for female student-athletes while ensuring compliance with federal law and upholding the values of fairness and equity in sports.

Colts Neck Summer Bridge: Learning, Creating, and Growing—All for Free!

The Colts Neck Board of Education is excited to announce that the 2025 Summer Bridge Program will once again be available to our students! This enriching program offers a diverse range of instructional, enrichment, and exploratory courses, providing students with opportunities to continue their learning beyond the traditional school year. Running from July 7 to July 24, 2025, the program will offer classes Monday through Thursday, providing a flexible and engaging summer learning experience. Board Vice President Phyllis Camera expressed enthusiasm about the program, stating, "This is a fantastic way for students to engage in new learning experiences and continue their academic growth over the summer."

PREPARING FOR THE NJSLA: RESOURCES & TIPS FOR SUCCESS

As we approach the end of April, students in Grades 3, 4, and 5 will be taking the New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA). These assessments help measure students' understanding of grade-level standards in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. To help students feel confident and prepared, we encourage parents and students to explore practice tests available at [NJ Pearson Support](#). These practice tests allow students to familiarize themselves with the test format, question types, and online tools they will use during the assessment.

Tips to Support Your Child's Success:

- ✓ Practice Online: Use the provided website to complete sample questions.
- ✓ Establish a Routine: Ensure your child gets plenty of rest and eats a healthy breakfast.
- ✓ Encourage Reading & Problem-Solving: Reading daily and working through math problems can build confidence.
- ✓ Stay Positive: Encourage a growth mindset—remind your child that effort and practice lead to improvement.

SPOTLIGHT ON VINNY: LEADING COLTS NECK'S SCHOOLS & COMMUNITY

Vincent Rugnetta, a dedicated Colts Neck resident for over 20 years, is making an impact as a member of the Colts Neck Board of Education. With a passion for education, fiscal responsibility, prioritizing core academics, and parental rights, Rugnetta is committed to ensuring Colts Neck schools provide the highest quality education while maintaining transparency and accountability.

Since joining the Board, Rugnetta has established an ad hoc committee for sports and extracurricular activities. After a successful trial year, this initiative evolved into an official liaison position, allowing for better communication and support between the Board of Education and the Colts Neck Sports Foundation. Likewise, Vinny highlights arts and cultural events in the community, fostering a well-rounded student experience beyond the classroom.

During an interim period, Rugnetta also served as the Board of Education Vice President, demonstrating his leadership and ability to foster compromise among board members to achieve the best outcomes for students and families.

Professionally, Rugnetta works for the State of New Jersey as a Senior Examiner in Temporary Disability Insurance at the Department of Labor, but his true passion lies in performing with his band and coaching his son's sports teams in his free time. His firsthand experience as a coach and community member helps him advocate for well-balanced programs that enhance student life. With his commitment to teamwork, Colts Neck families can trust that their children's education remains in capable hands.



Colts Neck First Aid Squad: Serving Our Community with Dedication

The Colts Neck Volunteer First Aid Squad is a vital community resource, providing free emergency medical services through dedicated volunteers. Operating primarily on donations, the squad is committed to saving lives and preparing the next generation of first responders.

The Colts Neck First Aid Cadet Program offers young people the chance to learn life-saving skills, gain healthcare experience, and build lasting friendships while giving back to the community. Cadets meet monthly for training, service projects, and fundraising.

Interested in making a difference? Join the program, or support the squad through volunteering or donations. For more info, visit <https://coltsneckfirstaid.org/>



CDMS Celebrates 60 Years!

Cedar Drive Middle School is turning 60 on April 24th, and the celebration is in the works from 6–8pm! The event will feature a “Through the Years” hallway display, student musical performances, speeches, and more. Save the date and join us in honoring this special milestone!

Taking Action: CDMS Student Leads Locker Room Improvement

At Colts Neck Middle School, one student’s initiative has made a lasting impact. Christopher Ciniglia, a dedicated and observant student, noticed a problem in the boys’ locker room—there were no benches for students to sit on while changing for gym. Instead of ignoring the issue, he took action.

Christopher brought his concern to the Board of Education, explaining how the lack of benches made the locker room experience uncomfortable and inconvenient. His advocacy didn’t go unnoticed. Thanks to his efforts, benches were installed, providing a much-needed improvement for students.

His peers were thrilled with the change, grateful for a simple but significant upgrade that made their daily routine easier. Christopher’s initiative serves as a powerful reminder that one student can make a difference—and that when students speak up, the BOE listens.

Great job, Christopher! Your leadership and problem-solving skills are inspiring!



★ Cedar Drive Middle School’s Diego Tantillo Represents Colts Neck at NJSBA Monmouth County 8th Grade Dialogue ★

The Colts Neck Township Board of Education is proud to recognize Diego Tantillo, an 8th-grade student at Cedar Drive Middle School, for his exceptional participation at the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA) Annual Monmouth County 8th Grade Dialogue.

This prestigious event brings together top 8th-grade students from across the county to engage in meaningful discussions about education, leadership, and the future of our schools. Diego represented Cedar Drive Middle School with poise, confidence, and insightful contributions, making a lasting impression on all in attendance.

His ability to articulate ideas and engage in thoughtful discussions with educational leaders highlights the strength of our students and the excellence of our district. We commend Diego for his dedication and for being such a wonderful ambassador for our school community. Congratulations, Diego! We are so proud of you and look forward to seeing all that you accomplish in the future.

The Colts Neck Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is dedicated to promoting the intellectual, social, and ethical welfare of our students by fostering a strong relationship between school and home. They encourage all parents, guardians, and teachers in the Colts Neck PreK-8 school district to become members. If you would like to join, please email membership@coltsneckpto.org. The CNPTO is gearing up for an exciting season of events designed to engage and support our students.

Highlights & Happenings:

41st Annual Ladies Spring Gala

This spectacular evening brought our school community together for an enchanted night of prizes, delicious food, music, dancing, and lasting friendships. A heartfelt thank you to the PTO volunteers, sponsors, and attendees who made this year's Gala a stunning success. Your dedication makes a huge impact on our school community.

2nd Grade Carnival

 May 30th |  6:30-8:00 PM |  CRPS Cafeteria

A special moving-up celebration for this year's graduating Primary School class! This FREE event will feature inflatables, carnival games, face painting, a photo booth, pizza and popcorn, and a commemorative 2nd-grade t-shirt! Complete the online permission slip and payment form by May 9th.

Read-A-Thon Results: WOW, Colts Neck!

The results are in—and we are blown away by this year's PTO Read-A-Thon!
585 registered student readers across all three schools—a 14% increase from last year!
250,000 minutes of reading logged—a 25% increase from last year!
Over \$37,000 raised by the PTO to support school programs and initiatives!

Supporting Our Schools and Students

Over the past three years, the PTO has raised more than \$200,000 to fund numerous school improvements and student programs. These funds have supported initiatives such as:

School signage at Conover Primary and Elementary
An automatic stage curtain for the Primary School
Partial funding for an Elementary School **basketball court**
Gym equipment and technology upgrades, including **Chromebooks and cases**
Playground enhancements at the Primary School



Why Join the PTO?

Be an Active Supporter: Your membership helps fund teacher grants, technology initiatives, enrichment programs, and school improvements.

Stay Informed: Receive updates on school news, activities, and volunteer opportunities through newsletters, emails, and social media.

Connect with the Community: Access a directory of PTO members for playdates, study groups, and activities.

Share in Your Child's School Experience: Volunteer for events, assist with fundraising, and participate in student activities.

The PTO offers a wide variety of volunteer opportunities for parents and guardians who want to get involved and make a difference in our school community. Some of their key programs include organizing gently used **Book Swaps**, hosting **Family Bingo Night**, coordinating the all-ages **5K Color Run**, assisting with the exciting **Harlem Wizards vs. Staff basketball game**, and helping celebrate our graduates through the **8th Grade Dance** and **Graduation Ads**. Whether you can give a little time or a lot, your involvement plays a vital role in enriching the educational experience of students. The CNBOE and PTO are grateful for your support and look forward to achieving great things together! For more information on how to get involved, visit www.coltsneckpto.org or email president@coltsneckpto.org. Stay connected and get the latest updates by following the PTO on social media: Facebook: [@coltsneckpto](https://www.facebook.com/coltsneckpto), Instagram: [@colts_neck_pto](https://www.instagram.com/colts_neck_pto), and X (formerly Twitter): [@colts_neck_pto](https://twitter.com/colts_neck_pto).

*Purple Up Day
Breakfast*

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A

FRIDAY **APRIL 11** 8:30-9:30
2025

honoring
COLTS NECK'S MILITARY CHILDREN

All Military Children within the Colts Neck Township School District and their parent(s) or guardian(s) are invited to Cedar Drive Middle School for a breakfast celebration.

Please arrive to Cedar Drive with children in grades PreK-5 at 8:30. Students in grades 6-8 can follow their normal arrival schedule. Bussing will be provided for all K-5 guests and will return to their school around 9:30.

[CLICK HERE](#) TO RSVP BY 3/27/25

SPECIAL THANKS TO COLTS NECK TOWNSHIP
PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE CNTEA

Friday, April 11, 2025, was a special day in Colts Neck as we celebrated our district-wide Purple-Up Day for Military Students. Across the district, students, staff, and community members wore purple to recognize and honor the strength and resilience of military-connected children.

April is the Month of the Military Child, a time to appreciate the unique experiences of children whose parents serve in the U.S. Armed Forces. These students often face challenges such as frequent relocations, adapting to new schools, and long separations from loved ones. Despite these hardships, they demonstrate remarkable adaptability, courage, and perseverance.

Why Purple? Purple represents all branches of the military, combining Army green, Navy blue, Air Force blue, Marine Corps red, and Coast Guard blue. Wearing purple is a visible sign of support for military children and a way to bring awareness to their sacrifices and contributions.

This event was a true community effort. The BOE is grateful to Commanding Officer Captain Smith, Board President Angelique Volpe, and Board Co-Liaison to NWSE Jessica Ramirez for attending and participating in the program. Special thanks to our NWSE School Liaison Ida West Jones, along with our dedicated school counselors, administrators, and staff, for organizing this meaningful event. The Board also extends our appreciation to the Colts Neck Township Education Association (CNTEA) for sponsoring the celebration.



Patriotism, Proclamations & Purpose: A Night to Remember at the BOE

Stars, stripes, and support lit up the Tuesday, April 8 Colts Neck Board of Education meeting as the Board proudly passed two meaningful proclamations—each reflecting the values that make our community shine.

🌱 April: Autism Acceptance Month

The Board embraced neurodiversity by proclaiming April as Autism Acceptance Month, promoting greater inclusion, love, and understanding for individuals with autism. Acceptance starts with awareness—and Colts Neck is committed to creating an educational environment where every student feels seen and supported.

🇺🇸 April: Month of the Military Child

The Board also recognized the courage, strength, and sacrifice of our nation's youngest heroes—children of military families. These resilient students serve in their own way, and Colts Neck is honored to celebrate them. The meeting opened on a high note as Captain Smith, his wife Allison, and their daughter Cara—a proud military family—led the Pledge of Allegiance. In keeping with the Board's new tradition, the pledge was followed by the playing of our National Anthem, setting a powerful and respectful tone for the evening.



"When a town comes together to honor all its children—military, neurodivergent, and everyone in between—it sends a clear message: we educate with heart"

Curtain Calls & Crescendos: Standing Ovation for the Arts! !

This spring, Colts Neck students lit up our schools with talent, creativity, and heart—from the stage to the band room and beyond. The CNBOE is proud to celebrate their hard work and the staff and families who support them.

🎭 Bravo to the Cast & Crew of Annie Kids!

The CRES stage came alive thanks to our young performers' energy and dedication, both on and off stage. Thank you to co-directors Ms. Santarsiero and Mrs. Auletta, and to Mrs. Hannen for backstage leadership. And of course, thank you to the families who helped make the show a hit!

🎵 Music in the Air at Conover Road

Our Spring Singers, CRES Choir, Beginning Band, and Advanced Band filled the campus with joyful sound. Kudos to Mr. BJ Willis, Ms. Lindsay Spitzer, and Mrs. Cheryl Chandler for their passion and guidance—and to our families for their continued support of the arts.

🌟 Curtain Call for Matilda Jr.!

Students wowed the audience with a powerful performance of Matilda Jr.. Applause to Ms. Sullivan, Mrs. Hubbard, Mrs. Londono, and Mr. Brown for helping our stars shine. Whether singing, playing, or performing, our students continue to inspire. The Colts Neck Board of Education is honored to support the arts—and the bright young talents who bring them to life.

