

Michael LaSusa, Superintendent of Schools
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Dear PPS Parent/Caregiver,

We have arrived at the final day of the school year! I hope that your children and your family are able to make time for whatever brings you joy and togetherness as we enter the ten or so weeks of the year when schools are not fully open. Below are some items that I would like to call to your attention since the last note I sent in April.

Construction!

We will begin staging and other preparations for the initial construction phase of the referendum projects approved in 2025 in the coming weeks. You may see safety fencing, signage, equipment, and other materials and items at multiple school locations. Please abide by any restrictions for accessing certain spaces during this time. We will provide updates as construction progresses on this [page of our website](#).

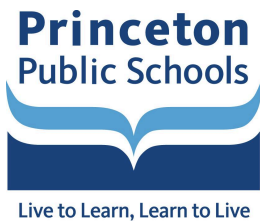
Activity Fee

The Board of Education is adopting a [policy establishing a Student Activity Fee](#) to participate in Board-funded extracurricular activities at PMS and PHS next year. The Activity Fee Program resulted after careful discussion during the development of our annual budget. Its purpose is to generate revenue in order to avoid reducing or eliminating extracurricular offerings. Specifically, revenue generated through the student activity fee program will be used to offset costs associated with coach/advisor salaries; equipment; facility use; official/referee fees; event registration fees; school/facility/field preparation and maintenance; insurance costs; security; and other expenses incurred by the district in the operation of the activity.

Beginning next school year, any student participating in an extracurricular activity (including in athletics, the performing arts, and other clubs) that carries a district expense will be assessed a one-time fee. At PMS the fee will be \$100 and at PHS the fee will be \$150. Paying the fee one time will entitle a student to participate in as many activities as they would like. The payment method and other instructions regarding the fee will be available by early August. The fee will be waived for any student qualifying for free or reduced lunch.

Device and Network Use

The Board of Education is also adopting a revised [Acceptable Use Policy](#), and the district has worked throughout the year on better managing use of district devices and the district network



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to ensure that students use these resources for appropriate educational purposes. It terms of key developments:

- Our Chief Technology Officer, Todd MacDonald, and his team have placed more restrictions on the district content filter and have reconfigured GoGuardian, a tool that helps control and monitor access to websites and the internet in general. These changes have resulted in a significant reduction in non-educational internet traffic among students during and outside of the school day. Mr. MacDonald has also reconfigured the GoGuardian parent app and has disseminated instructions for parents so that you have tools to monitor what your children are doing on their district devices over the summer.
- Mr. MacDonald also helped oversee a 30-day pilot of Linewize, a content monitoring program. The pilot illuminated the ways students have been bypassing the district content filter in order to access inappropriate websites, including during the school day. It also detected a small number of instances in which students were exploring potentially self-injurious behavior. We will move forward with the full rollout of Linewize for next school year in an effort to ensure safe and appropriate use of district technology.
- New Jersey's new "[cell phone](#)" law will take effect at the start of next school year. The law bans all student personal devices that connect to the internet during the school day, with some exceptions. For our PK-8 schools, the new law will not represent much of a change, though it does mean that students will not be permitted to wear a smart watch that connects to the internet. At PHS, this law represents a major shift. Students will not be permitted to use their cell phones during the school day, including during Break time and other non-instructional periods. The high school administration is finalizing a disciplinary framework for violations of the new rules and also continues to explore whether an app that students could voluntarily download to their phones to help curtail their use would be a helpful tool for some students. We will provide final details about our updated expectations, policies, and procedures by early August.

This is the fourteenth time I have concluded a school year as a superintendent of schools. I would like to thank all of those reading this note who have not only made this an enriching school year for our students, but who have also shown kindness to me personally this year. I hope you have a wonderful summer!

Sincerely,
Mike LaSusa