

CHERRY AVENUE BUZZ



September 2026 Edition

Dear Cherry Avenue Families:

Welcome to the 2026-2027 school year! Thank you for helping to prepare your child(ren) for a seamless transition.

This year, I am pleased to welcome new staff members: Jessica Finkelstein (Speech & Language), Chesly Lievano (LACES), Julia Kaczmarek (1:1 Nurse), Danielle Riolo (Permanent Substitute Teacher), Catherine Johnson (Monitor), and Tracy Stuhler (Teacher Aide). Transferring over to CA, we welcome Janice Pierce (Office Assistant), Maria Latwaitis (Teacher Aide), Lauren Raycroft (Food and Nutrition), and Karen Savage (Orchestra Teacher).

Thank you, CA PTA, for planning and overseeing the UPK and Kindergarten Playdates, as well as school supply distribution. Please consider supporting and joining this invaluable association.

MTSS/Response to Intervention (RtI) is a K-5 school-based process by which students are regularly screened and monitored to assess if they are responding to classroom instruction and progressing as expected. The aim is to match instruction to students' individual learning needs. As a result, we use iReady to conduct universal screenings which are given to all students three times a year (two times for kindergarten—winter and spring). Along with i-Ready, we use additional indicators to identify and tier students as indicated below.

Tier I: Students are progressing as expected with the instruction provided within the classroom.

Tier II: Students require some additional support and targeted instruction for success. This can take the form of small-group instruction, additional instructional time, or a variety of other interventions both within and outside of the classroom.

Tier III: Students who are still not progressing after receiving Tier II services or who have qualified by their scores will be given even more intense and frequent intervention services, often using specialized programs and/or materials.

Fall screening will take place from September 22 through October 9 and we will send home tiering information at a later date.

At Cherry Avenue, the practice of safety drills is of utmost importance. The students learn about evacuation drills, fire drills, lockdowns, lockouts, and the importance of listening, so they will know what to do in the event of an emergency. Security will continue to be present in the building during the school day. To uphold the safety of students and staff, it is very important that all visitors report directly to the security desk upon entering the building and be prepared to show photo ID.

If your child(ren) will not be in school, please call Cherry's attendance line at (631) 244-6702 to report the absence. Please note that this line is available 24 hours a day/7 days a week.

For students in grades K-5, please do not drop off students prior to 8:20 a.m., unless they are attending the breakfast program, which begins at 8:00 a.m. This timeframe will minimize hallway crowding while waiting for class to begin at 8:30 a.m. for the grade levels mentioned above. Drop-off for UPK students is from 8:55 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

In an effort to ensure a smooth dismissal process, please contact the office as early as possible in the day to inform us about any changes to your child(ren)'s dismissal plan. Please do not use Parent Square. If you send an email regarding a change in dismissal plan the day of, please copy the main office in addition to the classroom teacher in case the teacher is absent (ecalderone@sayvilleschools.org and janicepierce@sayvilleschools.org). Although unexpected situations may arise, when we are informed about a change during student transitions (e.g., after the dismissal process begins), it makes it difficult to communicate a change in plans. To ensure the safety of walkers at dismissal, we are requesting that students engage in safe behavior, especially while in close proximity to the staff parking lot, by adhering to the following:

- No running.
- Stay away from the curb.
- Do not hang on trees.

Please do not bring your pet when dropping off/picking up your child(ren). If you would like to walk your dog, please arrange to meet your children off school grounds. This rule is for the safety of all of our students. Thank you, in advance, for your assistance with this matter.

Just a reminder that smart watches/gaming devices (e.g., gizmo and vtech watches) and phones, along with any other non-district owned technology devices are not permitted in school. Thank you for your support and understanding.

At Cherry Avenue, we believe in and value a student-centered and engaging community where resilience is fostered and all feel welcomed, respected and valued. Small-group instruction and STRIDES are used as a vehicle for collaboration (e.g., care about others, appreciate and welcome diversity, encourage teamwork, etc.) and independent learning (growth mindset, the power of “yet”, be resilient in challenges, etc.). In today’s world, it is vital for our students to be equipped with tools to face and overcome inevitable disappointments, setbacks, and challenges. As educators, our job is to teach our students those tools and that is what we aim to do, supporting them while they navigate life in school and beyond. We also strive to instill some back to basics into our school community and hope you will partner with us to incorporate some oldies but goodies in your family life. Too often we are consumed with technology, stress, and everyday life that we lose sight of simply living and what matters most—human interactions and being present in the moment.

I am asking for your cooperation regarding students returning after school to retrieve forgotten items. I have encouraged teachers to remind students to double check that they have packed everything they need to bring home. It would also be helpful if you would remind your child(ren) of the necessity for students to take responsibility for packing up at the end of each school day. In the event that it does become necessary for your child(ren) to return for an item, please be aware that after three o’clock we have very limited staff to provide an escort to the classroom, and that the office closes at four o’clock; therefore, trips back to the building will not be possible after 4:00 p.m., and at times, 3:30 p.m. may be the latest option.

If you are not signed up for Infinite Campus (parent/student portal) access or have questions about an existing portal account, please send an email (using the email address we have on file) to sayvilleportalinfo@sayvilleschools.org and questions will be answered within 48 hours. Please be sure to check your spam/junk folders if you have email addresses from Yahoo, Hotmail, and Gmail. First trimester report cards are distributed hard copy during parent/teacher conferences. Second trimester report cards will be available via the Parent Portal in March. We will use this same format for the third trimester report card in June, so it important that you have access to the Portal.

Future publications of the Cherry Avenue Buzz will be distributed via email (not hard copy), as well as the majority of flyers and information. Please make sure you are signed up for Parent Square. This newsletter will also be made available monthly on the building website (Go to www.sayvilleschools.org, select “Cherry Avenue” across the top of the page, click on “Our School” then choose “Our Principal”, which will bring you to the option for choosing “Principal’s Newsletter”).

Parent Information Night (PIN) will take place on Wednesday, September 9. This informative evening is for parents only. 3-5 classroom presentations will take place from 6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. (5th grade will meet in the cafeteria); K-2 is scheduled from 6:45 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. A welcome blurb from special area teachers was included in the summer mailing. While not all special area teachers and support staff may be available from 6:30 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. (the names of those teachers in attendance will be displayed in the lobby, along with locations), they are always available to meet throughout the year by appointment.

As we embark with the adoption of *Magnetic Literacy*, Sayville’s literacy program is also comprised of creative writing units, small-group instruction, independent reading, running records, and a phonics/word study multi-sensory approach.

Regarding technology usage, our approach is balanced and intentional. Recreational use of Chromebooks is not permitted in school. We are focusing on traditional, non-digital methods, such as books in hand, writing, and note taking. Simply put, we will not use technology as a replacement to pen and pencil; we will use devices when augmentation/modification is necessary and purposeful.

Important September Dates

Thursday, September 3: UPK Open House @ 1:00 p.m.

Friday, September 4: UPK ½ day from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Monday, September 7: Labor Day - no school

Tuesday, September 8: First full day of school for UPK; STRETCH (enrichment) PIN @ 6:00 p.m. for grade 4 and @ 7:00 p.m. for grade 5

Wednesday, September 9: PIN @ 6:00 p.m. for grades 3-5 and @ 6:45 p.m. for K-2

Thursday, September 10: BoE meeting @ 7:30 p.m. - SHS

Friday, September 11: Patriots' Day: wear red, white, and blue

Tuesday, September 15: 4th grade STRETCH begins; September 16 for grade 5

Friday, September 18: Family Connect Night (no homework or next-day tests)

Monday, September 21: Yom Kippur - no school

Tuesday, September 22 - Friday, October 9: -i-Ready Fall screener for grades 1-5

Tuesday, September 22 and Wednesday, September 23: PTA Student Photo Day

Friday, September 25: Pep Rally (to build excitement for tomorrow's homecoming game (9/26)

Monday, September 28: PTA meeting @ 7:00 p.m.

CA Staff Shout-Out

Welcome, Ms Pierce, who started in Sayville School District in 2014, subbing as a lunch/recess monitor. She became a permanent teacher aide around 9 years ago at Lincoln Avenue and has been there up until happily accepting the position as Office Assistant at Cherry Avenue (could you blame her?!). Ms Pierce and her husband have three grown children: their oldest son currently in a federal law enforcement academy, middle son a senior in college, and a college sophomore daughter. Ms. Pierce enjoys casino trips, dinners out with friends, and a good movie. Here's to a great year with Ms. Pierce in the main office!



We look forward to a positive, healthy, fun, and enriching school year! Please feel free to reach out if we can assist you in any way.

Warm regards,

Lisa Ihne, Ed.D.
Principal

