

North Plainfield Pulse

District Highlights

YOUTH SUMMER SOLIDARITY SUMMIT

In June, North Plainfield High School rising seniors attended the Youth Summer Solidarity Summit at Princeton University's Carl A. Fields Center. The full-day summit brought together high school students from across New Jersey who are interested in social justice, civic engagement, and community leadership. Throughout the day, students participated in workshops, panel discussions, breakout sessions, and collaborative activities designed to help their generation better understand social issues and develop the skills necessary to create positive change.

Participants explored how power and institutions shape society while learning practical strategies for advocacy and organizing. Sessions focused on campaign development, leadership, community engagement, and effective action on issues that matter to their age group. The summit also provided students with opportunities to connect with peers from diverse backgrounds and schools throughout the state.

North Plainfield students demonstrated a strong commitment to learning and civic responsibility by engaging in meaningful discussions and activities focused on social awareness and community involvement. The experience encouraged students to think critically about the challenges facing society and empowered them to become active participants in creating solutions.

North Plainfield High School is proud of its students for representing the district at this enriching educational experience and looks forward to seeing how they apply the knowledge and skills gained from the summit in the coming school year.

*Pictured from left to right:
Nia Twyman, Dennis Nguyen, Ian Lameira, Mialuz D'Abreo Bird, Jakelyn Cardona Valdez, Leah Dodds, and Kiara King.*



2026 -2027 SOMERSET COUNTY TEACHER OF THE YEAR: Neil Thompson

It's with extreme pride that we share that the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) named Neil Thompson, North Plainfield High School (NPHS) history teacher, the Somerset County Teacher of the Year.

Mr. Thompson has been with North Plainfield for the entirety of his 25-year teaching career, first at North Plainfield Middle School before transferring to the High School. At NPHS, he is known for introducing and developing a popular course in criminal justice, as well as teaching United States history, multiple Advanced Placement history courses and a plethora of electives.

"Teaching at North Plainfield for the last 25 years has become my life's work, so being recognized like this after so many years is a true honor," shared Mr. Thompson. "I am humbled by the support and pride shown to me by my colleagues, community members, and, especially, my wonderful students. Winning this award is a deeply personal thing for me."

Beyond the classroom, Mr. Thompson has held numerous leadership positions within the district, including co-president of the North Plainfield Education Association and as a teacher mentor. Currently, he is part of the Scheduling Committee, writing curriculum, and serving on the High School's Security and Safety Team. Outside of school, Mr. Thompson is a person with deep ties to the North Plainfield community as a resident and parent of North Plainfield graduates.

Throughout his career, Mr. Thompson has ensured his focus remains firmly fixed on the needs of his students. His overriding priority is to instill in students a love of learning and a sense of community in the classroom. He achieves this by employing engaging and authentic classroom experiences mixed with real-life know-how.



"For 25 years, Mr. Thompson has inspired students through his passion for history, teaching, and commitment to their success," shared Superintendent Dr. Michelle Aquino. "Whether in the classroom, mentoring colleagues, or serving our school community, Mr. Thompson leads with integrity, dedication, and a love for learning. We are incredibly proud to see him recognized as the Somerset County Teacher of the Year—an honor that reflects not only his exceptional work, but also the lasting impact he has made on our students, families, and the entire North Plainfield community. He is truly a steward for our schools."

"Mr. Thompson is a dedicated teacher, a professional in all aspects of his job," expressed High School Principal Joseph Krouse. "He not only represents the North Plainfield School District as a distinguished educator, but is also a parent and community member living in the same district where he truly gives back to the community. He is well deserving of this prestigious recognition."

North Plainfield School District
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North Plainfield, NJ 07060

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DISTRICT VIDEO



Our new district video showcases the incredible opportunities, dedicated educators, and supportive community that make North Plainfield School District a place where futures begin. We invite you to watch, share, and see why **Your Future Starts Here.**

www.nplainfield.org/YFSH

REFERENDUM PROJECT UPDATES *Updates as of August 14, 2026

The July 14th bond sale resulted in **\$1.6 million in savings** over 25 years.
That is **\$15 a month in savings per average household**.
An excellent credit rating = lower interest rate.



For updated project timelines and progress photos, visit our referendum webpage. Scan the QR code or visit www.nplainfield.org/referendum

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Security Vestibules
East End, West End, and Stony Brook School ADA-accessible ramps are near completion. **Security vestibules are projected to be complete by September 2026.**
- 

High School Main Office/Security Vestibule
Framing for the main office began the week of August 3, 2026. Substantial completion March 2027.
- 

High School Auditorium
Construction started the first week of August 2026. Substantial completion spring 2027.
- 

High School/Middle School Science Labs
Pre-construction meeting July 30, 2026. **Projected substantial completion December 2026.**
- 

High School Media Center
Out to bid September 2026. **Construction to start March 2027.**
- 

High School/Middle School Window Replacements
Out to bid September 2026. **Construction to start March 2027.**
- 

High School Locker Rooms
Out to bid November 2026. **Construction to start January 2027.**

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HVAC: East End, Stony Brook, & West End
Out to bid November 2026. **Construction to start January 2027.**
- 

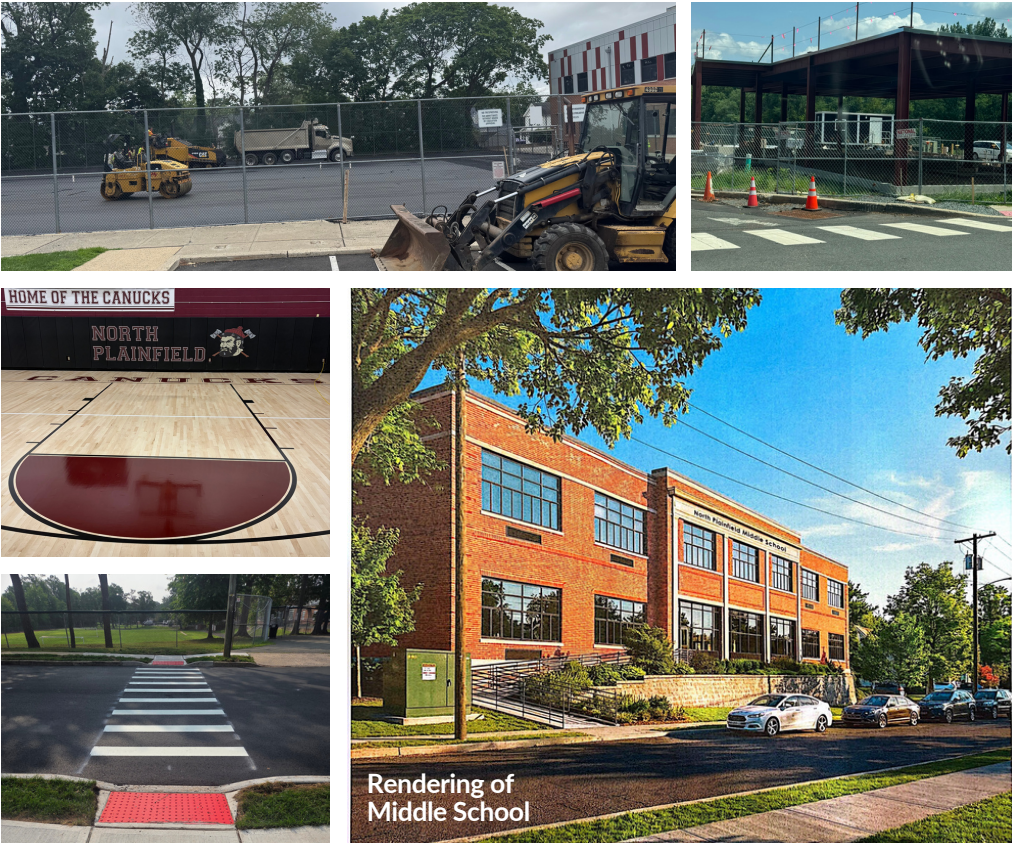
High School Culinary Room
Out to bid December 2026. **Construction to start June 2027.**



CAPITAL UPDATES *Updates as of August 14, 2026

The district continues to make improvements to its facilities to better meet the needs of students and staff.

- **East End Tennis Court Reconstruction:** Final pavement laid the week of July 27, 2026. The curing process is 30 days. The fence will be installed thereafter.
- **West End PreK Expansion:** Concrete slab poured July 31, 2026. Projected substantial completion November 2026.
- **Middle School Gym:** Floor replaced in July 2026.
- **Middle School Addition:**
 - **Going out to bid in October 2026**
 - **Independent School Operations:** NPHS & NPMS can operate fully independent of one another.
 - **Flexible Cafeteria & Event Space**
 - **Engaging Classrooms:** Flexible seating, advanced and enhanced IT capabilities, and maximized instructional space.
 - **Dedicated FPPA & Tech Spaces**
 - **Collaborative Staff Space**
 - **Historic Brick Design Inspired by 1926 NPHS**
- **Middle School LED Sign:** The long-awaited replacement that was damaged in last year's flood is coming soon. We hope to have it fully installed before the start of school.
- A new **crosswalk** has been painted on **Walnut Street**.



Internet-Enabled Device Policy

In accordance with a recently enacted law, our district must implement a mandatory "bell-to-bell" internet-enabled device policy this school year. This statewide requirement supports our ongoing commitment to maintaining a focused, safe, and productive learning environment for all students. For more comprehensive information, including enforcement details and practical tips for this transition, please review our dedicated webpage.



Scan to view dedicated webpage. Or visit www.nplainfield.org/devicepolicy

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS FOR 2026 - 2029

Goal 1: Academic Excellence

Increase academic rigor and student achievement by strengthening literacy and numeracy skills, ensuring students meet or exceed grade-level expectations.

Objectives:

- Reduce the percentage of grades 4-8 students performing below grade level in reading and math by 5% annually, as measured by NJ standardized assessments.
- Expand high school enrollment in Advanced Placement, Honors, and Dual Enrollment courses by 15%, with a specific focus on increasing participation among underrepresented student populations.
- Standardize counselor/family outreach to ensure that 100% of students in grades 9–12 participate in at least two annual counselor-led college/career activities focused on post-graduation planning, application steps and deadlines, and financial aid support.

Goal 2: Facilities & Technology

Modernize facilities and digital infrastructure to ensure safe, accessible environments and enhance instructional technology.

Objectives:

- Complete the construction of referendum projects by June 2029 and the middle school addition by July 2028.
- Conduct annual assessments of school infrastructure needs and develop a prioritized action plan for improvements.
- Conduct an evaluation of classroom technology use and identify adjustments to reduce technology where appropriate.

Goal 3: Support Every Learner

Enhance support for diverse learners and special education through improved services, equitable resource access, evidence-based instruction, and stronger general-special education collaboration.

Objectives:

- Increase the percentage of grades K-3 students performing at or above grade level by 5% annually, as measured by the iReady assessment.
- Implement targeted, evidence-based intervention programs for grades K-8 multilingual learners and special education students to close achievement gaps by 15% over the next three years.
- Reduce chronic absenteeism by 0.5% each year through targeted outreach.

Goal 4: Community Engagement & Development

Strengthen community engagement and staff support by fostering strong communication and investing in teacher and staff development.

Objectives:

- Launch a district-wide mentorship program that pairs 100% of new teachers within 30 days, provide monthly ongoing support and achieve an 85% satisfaction rating by year-end.
- Increase parent newsletter open rates to 75% and achieve at least a 90% newsletter satisfaction rate on annual parent survey.
- Conduct bi-annual surveys to assess teacher morale, with a goal of increasing overall satisfaction scores within three years.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Carlos Pareja NPHS Class of 2011

After graduating from North Plainfield High School in 2011, Carlos Pareja served as a Navy Hospital Corpsman from 2011–2016. He later attended Rutgers University, graduating in 2020, before earning his medical degree from Rutgers New Jersey Medical School as part of the Class of 2025.



Carlos is currently completing his Anesthesiology Residency at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, where he will continue training through 2029. He shares that he truly enjoys his career and describes anesthesiology as an ideal field for those who enjoy physiology, hands-on work, and the development of highly technical skills.

Outside of his career, Carlos is happily married and the proud father of two children. Reflecting on his journey so far, he says, “Life is great.”

Looking back:

“I learned a lot of discipline through sports. It has carried me through the military and my current career. Although I train mostly my brain nowadays, staying dedicated, consistent, and accountable has not changed.”

Advice for current students:

“Nothing comes easy, and nothing is handed to you. Success requires hard work, long days, and occasionally knowing how to bounce back after failure. Believe me, I have failed at times, but here I am in the long run. Do what is right when nobody is looking and have good character. In life, opportunities will present themselves, and have the courage to take them. You will gain/learn the most from stepping out of your comfort zone and being comfortable with being uncomfortable.”

Alumni: We want to hear from you! Share advice and what you're up to now at tinyurl.com/npalumni

Visit the strategic plan webpage to view the action steps for the 2026-2027 school year.



www.nplainfield.org/strategicplan

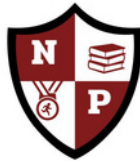


North Plainfield Fall Festival
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2026

North Plainfield High School 11am – 4pm
Rain or Shine

Food – Vendors – Community Groups Inflatables – Entertainment – Color Run – Puppy Parade – Car Nutz Car Show from 9 am – 2 pm

proceeds benefit our



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For more information visit npfallfestival.org



EN ESPAÑOL

Maestro del Año del Condado de Somerset 2026-2027: Neil Thompson

Es un gran orgullo para nosotros anunciar que el Departamento de Educación de Nueva Jersey (NJDOE) ha nombrado a Neil Thompson, profesor de historia de la Escuela Secundaria North Plainfield (NPHS), como el Maestro del Año del condado de Somerset.

El Sr. Thompson ha desarrollado toda su carrera docente de 25 años en North Plainfield; comenzó en la Escuela Intermedia North Plainfield antes de trasladarse a la escuela secundaria. En la NPHS, es reconocido por haber creado e impartido un popular curso de justicia penal, además de enseñar historia de los Estados Unidos, varios cursos de historia de nivel avanzado (*Advanced Placement*) y una amplia variedad de asignaturas optativas.

"Ejercer la docencia en North Plainfield durante los últimos 25 años se ha convertido en la labor de mi vida, por lo que recibir este reconocimiento tras tantos años es un verdadero honor", comentó el Sr. Thompson. "Me siento profundamente conmovido y agradecido por el apoyo y el orgullo que me han demostrado mis colegas, los miembros de la comunidad y, especialmente, mis maravillosos alumnos. Ganar este premio tiene para mí un significado muy personal."

Más allá del aula, el Sr. Thompson ha desempeñado numerosos cargos de liderazgo dentro del distrito, entre ellos el de copresidente de la Asociación de Educación de North Plainfield y el de maestro mentor. Actualmente, forma parte del Comité de Organización de Horarios, participa en la elaboración del plan de estudios y colabora en el Equipo de Seguridad y Protección de la escuela secundaria. Fuera del ámbito escolar, el Sr. Thompson mantiene fuertes vínculos con la comunidad de North Plainfield, tanto como residente como padre de alumnos graduados del distrito.

A lo largo de su carrera, el Sr. Thompson se ha asegurado de mantener su enfoque firmemente centrado en las necesidades de sus alumnos. Su prioridad absoluta es inculcar en ellos el amor por el aprendizaje y un sentido de comunidad en el aula. Para ello, emplea experiencias de aprendizaje dinámicas y auténticas, combinándolas con conocimientos aplicables a la vida real.

"Durante 25 años, el Sr. Thompson ha inspirado a los estudiantes gracias a su pasión por la historia y la enseñanza, así como a su compromiso con el éxito de ellos", comentó la superintendente, la Dra. Michelle Aquino. "Ya sea en el aula, asesorando a sus colegas o sirviendo a nuestra comunidad escolar, el Sr. Thompson lidera con integridad, dedicación y amor por el aprendizaje. Nos llena de orgullo verlo reconocido como el Maestro del Año del Condado de Somerset; un honor que refleja no solo su labor excepcional, sino también el impacto duradero que ha dejado en nuestros estudiantes, las familias y toda la comunidad de North Plainfield. Es, sin duda, un verdadero pilar de nuestras escuelas."

"El Sr. Thompson es un maestro dedicado y un

profesional en todos los aspectos de su trabajo", expresó Joseph Krouse, director de la escuela secundaria. "No solo representa al Distrito Escolar de North Plainfield como un educador distinguido, sino que también es padre de familia y miembro de la comunidad; vive en el mismo distrito al que aporta tanto valor. Es muy merecedor de este prestigioso reconocimiento".

Cumbre Juvenil de Verano por la Solidaridad

En junio, estudiantes de la escuela secundaria North Plainfield High School que estaban por comenzar su último año asistieron a la Cumbre Juvenil de Verano sobre Solidaridad (Youth Summer Solidarity Summit) en el Centro Carl A. Fields de la Universidad de Princeton. Este evento de jornada completa reunió a estudiantes de secundaria de todo Nueva Jersey interesados en la justicia social, el compromiso cívico y el liderazgo comunitario. A lo largo del día, los participantes tomaron parte en talleres, paneles de discusión, sesiones en grupos reducidos y actividades colaborativas, diseñados para ayudar a su generación a comprender mejor las problemáticas sociales y a desarrollar las habilidades necesarias para generar cambios positivos.

Los participantes exploraron cómo el poder y las instituciones moldean la sociedad, al tiempo que aprendían estrategias prácticas para la defensa de causas y la organización comunitaria. Las sesiones se centraron en el desarrollo de campañas, el liderazgo, la participación en la comunidad y la acción efectiva sobre temas relevantes para su grupo de edad. Asimismo, la cumbre brindó a los estudiantes la oportunidad de conectar con compañeros de diversos orígenes y escuelas de todo el estado.

Los estudiantes de North Plainfield demostraron un firme compromiso con el aprendizaje y la responsabilidad cívica al participar en debates y actividades significativas centrados en la conciencia social y la participación comunitaria. Esta experiencia fomentó el pensamiento crítico sobre los desafíos que enfrenta la sociedad y los empoderó para participar activamente en la creación de soluciones.

La escuela secundaria North Plainfield se enorgullece de sus estudiantes por haber representado al distrito en esta enriquecedora experiencia educativa y espera ver cómo aplican los conocimientos y habilidades adquiridos en la cumbre durante el próximo año escolar.

Video del distrito

El nuevo video de nuestro distrito destaca las increíbles oportunidades, los educadores dedicados y la comunidad solidaria que hacen del Distrito Escolar de North Plainfield un lugar donde comienzan los futuros. Le invitamos a verlo, compartirlo y descubrir por qué su futuro comienza aquí.

www.nplainfield.org/YFSH

Política sobre dispositivos con acceso a Internet

De conformidad con una ley promulgada recientemente, nuestro distrito debe implementar este año escolar una política obligatoria sobre el uso de dispositivos con acceso a Internet que abarca toda la jornada lectiva (desde el inicio hasta el final de las clases). Este requisito estatal respalda nuestro compromiso continuo de mantener un entorno de aprendizaje centrado, seguro y productivo para todos los estudiantes. Para obtener información más detallada, incluidos los pormenores de la aplicación de la norma y consejos prácticos para esta transición, le invitamos a consultar nuestra página web dedicada a este tema.

www.nplainfield.org/devicepolicy

Destacado de exalumnos

Carlos Pareja

NPHS Class of 2011

Tras graduarse de la escuela secundaria North Plainfield High School en 2011, Carlos Pareja prestó servicio como técnico de sanidad de la Marina (Navy Hospital Corpsman) entre 2011 y 2016. Posteriormente cursó estudios en la Universidad Rutgers, graduándose en 2020, antes de obtener su título de medicina en la Rutgers New Jersey Medical School como parte de la promoción de 2025.

Actualmente, Carlos está completando su residencia en Anestesiología en la Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, donde continuará su formación hasta el año 2029. Él comenta que disfruta enormemente de su profesión y describe la anestesiología como un campo ideal para quienes gustan de la fisiología, el trabajo práctico y el desarrollo de habilidades altamente técnicas.

En su vida personal, Carlos está felizmente casado y es el orgulloso padre de dos hijos. Al reflexionar sobre su trayectoria hasta la fecha, afirma: "La vida es maravillosa."

Echando la vista atrás:

"Aprendí mucha disciplina gracias al deporte. Esa disciplina me ha acompañado tanto en mi etapa militar como en mi carrera actual. Aunque hoy en día entreno principalmente la mente, mi dedicación, constancia y sentido de la responsabilidad permanecen inalterables."



**Festival de Otoño de North Plainfield
SÁBADO 27 DE SEPTIEMBRE DE 2025**

Escuela Secundaria North Plainfield 11 am - 4 pm Lleva o haga sol

**Comida - Vendedores - Grupos comunitarios
Inflables - Entretenimiento - Color Run - Car
Nutz Show de Carro de 9 am a 2 pm
Los ingresos benefician a nuestros**



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**Para obtener más información, visite
npfallfestival.org**

September 2026
North Plainfield Pulse
District Highlights

North Plainfield School District • 33 Mountain Ave • North Plainfield, NJ • 07060

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