

Board Update - September 2026

Every month, the different departments of Norwalk Public Schools will provide an update to the Board of Education of the work they've been doing to ensure an excellent and equitable education for all our scholars. We're also sharing that update with our entire community!

Communications

Brief Overview:

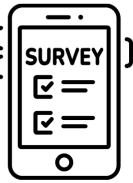
Communications assisted HYA in advertising the Sept. 22 Community Session and Survey for the Superintendent Search. The department also began planning for October events including the Middle School Showcase and Hispanic Heritage Festival. Communications worked with Curriculum to launch two campaigns — Kindergarten Registration changes for SY 2027-28 and updates to [Elementary Progress Reports](#).

Key Highlights:

- * Started production on We Are Norwalk video series
- * Assisted City of Norwalk with HVAC press conference on Sept. 10

Upcoming Work or Next Steps:

We will continue to prepare for the Hispanic Heritage Festival on Oct. 22. We will market the first Community Forum focusing on AI and screentime in schools, scheduled for Nov. 10.

NORWALK BOARD OF EDUCATION INVITES YOU TO A COMMUNITY SESSION FOCUSED ON THE SEARCH FOR THE NEXT SUPERINTENDENT OF NORWALK PUBLIC SCHOOLS Join us for an introductory information session with Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA), the nationally recognized search firm selected to guide this important process. Learn how the superintendent search will proceed and the opportunities ahead for you to make your voices heard. TUESDAY SEPT. 22, 2026 7 PM Norwalk Concert Hall 125 East Ave.  For more information: board@norwalkps.org bit.ly/NPSboeWebsite	NORWALK PUBLIC SCHOOLS SURVEY FOR SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH The Norwalk Board of Education is interested in your input as we seek to hire a new superintendent. This survey is designed to gather your perceptions of Norwalk Public Schools and the importance of various characteristics found in effective superintendents. The information will be used to determine the desired characteristics of the next Superintendent. TAKE THE SURVEY!   Scan the QR Code or visit https://bit.ly/4r5BT43  For more information: board@norwalkps.org bit.ly/NPSboeWebsite
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Excellence, Equity & Inclusion

Key Highlights:

Our My Brother's Keeper and My Sister's Keeper mentors attended our annual kickoff and professional development meeting on September 15. The day included several sessions focused on the role of mentorship in increasing student academic achievement and supporting overall wellness. This marks the 5th year of MBK and MSK in Norwalk Public Schools!

Upcoming Work or Next Steps:

Students in My Brother's Keeper and My Sister's Keeper will attend their kick-off retreat with their mentors on October 30 and November 2 at Club Getaway. This annual field trip features outdoor educational programs that promote unity, foster community enrichment, and help students to work as a group to overcome challenges.



MSK and MBK mentors listening to MBK program coordinator Qadir Abdus-Salaam

Leadership Development

Key Highlights:

We held our first Principal and Assistant Principal meetings on September 29 and 30. The agendas were comprehensive, including a deep dive into our Math Visioning initiative and planning for our continued work with the Portrait of a Graduate, with a focus on strengthening student agency.



NPS staff at Principal and Assistant Principal meetings

Upcoming Work or Next Steps:

All school leaders will participate in a Professional Learning Community starting in December. Leadership PLCs are year-long learning communities organized around a shared instructional challenge and a specific Problem of Practice. Leaders will collaborate with colleagues across the district to deepen their practice, visit classrooms to gather evidence of student learning, test improvement ideas in their schools, and refine their approach over time.

Business & Operations

Facilities

Key Highlights:

Norwalk Public Schools, in collaboration with the City of Norwalk, hosted a press conference announcing the completion of all six HVAC projects. Mayor Smyth, Interim Superintendent Sandra Faioes, State Representative Dominique Johnson, and Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff thanked the principals of Brien McMahon, Brookside, Marvin, Rowayton, Silvermine, and Naramake, along with their staff, for their patience and support throughout the project. Board members Ashley Gulyas and Mary Ellen Flaherty-Ludwig were also in attendance. This \$31 million project is a powerful example of what we can accomplish for students when we work together as a community.

Upcoming Work or Next Steps:

The work to provide air conditioning at Wolfpit began this summer (2026) and we anticipate completion by summer 2027. Once completed, all NPS schools will have appropriate air conditioning.

SCHOOL HVAC UPGRADES?

 **CHECK ✓**

CLEAN AIR. COMFORTABLE CLASSROOMS. IDEAL ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING.

ROWAYTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TOTAL PROJECT COST \$10.7 MILLION IN-STATE AIR CONDITIONING CLEAN AIR GRANT \$6.3 MILLION SPECIAL CITY CAPITAL APPROPRIATION \$4.4 MILLION	
	BRIEN MCMAHON HIGH SCHOOL TOTAL PROJECT COST \$8.3 MILLION IN-STATE AIR CONDITIONING CLEAN AIR GRANT \$4.9 MILLION SPECIAL CITY CAPITAL APPROPRIATION \$3.3 MILLION
NARAMAKE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TOTAL PROJECT COST \$6.5 MILLION IN-STATE AIR CONDITIONING CLEAN AIR GRANT \$3.8 MILLION SPECIAL CITY CAPITAL APPROPRIATION \$2.6 MILLION	
	MARVIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TOTAL PROJECT COST \$4.1 MILLION IN-STATE AIR CONDITIONING CLEAN AIR GRANT \$2.4 MILLION SPECIAL CITY CAPITAL APPROPRIATION \$1.7 MILLION
BROOKSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TOTAL PROJECT COST \$3.3 MILLION IN-STATE AIR CONDITIONING CLEAN AIR GRANT \$2.0 MILLION SPECIAL CITY CAPITAL APPROPRIATION \$1.3 MILLION	
	SILVERMINE DUAL LANGUAGE MAGNET SCHOOL TOTAL PROJECT COST \$3.0 MILLION IN-STATE AIR CONDITIONING CLEAN AIR GRANT \$1.8 MILLION SPECIAL CITY CAPITAL APPROPRIATION \$1.2 MILLION

School Nutrition/Food Services

Key Highlights:

Norwalk Public Schools is proud to announce that five schools received the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Grant: Dr. Ruby Shaw Elementary School, Kendall College and Career Academy, Jefferson Marine Science Elementary School, Tracey Magnet School, and Ponus Ridge STEAM Academy.

The program provides free fresh fruits and vegetables during the school day to promote healthy snack choices. Students kicked off the program with cucumbers and peaches; next week will feature watermelon and bell peppers. Educational videos from Chartwells Resident Nutritionist Kelly Gruber, RDN, are shared with schools to support the program.

- [Learning & Tasting: Cucumbers](#)
- [Learning & Tasting: Peaches](#)
- [Learning & Tasting: Bell Peppers](#)
- [Learning & Tasting: Watermelon](#)

Curriculum, Instruction & Specialized Learning

Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM)

Brief Overview:

This month, the STEM team welcomed educators back to school with professional learning. Sessions focused on a plethora of topics, with a clear foundation of Portrait of a Graduate competencies. Self-directed learner was embedded into all district created professional learning decks, ensuring educators had the same learning opportunities that we want to create for students. Additionally, hands-on marine science learning is actively taking shape across our schools, echoing our commitment to engaging, inquiry-based science education.

Key Highlights:

- High schools are engaging in piloting one of two math curricula resources, Reveal.
- Students have already begun their hands-on marine science field experiences.
- Classrooms are acquiring new marine organisms to expand interactive life science study.
- NPS has partnered with CT DEEP to provide students with hands-on learning focused on fishing.

Upcoming Work or Next Steps:

We are continuing to visit schools to provide both educators and leaders with curriculum support, as well as support around their specific professional learning arcs related to their School Improvement Plans. Next month we will be continuing professional learning for staff members with similar alignment as August. Looking ahead, marine science efforts will focus on expanding student field experiences and advancing collaborative curriculum development with our partner organizations.



Brien McMahon students at Calf Pasture Beach

Humanities (ELA, Social Studies, World Language)

Brief Overview:

September was dedicated to establishing a strong instructional baseline across the Humanities department. Department efforts focused on re-aligning staff with core curriculum goals, administering baseline assessments, and leveraging preliminary data to design targeted, high-impact instruction for the term.

Key Highlights:

- All baseline assessments are underway
- Professional learning was a success with many schools participating and inviting CO to lead sessions

Upcoming Work or Next Steps:

We will look at NWEA data as it comes in and use that within our teacher team and coaching meetings to plan for instruction. Planning for professional learning for October is being finalized and learning walks will take place next month as a way to see how curriculum implementation is progressing and to adjust upcoming units as needed.

Multilingual Learning

In September, the Multilingual and K-5 Curriculum Departments scheduled LAS Links Data and School Support Planning meetings with building administrators. Based on student data, seven school administrators opted to receive support during the first cycle.

During each meeting, the departments conducted a deep data dive of school and district LAS Links data, including Percent of Target Achieved for oral language and literacy progress, proficiency rates, grade-level data, student LAS Links levels, and student performance across the four language domains: Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing. Individual school slides were also created with data and resources for administrators to share with their staff.

The departments outlined a range of support options, including curriculum and instruction, MLL program and service requirements, targeted student support, MLL coach support for MLL and Dual Language teachers, programming and small-group interventions, planning professional learning opportunities with ILT and coaches, and support for coaches leading grade-level meetings.

Key Highlights:

- Schools identified targeted support needs in areas such as instruction, programming, small-group interventions, coaching, and professional learning.
- 13 Schools Literacy Growth PTA above state average
- 12 Schools Oral Growth PTA above the state average
- 211 Students Met Proficiency (8.9 %)

Upcoming Work or Next Steps:

As next steps, administrators reviewed the data and discussed findings with their Instructional Leadership Teams. Schools then followed up with the Multilingual Department to identify their selected areas of support and determine how the department can best assist their staff, students, and families. The department is now scheduled to visit schools to provide the identified support based on each school's needs.

Specialized Learning and Student Services

Brief Overview:

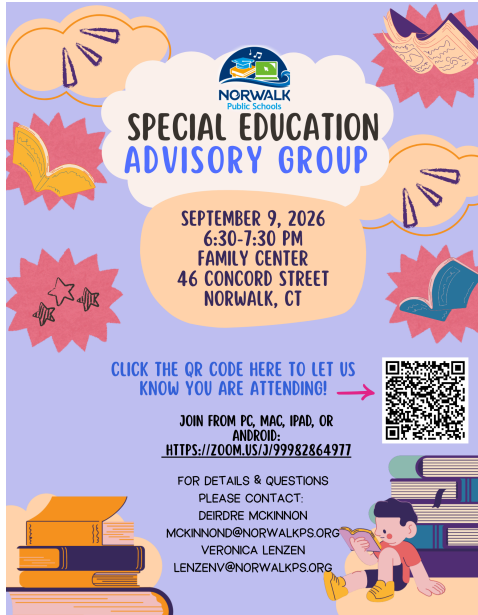
The Specialized Learning Department hosted the September Parent Advisory Group Meeting on September 9th at 46 Concord in the Library. This was the first meeting for the 2026-2027 school year. The meeting was held in person and on zoom, and welcomed approximately 30 parents. To create consistency in meeting and making connections, the group plans to meet each month, with alternating months providing the opportunity for parents to participate in informational sessions opposite a social gathering planned and executed by the parents.

Highlights:

- Jessica Ireland (NPS Transition Coordinator) presented an in-depth review of Transition Services, including our participation in Bridge CT, as well as how Transition Services are implemented for all students with IEPs.
- Welcome Dr. Nekita Carroll-Hall to our NPS Special Education Department
- Nekita Carroll-Hall was present and had the opportunity to introduce herself to parents as our newest Special Education Administrator.

Upcoming plans:

Jessica will be returning in November and March to facilitate presentations on HUSKY-C and DDS.



Dr. Nekita Carroll-Hall

School Improvement

Brief Overview:

This month, the School Improvement team focused on launching key structures to support continuous improvement across schools. This included preparing for school-based PLCs using an instructional rounds model, through which teams will observe classrooms, collect low-inference evidence, and use patterns in practice to strengthen teaching and learning over time. The team also worked closely with each school to finalize School Improvement Plans, ensuring that goals, strategies, and progress monitoring structures are aligned to district priorities and school-specific needs.

Key Highlights:

- Reviewed and provided feedback on School Improvement Plans to strengthen coherence across goals, strategies, action steps, and progress monitoring.
- Collaborated with school leaders to clarify next steps for implementation and identify areas where additional support may be needed.

Upcoming Work or Next Steps:

Next month, the team will support the administration of universal Grade 3 Naglieri testing for Gifted & Talented identification. As BOY testing is completed, the team will provide schools with updated data to support continued implementation and refinement of their School Improvement Plans.

School Counseling

Brief Overview:

We had a strong start to the school year, with K-12 school counselors participating in professional development. In August, counselors received training on best practices for the 504 legal process to support their role as 504 case managers. The team also heard from NPS legacy leader Principal James Crouch, who shared an inspiring message, “What It Means to Be Fearless,” to motivate the team for the new school year.

Key Highlights:

- K - 12 counselors began the year with professional development.
- Counselors were trained on 504 legal process best practices.
- Principal James Crouch inspired the team with “What It Means to Be Fearless.”



James Crouch presenting

Upcoming Work or Next Steps:

On October 13, the K-12 School Counseling Team and College & Career Specialists will participate in a half-day District Professional Development session focused on AI in school counseling, communication styles, postsecondary planning with CT State Norwalk, and Moment in Time Studies.

Testing and Accountability

Brief Overview:

The Testing Office has reviewed the 2026 State release of Smarter Balanced, Next Generation Science and CT-SAT proficiency results and accountability indicators for performance and growth. Summary reports were provided to the Curriculum Office. An overview was presented to the Board of Education on September 15, 2026.

Key Highlights:

- In both 2025 and 2026 Norwalk's growth in English Language Arts and Mathematics has exceeded the growth of the State.
- English Language Arts and Mathematics proficiency trends are close to pre-pandemic levels and Science proficiency is above 2018-19 for two consecutive years.
- Compared to other large cities in Connecticut, Norwalk ranks number one in graduation rate, proficiency, performance and growth.

Upcoming Work or Next Steps:

Next Generation Accountability indicators are being reviewed. Final 2026 reports will be released by the State in November. Fall district testing is underway for PSAT- grades 8-11, NWEA - grades 1-8 and DIBELS8 - grades K-3. Results will be reviewed and reported.



2026 State Data Release

Digital Learning & Technology

Brief Overview:

The Digital Learning and Innovation Department continues to support innovative, student-centered learning experiences that connect digital learning, STEM, environmental literacy, and inquiry-based instruction. This month, we recognize the work of Jefferson Marine Science Elementary School Library Media Specialist and Gifted & Talented Teacher Maria Paris, whose leadership, collaboration, and advocacy have helped secure significant learning opportunities for students and staff which will directly benefit the students they teach.

Key Highlights:

Jefferson Marine Science Elementary School received grant support through the Fund for Teachers and the Mary L. Fitch Trust, enabling four Jefferson teachers to participate in a California Coastal Marine Ecology professional learning experience where they studied marine ecosystems and conservation practices, strengthening Jefferson's role as the foundation of Norwalk's K-12 marine science pathway.

In addition, Jefferson was awarded a \$3,500 Garden Grant, selected from more than 800 applicants across the U.S. and Canada, to support hands-on garden-based learning connected to STEM, sustainability, composting, environmental stewardship, and student-led inquiry.

Further, Grant applicant Maria Paris was recently selected as an honoree for the Connecticut Science Center's Petit Family Foundation Women in Science Leadership Award, recognizing her innovative STEM leadership, mentorship, and contributions to advancing science learning in the region.

Upcoming Work or Next Steps:

This work aligns with the ISTE Standards for Educators through advocacy for equitable access to high-quality STEM experiences, collaboration among educators, scientists, and community partners, and empowered learning through professional growth that strengthens instruction across grade levels. The Digital Learning Department work will continue to focus on professional growth as we prepare for the November EdCamp where we will create opportunities to share best practices in STEM and instructional technology.



Maria Paris, Library Media Specialist at Jefferson

Human Resources

Human Resources

Substitute Services: On August 19, 2026, the District transitioned from ESS to Kelly Services for the management of substitute hiring for the 2026-2027 school year. Representatives from Kelly have conducted training sessions for school administrators and secretaries, onboarded substitutes transitioning from ESS to Kelly, and visited schools to meet with principals regarding the transition. The HR team has been heavily involved throughout this process, working closely with Kelly and school-based administrators to support a smooth and effective transition.

New Employee Orientation: The in-person orientation session for new employees has transitioned to a virtual format. The HR team collaborated with the various departments involved in the new hire orientation process to implement this initiative. This transition represents a meaningful step toward modernizing our processes, improving efficiency, and aligning our practices with the District's evolving operational needs.

Onboarding Stats: Over the summer, the team worked diligently to hire and fill vacancies throughout the district. From August to present, 120 new employees were onboarded.

Key Highlights:

- Riquel Pratt confirmed to be new Assistant Principal at Roton Middle School
- Active recruiting for the following three positions
 - Principal at Ponus Ridge STEAM Academy
 - Assistant Principal at Dr. Ruby Shaw Elementary School
 - Assistant Principal at Silvermine Dual Language Magnet School



Riquel Pratt, AP Roton