



Eric A. Byrne, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

35 Leroy Ave
Darien, CT 06820
T. (203) 656 7412
F. (203) 656 3052
E. ebyrne@darienps.org

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Dear Darien Community,

It looks like the warm weather is finally on the horizon. While we are jumping over typical spring temperatures right into July heat, I am ready! As we hit the midpoint of May, it seems like there is a special event or program every single day and in many cases multiple events each day. We will continue to share lots of information in the Friday update and I hope to see you at an upcoming event in our schools and community.

FY27 Budget

The RTM unanimously approved the BOE FY27 Budget of \$130,179,922 on Monday. I am incredibly grateful to the Board of Education, District Administration, First Selectman Zagrodzky, the Board of Finance, the RTM Education Committee, RTM Finance & Budget Committee and the RTM for their collaborative efforts and steadfast support throughout this process.

Mental Health Awareness Month

Today, our halls were filled with a sea of green as our staff came together to recognize Mental Health Awareness Month. As the color of hope, renewal, and growth, green serves as a powerful reminder that connection and support are always within reach here. This year's theme, "More Good Days Together," resonates deeply with our mission; it invites us to reflect on how we show up for one another and reinforces our shared commitment to a culture of care. By wearing green today, we reaffirm that as trusted adults and colleagues, we are the steady presence our students and community can rely on.

Approved District Calendars: 2026-2028

I am pleased to announce that the Board of Education officially approved the school district calendars for both the 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 academic years during Tuesday's meeting. Both calendars feature an improved layout for better readability and clearly outline all holidays, breaks, and professional learning dates, including the transition of winter professional development days to March and May. Additionally, two emergency closing days have been built into each schedule to provide clarity for the end of the school year. You can access and download both the [2026-2027 District Calendar](#) and the [2027-2028 District Calendar](#) on our website.

Early Learning Program

Enrollment for Darien Public Schools' Early Learning Program's Preschool is currently open for children aged 3, 4, and 5. Our play-based learning environments are designed to spark curiosity and foster a love for discovery in every young learner. We invite you to visit our [website](#) to explore our unique curriculum, view registration details, and complete your enrollment online today.

Theatre 308 Recognition

It was a show-stopping weekend for DHS' Theatre 308 at the ninth annual Stephen Sondheim Musical Theater Awards in New Haven! Our production of *The Lightning Thief* electrified the Shubert Theater, earning an impressive 10 nominations,

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including Best Musical. Congratulations to the cast and crew for this wonderful recognition! The highlight of the night came when senior Darragh Hallinan was named Best Actor, a prestigious honor that makes him the first Darien student ever to compete in the world-renowned Jimmy Awards (the National High School Musical Theater Awards). Darragh is headed to New York City on June 22 for a week-long professional boot camp at Juilliard, culminating in a performance at the Minskoff Theatre, the legendary Broadway home of *The Lion King*. Please join us in congratulating Darragh on this historic achievement and wishing him the best of luck on the big stage!

Problem Gambling Community Presentation

Thank you to everyone who attended our community presentation, "Problem Gambling: Sports Betting 101," this past Wednesday at Middlesex Middle School. It was a vital session discussing the growing presence of sports betting among students and its impact on adolescent mental health. Special thanks to our speakers, including TeenTalk Counselors Karla Greto and Ashley Lopez from Kids In Crisis, Sarah McCarty from Thriving Youth Darien, as well as John Hastings and Ethan Bourque from Sasco River Center, for sharing their expertise and guidance. For those who were unable to attend, or for those who would like to review the materials, please see the two handouts below. These documents provide the key highlights from the presentation, including signs to watch for, communication strategies for parents, and additional resources for prevention and support.

[Problem Gambling 101 - Resources](#)

[Gambling Handout - Key Takeaways](#)

DHS Sports

The Blue Wave is ready for another high-intensity weekend of competition, largely dominated by a Friday afternoon showdown against Ridgefield across multiple sports. Our teams will be battling on the diamond and the court both at home and on the road, followed by a Saturday slate of elite regional lacrosse and the prestigious Danbury Dream Invitational for our track athletes. Please see the schedule of weekend games:

Friday's Schedule:

- 4:00 PM: Girls Varsity Softball vs. Ridgefield (Home at DHS)
- 4:00 PM: Boys Freshman Baseball vs. Ridgefield (Home at DHS)
- 4:30 PM: Boys Varsity Baseball vs. Ridgefield (Away at Governor Field)
- 4:30 PM: Boys JV Baseball vs. Ridgefield (Away at East Ridge Middle School)
- 5:00 PM: Boys JV Volleyball vs. Ridgefield (Away at Ridgefield HS)
- 6:15 PM: Boys Varsity Volleyball vs. Ridgefield (Away at Ridgefield HS)

Saturday's Schedule:

- 3:30 PM: Boys JV Lacrosse vs. Rye (Away at Rye HS)
- 6:00 PM: Boys Varsity Track @ Danbury Dream Invitational (Away at Danbury HS)

Have a wonderful weekend.

Sincerely,



Eric A. Byrne, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools