SOUTH AMBOY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Educate. Empower. Lead.

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 3

March 2026

As we move through the winter season, I would like to thank our students, staff, and families for their flexibility and understanding during periods of inclement weather. Due to the weather-related closures we experienced, South Amboy Public Schools has now utilized all allotted emergency days built into the 2025–2026 District Calendar. We will continue to monitor conditions closely and will communicate promptly should any additional adjustments become necessary. Our priority remains ensuring the safety of our school community while maintaining instructional continuity.

February provided us with a meaningful opportunity to celebrate Black History Month throughout South Amboy Public Schools. This year's Black History Program highlighted the achievements, resilience, and contributions of Black leaders while showcasing the talents and dedication of our students. I commend our Instructional Leaders, faculty, and students for their thoughtful preparation and for creating a program that reflected both pride and purpose. Events such as these reinforce our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion within our learning community.

As we look ahead, the administration is preparing for the anticipated April public hearing for the 2027–2028 District Budget. During this meeting, we will present the proposed budget, provide an overview of revenue sources, and outline how funds will be allocated to support instructional programs, student services, and district operations.
As many of you are aware, fluctuations in state funding and equalization aid continue to present financial challenges for school districts across New Jersey. Our focus remains on maintaining fiscal responsibility while prioritizing student achievement and preserving the quality of programs offered to our scholars.

Additional details regarding the date, time, and agenda will be shared in advance of the meeting and posted on the district website. We encourage members of our school community to attend and remain engaged in this important process.

As we enter the spring months, our attention turns toward preparation for state assessments. Our educators are working diligently to ensure students feel confident and well-prepared. Instruction remains aligned to state standards, and additional supports are in place to assist all learners. Families can support this effort by encouraging consistent attendance, ensuring students are well-rested, and reinforcing the importance of doing their very best.

Speaking of spring, all schools and offices will follow the Early Dismissal Schedule on Thursday, April 2, 2026, and will be closed from April 3, 2026 through April 10, 2026 for Spring Break. For those who observe, I wish you a Happy Passover, a blessed Good Friday, and a Happy Easter. I hope our students, staff, and families enjoy a safe and restful break.

—Dr. Frederick D. Williams

HIGHLIGHTS

- Superintendent's Message
- District Vacancies/Events
- ES Highlights
- MHS Highlights
- Athletics & Activities
- Special Services
- Curriculum
- Technology

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QUICK LINKS

SCHOOL DISTRICT WEBSITE

DISTRICT SOCIAL MEDIA

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL PAGES — MHS | ES

GENESIS PARENT PORTAL

District

South Amboy Board of Education

Vacancies



- District
  - Part Time Behaviorist
- ES
  - World Language Teacher
- MHS
  - ELA Teacher Leave Replacement 1/16/2026-6/30/2026
  - Part Time Lunch Aide at MHS
  - Literacy Coach at MHS
  - Transition Coordinator



EVENTS/ACTIVITIES



March 19th: Early Dismissal (Staff In-Service)

March 20th: Eid al-Fitr (Schools & Offices Closed)

April 2nd: Early Dismissal - Staff & Students

April 3-10 Spring Recess (Schools & Offices Closed)

May 22nd: Early Dismissal - Staff & Students

May 25th: Memorial Day (District Closed)

June 11th: Early Dismissal (Staff In-Service)

June 19: Juneteenth (Schools & Offices Closed) 22-25 Early Dismissal for Students June 25th: Last Day for Students, Last Day for Certificated Staff, H.S. Graduation

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
SEAN DUNPHY,PRINCIPAL | MICHELLE BUCHANAN,VICE PRINCIPAL

December Retirements

South Amboy Elementary School proudly celebrated the retirement of several long-standing staff members whose collective service spans more than 75 years of dedication to our students and school community. On December 23, we honored three remarkable individuals whose impact will be felt for years to come.

For three decades, **Sharon Koy** has been a devoted educator who has touched the lives of countless students, most recently in second and third grade. Sharon is widely known for her kindness and compassion, creating a classroom environment where students feel safe, supported, and genuinely cared for. Her calm presence and commitment to nurturing the whole child have left a lasting impression on our school.

Lisa Wilson concluded an incredible 32-year career at South Amboy Elementary School. Throughout her tenure, Lisa wore many hats—serving in self-contained classrooms, inclusion settings, and everywhere in between. No matter the role, her unwavering dedication to her students and colleagues never wavered. Lisa's professionalism, flexibility, and deep commitment to student success made her an invaluable member of our staff.

Anna Mae O'Connor has served our district in more roles than can be counted—PTO president, costume designer, paraprofessional, secretary—and in each one, she gave nothing less than her whole heart. Her creativity, clever problem-solving, and magical ability to keep everything running smoothly have touched every corner of our building. Anna Mae's presence has truly shaped the spirit of our school.



We extend our deepest gratitude to Sharon, Lisa, and Anna Mae for their years of service, dedication, and love for the South Amboy school community. They will be greatly missed, and we wish them all the best in their well-earned retirement.



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

SEAN DUNPHY,PRINCIPAL | MICHELLE BUCHANAN,VICE PRINCIPAL





Winter Concert

On December 10 we held our Winter Concert. Over 45 students performed in the band and chorus to put on a spectacular show for our families. Led by Mrs. Cotter, the students performed many holiday favorites.



First Trimester Awards

The SAES held its first trimester awards ceremony in December. Students were honored for their growth in Math, ELA, Specials, Attendance, as well as Leadership and Citizenship. Each grade held a separate ceremony and we held a raffle for all students who had less than 3 days absent during the first trimester. Students were excited to hear their name called and get their certificates and prizes.



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
SEAN DUNPHY,PRINCIPAL | MICHELLE BUCHANAN,VICE PRINCIPAL

Teacher/Educator of the Year

In December we celebrated the selection of our Teacher of the Year and Education Specialist of the Year. We had over 20 nominations from the students, staff and parents. Congratulations to Marcia Mercado for being selected as our Teacher of the year and Joanie Crowley for being selected as our Education Specialist of the year.





Marcia is a first grade teacher who began her teaching journey 10 years ago as a long term substitute in our school. Although she has taught many different grade levels in South Amboy, the last few years she had been a first grade teacher.

Joanie has been a paraprofessional for 27 years in our district, most recently in our pre-school setting.



MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL

ERIN LAMBERSON PRINCIPAL | WENDY DANZY, VICE PRINCIPAL

NHS & Athletic Leadership Council Food Drive



Through a collaborative effort between the National Honor Society and the Athletic Leadership Council, our recent food drive supported and provided meals to over 40 families in our community during winter break. This initiative highlighted our students' commitment to service, leadership, and giving back, and made a meaningful impact on families in need during the holiday season. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of this effort!



Spirit Week

Spirit Week was a huge success as students showed off their school pride and enthusiasm all week long! Throughout the week, students competed in a variety of spirited activities and challenges, earning points for participation, teamwork, and school spirit. From themed days to friendly competitions, the excitement was contagious and the energy was high. It was wonderful to see students encouraging one another, working together, and celebrating what makes our school community so special. Thank you to everyone who participated and helped make Spirit Week such a memorable experience!

MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL
ERIN LAMBERSON PRINCIPAL | WENDY DANZY, VICE PRINCIPAL

Students of the Month: November, December, and January

We are proud to recognize our Students of the Month for November, December, and January! These students were selected for consistently demonstrating strong character, a positive attitude, and a commitment to excellence both in and out of the classroom. They model our school values through their hard work, respect for others, and willingness to contribute to our school community. We are so proud of their accomplishments and grateful for the positive example they set for their peers. Congratulations to all of our honorees!



November- (From left to right) Joseph Foreman, Lilian Khalil, Edward Jimenez, Brittany Bixby, Nathaniel Pitsios, Abigail Camacho and Mia Inclan



December- (From left to right) Carolyn Canela, Ricardo Martinez, Victoria Williams, Juliette Orengo, Natalie Philistin, Zoey Mercado and Nazaret Vasquez



January- (From left to right) Nicholas Tierney, Osmari Herrera-Martinez, Joy Nunez, Addison Lonardo, Aleksandra Grande-Perez, Gina Rodriguez and Matthew Tapia-Torres

MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL

ERIN LAMBERSON PRINCIPAL | WENDY DANZY, VICE PRINCIPAL











Black History Month Celebration

We proudly kicked off Black History Month on February 5 with our Celebrating Black Excellence Performance, an inspiring event that highlighted the rich history, culture, and achievements of Black leaders, artists, and changemakers. Our students delivered powerful performances that reflected creativity, pride, and deep respect for the legacy of Black excellence throughout the decades. The evening was a true celebration of talent, learning, and community. A special thank you to Mr. Akene Dunkley, the visionary behind the program, whose leadership and passion brought this meaningful performance to life. Additionally, a big thank you to Mayra Ortiz and Ross Santana for their great support in this endeavor.



MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL

ERIN LAMBERSON PRINCIPAL | WENDY DANZY, VICE PRINCIPAL

Winter Concert

Our Winter Concert was a wonderful showcase of student talent and musical growth under the direction of Mrs. Veronica Zarrella. Students delivered an engaging performance that highlighted their hard work, dedication, and love of music. From start to finish, the concert filled the space with energy, joy, and seasonal spirit, making it a memorable experience for all in attendance. Thank you to Mrs. Zarrella for her leadership and commitment to fostering a meaningful and enriching music program, and congratulations to our students on an outstanding performance!





Help Your Child Achieve Success *with the Homework Club Program!*

In the coming months, our students will take important state tests in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. These assessments are a critical part of their academic journey and provide an opportunity to show all the hard work they've put into their learning. To help every student reach their fullest potential, we are encouraging all parents to support their children in attending our Homework Club Program, offered Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays for additional help with ELA and Mathematics.

If you have any questions about the program or need assistance with scheduling, please don't hesitate to reach out. We are here to support you and your child every step of the way. Thank you for your continued support in helping our students achieve their best!

MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL
ERIN LAMBERSON PRINCIPAL | WENDY DANZY, VICE PRINCIPAL

Educator of the Year and Educational Service Professional of the Year

We are proud to recognize Mrs. Brittany Toribio as our Educator of the Year for her dedication to creating an inclusive, student-centered learning environment where every child is supported, empowered, and encouraged to grow. Her passion, creativity, and advocacy make a lasting impact on our school community.

We also proudly honor Ms. Christine Colon as our Educational Service Professional of the Year. Ms. Colon’s compassion, proactive support, and unwavering commitment to students, families, and staff strengthen our school climate each and every day.Congratulations to both for their outstanding contributions!



ATHLETICS & ACTIVITIES

JA'MON DUNN, DIRECTOR

Winter Sports

The Winter 2025-26 season was packed with excitement and energy! Our sports lineup featured JV and Varsity Boys Basketball, Varsity Girls Basketball, Varsity Track, Varsity Cheerleading, Middle School Boys and Girls Basketball, Middle School Track, and Middle School Cheerleading. Additionally, we had an individual swimmer proudly represent our school this season.

Our student-athletes dedicated themselves to both physical and mental training, consistently improving with each competition. Meanwhile, our coaching staff worked tirelessly to develop their skills and help them reach their goals. We're excited to see our athletic programs continue to grow and thrive!







ATHLETICS & ACTIVITIES

JA'MON DUNN, DIRECTOR

Spotlight

Our ***Varsity Boys Basketball*** team captured the GMC Blue American Division Championship for the first time since 2008. This is a tremendous milestone for our program. Throughout the season, the team demonstrated resilience, dedication, and a relentless commitment to improvement. This achievement reflects the standard they set every day in practice and competition. We are incredibly proud of our student-athletes and extend our congratulations to the entire team and Coach Wiater on this outstanding accomplishment!

Our ***Varsity Girls Basketball*** team has recorded 17 wins this season, surpassing last year's total and marking the program's highest win total in nearly two decades. The team has competed with determination, resilience, and pride throughout the season, continuing to raise the standard for South Amboy Athletics. Their growth and commitment have been evident every time they step on the court, and the future of the program is extremely bright. Congratulations to our student-athletes and Coach Gumbs on an outstanding season!

Ashley Moreira-Burgos was selected as South Amboy's representative for the National Girls and Women in Sports Day, hosted by the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association. She was honored during halftime of the Rutgers women's basketball game on Sunday, February 8th. This recognition celebrates Ashley's dedication, leadership, and commitment to athletics. We are proud of her outstanding achievement representing South Amboy on such a meaningful stage.

Junior ***Christopher Rodriguez*** represented South Amboy at the GMC Swimming Championships on Friday, January 23. Competing at a high level, Christopher earned 6th place in both the 50-meter freestyle and the 100-meter freestyle, securing medals in each event. His performance, determination, and sportsmanship were on full display, and he proudly represented our school and community throughout the championship meet.



ATHLETICS & ACTIVITIES

JA'MON DUNN, DIRECTOR

Cont..

The Athletic Leadership Council continues to meet each month to engage in meaningful discussions centered on sportsmanship, leadership, and character development. These student-athletes consistently bring what they learn back to their respective teams, leading by example and helping to set the standard for South Amboy Athletics.

Recently, the council visited the Cornelius Low House in Piscataway to tour the Hometown Pride exhibit, which highlights the rich history of sports throughout Middlesex County. The experience was both educational and inspiring, as students discovered that South Amboy has a proud and storied athletic tradition that continues to shape our community.

All-Division Selections

At the conclusion of each season, coaches from each division meet to determine All-Division selections based on season results. The following student athletes have been recognized as members of the All-Division Team for their athletic performance during the Winter 2025-2026 season:



Girls Basketball, Blue National Division
Gabby Evanski
Valerie Figueroa

Boys Basketball, Blue American Division
Darion Joubert (Division Player of the Year)
Jaydius Jimenez
Jadiel Vasquez

Coach of the Year

Coach **Matt Wiater** was recognized by his peers at the GMC Boys Basketball end of the season meeting. He was voted as the GMC Blue American Division Coach of the Year!

ATHLETICS & ACTIVITIES

JA'MON DUNN, DIRECTOR

Athletes of the Month



The Athlete of the Month award recognizes individuals who exemplify outstanding character both on and off the field. Our Athletic Department values success not only in athletic performance but also in sportsmanship, dedication to our community, and the ability to inspire as role models for current and future South Amboy student-athletes. This honor goes beyond sports—it highlights the positive influence athletes have on those around them. Congratulations to our award winners:

December 2025

MS Cheer- Alina Joubert
MS Girls Basketball- Journee Freeman
MS Boys Basketball- Nasir Jones
Varsity Cheer- Jodi Rose
Varsity Girls Basketball- Gabby Evanski
JV Boys Basketball- Gary Gragg
Varsity Boys Basketball- Darion Joubert
Varsity Track-Rayan Mohamed

January 2026

MS Cheer- Paige Fehling
MS Girls Basketball- Grace Rodriguez
MS Boys Basketball- Michael Donnelly
Varsity Cheer- Alexa Giordano
Varsity Girls Basketball- Valerie Figueroa
JV Boys Basketball- Josh Pena- Nunez
Varsity Boys Basketball- Jaydius Jiminez
Varsity Track- Aries Dominguez



ATHLETICS & ACTIVITIES

JA'MON DUNN, DIRECTOR

Winter Media Day

On December 20th, our student-athletes participated in Winter Media Day, enjoying a fun and energetic morning alongside their teammates and peers. Athletes took official team photos as well as individual pictures with friends, capturing memories from the winter season. The event provided a great opportunity to bring all of our winter programs together, strengthening school spirit and building camaraderie across South Amboy Athletics.



Friends of South Amboy

The Friends of South Amboy hosted the Annual Charity Basketball Event on Saturday December 13th. Our Varsity cheerleaders as well as our boys and girls Varsity basketball teams participated in the wonderful event. The FOSA raised money that will benefit South Amboy students(via scholarship) and families.

Spring Athletics

Spring Athletics are in full swing! Our teams are actively training and gearing up for upcoming competitions. We're excited for a successful season—stay tuned for more updates!



Winter Musical

Our theater department is ready to showcase their talent in this year's musical, Frozen! The students and staff have dedicated countless hours to ensure that this will be an enjoyable experience for all. The show will take place on 3/27 and 3/28 at 7:00pm in the MHS auditorium. You don't want to miss this!

SPECIAL SERVICES

Dr. Alain Mollinedo, Director Of Special Services

SEPAG – Special Education Parent Advocacy Group

The Office of Special Services hosted three SEPAG meetings during this school year, with the final session held on February 11, 2026. These in-person meetings gave families and school staff meaningful opportunities to connect, ask questions, and collaborate in support of our students.

Parents and community members attended professional presentations on Parental Rights in Special Education, Understanding the Components of an IEP, and Resilience and Mental Health in School. We are especially grateful to Effective School Solutions for partnering with the district to provide the mental health presentation. Opportunities like these strengthen the connection between home and school and help ensure families feel informed, confident, and supported throughout the special education process.

The Department of Special Services plans to reconvene SEPAG members and may hold an additional virtual meeting before the school year ends. This session will focus on clarifying the group's mission and identifying meeting dates and topics for next school year so that participation is accessible for as many families as possible.

We sincerely thank every parent and community member who attended and shared their perspective. Your voice helps guide our work. We warmly encourage other families to become involved—SEPAG is a partnership, and student success is greatest when schools and families work side-by-side.

SPECIAL SERVICES

Dr. Alain Mollinedo, Director Of Special Services

Avos Ria Mar

Our high school MD class was hosted by Avos Ria Mar in South River, for a formal luncheon. Students followed a dress code and were able to practice their table manners and appropriate social etiquette that they learned and discussed during class prior to the visit. Ria Mar is also one of our Work-Based Learning sites and continues to be an excellent partner and support.









Tis the Season!

During our visit to Menlo Park Mall, students had the opportunity to meet Santa and take some pictures. Students additionally made several transactions and utilized what they learned in school to ensure they had the correct amount of money and received the correct change.

We also welcomed families in for our family holiday party. Students worked together to prepare all of the food and entertainment for the families.



SPECIAL SERVICES

Dr. Alain Mollinedo, Director Of Special Services

Carteret High School

During a collaborative visit to Carteret High Schools, our middle and high school MD classes had the opportunity to take part in a fun day filled with activities and fun. Students made new friends while creating snowmen, taking part in a snowball fight, enjoying several coloring activities and cupcake decorating. Students followed this up with lunch alongside their new friends.







Majestic Lanes Bowling Alley

Our Middle and High School MD classes visited Majestic Lanes Bowling Alley for community-based instruction. Here, students worked on social interactions and understanding proper bowling etiquette.





SPECIAL SERVICES

Dr. Alain Mollinedo, Director Of Special Services



Special Olympics Unified Sports

Our inaugural Unified Sports season wrapped up with a successful culminating activity. It was inspired by a simple principle: training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding. Students participated in an intrasquad game that highlighted incredible sportsmanship, teamwork, friendship and the importance of equity and inclusion. All of our athletes enjoyed the opportunity to team up with their partners and engage in practices and our final game.











SPECIAL SERVICES

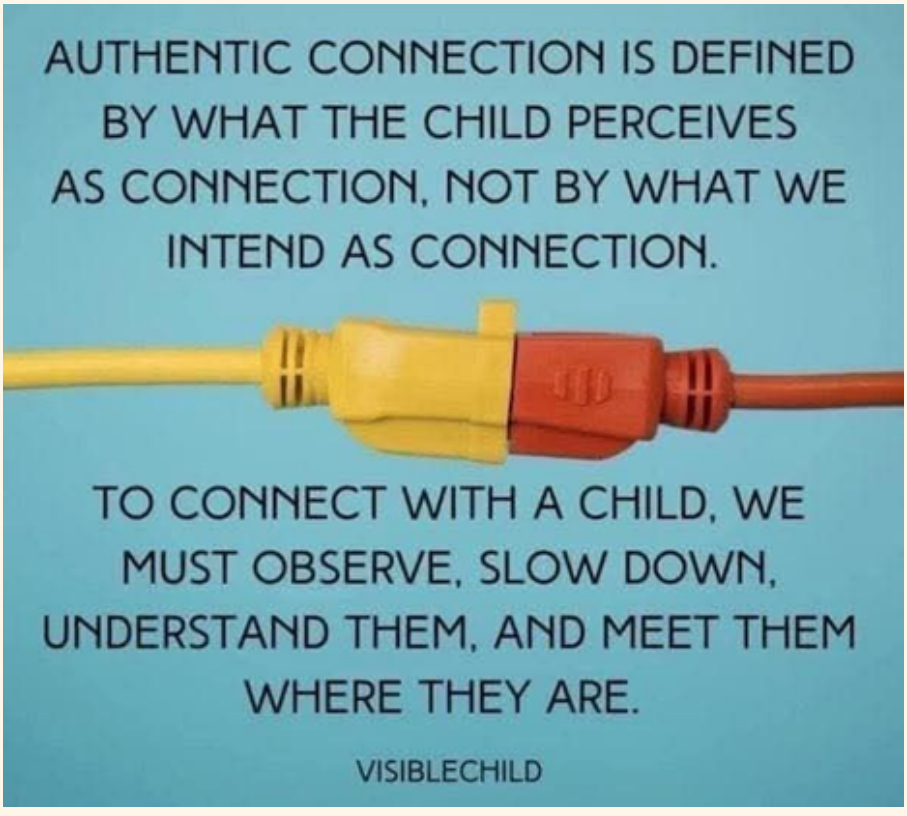
Dr. Alain Mollinedo, Director Of Special Services

Seeing through their eyes:

Strong relationships with children are built less on what we say and more on what they feel. Kids read tone, attention, and patience long before they hear instructions.

A quick smile, sitting beside them instead of across the room, or pausing to listen to their story after a long day often matters more than a perfectly worded reminder. When a child acts out, it is usually communication, not defiance. Our job is to notice, slow down, and stay curious.

When we meet a child where they are, not where we wish they were, we start to see the world through their eyes. That shift changes everything for them and for us.



Curriculum

DR. MARTIN GURCZESKI, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT



2026-2027 Pre-Kindergarten Registration

Online registration runs from January 26 to March 27, 2026. To be eligible, children must turn 3 or 4 years old by October 1, 2026.

New families must apply via the Genesis portal and upload all required documents. Seats are limited; if applications exceed available spots, a lottery will be used to determine enrollment. Only fully finalized registrations (with all documents approved) will enter the lottery. Students currently enrolled at partner sites do not need to re-register.

Placements will be announced during the summer and students will be placed at either Acelero, The Children Center, or South Amboy Elementary. For questions, contact Joey Forbes-Diver at (732) 525-2100 ext. 2004.

Curriculum

DR. MARTIN GURCZESKI, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

SAPS Parent Pro Academy: Social Media: Strengthening Caregiver Connectivity

Join us at South Amboy Middle/High School on March 12, 2026 to learn more about the rising trend of social media use among children and adolescents. In partnership with Effective School Solutions, we aim to help caregivers understand the needs children fulfill online and provide strategies to shift that engagement to offline activities. By strengthening parent-child connections, the program encourages youth to voluntarily reduce screen time. Following the presentation, Dr. Gurczeski will hold a Coffee and Conversation session on the new law signed by Governor Murphy which prohibits student use of cell phones in schools. To learn more you can visit this link or visit the NJDOE's webpage. We look forward to seeing you on March 12 and ask that you RSVP for the event here.



Technology

ROB LESCANO, DIRECTOR

iMacs in LMC

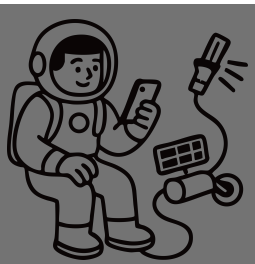
The Library Media Center is now equipped with STEM iMacs, ready to enhance STEM. These computers will facilitate student engagement in music creation through GarageBand, introduce 3D printing design using Tinkercad, and lay the groundwork for future CAD design projects.





District Chromebooks

In support of the district's 1:1 Chromebook initiative, the aging fleet of devices is being replaced with new hardware. Specifically, all Chromebooks for grades 4 through 10 have been upgraded to new HP units, which also include customized protective cases. This purchase of additional Chromebooks will significantly help the initiative.



SOUTH AMBOY HIGH SCHOOL PLAYERS



Disney

FROZEN

THE BROADWAY MUSICAL

MARCH 27 & 28
AT 7:00 PM

Ticket sales online beginning February 8, 2026

cur8.com/16182/project/136240