



KINGSWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Committed to Excellence

Ms. Sharon Ormsbee
School Business Administrator

Dr. James J. Lavender
Superintendent of Schools

Ms. Patricia Calandro
Assistant Superintendent

June 26, 2026

Dear School Community,

With the Class of 2026 officially graduated and summer now in full swing, I am pleased to share the latest edition of **Superintendent's News & Notes**, along with the [June Board Brief](#). This month's edition is filled with celebrations, recognitions, and highlights that showcase the many accomplishments of our students, faculty, and staff. As we close another successful school year and look ahead to the opportunities that await, I invite you to scroll through and enjoy the many stories that make Kingsway such a special place.

Kingsway Graduates 519 Members of the Class of 2026

On Wednesday, June 17, Kingsway proudly graduated **519 students** during our 63rd Commencement Ceremony, marking the largest graduating class in school history. With nearly 88 percent of students attending a college or university after graduation, this remarkable class earned more than **1,687 college credits** before even receiving their diplomas, secured over **\$34.1 million** in scholarships, grants, and awards, and will attend some of the most prestigious colleges and universities in the nation, including **Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), University of Pennsylvania, Stanford University, Johns Hopkins University, and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.**



Several graduates will also pursue their passions at some of the nation's most prestigious arts institutions, including the **Savannah College of Art and Design**, the **Rhode Island School of Design**, and the **Culinary Institute of America.**

While many graduates will continue their education at colleges and universities across the country, **13 members of the Class of 2026** have chosen a different path: service to our nation. These graduates will enter the **U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, National Guard**, and collegiate **ROTC programs**. In recognition of their extraordinary commitment to duty, honor, and country, each received Kingsway's highest student honor, the **Spirit of America Award**, presented annually to seniors whose post-graduation plans exemplify courage, patriotism, and selfless service. Through their willingness to answer the call to serve, these young men and women truly embody the Spirit of America.

Home of the Dragons

Surrounded by proud families, friends, and faculty, the Class of 2026 walked with confidence and pride, ready to leave their mark on the world. Be sure to check out the [Senior Highlight Reel](#) to relive the unforgettable moments from this historic evening.

Kingsway's 8th Grade Class Celebrates the End of Middle School Journey

On June 17, Kingsway's eighth-grade class gathered to celebrate the successful completion of their middle school experience. The event recognized not only their academic accomplishments but also the tremendous personal growth, resilience, and character they have demonstrated throughout their time at Kingsway Middle School.

Supported by their teachers, families, and classmates, these students have built a strong foundation for future success. As they prepare to enter Kingsway Regional High School this fall, the Class of 2030 does so with confidence, enthusiasm, and a commitment to excellence. We look forward to watching them continue to grow as scholars, leaders, athletes, artists, and engaged members of our school community.

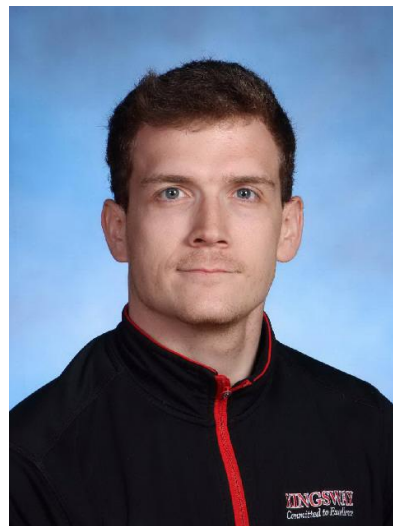
Be sure to check out our [8th Grade Highlight Reel](#) to celebrate this important milestone.

School Officials Recognize and Celebrate Retiring Faculty & Staff

More than 400 faculty and staff members gathered in Café West to commemorate the conclusion of another successful school year and celebrate the achievements that made it possible. A special highlight of the event was the recognition of 13 retiring employees whose dedication, professionalism, and commitment have left a lasting impact on generations of students and colleagues.

Collectively representing more than 250 years of service to Kingsway, these individuals have helped shape our culture, strengthen our programs, and support countless students throughout their careers. We extend our sincere gratitude for their service and wish them a healthy, happy, and fulfilling retirement.

- **Suzie Shakespeare**, Middle School English Teacher (34 years)
- **Ed Heil**, Middle School Math Teacher (25 years)
- **Lori Baker**, Accounts Payable (25 years)
- **Ron Johnson**, Custodian (25 years)
- **Regina Foody**, Middle School English Teacher (24 years)
- **Karen Schonewise**, High School English Teacher (20 years)
- **Sharon Young**, Middle School Paraprofessional (16 years)
- **Jackie Balliet**, Assistant to the School Business Administrator (16 years)
- **Eric Peterson**, High School Paraprofessional (15 years)
- **Dave Dominik**, Middle School Math Teacher (14 years)
- **Patricia Shields**, High School Secretary (14 years)
- **Donna Andersen**, Bus Driver (13 years)
- **Warren Adams**, Custodian (12 years)



Educational Services Professional of the Year

Since 2017, Kingsway has proudly recognized the outstanding contributions of our Educational Services Professionals, whose work



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behind the scenes is essential to the success of our schools. This year, we are honored to recognize **Rob Bruno, Network Technician**, as our **2026 Educational Services Professional of the Year**.

Rob's impact extends far beyond technology. While his technical expertise helps keep our district running efficiently, it is his unwavering commitment to supporting others that truly sets him apart. Whether responding to a service request, troubleshooting a complex issue, or assisting staff members with new technology, Rob approaches every challenge with patience, professionalism, and a genuine desire to help.

Known throughout the district for his reliability and positive attitude, Rob consistently goes above and beyond to ensure that students and staff have the tools and support they need to succeed. He is a trusted colleague who takes ownership of every task, follows through on every commitment, and approaches his work with humility and dedication.

Most importantly, Rob embodies the qualities we value most at Kingsway. He is humble in his approach, hungry in his work ethic, and smart in both his thinking and relationships. His willingness to serve others, solve problems, and contribute wherever needed has earned the respect and admiration of colleagues across the district.

Congratulations, Rob, on this well-deserved recognition, and thank you for your outstanding service to the Kingsway Regional School District.

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 [2026-27 School Calendar](#) or the [Athletics & Activities Calendar](#).

- June 22 Summer Flex Schedules Begin for Staff
- July 4 Independence Day; School Closed to Staff (July 3)
- July 6-10 Administrative Retreat
- July 22 Chromebook Distribution for 9th Grade
- August 4-5 Secretary Retreat
- August 5 & 12 Freshman Transition Camp
- August 10-14 NJROTC Basic Leadership Training
- August 10-17 Fall Athletics Begin
- August 25-27 New Educator Orientation
- August 31 Summer Flex Schedules End for Staff
- August 27 Middle School Self-Guided Tour
- September 1-2 Faculty Inservice; Annual Staff BBQ
- September 2 High School Open House
- September 3 Welcome Back! 1st Student Day.



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You May Have Missed....

- **[Kingsway NJROTC Earns Unit Achievement Award](#)**
Kingsway Regional High School NJROTC program has been awarded the prestigious Unit Achievement Award for the 2024-2025 school year.
- **[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.
- **[Bernat & Finlaw Named New Head Coaches](#)**
Kingsway Regional High School is excited to announce the appointments of **Erin Bernat as the new Head Field Hockey Coach**, alongside her assistant coaching staff, and **Jason Finlaw as the Head Girls' Soccer Coach** for the 2025 season.
- **[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.
- **[Board of Education Celebrates Teachers and ESP of the Year](#)**
The Board of Education is proud to recognize **Middle School Special Education Teacher Amanda Hanigan** and **High School History Teacher Kristian Ward** as the 2024-25 Teachers of the Year. Additionally, **School Psychologist Danielle Baney** has been honored as this year's Educational Support Professional of the Year.
- **[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 Names Nick Rothwein as New Head Girls' Lacrosse Coach](#)**
The Kingsway Regional School District is thrilled to announce Nick Rothwein's appointment as the new Head Girls' Lacrosse Coach, which was announced at the January 23rd Board of Education meeting.
- **[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](#)**



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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 4th Annual Veterans Day Program**](#)
Representatives from the South Jersey Quilts of Valor Foundation participated in Kingsway's 4th Annual Veterans Day Breakfast on Friday, November 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 the 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.



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Very truly yours,



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

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