

Bulletin Board

Middle Country Central School District

ISSUE XIII OF DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

PRESERVING OUR SPACES, INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

Our school buildings and grounds are among the Middle Country Central School District's most valuable assets because they house our most important investment: our students. Caring for these spaces requires the same thoughtful planning and stewardship that guide our instructional programs. From classrooms and hallways to playgrounds and athletic fields, our facilities team works year-round to ensure these spaces remain safe, functional, and welcoming for students, staff, and the community.

Maintaining school buildings is not just about addressing visible needs, it is about preserving investments, planning ahead, and making fiscally responsible decisions that protect taxpayer resources. Through careful budgeting, strategic use of capital funds, and a focus on preventive maintenance, our District continues to address essential upgrades while avoiding unnecessary costs. Looking ahead, we are exploring additional ways to fund basic maintenance through transfers to capital, allowing us to extend the life of our facilities and plan responsibly for future needs without an undue burden on our taxpayers.

All of these efforts directly support student learning and well-being. These include improvements to air quality, including annual duct cleaning, upgraded filtration, and fan installations. They go above and beyond basic requirements, creating healthier environments where students and staff can thrive. Continued replacement of traditional water fountains with water bottle filling stations, at Oxhead Elementary School, for example, along with ongoing building upgrades and compliance-driven improvements such as lead testing, reflect the District's commitment to both safety and sustainability. To date, the three water filling stations at Holbrook Road Elementary School have filled about 165,000 bottles, which is about 6,875 cases of water. At an average cost of \$5 per case, these have saved families and staff about \$35,000! As one of 14 schools, the collective savings Districtwide are substantial.

We are also exploring innovative ways to connect facilities improvements with student opportunities. By expanding hands-on learning through career and technical education programs like HVAC training and a potential future carpentry program, students gain real-world skills while contributing meaningfully to their school environment.

"Bringing elements of facilities work into our curriculum reminds us that we are, first and foremost, a school, and one that prepares students for the future while strengthening the spaces they learn in every day," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Roberta Gerold.

Additionally, Middle Country's grounds and athletic fields are shared spaces enjoyed by the community. We take pride in keeping them clean and accessible, and we ask for everyone's help in preserving them by cleaning up after use. Together, through thoughtful planning, collaboration, and a continued focus on students, we are building a strong foundation—one that supports learning today and for years to come.



“Our goal is to improve our buildings and grounds in ways that are both impactful and cost-effective, without placing an additional financial burden on our community. By leveraging grants, in-house expertise, and long-term planning, we are able to move important projects forward while remaining financially prudent.”

- Dr. Beth Rella,
Assistant Superintendent for Business

PRESERVING OUR FACILITIES, INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

Our Staff Keep Our Schools Looking Their Best

Much of the work that keeps our buildings clean, functional, and beautiful is completed by Middle Country's own Buildings and Grounds staff. From painting and repairs to maintenance and upgrades, their skill and pride in their work help ensure that our schools remain welcoming spaces for students and the community.

Bicycle Path Pre-K/ Kindergarten Center



The cafeteria at Bicycle Path Pre-K/Kindergarten Center is looking brighter than ever thanks to a fresh coat of yellow paint applied by our own school's custodial staff. The new color makes the space feel warm, welcoming, and fun for young learners.

Snow Removal

During winter storms, District staff work diligently behind the scenes to ensure snow is cleared quickly and safely. A dedicated team



heads out with snow plows to tackle more than 20 parking lots, representing tens of thousands of square feet—sometimes working through the night so everything is ready by morning. Their efforts create a comfortable and safe environment for students and staff, allowing the school day to begin smoothly no matter the weather.

Front of House Spotlights

The front of house spotlights in the auditoriums of Centereach and Newfield high schools have been meticulously maintained by our own staff. They shine a well-deserved spotlight on our students as they take center stage and captivate audiences through outstanding theater productions.



New Lane Elementary School

New Lane Elementary School recently underwent important upgrades that highlight both the visible and behind-the-scenes work of our facilities team. When an emergency plumbing issue arose, our own staff responded quickly to make essential repairs—one example of the kind of critical work that often goes unnoticed but keeps the building running safely each day. Hallway flooring was also upgraded; the transformation not only met required upgrades, but also made the environment more welcoming for students and staff, underscoring the value and versatility of our skilled in-house team.



“We value the expertise of our own maintenance staff, who often work in conjunction with vendors to complete facilities projects. When work can be done efficiently and more economically in-house, we do so—because it makes sense for our students, staff, and our taxpayers.”

— Dawn Sharrock, Board of Education President

PRESERVING OUR FACILITIES, INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

Selden Middle School Building Reveal



Selden Middle School has seen a positive transformation. A new coat of paint, a refreshed entrance, and bold school letters now welcome everyone who walks through the doors of the building! The updates reflect the pride and potential seen within each student every day. The changes are more than facilities improvements; they bring with them a renewed sense of pride and a feeling that our school is a place worth celebrating. We are excited for our students to see this transformation and to feel that pride each time they step onto campus.



Jericho Elementary School

Bathrooms at Jericho Elementary School recently received a fresh update, thanks to the hard work of our own Buildings and Grounds staff. The renovated spaces are clean, bright, and welcoming—another great example of how our in-house team keeps our schools looking their best. These thoughtful upgrades help create a more comfortable daily experience for students and staff alike. The result is a modern look that enhances the school environment while saving the District money on contracted work. And it's not just Jericho—students and staff can see the same changes at each school's bathrooms.



PRESERVING OUR FACILITIES, INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

New Playgrounds Support Active Learning and Inclusive Play

Four elementary buildings—Bicycle Path Pre-K/Kindergarten Center, Unity Drive Pre-K/Kindergarten Center, Jericho Elementary School, and Holbrook Road Elementary School—celebrated the opening of new school playgrounds. These vibrant outdoor spaces provide students with safe, developmentally appropriate environments to play, explore, and grow. Beyond offering room to move and exercise, the new equipment supports gross and fine motor development, encourages problem-solving, and creates opportunities for students to socialize, build friendships, and experience unstructured play together. The District was able to refresh the playgrounds in part because of Assemblyman Doug Smith’s continuing support of the school district.

Additionally, the playground at Eugene Auer Elementary School received inclusive upgrades. Several years ago, a student who uses a wheelchair petitioned the Board of Education to make the space more accessible for all. The District incorporated new inclusive features—an investment made possible through careful, responsible bond management that allowed funds to be redirected to this important work. The result is a more welcoming play environment that better reflects the needs of all students.

These playgrounds are also enjoyed by families throughout the community outside of the school day. To help keep these spaces clean, safe, and enjoyable for everyone, we encourage visitors to tidy up after use. Our playgrounds continue to support healthy development, inclusive play, and a sense of community connection.



PRESERVING OUR FACILITIES, INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

New Lane's Memorial Outdoor Classroom

The late Sue Rossi was dedicated to her 22-year career in the Middle Country School District as a school nurse. She tirelessly cared for and supported thousands of students at that time. In order to honor Ms. Rossi and the tremendous impact she had on New Lane Elementary School, a Memorial Outdoor Classroom has been constructed in her name. The classroom consists of an octagon bench big enough for a full class, picnic tables, and log seating coupled with landscaping to make the space beautiful. Community partners joined forces to donate their time and resources to make this special project happen. Project Manager Greg Capese, of the Coram Home Depot, gave a gift card donation of \$5,000; New Image Construction donated crew members for construction at an estimated cost of \$4,000; the Holdridge family donated log seating, mulch, and stepping stones at an estimated cost of \$2,000; and Logic Landscaping donated landscaping materials and crew members at an estimated cost of \$600. The students and staff at New Lane are very grateful. Additionally, New Lane has been approved for another grant. Home Depot approved the school for \$6,895.58 in vouchers to build a new shed and purchase playground mulch, benches, and new backboards and rims for the basketball court. Across the District, community-donated benches serve as heartfelt tributes to beloved staff members who are no longer with us.



Middle Country Education Foundation



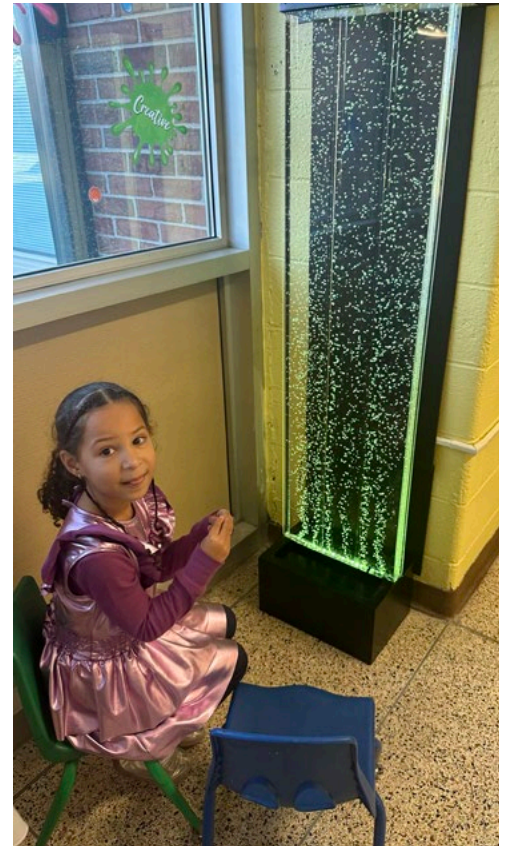
The Middle Country Education Foundation continues to make a meaningful impact through its annual golf outing, one of its primary fundraising events. Thanks to the generosity of sponsors and participants, the Foundation has helped fund building improvements and enhancements throughout the District, including the creation of a sensory room that supports students' social-emotional needs. These efforts would not be possible without the strong backing of local businesses and families, whose contributions directly benefit Middle Country students.

“When schools and the community work together, our students thrive,” said Board of Education Trustee Laura Talamo, a member of the Middle Country Education Foundation alongside Trustees Doreen Feldmann and John DeBenedetto. “We are grateful for the support that allows us to keep improving their learning environment.” The District extends its sincere thanks to all sponsors and community members who continue to champion these initiatives year after year.

PRESERVING OUR FACILITIES, INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

North Coleman Road's New Sensory Wing

North Coleman Road Elementary School unveiled its new sensory hallway, known as "Sensory Place," with a ribbon-cutting ceremony this winter. The project had been in the works for more than a year with the assistance of the staff at North Coleman Road, the Buildings and Grounds Department, and the Sensory Hallway Committee. The idea was to create a place for students to reset before returning to their learning if they are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or have too much energy. The students had a chance to take a walk down "Sensory Place" to test everything out! The official ribbon cutting took place with the support of the Middle Country community, and North Coleman Road is appreciative of all who came to check out this new space.



Newfield's New Science Lab



Newfield High School students in Ms. Innes' Forensic Science class practiced dusting and rolling fingerprints. The newly renovated science lab allowed for students to work collaboratively as they simulate analyzing crime scene evidence. These hands-on exercises help provide insight into potential future careers by allowing students to apply classroom concepts to real-world forensic scenarios and explore the skills used by professionals in the field.

PRESERVING OUR FACILITIES, INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

Looking Ahead: Planning for the Next Five Years

Caring for our school buildings is important work that is ongoing and thoughtfully planned. Over the next few years, Middle Country will continue to address necessary facilities projects in each school building. These improvements are supported by our five-year plan, a long-term approach that protects our community's investment in our schools. The work also highlights the importance of community support for the budget because the funding of these projects depends on voter approval of the annual budget. When residents vote on the school budget each year, they are helping to maintain our buildings, preserve community assets, and ensure safe, modern learning environments for students. As these improvements roll out in each building, families and community members will continue to notice both large and small enhancements that contribute to safer, healthier, and more vibrant schools.

While some upgrades are highly visible, others—such as electrical and mechanical work—take place behind the scenes. Both are essential to extending the life of our buildings. For example, Centereach High School will soon house a new chiller to cool down the building and a new boiler to warm it. At Unity Drive Pre-K/Kindergarten Center, planned work includes replacing ceiling tiles over the next few years to refresh learning spaces and maintain a clean and welcoming environment for students and staff.

Centereach High School is also undergoing significant electrical upgrades, including the replacement of major electrical panels, to support new technology. Additionally, in the same way roofs on our homes age and need replacement, school roofs also require attention as they deteriorate over time. For Hawkins Path, a new roof will be one of the top priorities. Together, these improvements ensure our facilities remain safe, reliable, and equipped to support students and staff for years to come.

Additionally, through careful, self-sustaining management, we were able to upgrade food services equipment at Centereach High School, including this impressive new stove.



The current chiller at Centereach High School, pictured here, will be replaced with a new unit.



The Hawkins Path Elementary School roof will soon be upgraded.



Food service employees cooked nutritious meals with the new stove at Centereach High School.

MIDDLE COUNTRY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
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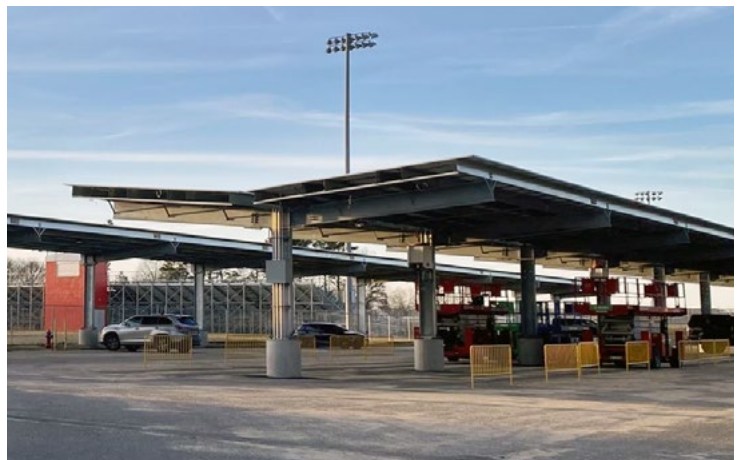
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Energy Performance Projects



Middle Country invested in energy performance projects that improve efficiency, reduce long-term costs, and support sustainability. These initiatives—including solar installations such as the car ports and energy-efficient lighting—are designed so that energy savings help offset project costs over time. Installed and maintained at no cost to taxpayers, the universal electric vehicle charging stations offer yet another benefit to the community for a small fee. These projects help the District advance energy-efficient infrastructure in a financially responsible way.

“Energy performance projects allow us to be both environmentally responsible and fiscally smart. By investing in efficiency today, we are protecting our schools and resources for future generations.”

— Doreen Feldmann, Board of Education Trustee