FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Summer 2026

Dear Members of the Lyme-Old Lyme Communities,

We are well into summer, and preparations for the new school year are in full swing as our teachers and staff get ready to welcome students back in the weeks ahead. Although this edition is reaching you a bit later than planned due to an unexpected circumstance, we are pleased to share it with you. You will find highlights from the memorable final days of the 2025–2026 school year, celebrations of our retirees and graduating seniors, and a look ahead at the exciting updates, and opportunities that will shape the year to come. We hope you enjoy reflecting on the accomplishments of the past year while looking forward to another successful school year together.

Sincerely,
Ian Neviaser
Superintendent of Schools

Jason Kemp
Chair, Board of Education







Lyme-Old Lyme Schools

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www.region18.org

LYME-OLD LYME SCHOOLS

Please join us in recognizing the following retirees for their many years of service to the communities of Lyme and Old Lyme.

Mary Dargie, SRBI specialist at Lyme School, 24 years

Richard Fisler, science teacher at Lyme-Old Lyme High School, 7 years

Tracy Lenz, Director of School Counseling, Lyme-Old Lyme High School, 14 years

Lisa McDermott, teacher at Lyme School, 21 years

Kathryn Mulligan, teacher at Mile Creek School, 27 years

Susan Oliver, teacher at Mile Creek School, 31 years of service

Leslie Traver, business teacher at Lyme-Old Lyme High School, 30 years



Leslie Traver, Richard Fisler, Tracy Lenz



Susan Oliver, Kathryn Mulligan



Lisa McDermott, Mary Dargie

We welcome **Marianne DeBruyn** as the newest member of the Board of Education.

We also extend our thanks to **Susan Fogliano** for her service, particularly for her leadership of the PK-8 Renovation Project. We wish her all the best in her new community.





Welcome to Andrea Montovani



Andrea Montovani joined Lyme-Old Lyme Schools in July as assistant principal of Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School and principal of Center School.

Montovani most recently served as assistant principal at Memorial Elementary School in East Hampton, Connecticut, a position she held since 2021. Before moving into administration, she worked in East Hartford Public Schools as a reading specialist, instructional coach, literacy/media technology specialist, and classroom teacher.

Montovani earned a Sixth-Year Certificate in Educational Leadership from Central Connecticut State University. She also holds a teaching certification in Elementary Education from Sacred Heart University and a Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Studies from the University of Connecticut. She resides in Niantic with her family.

Congratulations to this year's top graduates!



Valedictorian Rose Dimmock

Valedictorian Rose Dimmock will attend Brown University this fall, where she is enrolled in the Program in Liberal Medical Education (PLME), a combined undergraduate and medical school program. During her undergraduate studies, she plans to concentrate in neuroscience.

Throughout high school, Dimmock was a member of the Shoreline cooperative girls swim team and the varsity girls tennis team, serving as tennis captain during her senior year. She was also an officer of the National Honor Society, co-president of the Chinese Honor Society, a member of the Spanish Honor Society, and participated in both Amnesty International and student council all four years.

Outside the classroom, Dimmock volunteered at the Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library, where she participated in the Intellectual Freedom Internship and the Teen Advisory Board. She also created and taught an introductory Chinese language class. A passionate language learner, she speaks four languages: English, Spanish, Mandarin, and Cantonese.

Dimmock said AP Calculus was her favorite class because of the enthusiasm of her classmates and teacher. This summer, she plans to spend time with family and friends while working as a lifeguard before beginning her studies at Brown. Looking back on her high school years, she said she will miss the school's close-knit community and is especially grateful for the dedication and support of her teachers.



Salutatorian Christopher Dagher

Salutatorian Christopher Dagher will attend Cornell University this fall, where he plans to major in economics. Although mathematics was his favorite subject, he developed a wide range of interests both inside and outside the classroom.

Dagher was a member of the boys tennis team, mock trial, math team, trivia club, the French Honor Society, and the National Honor Society. One of his favorite high school experiences was participating in mock trial, where he found both a strong sense of community and a fascination with criminal law.

Although he did not join mock trial until his junior year, Dagher quickly discovered he was able to catch up with the support of his teammates. The experience helped him become comfortable speaking in front of large groups, and his interest in the law grew to the point that he found himself reading about legal concepts, including exceptions to hearsay, in his free time.

Outside of school, Dagher enjoys playing tennis, making music, riding his bike, and reading. This summer, he plans to find a job, spend time at the beach, and explore more of Connecticut before heading to Cornell.



Honor Essayist Maya Cook

Honor Essayist Maya Cook will attend Boston College this fall, where she plans to major in biology on the pre-med track. Her love of science made AP Biology her favorite class during high school.

Cook served as Student Council president and was active in ECOS, the school's community service club, yearbook, and crew. She also served as president of the Latin Honor Society and was a member of the National Honor Society, demonstrating a commitment to leadership, service, and school involvement.

Outside of school, Cook enjoys spending time at the beach and with her family. This summer, she plans to work as a lifeguard before beginning her college career at Boston College.

Reflecting on her time in high school, Cook said she is especially grateful for the encouragement of her teachers and the friendships she built along the way.

LYME-OLD LYME CLASS OF 2026

Although rain threatened to dampen the celebration, the skies cleared just in time for the graduation ceremony to be held outdoors.

"You my friends, possess something very special. You have character. Every day I witness individual and collective displays of that character. You are kind to each other. You look-out for and protect each other. You care about this school, our community, our country, our earth. You consistently do the right thing because it's the right thing to do, not because someone is watching or there's something in it for you." —Jim Wygonik, Principal

"We've all built friendships here, our own sense of communities, developed our own personal values, and connected with each other. Really, one of the things I admire most about our class is how supportive we are of each other." — Rose Dimmock, Valedictorian

"As I watched you during all of the senior events, I realized that as a class, you truly like to be together! You have your own groups of people within the class, but you successfully flow amongst each other and come together as one when you need it and that is unique for a class of individuals. Cherish it and rely on these people sitting next to you today, tomorrow and 10 years from now."— Ms. Lenz, Commencement Speaker



Congratulations to Thomas Kelley on earning the Stephen Sondheim Award for Best Supporting Actor for his portrayal of Ambrose Kemper in the musical *Hello, Dolly!* Kelley was also recently awarded a scholarship from the Shoreline Arts Alliance after earning first place in the dance category.





Congratulations to the boys and girls crew teams on being named the Connecticut Public Schools Rowing Association State Champions!



Congratulations to the girls' lacrosse team for winning the 2026 Shoreline Conference Championship!

AI in the Classroom

Artificial intelligence is seemingly everywhere these days, and it is something Lyme-Old Lyme Schools is navigating alongside other school districts and industries. Our district has established guidelines for the appropriate use of AI by both students and staff, and those guidelines will undoubtedly continue to evolve as AI technology and its applications change over time.

One exciting example of AI in action is taking place in our high school world language classrooms. Teachers are using software developed by a Connecticut startup to give students additional opportunities to practice speaking in the language they are learning. By engaging in conversations with a human-like AI chatbot, students can build confidence, improve their conversational skills, and receive immediate, personalized feedback. This tool complements classroom instruction by providing students with more time to practice and helping them become more comfortable communicating in a new language.

Lyme-Old Lyme Schools
49 Lyme Street
Old Lyme, Connecticut 06371

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Please join the Board of Education for the following meetings:

SEPT 2: Regular BOE Meeting, 6:30 PM

OCT 7: Regular BOE Meeting, 6:30 PM

NOV 4: Regular BOE Meeting, 6:30 PM

Meetings are held in the Board of Education Conference Room at Center School, 49 Lyme Street, Old Lyme. Agendas, links to live-streams of meetings, and links to recordings of previous meetings are available at www.region18.org under the “District Information” tab.