District Highlights & Progress: A Monthly Update from the Superintendent

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SEPTEMBER 23, 2026

(DATA PRESENTED IS AS OF SEPTEMBER 18, 2026)

Student Enrollment

(September 18, 2026)

School	Number of Students
Spruce Street School	279
Oak Street School	683
Clifton Avenue Grade School	734
Lakewood Middle School	711
Lakewood High School	1,026
Total	**3,433**
Mixed Delivery Preschool	100
Adult High School	6
Out-of-District (OOD)	462
Total	**4,001**

Student Transfers

- Number of students who transferred out:
  - July – 83
  - August – 93
  - September -39
  - **Total - 207**
- Number of NEW students who enrolled in the District:
  - July – 88
  - August – 95
  - September – 74
  - **Total - 257**

During this period, 257 students enrolled in the District and 207 transferred out—a net increase of 50 students.

Continuous Enrollment Since Kindergarten

- 65.0% of current students have remained continuously enrolled in Lakewood School District since kindergarten.

Current grade span	Students continuously enrolled since kindergarten
Grades K-2	90.1%
Grades 3-5	64.7%
Grades 6-8	56.8%
Grades 9-12	55.3%

This chart represents only current students. Source: IT

Student mobility can interrupt instruction and increase the risk of learning gaps.

Factors That Shape Student Learning

41.5%

Of students in grades 3–12 have not been continuously enrolled in Lakewood Public Schools since kindergarten

40.0%

Of district students are **multilingual learners**

90.0%

Of district students **receive free breakfast and lunch**

Why it matters: Changes in district enrollment can disrupt the continuity of instruction and increase the likelihood of learning gaps. Students may also be developing English proficiency or facing economic challenges while learning new content.

Lakewood educators use targeted instruction, language development, and social and emotional support to meet students' needs.

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Multilingual learners across the District

- Approximately 40% of District students are multilingual learners.

- Newly enrolled students bring a wide range of language and educational experiences.
- Students' prior schooling ranges from continuous formal education to little or no formal schooling.

Countries of origin include

Ecuador, Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Columbia, Ukraine, Haiti and Venezuela

These factors do not determine student ability. They identify where sustained support and resources are needed.

- Strong early literacy and mathematics instruction
- Consistent multilingual learner services
- Diagnostic assessments and targeted intervention
- Improved attendance and student stability
- Extended learning and family partnerships

The goal is clear: accelerate learning while maintaining high expectations for every student.

Ready to Teach. Ready to Learn

Districtwide readiness

- All Lakewood Public Schools successfully opened on September 8, 2026. Instructional and operational systems are up and running across the District.

CURRICULUM UPDATED

- Curriculum was reviewed and revised over the summer as part of the District's annual improvement process.
- **Aligned to NJSLS**: Curriculum, instruction, and learning expectations align with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.
- **Strong Start**: Schools began the year with instructional resources, schedules, and support systems in place

Ready to Teach. Ready to Learn

Across the District, educators use research-based practices to meet students' varied needs and strengthen learning.

- Classroom instruction emphasizes practices supported by educational research.

Explicit Instruction

- Clear learning goals, modeling, guided practice, and checks for understanding.

Differentiation

- Responsive supports based on student readiness, language development, and learning needs

Formative Assessments

- Frequent evidence of learning used to adjust instruction and provide timely feedback

Collaborative Learning

- Purposeful discussion and structured student interaction that strengthen understanding

Monitoring Student Growth

Beginning-of-year assessments give our educators a clear picture of each student's strengths and learning needs. Teachers use these results to plan instruction, provide targeted support, and measure growth throughout the school year.

- **K-2 Assessments**
  - Dibels – K-2 were completed
  - Phonic Survey of red & yellow students completed. (Scored below or very below on Dibels)
  - Reading Mastery Placement Tests were completed
  - Istation BOY Math Assessment
- **Grades 3-5 Assessments**
  - ELA Assessments – 9/24 & 9/25
  - Istation BOY Math Assessments
- **Grades 6-8 Assessments**
  - ELA Assessments – Completed
  - i-Ready (ELA) – In Progress
  - Istation BOY Math Assessment – In Progress
- **Grades 9-12 Assessments**
  - ELA Assessments Completed
  - BOY Math Assessments

Paraprofessional Staffing Update

The District continues to face a significant paraprofessional shortage.

DAILY OPERATIONAL CHALLENGE

- The paraprofessional shortage affects student supervision, classroom safety, instructional continuity, and the consistent implementation of IEP-required supports. Teachers, substitutes, and administrators must frequently be reassigned or give up lunch and preparation periods to provide coverage. These challenges are most significant in specialized classrooms, where many students require consistent routines and individualized academic, behavioral, mobility, communication, or personal-care assistance.

On Tonight's Agenda:

Expanding Paraprofessional Staffing

- Tonight's Board agenda includes two items to expand the District's access to qualified paraprofessionals:
  - **50 Stars Staffing** — additional recruitment and staffing support.
  - **Monmouth Ocean Educational Services Commission (MOESC)** — recruitment and staffing support.

- These additional sources will help the District fill vacancies and provide more consistent support for students and classrooms.

On Tonight's Agenda:

Board Approval Requested: 20 Full-Time Paraprofessionals

The Board is being asked to approve the recall and hiring of up to **20 full-time paraprofessionals** to provide consistent support in special education classrooms.

- Part-time recruitment and vendor staffing have not consistently filled vacancies.
- Reliable coverage is needed for student safety, IEP implementation, and mandated services.
- Eligible paraprofessionals will be recalled according to the seniority list negotiated with the LEA.
- Funding is available in the approved budget. Estimated annual salaries total up to **$700,000**, with additional funding available for benefits.

Transportation Update

- Courtesy busing was eliminated, affecting 302 public school students.
- 1,173 public school students receive Hazardous busing.
- During September 14–18, the District revised 72 regular and special education routes to address extensive transportation changes.
- One route was eliminated, saving $24,300. No new routes were added.
- Call volume and daily operations are becoming more manageable.
- The Transportation Department is working with Traversa and bus contractors to improve the exchange of GPS data.

NEW: STUDENT INTERNET-ENABLED DEVICE POLICY

Bell-to-Bell: Off & Away

- The districtwide implementation of the **Bell-to-Bell: Off & Away** initiative has been largely successful throughout the month of September.

School Security Update

Required September Drills

- Every Lakewood Public School completed its monthly fire drill and active shooter lockdown drill.

NJDOE Security Self-Assessment

- Security completed the annual NJDOE Security Self-Assessment for the 2026–2027 school year.

Districtwide Tabletop Exercise

- All schools completed the districtwide tabletop exercise on September 1, 2026.

Piner Press: First Edition of 2026-2027

If you have not had a chance, please take a moment to review the first edition of **Piner Press** for the 2026–2027 school year. It is available on the District website.

- WWW.Lakewoodpiners.org
- Under Announcements!


A GREAT
BIG
THANK
YOU