



# KINGSWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Committed to Excellence*

Ms. Sharon Ormsbee, CPA  
School Business Administrator

Dr. James J. Lavender  
Superintendent of Schools

Ms. Patricia Calandro  
Assistant Superintendent

March 3, 2026

Dear Kingsway Community,


As we move through February, our schools continue to reflect the focus, momentum, and commitment to excellence that define Kingsway. This month's [Superintendent's News & Notes](#) and [February Board Brief](#) highlight student achievement, program updates, and important information as we progress through the winter season and toward the close of the second marking period.



This month also includes **Presidents Day on February 16**, which represents more than just a day off from school. It is an opportunity for reflection on leadership, service, and the responsibilities of citizenship. The image of President Abraham Lincoln at the Lincoln Memorial serves as a powerful reminder that leadership is rooted in integrity, perseverance, and a commitment to the greater good. As we encourage our students to grow as scholars and citizens, we hope they take a moment to reflect on how their own actions, character, and choices contribute to the community around them.

I encourage you to review the information below and follow the embedded links to learn more about the initiatives, recognitions, and upcoming events shaping our schools.

Very truly yours,



James J. Lavender, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

## **Spotlights and Recognitions**

The following spotlights and recognitions celebrate individuals and groups whose dedication and accomplishments exemplify our district's **Commitment to Excellence**.

- **February Seniors of the Month**  
Mishi Chaturvedi & Sophia Paoletti
- **High School Student Spotlights**  
Cooper Allen (Grade 9), Ariel Cunha (Grade 10), Ryan Erikson (Grade 11), Dianely Flores (Grade 12).
- **Middle School Student Spotlights**  
Harper Faust (K Team), Michael Reagan (I team), Luz Elena Tapia-Cores (N Team), Carly Hemple (G Team), Ila Tull & Anthony Ambrosio (S Team), Aubrey Scheeper (W Team), Alanna Lukasiewicz (A Team), Samantha Singer (Y Team)

***Home of the Dragons***

**Ryan Rittershausen Selected for NJ All-State Music Ensembles**

Ryan earned an outstanding honor at the New Jersey All-State level following auditions in Edison. After being selected in December for the All-South Wind Ensemble and Orchestra, Ryan qualified to audition for All-State and placed 5th out of 35 trombonists statewide. His score earned him First Chair, Section Leader for the All-State Symphonic Band and Third Chair for the All-State Orchestra. Ryan will perform with the Symphonic Band at the Atlantic City Convention Center February 19–22 as part of the New Jersey Music Educators Association conference. He is the first student selected to All-State Band since 2017. All-State




Orchestra rehearsals and performances will take place in the fall, with the concert scheduled during our Fall Break. Congratulations to Ryan on this remarkable achievement, which reflects months of preparation and dedicated practice, and represents the first Kingsway All-State selection in a number of years.

**February Spotlight Teacher – Tori Miller, School Counselor**

It is with great pride that we announce Tori Miller as our "Spotlight" honoree. For nearly seven years, Tori has been a cornerstone of the High School counseling department, providing valuable support to our students and their families through critical academic and personal transitions. Her tenure here has been marked not just by the length of her service, but by the depth of her impact. Tori approaches every interaction with empathy and expertise, ensuring that every student she works with feels seen, heard, and valued.

## Spotlight Teacher

**MS. TORI MILLER**  
GUIDANCE COUNSELOR



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Tori's commitment to her students is perhaps best illustrated by her strong work ethic. A walk through the counseling office after school often reveals a familiar sight: Tori at her desk, frequently the last person to leave the suite. She consistently stays well beyond school hours to address student needs, collaborate with parents, or coordinate with administration to ensure comprehensive support is in place. Her dedication ensures that no student falls through the cracks and that families have a reliable partner in their child's education.

Tori's influence extends well beyond the walls of her office, as she is a contributor to the broader school community. She pours her energy into fostering school spirit and developing young leaders through her tireless work as a Student Council advisor, planning memorable events and promoting positive school climate. Additionally, serving as a freshman class advisor and volunteering to chaperone multiple senior trips demonstrates her desire to connect with students at every stage of their high school journey, building relationships that exist outside of a traditional counseling setting.

Within our own counseling team, Tori is a valuable collaborator. She is an active and engaged member of the department, consistently contributing fresh ideas and perspectives that enhance how we serve our students. Her combination of compassion for students, personal dedication, and team-oriented mindset makes her an exemplary counselor. We are very grateful for everything Tori does for Kingsway and are thrilled to share this well-deserved spotlight on her contributions.

**Attention Class of 2026 – Graduation Requirement**

The New Jersey Department of Education has implemented a new graduation requirement (P.L.2023, c.295) for the **Class of 2026**. To receive a high school diploma, all seniors (or a parent/guardian if the student is under 18) must complete **one** of the following by **April 14**: submit the [FAFSA](#), submit the [NJFAMS](#) application (for NJ Dreamers), or complete the [Graduation Waiver](#) through the **Genesis Parent Portal**. Families may contact a school counselor with questions or visit the [HESAA FAFSA webpage](#) for additional information.

**Kingsway Launches New School of Education Program**

Kingsway Regional High School is proud to announce the launch of its [School of Education](#), an innovative, multi-year pathway for students interested in careers that support teaching, learning, and school communities. The program will open to students beginning in the **2026–2027 school year**.

**Policy Updates**

The Board of Education has amended and/or adopted several policies. Updated policies and regulations are available on the district website and in the [2025-26 Board Briefs](#) section. All **POLICIES & REGULATIONS** can be viewed on our website [HERE](#). Employees are reminded of their obligation to review all policy updates carefully.



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**Look Ahead/Important Dates**

Please update your calendars to include the following key dates. For more, click on the District’s [2025-26 School Calendar](#) or the [Athletics & Activities Calendar](#).

- March 5-6 – High School Musical “Anastasia”, 7:00 p.m. Shows
- March 7 – Anastasia the Musical, 1:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m. Shows
- March 13 – KEF Jazz Bistro, 6:00 p.m.
- March 20 – Middle School Semi-Formal, 7:00-9:30 p.m.
- March 21 – Jazz Festival, 10:00 a.m.
- March 24 – 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Orientation for rising 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Parents
- March 26 – Board of Education Meeting
- March 30, 31 & April 1: School Open; Snow Makeup Days
- April 2-6 – Spring Recess (Weather Permitting)

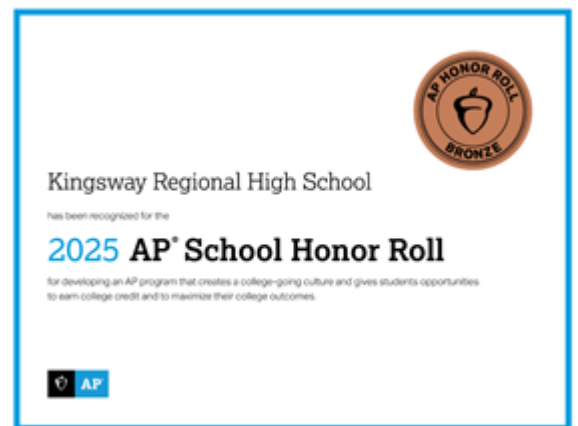
**You May Have Missed....**

- [College Board’s AP School Honor Roll for the 2024–2025 school year, earning Bronze-level distinction](#) This recognition highlights Kingsway’s continued commitment to expanding access to rigorous, college-level coursework while supporting student achievement and college readiness. The honor builds upon our ongoing efforts to strengthen Advanced Placement offerings and create meaningful opportunities for students to challenge themselves academically.



- **Kingsway Launches New School of Education Program.** School officials are excited to launch its [School of Education](#), an innovative, multi-year pathway for students interested in careers that support teaching, learning, and school communities. The program will open to students beginning in the **2026–2027 school year**.

- **2025–2026 Educators of the Year.** **Morgan Moore** (Educational Support Professional of the Year), **Amanda Ottinger** (Middle School Teacher of the Year), and **Meghan Mattson** (High School Teacher of the Year) were honored at the January 22, 2026 Board of Education Meeting. Each of these outstanding professionals exemplifies the very best of Kingsway. Through their dedication, leadership, and commitment to student growth and well-being, they have inspired, innovated, and made a meaningful difference in the lives of those they serve.



- **Kingsway Names Nelson New Head Softball Coach**  
School Officials announced the appointment of Diane Nelson as Head Softball Coach for Kingsway Regional High School (January 2026).



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- [Kingsway Names Shaup New Head Girls' Lacrosse Coach](#)  
School Officials announced the appointment of Carly Shaup as Head Girls' Lacrosse Coach for Kingsway Regional High School (January 2026).
- [Meet the Cadets of Kingsway's Rising NJROTC Program](#) by Matt Rappa, SW Neighbors "These students aren't just earning academic credits – they're building character, sharpening leadership skills, and discovering the power of camaraderie."
- [Connor's Crew: Kingsway Students Turn Personal Tragedy into Hopeful Mission](#)  
Born out of personal tragedy, **Paige Oatman** and **Audrey Klieger** have transformed grief into action, hope, and healing for others. Their story is a reminder of the extraordinary impact young people can make when they lead with empathy and heart.
- **Committed to Excellence: Perez & Mopal Stand Out**  
The Kingsway Regional School District proudly congratulates Senior [Jayden Perez](#) on his remarkable achievement—graduating from the **Gloucester County Fire Academy**. This milestone reflects Jayden's dedication, perseverance, and passion for public service. We also extend our heartfelt congratulations to [Mahi Mopal](#), an 11th-grade student at Kingsway Regional High School, for being featured in the **American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine!**
- ["Commended Students" in the 2025 Merit Scholarship Program](#)  
Daniel Houck, Evan Frederick, Natalie Ficarra, and Kai Tolley have been named Commended Students in the 2025 National Merit Scholarship Program.
- [Three Seniors Achieve the Prestigious Eagle Scout Rank!](#)  
Celebrating the remarkable achievement of three best friends—Seniors *Devin Soffy*, *Robert "Bobby" Rittershausen*, and *Anthony Barone*.
- [Kingsway Celebrates Excellence at This Year's NHS Induction Ceremony!](#)  
A record 168 new inductees alongside 159 returning members, celebrating their achievements and bright futures. These students exemplify the values of leadership, learning, and character, standing as tomorrow's leaders and compassionate citizens.
- [Kingsway's Commitment to AP Courses Drives 37% Growth in Enrollment](#)  
Kingsway Regional School District is proud to announce a significant increase in student participation in [Advanced Placement \(AP\) courses](#) and exams. For the 2024-25 school year, AP course enrollment has climbed to 2,183 seats, representing a 37% increase from the 1,375 seats filled during the 2022-23 school year. Additionally, AP exam registrations have risen by 46%, from 627 in 2022-23 to 913 this year.
- [Kingsway Recognized as Gloucester County's Best High School by NJ.com](#)  
Kingsway Regional High School has been recognized as the top high school in Gloucester County, according to a recent NJ.com article published on September 5, 2024.
- [Quilts of Valor Honorees Celebrated at 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Veterans Day Program](#)  
Representatives from the South Jersey Quilts of Valor Foundation participated in Kingsway's 4th Annual Veterans Day Breakfast on Friday, December 15, 2024, to bestow upon Kingsway employees who have served in the United States Armed Services a handmade quilt. Honored this



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year were Bus Driver Henry Olinsky (U.S. Army) and School Resource Officer Billy Franklin (U.S. Marine Corps). Kingsway's Navy JROTC Cadets, Middle School Choir, Band, Student Council Members, and the Woolwich VFW Post 10886 also participated this year.

- [Celebrate Students' Academic Honors from College Board's National Recognition Program](#)  
We are excited to highlight our students' exceptional achievements and the significance of these honors in showcasing their academic prowess. We are immensely proud of their accomplishments and the recognition they have received.
- [Kingsway Introduces Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) Playbook](#)  
This comprehensive playbook offers invaluable guidance and a wealth of resources to enhance our collective AI Literacy, empowering us to support student learning better and streamline educator workflows.
- [Kingsway Offers More than 20 Advanced Placement \(AP\) Courses](#)
- [Kingsway's Armed Service Veterans Honored with Quilts of Valor](#)
- [Kingsway's Navy JROTC Promotional Video](#)
- [Kingsway Ranked Among Best High Schools in South Jersey](#)  
Kingsway is the highest-ranked high school in Gloucester, Salem, Cumberland, and Cape May Counties (U.S. News & World Report).
- [Kingsway is Named to the College Board's AP District Honor Roll](#)  
With more than twenty Advanced Placement (AP) offerings.
- [Kingsway Partners with Care Solace, Removing Barriers to Mental Health Access](#)  
Kingsway recently announced a partnership with Care Solace to support our ongoing commitment to removing barriers to access to mental health services.

Thank you for your attention to this announcement. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Very truly yours,



Dr. James J. Lavender  
Superintendent of Schools

JJL/svv



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