



# KINGSWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Committed to Excellence*

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Superintendent of Schools

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May 4, 2026

Dear School Community,

Welcome to the April edition of the [Superintendent's News & Notes](#) and [Board Brief](#). As we move fully into the spring season, our schools continue to reflect the energy, talent, and commitment that define our district. April has been filled with meaningful experiences and accomplishments that showcase the very best of our students and staff.

Among this month's highlights, our **NJROTC 2nd Annual Military Ball** provided an evening of tradition and pride for our cadets and their families. We proudly celebrated the **induction of our Tri-M Music Honor Society students**, recognizing excellence in musicianship and leadership. The Board of Education marked an important milestone with the **adoption of the 2026–2027 school budget**, ensuring continued support for our students and programs. Our **Indoor Color Guard earned a Silver medal**, reflecting outstanding dedication and performance. We also recognized **Denise Desiderio, High School Art Teacher, as this month's Spotlight Teacher**, honoring her exceptional impact on our school community. In addition, **construction of our new multi-sport turf field is now underway**, and we anticipate this exciting project will be completed near the end of the school year.

Kingsway's **Commitment to Excellence** was also reflected in the arts, as our Select Jazz Ensemble earned a Bronze Medal and Gold Rating at the NJAJE State Finals in their first year of competition, with additional recognition for outstanding musicianship and individual achievement.

We were especially excited to welcome our incoming 7th grade students, the **Class of 2032**, during our annual Field Day, a tradition that begins their journey with us in a memorable way.

With just over 30 school days remaining, we are entering one of the busiest and most meaningful times of the year. End-of-year activities are underway, including preparations for our Annual Memorial Day Program. This year's theme, **The Meaning of Memorial Day: 250 Years of Sacrifice – 1776–2026**, will



*Home of the Dragons*

provide an opportunity for reflection and gratitude as we honor those who have served our nation.

For our seniors, [graduation is scheduled for June 17](#), marking a significant milestone. We also encourage eligible students to take a moment to submit their **Application for the General Scholarship**, with a deadline of May 7.

As always, thank you for your continued support of our schools. Together, we are well positioned to finish the year on a strong and successful note.

Very truly yours,



James J. Lavender, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

### Spotlights and Recognitions

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

- April Seniors of the Month**  
 April, May & June Seniors of the Month will be recognized at the May Board of Education Meeting.
- High School Student Spotlights**  
 Alexander Jacobs (Grade 9), Michael Beaver (Grade 10), Melanie Ortiz Vicente (Grade 11), Julia Ellers (Grade 12).
- Middle School Student Spotlights**  
 Bailee Small (K); Shrey Chaturvedi (I); Kayla McSorley (N); Isabella Rodriguez (G); Declan Kirk (S); Simone Henson (W); Caleb Lizzewski & Elisa Bradley (A); Brayden Black (Y).



### Silver Medal Finish Caps Outstanding Season for Indoor Color Guard

The Kingsway Regional Indoor Color Guard capped off an extraordinary season with a **Silver Medal finish at the MAIN Championships**, earning an impressive score of **85.8** after a mid-season promotion to **Scholastic A3**. This accomplishment is a testament to the dedication, talent, and teamwork of our students and staff, who continue to elevate the program year after year. Check out the [Video of our Championship Performance!](#)

### Kingsway Jazz Ensemble earns Bronze at NJAJE State Finals, highlighted by outstanding musicianship and individual honors

The Kingsway High School Select Jazz Ensemble concluded an outstanding season with a historic performance at the NJAJE State Jazz Band Festival, earning a Bronze Medal and Gold Rating while finishing 3rd in the state in their first year of competition. The ensemble also received recognition for Best Trumpet Section and achieved one of the top sight-reading scores in the state, highlighting the depth of musicianship within the program. Senior Lira Carrig was honored with the prestigious Rick Kerber Scholarship, further underscoring the exceptional talent and dedication of Kingsway's student musicians.



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### April Spotlight Teacher – Denise Desiderio High School Art Teacher

Denise Desiderio exemplifies what it means to inspire through both passion and purpose, bringing creativity and authenticity into every classroom experience. Her dedication to her craft and her students creates an environment where young artists feel confident to take risks, express themselves, and grow. Kingsway is fortunate to have an educator whose impact is felt not only in her classroom, but in the lives of the students she inspires every day.

### 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Orientation – Class of 2032

We were excited to welcome our incoming 7th grade students at last week's **7th Grade Orientation – Class of 2032**, highlighted by our *Annual Field Day*. It was a great day as **Roadrunners, Comets, and Hornets** came together to begin their transformation into becoming a Dragon. For those parents who may have missed the opening video from Orientation, you can view it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhAlsI0vwg0>

### America's Favorite Teacher...

Our own **Middle School Math Teacher, Ed Heil**, is currently in the running for *America's Favorite Teacher*. This is a wonderful opportunity to recognize the impact he has on our students and school community. I encourage our staff, students, and families to show their support by casting a vote for Mr. Heil: [America's Favorite Teacher](#).

### 2026-27 School Budget Adopted

The Kingsway Regional School District has officially adopted its [2026-2027 Annual School Budget](#), a plan that reflects a continued **Commitment to Excellence** while responsibly navigating fiscal challenges.

The budget maintains all core academic programs and student services, supports continued investment in safety and infrastructure, and advances key initiatives aligned with the district's Aims and Goals. It also addresses rising costs in areas such as employee health benefits, special education, and transportation, while preserving the high-quality educational experience our community expects.

This budget positions Kingsway to sustain progress, support student achievement, and continue providing meaningful opportunities for all students.



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### Attention Seniors! Scholarships Now Available

The **GENERAL SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION** is open to Seniors who plan to further their education, career, profession, or occupation. Up to \$5,000 in scholarships are available for academic achievement, contribution to school or community, postsecondary plans, and financial needs.

### Class of 2026 Graduation – Are you Ready?

Graduation for the Class of 2026 is scheduled for **Wednesday, June 17th at 6:30 PM** at the Anthony “Tony” Barchuk Stadium. Gates will open at 5:30 PM. The event will feature several speakers and the conferral of diplomas. Each graduate will have the opportunity to cross the field and have their name read aloud. Please review the [information on our website](#) for additional information regarding graduation.

### 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.

### 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](#).

- May 4-8 Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week
- May 8 Decision Day – High School
- May 13 High School Art Show Exhibit & NAHS Induction Ceremony
- May 14 Small Ensemble Concert (High School)
- May 14-15 NJSLA Testing (8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science)
- May 16 Junior Prom, Masso’s Orchard Garden
- May 15 MS Musical (Once Upon A Library)
- May 18-20 NJSLA Testing
- May 19-21 NJSLA Testing
- May 21 Board of Education Meeting
- May 22 Memorial Day Ceremony
- May 25 School Closed, Memorial Day
- May 27 HS Blood Drive
- May 27 NJROTC Award Ceremony
- May 28 Athletic Signing Ceremony
- May 28 BLA/STEM Orientation
- June 2 MS End of Year Band Concert
- June 4 MS Art Show
- June 4-5 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Field Trip (Philadelphia)
- June 5 Senior Prom
- June 8 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Trip to Dorney Park
- June 9 HS/MS End of Year Chorus Concert
- June 10 HS End of Year Jazz Band Concert
- June 11 World Language Honor Society Induction Ceremony (HS)

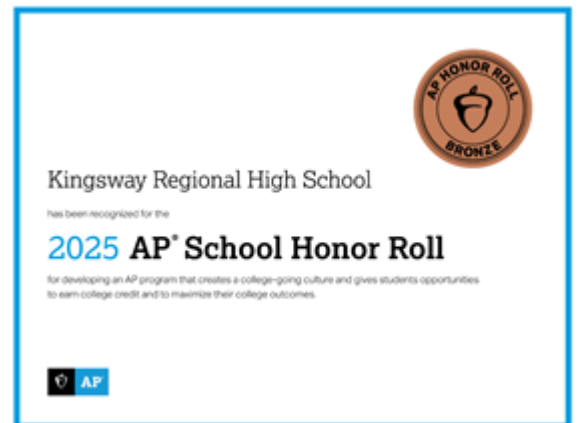


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- June 11 BLA/STEM Service Learning Awards Program
- June 15 Senior Awards Ceremony
- June 16 Senior Sunset
- June 17 Class of 2026 Graduation / Last Student Day

**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).
- [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**



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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 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](#)



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- [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.



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