

# PM RAIDER CONNECTION

PATCHOGUE-MEDFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT

## THE NEXT CHAPTER BEGINS

### Back to School in Patchogue-Medford

*The 2025-2026 school year is officially underway! From the excitement of first-day smiles to the warm reunions of classmates and teachers, our schools are once again buzzing with energy, anticipation, and pride. These wonderful moments were captured on our school buses, in our classrooms and hallways, and throughout our campuses Districtwide. We hope that you enjoy these photos, and that they reflect the spirit of a community ready to learn, grow, and support each other.*





# WRITING THE FUTURE TOGETHER

Each new year brings with it new goals, new themes, and new ideas. As the 2025-2026 school year begins, we are proudly embracing the year's theme, ***The Next Chapter: Writing Our Future Together***. This theme reflects our direction and our commitment to shaping the future as a united community.

Central to this vision is the adoption of the Portrait of a Graduate by our Board of Regents. This framework defines the character we want every student to develop by graduation, ensuring they are prepared for college, careers, and life as engaged citizens. Alongside this, advances in educational technology continue to open new doors.

Adding to the excitement is the upcoming search for our next superintendent, a process that will unfold during the school year with an appointment expected by the year's end. This represents a meaningful opportunity for our community to welcome a new leader who will honor our tradition of Raider Pride and collaborative spirit. Together, we look forward to continuing to write the next chapter in our District's story.



## SUPERINTENDENT'S GOALS FOR THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR

### I. Data-Driven Student Achievement and Growth

*Continue to implement data-informed building and department goals that target measurable growth and proficiency gains for all students through systematic analysis of academic performance indicators.*

### II. Social-Emotional Learning and Family Support

*Continue to strengthen Districtwide social, emotional, and behavioral support systems for students and families through coordinated programming and resources.*

### III. Cultural Responsiveness and Inclusivity

*Continue to ensure cultural competency across all District personnel to effectively serve the diverse needs of every student and family in our community.*

### IV. Staff and Student Empowerment

*Continue to foster confidence, critical thinking, and self-reflection in students and staff to develop college, career, and civic readiness for all learners.*



### V. Safety and Security Excellence

*Continue to enhance comprehensive safety protocols and security measures to maintain secure learning environments for students.*

### VI. Community Partnership and Engagement

*Continue to promote collaborative relationships with families, businesses, and community organizations to support student success and District initiatives.*

# PRIORITIZING SAFETY: NEW MEASURES FOR 2025-2026

*The Patchogue-Medford School District is deeply committed to maintaining a safe, secure, and welcoming learning environment for all students, staff, and visitors. For the 2025-2026 school year, we are focusing on three key areas of safety: the implementation of metal detectors to strengthen building security, enhancements to our Visitor Management System to better monitor campus access, and updated guidelines for e-bikes to promote safe transportation. These proactive measures reflect our District's ongoing commitment to student and community well-being while preserving the strong partnership between families, community members, and school staff that is vital to student success.*

## Security Measures and Metal Detector Policy

Per Board Policy 5154.1, periodic metal detector searches may occur during high-attendance events. Signs will be posted, designated entrances used, and additional protocols may apply. Safety remains our top priority. For questions, contact John Ahern, Director of Security, at 631-687-6580.



## Visitor Guidelines

These following visitor and guest protocols ensure safety while fostering a welcoming environment. Thank you for your cooperation.

- **Appointments:** Visitors are encouraged to schedule appointments with staff before arriving.
- **Check-In:** All visitors must enter through the main entrance, use the intercom to state their name, purpose, and show photo ID (driver's license, military, or other government-issued). Those without ID require administrator approval.
- **Visitor Management System:** Approved visitors scan ID, take a live photo, and select destination. A badge will print if cleared. Badges must be worn visibly at all times.
- **Escort:** Visitors may not walk unescorted; staff must escort them to and from their destination.
- **Sign-Out:** Before leaving, visitors must return to the greeter desk, check out, and return their badge.

## NYS E-Bike and E-Scooter Law

As electric-assist bicycles (e-bikes) grow in popularity, the Patchogue-Medford School District would like to remind families of the importance of safe and responsible riding as well as New York State law regarding e-bikes. By New York State law, **riders must be at least 16 years old**. Helmets are legally required for riders aged 16 and 17, as well as being strongly encouraged for those over 18. **Please note that e-bikes and e-scooters are restricted in certain areas on school property as per Board policy 1340.**

Nationally, e-bike injuries treated in emergency departments have increased dramatically. We urge parents and guardians to talk with their children about safe riding habits, age restrictions, and the importance of helmet use.

New York State legalized the use of bicycles with electric assist (e-bikes) and electric scooters (e-scooters) for people over 16 in 2020, but riders should be aware of key rules and restrictions. For more complete information, please scan the following QR code.





# WELCOMING OUR 63 NEW HIRES TO THE DISTRICT



As the start of the school year approached and the summer days wound down, the Patchogue-Medford School District hosted its new hire orientation, a two-day onboarding event that welcomed 63 new team members to our District. The influx of new faces, new perspectives, and new partners in education is one of the best parts of the new school year, and 2025-2026 looks to be no different. Each will bring fresh energy and a shared commitment to supporting our students and community.

Over the course of the two-day orientation, our new hires showed tremendous enthusiasm, actively engaging in discussions, collaborating with colleagues, and diving into the work ahead. They attended a wide range of presentations, including:

- Classroom Management
- Lesson Planning and Instructional Updates
- Technology Updates
- Community Presentation
- Special Education Updates
- Overview of District Procedures

In addition, new staff had the opportunity to meet with their directors to review department-specific information and connect with their assigned buddies during a Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers-sponsored luncheon. We are excited to see the positive impact our new hires will make as they contribute their talents and dedication to our District.



# ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES: NEW HIRES AND NEW ROLES

The new year also brings exciting changes in District leadership. Six administrators who have been with our District for years are moving into exciting new roles, while six new hires are stepping into administrative roles, helping to shape the future of our District with their new visions, strategies, and personalities.

**New Roles:** (Pictured L-R) **Kevin Petrosino** is the new Assistant Principal at Saxton Middle School. **Michelle Marrone** is the new Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction. **Emily Wernau** is the new Director of Humanities K-6. **Shannon Ott** is the new Assistant Principal at Oregon Middle School. **Christine Ordonez** is the new Assistant Principal at Patchogue-Medford High School. **Christopher Kelly, Ed.D.** is the new Principal at Tremont Elementary School.



**New Hires:** (Pictured L-R) **Christopher Cherouvis** is the new Principal at South Ocean Middle School. **Miriam Walls** is the new Director of Special Education, Districtwide. **Michele Cohen, Ed.D.** is the new Director of CTE, Business & Technology. **Laura Viruet** is a new Assistant Director, Districtwide. **Ana Martinez-Fuentes, Ed.D.** is the new Director of ENL, World Languages & Bilingual Programs 6-12.



**Marissa Scholl, Ed.D.** is a new Assistant Director, Districtwide.

## PATCHOGUE-MEDFORD FAMILY CENTER OFFERS SUPPORT FOR DISTRICT FAMILIES

The Patchogue-Medford School District reminds our community to take advantage of our Family Center, a welcoming resource hub designed to support families throughout the year. Located within the District, the Family Center offers a wide range of services, including counseling and crisis intervention, Spanish translation, free parent workshops, seasonal assistance (such as school supplies and home heating support), and an on-site food pantry for District families.

The Center also assists families in setting up accounts for important platforms like Parent Portal, ParentSquare, FinalForms, and before-and-after-school childcare.

Led by a dedicated team—including Director of Social Emotional Learning Carolyn Candela, district psychologists Robert Christie and Carolyn Walsh, and social worker Janice Guzman—the Family Center is here to help. Spanish-speaking office assistant Nilsa Catalano is also available. We're here for you—stop by and get to know us!

### FAMILY CENTER HOURS:

Mon, Wed–Fri:  
8:30 AM–4:00 PM

Tues: 10:00 AM–5:30 PM

# EVERY DAY COUNTS: WHY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MATTERS FOR YOUR CHILD'S SUCCESS

Regular school attendance is one of the strongest predictors of a child's academic success. Research shows that students who attend 95 percent or more of school days perform significantly better on standardized tests and develop stronger skills in reading and math. Even a few absences add up—missing just two days per month makes a student chronically absent, a factor linked to lasting academic challenges. Attendance habits formed as early as kindergarten can shape success throughout elementary school and beyond.

The benefits go far beyond test scores. Students who attend regularly build stronger relationships with teachers and peers, participate more actively in class, and are more likely to engage in extracurricular activities. These experiences foster not only academic growth but also personal development, confidence, and a sense of belonging. Looking ahead, students with consistent attendance are more likely to graduate on time, while chronic absenteeism increases the risk of falling behind academically.

We know some families face challenges that make daily attendance difficult. Please remember that help is available. If transportation, health concerns, or other obstacles are affecting your child's attendance, reach out to your school's guidance counselors, social workers, teachers, or principals. Our team is here to work with you and find solutions.

Over the coming weeks, our District Attendance Officer, Linda Hockney, will be spending time in our middle schools to meet students and families. She has been a familiar face in our high school for years, and now she's looking forward to getting to know our middle school students and families, too. Her role is not punitive, but supportive; she helps connect families with community resources, develop individualized attendance plans, and collaborate with school staff to ensure every student has the opportunity to succeed.



*Linda Hockney*

## HOW OUR SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION SPECIALIST SUPPORTS STUDENT WELLNESS

Wilda Rosario, our dedicated substance abuse prevention social worker, plays a vital role in helping students stay healthy and make positive choices. Her position is made possible through a longstanding partnership with the Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act, which has supported districts like ours for nearly four decades.

Mrs. Rosario leads evidence-based prevention groups at the high school level, where students learn about the risks of substance use and build skills for making safe, informed decisions. Her work is guided by research and tailored to the unique needs of our community.

Students suspended for substance possession participate in a structured ten-week support program with Mrs. Rosario. This intervention focuses not on punishment, but on growth, equipping students with tools for healthier choices. Prevention begins early: fourth graders receive age-appropriate lessons on smoking and vaping, while middle school students benefit from targeted summer programming before eighth grade.

This vital role reflects our District's commitment to supporting the whole child—ensuring every student has the knowledge and resources to thrive in school and in life.



*Wilda Rosario*



# DASA IN ACTION AT PATCHOGUE-MEDFORD

The Patchogue-Medford School District is committed to fostering safe, welcoming schools, environments in which every student is treated with dignity and respect. As part of this ongoing commitment, all District administrators participated in a Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) workshop during the annual administrative retreat on August 22, 2025 as well as a follow-up presentation by our District attorneys on September 17, 2025.



Information for parents can be found on our website by scanning the following QR code:



These workshop provided an in-depth overview of the law, including reporting requirements, investigation timelines, and the responsibilities of school leaders in addressing allegations of bullying. Administrators also engaged in meaningful discussions about prevention programs and strategies designed to reduce incidents of bullying while promoting positive school climates.

By strengthening understanding of DASA and reinforcing consistent practices across all schools, the District ensures that students and families can trust concerns will be taken seriously and handled with care. Together, we are dedicated to creating learning environments where every student feels safe, valued, and empowered to succeed.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S CONFERENCE DAYS

### *District Welcomes Back Staff With Inspiring Keynote Address and Dynamic Workshops*

The Patchogue-Medford School District kicked off the new school year with its Superintendent's Conference Day, a vital staff development event that included fascinating discussions about the future of education and workshops aimed at tackling some of the biggest issues and devices in education today.

The event began with a warm welcome from interim Superintendent Lori Cannetti, followed by a special acknowledgement of the staff being honored with tenure and distinguished service awards. A particular highlight was a compelling keynote address by Dr. Shané Beauford, Vice President of Learning Design and Equity at IDE Corp. Dr. Beauford is an expert in creating equitable learning environments, particularly regarding how artificial intelligence is shaping the future of education. Drawing from her extensive background—including her work developing culturally responsive education content for New York State—she challenged educators to harness AI as a powerful tool to promote engagement, empowerment, and equity in the classroom.

Staff participated in several trainings. Topics included:

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ■ Secondary Grading Policy Updates | ■ Special Education Progress Monitoring  |
| ■ Cell Phone Policy Updates        | ■ EBLI Training                          |
| ■ K-1 iPad Training                | ■ TeachTown                              |
| ■ Savvas myPerspectives Workshop   | ■ Essay Writing Workshop                 |
| ■ Ready Math Workshop              | ■ Back-to-School Behavioral Health Forum |

The Superintendent's Conference Days set an inspiring tone for a year dedicated to innovation, equity, and success.



## Patchogue-Medford Schools

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www.pmschools.org

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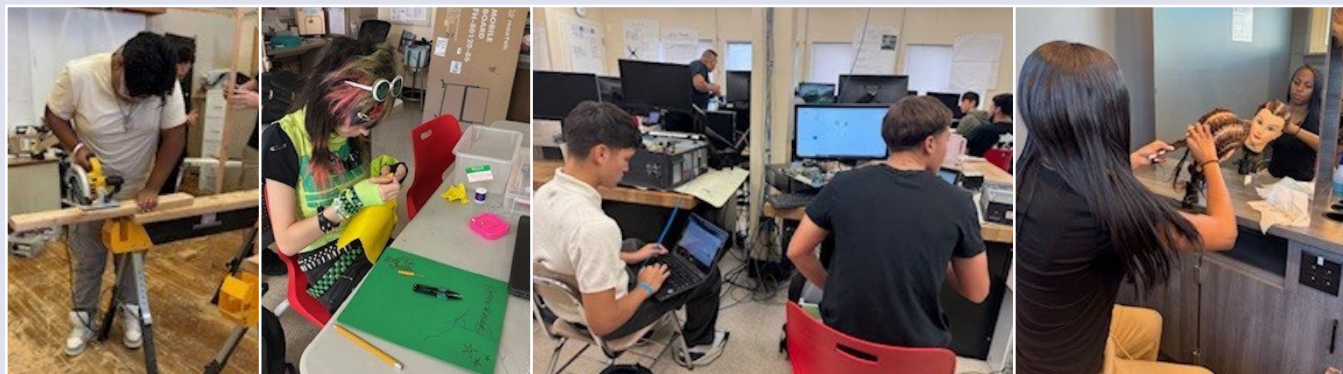
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# PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE: PREPARING OUR STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE

As we begin a new school year in the Patchogue-Medford School District, we continue to focus not only on academic achievement but also on the skills and qualities our students need to thrive in today's world. Education is about more than tests and textbooks—it's about preparing young people to become thoughtful, creative, and engaged citizens who can adapt and lead in a rapidly changing society.

To guide this mission, our District has embraced the **Portrait of a Graduate (POG)**, a clear vision of the attributes we want every student to carry with them when they leave our schools.



## OVERVIEW OF THE PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

The Portrait defines six interconnected attributes that all graduates should demonstrate. These attributes are grounded in culturally responsive-sustaining education and reflect New York State Education Department's commitment to whole-child development:

- **Academically Prepared.** Mastery of NYS Learning Standards and readiness for college, careers, and civic engagement.
- **Creative Innovator.** Uses imagination and flexibility to solve problems and develop new ideas/products.
- **Critical Thinker.** Thoughtfully analyzes information, evaluates evidence, and makes interdisciplinary connections.
- **Effective Communicator.** Clearly articulates ideas through speaking, writing, and media; engages with diverse audiences.
- **Global Citizen.** Acts ethically and responsibly in local and global communities; promotes sustainability and democracy.
- **Reflective and Future Focused.** Practices self-reflection, sets goals, maintains positive relationships, and makes responsible decisions prioritizing well-being.