

PM RAIDER CONNECTION

PATCHOGUE-MEDFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT

CONNECTION

Patchogue-Medford High School Earns National Recognition as a Special Olympics Unified Champion School

Patchogue-Medford High School has been proudly recognized as a Special Olympics Unified Champion National Banner School, a prestigious honor awarded to schools that demonstrate an exceptional commitment to creating an inclusive, respectful, and welcoming school climate for all students.

This national distinction is earned by schools that meet ten rigorous Standards of Excellence developed by Special Olympics and education leaders nationwide. These standards reflect sustained efforts in inclusion, student leadership, and meaningful engagement opportunities across the school community. The recognition highlights the collective impact of Patchogue-Medford's Unified athletes, partners, coaches, teachers, and staff, who promote inclusion daily through Unified Physical Education, Unified Athletics, schoolwide events, field trips, and related activities. Their work ensures that every student feels valued and supported.

The achievement was recently celebrated at a high school pep rally and a Board of Education meeting, where Unified athletes and partners shared powerful personal reflections on the program's impact. Patchogue-Medford High School was also honored at the Sayville Unified Youth Summit in November, underscoring its regional leadership in inclusive education.

This milestone affirms that inclusion is not just a program at Patchogue-Medford High School—it is a core value.



RAISING LEADERS: HOW STUDENT GOVERNMENT SHAPES SUCCESS AT PATCHOGUE-MEDFORD

Student government in the Patchogue-Medford School District plays a vital role in fostering leadership, responsibility, and community. By giving students a voice, student government strengthens communication among peers and with teachers. Participation helps improve academic achievement by teaching time management, collaboration, and problem-solving. It also builds character, encouraging empathy, integrity, and initiative—skills that prepare students for college, careers, and civic life. We interviewed teachers who serve as student government advisors to get a firsthand look at student government in the district.



Student government members from River Elementary School

GINA BRADFORD, STUDENT GOVERNMENT ADVISOR

RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

In student government, I represent and support students while guiding them in meaningful ways to give back to our community. I was drawn to this role because collaborating with passionate, hard-working peers makes a difference. Student government amplifies student voices, builds leadership skills, encourages civic engagement, and organizes initiatives that promote school spirit and service. Highlights this year include a candy drive, care packages for troops, and decorating for an in-school New Year's celebration. Looking ahead, we plan to research a buddy bench, create hygiene kits for the homeless, and support an otter foundation. These experiences are helping me develop leadership, communication, and collaboration skills that will serve me well in college and beyond while reinforcing a lifelong commitment to service.

JAMIE MANGAN, STUDENT GOVERNMENT ADVISOR

CANAAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

As student government advisor, I guide our student leaders, support their ideas, and help them grow into confident, capable leaders. I love giving back to the community, and this role allows me to inspire students to experience that same joy through service. Student government gives students a platform to share ideas, take initiative, and help shape a positive school culture. It demonstrates how empowered learners strengthen the entire community. This year, highlights include students stepping outside their comfort zones, organizing community drives, and spreading kindness. One standout project was a holiday card drive for a local nursing home, showing their dedication to giving back. Looking ahead, I want to continue building leadership, expand community outreach, and create meaningful opportunities for students to make a difference—finishing the year proud of the impact they've made together.

JENNIFER WAGNER, STUDENT GOVERNMENT ADVISOR

BAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

As student government advisor at Bay Elementary, I teach students the importance of civic duty, leadership, and service. I support them in organizing schoolwide events, including a food drive for the Family Center, a Halloween candy collection for Angels of Long Island, and an upcoming ALS Ride for Life assembly. Students share lessons and activities with the community on the district's social media pages. I was drawn to this role because of my own experiences in student government and a lifelong belief in service. Student government empowers students to find their voice, develop leadership, and see how their actions positively impact the school and community. Highlights this year include the food and candy drives, global connections with figure skaters at the Winter Olympics, and planning new service initiatives. Looking ahead, we aim to continue meaningful projects, connect with community organizations, and help students build confidence, collaboration, and advocacy skills that will prepare them for college and beyond.

BOARD OF EDUCATION 101

Who We Are, What We Do, and How Our Shared Goals Help Shape the Future of the District

To help the community better understand the role of the Board of Education, the Patchogue-Medford School District conducted a series of in-depth interviews with Board members and district leadership. Trustees reflected on their backgrounds, priorities, and motivations for public service, offering insight into how their experiences inform decision-making and long-term goals for the district.



Kelli Anne Jennings, President, Board of Education

As a member of the Board of Education, my role is to represent the community and serve as a listening ear for students, families, and staff. The Board focuses on policy development, budgeting, and curriculum oversight, ensuring that district decisions align with community needs. One of our most important priorities right now is the search for a new superintendent who will lead the district forward.

I am a mother of two boys and currently work as a Special Education teacher and team leader, supporting students with autism and other neurodiverse disabilities. I hold a bachelor's degree in Speech Pathology/Audiology, a master's degree in Special Education, and am currently pursuing an advanced certificate in behavior analysis with the goal of becoming a BCBA. My professional experience strongly shapes the perspective I bring to Board work.

What Motivated You to Serve

What motivates me most is seeing the growth of inclusive programs across our schools—in academics, the arts, music, and athletics. Attending school events and watching students thrive at every level is incredibly rewarding. My background in special education allows me to advocate for all learners and ensure that every student feels seen, supported, and included.



Diana Andrade, Vice President, Board of Education

My background in dance education, wellness, and leadership shapes how I approach my role on the Board. As an educator, I understand that students learn in different ways and benefit from opportunities that extend beyond the traditional classroom. My work in wellness reinforces the importance of supporting both student and staff well-being as a foundation for success.

I bring a creative, student-centered perspective to decision-making and focus on policies that support the whole child. Collaboration, thoughtful listening, and long-term planning guide my approach as we work to strengthen our school community and ensure continued growth for all students in Patchogue-Medford.

What Motivated You to Serve

For more than 12 years, my motivation has been the children. I am deeply committed to ensuring every student receives a well-rounded education that nurtures academic, social, emotional, physical, and creative development. Helping students thrive in all areas of their lives is what continues to drive my service.



Lauren Kuban, Board of Education Trustee

As a newly elected trustee, the past six months have been filled with valuable learning experiences. I have been warmly welcomed by fellow Board members, district leadership, and the community. I am a Patchogue-Medford graduate, a public-school educator of 15 years, and the parent of two children currently enrolled in the district—all of which shape my perspective.

I hold degrees in Elementary and Special Education, as well as a master's in Literacy. My educational philosophy emphasizes critical thinking and problem-solving, and I stay current through ongoing professional development. As the district begins its search for a new superintendent, I remain committed to collaboration and keeping students and families at the center of every decision.

What Motivated You to Serve

Our district serves a diverse student population, and every child deserves a high-quality education that prepares them for an ever-changing world. Becoming a parent further motivated me to use my professional experience to advocate for policies that support students and families and help move the district forward in a positive direction.



Jennifer Krieger, Board of Education Trustee

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the Patchogue-Medford community. After moving to Patchogue Village in 2003, I transitioned from a career in advertising and marketing to education, earning a master's degree and becoming deeply involved in the district's schools as a parent and volunteer. My involvement has included PTAs, SEPTA, scouting organizations, dance productions, and community service.

I currently work as a Teaching Assistant at Bixhorn Technical Center through ESBOCES, where I support students from 51 districts. Now in my fifth year as a trustee, I continue to pursue professional development and recently earned certifications in special education, yoga, mindfulness, and social-emotional learning.

What Motivated You to Serve

My motivation is simple: our students. I want them and their families to feel supported and prepared for the future. I believe in access to strong academics, the arts, CTE, athletics, and social-emotional supports. Open communication and collaboration are essential to helping students thrive.



Francis Salazar, Board of Education Trustee

One of our top priorities is ensuring that every student feels safe, supported, and challenged. This includes strong academics as well as access to social-emotional learning, the arts, athletics, and extracurricular opportunities. A major focus for the Board right now is hiring our next superintendent—a decision that will shape the future of the district.

We are also committed to being responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars by maintaining transparency and making data-informed decisions. Through collaboration and community engagement, we work to balance immediate needs with long-term goals.

What Motivated You to Serve

As a parent of two students in the district and an educator with over 20 years of experience as a teacher and administrator, I bring both perspectives to my role. I understand classroom realities and family expectations, and I strive to make decisions that best support students, staff, and the broader Patchogue-Medford community.



Bernadette Smith, Board of Education Trustee

The Board's top priority this year is identifying and hiring a new Superintendent of Schools. With the support of a search firm, we gathered extensive input from staff, families, students, and community members to help identify strong candidates. The interview process is well underway and will continue into the new year.

Another major focus is addressing construction delays at Bay Elementary. We are working closely with district leadership, architects, and construction teams to complete much-needed additions and improvements as efficiently as possible.

What Motivated You to Serve

I decided to run for the Board seven years ago after a decade of leadership roles in district PTAs. I saw challenges related to communication, equity, and changing demographics and wanted to be part of the solution. While I didn't have all the answers, I believed that serving on the Board was the best way to advocate for students and help strengthen our district.



Theresa DeLeva, District Clerk

The Board of Education serves as the governing body of the Patchogue-Medford School District, setting policy, approving budgets, establishing long-term goals, and hiring and evaluating the superintendent. While the Board does not manage daily operations, it provides oversight to ensure compliance, accountability, and a focus on student success.

As District Clerk, I support this work by serving as the official recordkeeper and liaison between the Board, administration, and community. I coordinate meetings, maintain official records, oversee elections and public hearings, and ensure transparency by making information accessible. My role helps promote open governance and keeps students at the center of every decision.



PLEASE NOTE: Board Trustee Marc Negrin was unavailable for interview.

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

As shared by trustees during these interviews, the Board of Education plays a critical role in guiding the long-term direction of the Patchogue-Medford School District. While the Board does not manage the day-to-day operations of schools, it serves as the district's governing body, providing local oversight and accountability on behalf of the community.

Board members are responsible for setting district policies, approving the annual budget, and hiring and working closely with the Superintendent of Schools to establish the district's vision, mission, and goals. Trustees emphasized the importance of balancing fiscal responsibility with the diverse needs of students, ensuring that resources are used thoughtfully while keeping the financial impact on taxpayers in mind.

Equally important is the Board's role as a bridge between the district and the community. As parents, neighbors, and residents, Board members listen carefully, ask informed questions, and collaborate as a team to make decisions that prioritize student success and reflect community values.

WINTER MUSIC AND ARTS ROUNDUP

Patchogue-Medford students have been keeping the winter season lively with creativity, music, and a splash of style!

Patchogue-Medford School District students showcased their talents this winter through a vibrant combination of visual and performing arts experiences. A highlight of the season was the annual Pat-Med Art Show, a culmination of outstanding student artwork created since the start of the school year. The exhibit, which traditionally complements the district's winter concert series, featured selected pieces from students in grades K-12. Displayed during concerts, the show highlighted a wide range of disciplines including drawing, painting, digital and media arts, photography, jewelry, and studio art, offering a true snapshot of the district's creative programs.

The winter concerts brought festive energy to school communities. At River Elementary School and Saxton Middle School, chorus and band students delighted audiences with seasonal selections, impressing classmates and staff with their enthusiasm and musical growth. The celebration extended beyond district walls when Patchogue-Medford High School band, chorus, and orchestra students performed at Long Island MacArthur Airport, spreading holiday cheer to travelers. Their memorable performance even earned a feature on News 12, shining a spotlight on the district's exceptional arts education.

To watch the band in action at MacArthur Airport, please scan the following QR code:



South Ocean Middle School



River Elementary School



MID-YEAR ATHLETICS CHECK-IN

Cross Country: Colin Jennings, Walton O’Neil, and Sophia Yondola qualified for the State Qualifier Cross Country Championships.

Girls Gymnastics: Finished fifth overall at the Suffolk County team championship. Six gymnasts—freshman Brianna McLoughlin; sophomores Ginna Gonzalez, Klaudia Matz, and Chloe Colom; and juniors Aleise Cordts and Sofia Ricciardi—qualified for and competed in the county individual championships, placing among the top 30 in Suffolk County. Adding to the program’s success, varsity coach Kimberly Marshall was named the Suffolk County Girls Gymnastics Coaches Association League 1 Coach of the Year for the 2024–2025 season. Congratulations to all student-athletes and coaches on a memorable and successful fall season.

Indoor Track: The team had recent record-breaking performances. Colin Jennings broke the school record in the 1000 meter with a time of 2:37.31; Evan Fraser set a new school record in the 300 meter with a time of 35.38; and Jeremiah Newsome broke the school record in the weight throw with a mark of 47’ 9.25”. Congratulations to the Indoor Track boys athletes and coaching staff.



Boys Soccer: Entered the postseason as the fifth seed and battled fourth-ranked Bay Shore to a tough overtime loss.

Girls Soccer: Advanced to the playoffs, earning a first-round victory over Connetquot before falling to top-ranked Northport.

Volleyball: Both boys and girls teams earned playoff berths, continuing Patchogue-Medford’s tradition of competitive play.

GIVING BACK IN PAT-MED: A COMMUNITY UNITED

This holiday season, the Patchogue-Medford School District came together in the spirit of generosity and service. Class of 2026 officers, alongside Co-Advisors Kerri Silsbe and Zackary Petker, proudly donated \$500 to support the district’s holiday food drive. The Patchogue-Medford Administrators Association collected and donated over \$2,000 in money and goods to the Patchogue-Medford Family Center. Retired teachers volunteered with Family Center staff to pack 245 ready-to-go Thanksgiving meals during the annual gift giveaway. The Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers continued its annual partnership by donating turkeys and hams, while students who attend our Positive Alternative Student Support program with Ms. Borrero helped pack bags, building responsibility and social skills through service. Experiences like these highlight the importance of instilling strong community values as an essential part of a well-rounded school education.



Patchogue-Medford Schools

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BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Lori Cannetti, *Interim Superintendent of Schools*

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CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE: *Athletics, Performing Arts, HVAC, and Facilities*

Patchogue-Medford High School Athletic Field

Progress continues on the athletics upgrades funded by our approved bond. Since October 2025, goal posts and new scoreboards have been installed on the multipurpose field and Raider Stadium. Footings for Raider Stadium grandstands and multipurpose field bleachers have been poured. Bleachers and grandstands are expected to arrive in mid-February, with installation completed by March. The jumbotron was delivered in January and will be installed as weather permits.



Theatrical Light and Sound Upgrades

All equipment has been ordered and will begin shipping soon. Installation at the high school is scheduled for early-mid February, with completion by mid-March. Saxton Middle School's auditorium work will run from early April through May, followed by South Ocean Middle School's cafetorium (May-June) and Oregon's cafetorium (June through early summer 2026). Scheduling will accommodate school events.



HVAC Projects (Bay, Eagle, South Ocean)

Unit ventilators for Bay and Eagle elementary schools were ordered in late January and are expected to be installed over the summer. At South Ocean Middle School, vendors are connecting air-cooling components to existing unit ventilators, with completion anticipated by the end of the school year or early summer 2026.



Interfund Transfer Projects

The final phase of Saxton Middle School's wrestling room renovation is underway, funded through an Interfund Transfer to Capital. Work includes replacing the floor and removing wall padding to allow the space to be repurposed as a fitness or multipurpose room for students and adult education. District maintenance staff began work over the winter recess and expect completion by late February or early March. Additional interfund projects include districtwide wireless clock system upgrades and continued installation of safety door locks.