



Cherry Avenue Buzz

Principal's Message

September 2025

Dear Cherry Avenue Families:

Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year! We're off to a great start! Thanks to your help and preparation, classes have experienced a smooth, seamless transition.

This year, I am pleased to welcome new staff members: Avery Jayne (nurse) and Siobhan McCarthy Lavelle (permanent substitute teacher). Transferring over to CA, we welcome Ellen Calderone (office assistant), Megan Schmidt (teacher aide), Danielle Coleman (third grade), Kevin Kelsey (physical education), Lauri Carluccio (district-wide social worker) and Jessica O'Rourke (UPK). We are happy to have back Rick Michaels (art), Terence McCartney (security), and Mary Valentino (world language) who are shared staff. Chris Martino is returning as one of the three permanent subs, along with Ms. Lavelle and Ms. Zoller. Congratulations to Ms. DiGennaro (Falco) and Ms. Votinelli (Calia), and Ms. Lavelle on their weddings that took place over the summer!

Thank you, CA PTA, for planning and overseeing the UPK and Kindergarten Playdates, as well as school supply distribution.

MTSS/Response to Intervention (RtI) is a school-based process by which students are regularly screened and monitored to assess if they are responding to classroom instruction and progressing as expected. The aim is to match instruction to students' individual learning needs. As a result, we use iReady to conduct universal screenings which are given to all students three times a year (two times for kindergarten—winter and spring). Along with i-Ready, we use additional indicators to identify and tier students as indicated below.

Tier I: Students are progressing as expected with the instruction provided within the classroom.

Tier II: Students require some additional support and targeted instruction for success. This can take the form of small-group instruction, additional instructional time, or a variety of other interventions both within and outside of the classroom.

Tier III: Students who are still not progressing after receiving Tier II services or who have qualified by their scores will be given even more intense and frequent intervention services, often using specialized programs and/or materials.

Fall screening will take place from September 15 through October 3 and we will send home tiering information at a later date.

At Cherry Avenue, the practice of safety drills is of utmost importance. The students learn about evacuation drills, fire drills, lock-downs, lockouts, and the importance of listening, so they will know what to do in the event of an emergency. Security will continue to be present in the building during the school day. To uphold the safety of students and staff, it is very important that all visitors report directly to the security desk upon entering the building and be prepared to show photo ID.

If your child(ren) will not be in school, please call Cherry's attendance line at (631) 244-6702 to report the absence. Please note that this line is available 24 hours a day/7 days a week.

For students in grades K-5, please do not drop off students prior to 8:20 a.m., unless they are attending the breakfast program, which begins at 8:00 a.m. This timeframe will minimize hallway crowding while waiting for class to begin at 8:30 a.m. for the grade levels mentioned above. Drop-off for UPK students is from 8:55 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

In an effort to ensure a smooth dismissal process, please contact the office as early as possible in the day to inform us about any changes to your child(ren)'s dismissal plan. If you send an email regarding a change in dismissal plan the day of, please copy the main office in addition to the classroom teacher in case the teacher is absent (ddethomasis@sayvilleschools.org and ecalderone@sayvilleschools.org.) Although unexpected situations may arise, when we are informed about a change during student transitions (e.g., after the dismissal process begins), it makes it difficult to communicate a change in plans. To ensure the safety of walkers at dismissal, we are requesting that students engage in safe behavior, especially while in close proximity to the staff parking lot, by adhering to the following:

- No running.
- Stay away from the curb.
- Do not hang on trees.

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Please do not bring your pet when dropping off/picking up your child(ren). If you would like to walk your dog, please arrange to meet your children off school grounds. This rule is for the safety of all of our students. Thank you, in advance, for your assistance with this matter.

Our 4th-Annual Color Mile Run/Walk is taking place on Saturday, September 27, at 10:00 a.m., at Sayville Middle School Hope to see you there and remember to wear white (if you like)!

October is Fire Prevention Month. The West Sayville Fire Department will host a kindergarten field trip to the firehouse and hold assemblies at Cherry Avenue for UPK and students in grades 1-5. We thank them in advance for their time, partnership, and dissemination of vital information/tips for staying safe.

Just a reminder that smart watches/gaming devices (e.g., gizmo and vtech watches), along with any other non-district owned technology devices are not permitted in school. Thank you for your support and understanding.

At Cherry Avenue, we believe in and value a student-centered and engaging community where resilience is fostered and all feel welcomed, respected and valued. Small-group instruction and STRIDES are used as a vehicle for collaboration (e.g., care about others, appreciate and welcome diversity, encourage teamwork, etc.) and independent learning (growth mindset, the power of “yet”, be resilient in challenges, etc.). In today’s world, it is vital for our students to be equipped with tools to face and overcome inevitable disappointments, setbacks, and challenges. As educators, our job is to teach our students those tools and that is what we aim to do, supporting them while they navigate life in school and beyond. We also strive to instill some back to basics into our school community and hope you will partner with us to incorporate some oldies but goodies in your family life. Too often we are consumed with technology, stress, and everyday life that we lose sight of simply living and what matters most—human interactions and being present in the moment.

I am asking for your cooperation regarding students returning after school to retrieve forgotten items. I have encouraged teachers to remind students to double check that they have packed everything they need to bring home. It would also be helpful if you would remind your child(ren) of the necessity for students to take responsibility for packing up at the end of each school day. In the event that it does become necessary for your child(ren) to return for an item, please be aware that after three o’clock we have very limited staff to provide an escort to the classroom, and that the office closes at four o’clock; therefore, trips back to the building will not be possible after 4:00 p.m., and at times, 3:30 p.m. may be the latest option.

If you are not signed up for Parent/Student Portal access or have questions about an existing portal account, please send an email (using the email address we have on file) to sayvilleportalinfo@sayvilleschools.org and questions will be answered within 48 hours. Please be sure to check your spam/junk folders if you have email addresses from Yahoo, Hotmail, and Gmail. First trimester report cards are distributed hard copy during parent/teacher conferences. Second trimester report cards will be available via the Parent Portal in March. We will use this same format for the third trimester report card in June, so it important that you have access to the Portal.

On September 19, in preparation for homecoming (September 20), we are encouraging all students in grades K-5 to wear either Sayville attire, purple and/or gold, our school color red, fox attire (mascot), sports uniforms/jerseys for our pep rally. The purpose of this assembly is to foster excitement for our high school team/community. We will hold a “pep rally” for students to show enthusiasm, support, and Sayville pride for the upcoming homecoming game. All students will be recognized during the assembly. Football players and cheerleaders (cheerleaders are not permitted to wear league-issued uniforms, as per organization rules, but may wear cheer-related apparel) may wear their jerseys/uniforms, as they will introduce the assembly.

Future publications of the Cherry Avenue Buzz will be distributed via email (not hard copy), as well as the majority of flyers and information. Please make sure you are signed up for Parent Square. This newsletter will also be made available monthly on the building website (Go to www.sayvilleschools.org, select “Cherry Avenue” across the top of the page, click on “Our Principal” then choose “Principal’s Newsletter”).

Mon., September 8:

Tues., September 9:

Thurs., September 11:

Mon., September 15—Fri., October 3:

Mon., September 15 & Tues., Sept. 16:

Fri., September 19:

Sat., September 20:

Mon., September 22:

Tues., September 23 & Wed., Sept. 24:

Sat., September 27:

Thurs., October 2:

Fri., October 3:

STRETCH PIN (Parent Information Night—CA Room 122 @ 6:00 p.m.—6:45 p.m. for grade 4 and from 7:00 p.m.—7:45 p.m. for grade 5 (STRETCH is an enrichment program for identified students in grades 4 and 5.)

K-5 Parent Information Night beginning at 6:00 p.m.—refer to Parent Square message

Patriot Day - wear red, white, and blue

i-Ready Fall RtI Screener

PTA School Photo Day

K-5 Pep Rally @ 1:45 p.m.

Homecoming

Family Connect Night

Rosh Hashanah—school closed

Sayville STRIDES Color Mile @ 10:00 a.m.—SMS (wear white if you like)

Yom Kippur—school closed

PTA Walk/Bike to School Day

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CA Staff Shout-Out

Ms. Calderone started working at SD as a lunch monitor in 2017 before becoming a teacher aide in 2019. In 2021, Ms. Calderone transitioned into the office assistant position, where she has continued to work in this role before transferring to CA for the start of this new school year. Ms. Calderone and her husband are “empty nesters” and enjoy spending time with their two children when they come home to visit from college. She loves music and going to concerts, especially enjoying country music at Jones Beach. Welcome, Ms. Calderone!



We look forward to a positive, healthy, fun, and enriching school year! Please feel free to reach out if we can assist you in any way.

Sincerely,

Lisa Ihne, Ed.D.

Principal