



SUPERINTENDENT NEWSLETTER

September 2026

Welcome

Welcome to the *Superintendent Newsletter*, a new monthly feature that I will be sharing with all families in our district. The focus will be to highlight major initiatives, events to share from each school across the district, and to preview upcoming School Committee meetings.

Norwell is proud and supportive of its school system, which reflects the intellectual strength and character of our community. Each of our four schools offers students opportunities to succeed in a safe and supportive environment, while fostering academic growth and a love of learning.

There are many opportunities for students to become involved beyond the classroom. There are also many opportunities for families to be involved in as well. There is a community tab on the website at <https://www.norwellschools.org/link-3> that shares information on our parent organizations: SEPAC, School Councils, PTO's, Norwell Arts, NHS Boosters, and the Norwell Education Foundation. Please consider joining or volunteering for one or some of our parent organizations.

Information regarding the Norwell School Committee can be found on the website at <https://www.norwellschools.org/school-committee>. The School Committee's schedule, meeting information, policy manual, and budget reports are all available. We hope you will become familiar with the meetings and topics that are discussed throughout the year in order to be informed about what is happening within the schools.

We are looking forward to a new year as we welcome the class of 2039 and the graduating class of 2027.

Sincerely,
Matthew A. Keegan
Superintendent,
Norwell Public Schools

Strategic Plan



The 2025-2030 Norwell Public Schools Strategic Plan, available on our [website](#), is a five year plan that anchors the ongoing improvements in the district. The Strategic Plan was developed by a 24 member team made up of community members, School Committee members, administrators, teachers, parents, and students. It includes our Mission Statement, Core Values, Theory of Action, Focus Areas and Strategic Objectives. Our mission

statement:

Norwell Public Schools, in partnership with the community, is dedicated to providing all students an exceptional education in an inclusive and supportive environment, igniting curiosity, fostering integrity, and empowering students to navigate and contribute to a dynamic, global society.

Key to working through this strategic plan is communicating with families and the greater Norwell community on our progress.

Strategic Plan Update

Over the summer, the Leadership Team reflected on progress made in the first year, and we captured the highlights of this work in the [NPS Strategic Plan Year 1 Status Report](#), linked on our Strategic Plan page of the district website. Some of the accomplishments of our first year include articulating our Norwell Tiered Systems of Support (NTSS), which will be explained at our September School Committee meeting, posted on our website, and will be shared in detail in the October *Superintendent Newsletter*.

Strategic Plan Status Report 2025-2026 (Year 1)

Focus Area #1: Teaching and Learning				
Initiative	Strategic Objective	Year	Priority	Impact
Curriculum: Examine Structures of Coherence, Horizontal, and Vertical Alignment	• Continue to refine as curriculum cycles evolve in conjunction with academic subjects	Year 1	Director of Teaching and Learning and Technology (TLL), Curriculum Coordinators, and Principals	• Elementary Curriculum Committees established and met • Instructional Leadership Team Meetings focused on vertical alignment and horizontal coherence • Leadership team walkthroughs leveraged common look fors aligned with UDL and best practices • All schools conducted learning walks • Peer observations completed at both elementary schools • K-12 Literacy: - Focus on writing coherence K-5 during Elementary Early Release Days - E&A department adjusted grammar expectations grades 6 - 8 to better align to state standards - Examined writing approach 6-12 and prioritized areas for increased vertical alignment and coherence

Norwell Public Schools Strategic Plan 2025-2030 Status Report

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During the past year, we also took a deeper look at how technology is being leveraged within the district and how this aligns with findings from the broader fields of research in education and child development. Each school participated in a screen time audit, and we have started to outline ways that we can continue to adjust how and when we use technology for learning. Another major achievement has been to launch the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) feasibility study to determine next steps for our high school building. The MSBA Board has just approved our Owner's Project Manager (OPM), LeftField. LeftField will help guide the next phase of the high school building project. Additional information will be shared throughout the year.

As we look ahead to year two, a key component of our work will be creating a Norwell Public Schools Vision of a Learner. All families have received a letter from me about the creation of the Vision of a Learner Advisory Committee and we urge you to reach out to your building principal if you are interested in volunteering. There will be opportunities to provide feedback throughout the year.



What's Happening in Our Buildings

Norwell High School

Students jumped right into the new school year eager to share their opinions and thoughts on their summer reading selections. During our summer reading book groups, our Peer Lit Leaders prompted discussion using "book club" style questions, helping to facilitate a lively and interactive analysis of the books read. Principal Marc Bender enjoyed observing students leading rich dialogue and high levels of group participation as he attended Peer Lit Book Discussions.

Speaking of clubs, the NHS Club Fair provided time for all students to interact with the vast variety of clubs and co-curriculars to help students participate in the high school community and connect with others who share similar or new interests.

Assistant Principals Jen Greenberg and Matt Marani are excitedly preparing for our annual Norwell Cares Day which includes:

- Ninth Grade: Team building, entitled "Freshmen Kickoff"
- Tenth Grade: Community service in small groups around town
- Eleventh Grade: "Junior to Junior" allows our students to help support the learning activities at the Cole and Vinal Elementary Schools
- Twelfth Grade: "Senior to Senior" connects our students with Norwell Council on Aging and Norwell senior citizens for a day of multigenerational connection, lunch, and fun

Cole Elementary

Cole is off to a great start! Principal Eliza Burns and our new Assistant Principal Katy Busk were able to conduct kindergarten home visits ahead of the first day of school. *Pick Up Patrol* is helping ensure an efficient dismissal process. We are looking forward to seeing our high school friends during *Norwell Cares Day*.

Norwell Middle School

The Middle School is focused on decreasing student distractions in the classroom and we are piloting a phone program in grade 8. Students leave their phones in a caddy when they arrive at homeroom and then return to their homeroom at the end of the day to retrieve their phone before getting on the bus or picked up. Students have embraced this new procedure and are highly cooperative. This, combined with grades 6 & 7 keeping phones in their lockers has already had a positive impact on our overall school climate.

Our after school activities sign up sheet will be sent out within the coming weeks. We strongly promote student involvement in our after school activities.

Principal Jim Dupille and Assistant Principal Ellen Murrar are excited about the upcoming annual "Team Day." Students have a blast participating in a wide variety of fun and competitive activities. It is a fantastic way to kick off the new school year—full of laughter, teamwork, and school spirit! We also host the Sixth Grade Fun Day, where our sixth grade students will take to the field for an action-packed afternoon of activities (diving into obstacle courses, throwing footballs, hitting volleyballs, dancing at the DJ booth and more).

Vinal Elementary

Vinal has had a terrific beginning to the year. In addition to Principal Nate Thorsteinson and Assistant Principal Katie Egan conducting kindergarten home visits, our Vinal Student Government created a *Student Buddy* program. This matches a student government representative with a new student, to help tour them around the building, show them the ropes,

and make sure that everyone feels a strong sense of belonging.



Norwell School Committee Corner

Please consider attending a Norwell School Committee Meeting. Here is a brief list of highlights that will be covered at the meeting on **Monday, September 21 at 7:00 PM at the Norwell Public Library.**

- Introduction of the School Committee Student Representative
 - Protect Act Policy approval
 - Opening of Schools update
 - Strategic Plan Year 1 update
 - Norwell Tiered Systems of Support (NTSS)
 - Vision of a Learner process
 - Proposed FY28 Budget Development Timeline
 - FY26 End of Year Budget Report
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Norwell Public Schools

www.norwellschools.org