



LAKER NEWS

2026-2027 School Year, August Edition

A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Mount Arlington Public School Community,

As we approach the start of an exciting school year, I am pleased to share that our team has had a highly productive summer preparing for the return of our students. There has been a tremendous amount of work taking place behind the scenes to strengthen our programs, enhance our facilities, welcome new staff, and ensure that we are ready to begin the 2026–2027 school year with energy and purpose.



We are thrilled to welcome new members to the Mount Arlington Public Schools community. Please join us in welcoming members to our administrative team:

- Ms. Marina Williams, Principal,
- Mr. Migue Valle, Facilities Manager,
- Ms. Laurie Dachowski, Main Office Secretary at MAPS, and
- Ms. Maria Panycia, Child Study Team secretary.

We are also welcoming several new staff members to our instructional and student support teams. Please join us in welcoming:

- Ms. Zoe Cerenzio, Grade 1 teacher, serving as a leave replacement,
- Ms. Samantha Trilling, Grade 3 teacher,
- Ms. Heba Soliman, Speech Therapist,
- Mr. Tim Macko, Social Studies teacher for Grades 6–8, serving as a leave replacement, and
- Ms. Krissoula Tzouvaras, School Counselor, also serving as a leave replacement.

We are fortunate to have such talented staff joining our schools, and I look forward to seeing the positive contributions they will make to our students and school community.



A Message from the Superintendent (cont.)

Another exciting addition this year is our **full-day Preschool program**. This expansion provides families with greater access to high-quality early childhood education right here in our community.

This year, we will be **moving our Parent-Teacher Conferences from November to February**. This change is intentional and will allow our teachers to have additional time to collect and analyze meaningful student growth data following the first half of the school year. By meeting with families in February, we hope to provide a more comprehensive picture of each student's progress, strengths, and areas for continued growth, while also discussing specific ways we can work together to support their success.

This summer has also provided an opportunity for us to **enhance a few of our school safety and security measures**. Among the improvements taking place are the installation of a fence around the Edith Decker School field and playground. Security roll-down shades for each classroom and new highly reflective door numbers will be installed in both schools to assist with clear building identification during an emergency.

The start of a new school year is always filled with possibility, and I am honored to begin this journey with the Mount Arlington Public Schools community. *Most importantly, I am eager to welcome our students and families back to our schools in just a few short weeks.*

Warmly,

Dr. Jessica Neu



A Message from the Principal

Welcome to the 2026–2027 School Year!



Greetings, Mount Arlington Schools Community!

I am so happy and proud to be your new principal and look forward to the year ahead. I truly can't wait to lead and learn with the staff, students, families and community in this incredibly special place.

I come to you with 25 years of experience in education that include being an acting elementary school principal, middle school assistant principal, district supervisor of world languages and dance/drama, literacy coach and a teacher of language arts and social studies. I received my bachelor of arts degree in Sociology from Montclair State University, my teacher certification from St. Elizabeth's College, through an accelerated teacher certification program, and my master of arts degree in educational leadership from Montclair State University.

I strongly believe in working together to ensure that students receive a safe and meaningful education, that allows for them to identify and achieve their goals and dreams. I am committed to upholding the District mission:

To ensure that our children succeed personally, academically, socially, and physically. Through our commitment and passion to promote excellence, we will continue to provide our students with a safe, challenging, and inspiring learning environment so that each student may achieve his/her full potential. In partnership with the community, our students are provided with a sound foundation to support a lifelong journey of opportunity and success.

Sincerely,
Ms. Marina Williams



IMPORTANT DATES

School Start Time: 8:20 AM, School End Time: 2:55 PM

AUGUST

Day/Date	Time	Event
Thursday/27th	10:00 – 11:00 AM	Kindergarten Orientation

SEPTEMBER

Day/Date	Time	Event
Friday/4th	8:20 am – 2:55 PM	1st Day of School for Students
Monday/7th	N/A	LABOR DAY-District Closed
Wednesday and Thursday/16 and 17	N/A	Decker-Scholastic Book Fair
Thursday/17th	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Decker-Back to School Night
Wednesday and Thursday/23 and 24	N/A	MAPS-Scholastic Book Fair
Monday/21st	N/A	YOM KIPPUR-District Closed
Thursday/24th	6:30 – 8:00 PM	MAPS-Back to School Night
Friday/25th	11:00 AM – Close	8th Grade Fundraiser-Buffalo Wild Wings

OCTOBER

Day/Date	Time	Event
Friday/2nd	4:00 – 8:00 PM	8th Grade Fundraiser-Panera
Wednesday/7th	9:00 – 3:00 PM	School Picture Day (both schools)
Monday/12th	N/A	District Closed for Students Only
Friday/23	6:30 – 8:30 pm	Theatre Performance



TITLE I Part A INFORMATION

The links below provide information regarding Title I Part A.
WEBSITE LINK: includes annual Parent Right to Know Letter and the Parent School Compact.

BOARD POLICY # 2415 Parent Engagement



2026-2027
School Code of Conduct

Mount Arlington Public Schools

235 Howard Boulevard
Mount Arlington, NJ 07036
973-398-4400
<https://www.mtarlingtonk8.org/>

Revised July 2026

"High Expectations • Respectful Behavior • Student Success"

2026-2027 Student Code of Conduct

The [Student Code of Conduct](#) has been revised for the school year and is now posted on our District website. We encourage parents to review the document with their children.

2026-2027 Technology User Agreement

The [Student Technology User Agreement](#) has been updated for the school year and is now posted on our District website. We encourage parents to review the document with their children. Student will receive a hard copy on the first day of school and are required to return it with a parent signature.



PowerSchool Parent Portal is now open!

The [PowerSchool Parent Portal](#) is now open and available for families to access throughout the school year. The Portal provides families with an easy way to view their child's schedule, stay informed about academic progress, including viewing grades and attendance. We encourage all parents to regularly check the Portal as an important tool for staying connected to their child's educational experience.

Please contact your school's main office if any help is needed.





Important: Safety and Security Reminders



All parents/guardians must be prepared to show proof of ID when picking up their child. Emergency contact must be updated in PowerSchool, as needed.

All parents and visitors are encouraged to schedule an appointment prior to stopping by the school. All visitors must sign in upon entry and wear a visitor lanyard. Visitors must be escorted while in the building at all times.

If needed, a drop box for students' forgotten items is located in each school's vestibule.



Drop-Off/Pick-Up Safety Reminders

Decker

To ensure the safety of all students, families and staff at Decker School, if a child is being walked to the school entrance or picked up from the school entrance, the child must be accompanied by an adult at all times. In these instances, vehicles must be parked in the designated parking lot. Adults should then walk their child across the bus/fire lane using one of the designated pedestrian walkways.

Families who are dropping off or picking up their child without accompanying them to the entrance may use the bus/fire lane. In these cases, students can exit and enter the vehicle independently, but must exit and enter the vehicle on the sidewalk side. Additionally, when using the bus/fire lane drivers can only move forward when exiting.

MAPS

To ensure the safety of all students, families and staff at MAPS, drop off and pick-up is on Kadel Drive only (on the school-side of the street), with the first car pulling up to the crosswalk (across from Henry Ct). Children must exit and enter the vehicle on the sidewalk side (only), in a timely manner and walk on the sidewalk on the hill.

The parking lot is only for buses and faculty.



MOUNT ARLINGTON
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
NEW JERSEY

NEW POLICY

NO 
CELL PHONES
DURING THE
SCHOOL DAY

MT. ARLINGTON STUDENTS STAY FOCUSED

- Keep cell phones off and out of sight. OUT OF SIGHT (smartphones, smartwatches, etc.).
- Cell phones must be kept in backpacks (all grades) or lockers (upper grades) at student discretion.
- USE PROHIBITED on SCHOOL GROUNDS: including classes, lunch/recess, bathroom, and hallways.
- FOLLOW all STAFF DIRECTIONS regarding electronics.

Phones must be off and kept out of sight from bell to bell. Bell to bell is the START TO END of the school day on school grounds.

EFFECTIVE:
SCHOOL YEAR
26-27

BE A MT. ARLINGTON STUDENT
BE PRESENT • BE ENGAGED • BE RESPONSIBLE

MOUNT ARLINGTON
ESCUELAS PÚBLICAS
NUEVA JERSEY

NUEVA POLÍTICA

NO 
TELÉFONOS
CELULARES
DURANTE EL
DÍA ESCOLAR

LOS ESTUDIANTES DE MT. ARLINGTON MANTIENEN EL ENFOQUE

- Mantén los teléfonos celulares apagados y fuera de la vista. FUERA DE LA VISTA (teléfonos inteligentes, relojes inteligentes, etc.).
- Los teléfonos celulares deben permanecer en mochilas (todos los grados) o en casilleros (grados superiores) a discreción del estudiante.
- ESTÁ PROHIBIDO en los TERRENOS ESCOLARES, incluyendo clases, almuerzo, recreo, baños y pasillos.
- SIGUE todas las indicaciones del personal respecto al uso de dispositivos electrónicos.

Los teléfonos deben estar apagados y fuera de la vista desde la campana de inicio hasta la campana de finalización del día escolar en los terrenos escolares.

VIGENTE DURANTE
EL AÑO ESCOLAR
26-27

SÉ UN ESTUDIANTE DE MT. ARLINGTON
ESTAR PRESENTE • PARTICIPAR • SER RESPONSABLE

As we prepare for a successful start to the 2026–2027 school year, we want to inform families about New Jersey’s new “bell-to-bell” requirement for student use of personal internet-enabled devices.

At its August 19, 2026 meeting, the Mount Arlington Board of Education approved the district’s implementation of this NJ Department of Education requirement. Under the new guidance, students are expected to refrain from using personal internet-enabled devices including cell phones and smartwatches on school grounds throughout the school day.

We encourage parents and guardians to review these expectations with their children before the first day of school. Working together, we can help ensure a smooth transition and create an environment that supports student learning, engagement, and positive connections.

For additional information, please review the [NJDOE Guidance document](#), [BOE Policy #5516](#), the [Letter to the Community](#), and the [Student Code of Conduct](#). If you have questions regarding the district’s bell-to-bell device policy, please contact Ms. Marina Williams, Principal.



It is important to know that while we want children to stay home and recover from illness, sick days, even with medical notes, **ARE NOT STATE EXCUSED ABSENCES**. See the attached flyer for more detailed information. Let's work together to make every school day count.



YOUR PRESENCE MATTERS



INCREASING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE: YOUR PARTNER IN STUDENT SUCCESS

14.2%

DID YOU KNOW? IN THE 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR, 14.2% OF OUR STUDENTS WERE CHRONICALLY ABSENT.
Let's work together to make every school day count!



WHAT RESEARCH SAYS: CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM & ITS IMPACT

- Missed instruction leads to significant learning gaps.
- Affects foundational skills like reading and math.
- Reduces chances of high school graduation.
- Limits future career opportunities.
- Disconnects students from the school community.
- Even missing a few days can add up to critical losses.

THE BENEFITS OF HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

- Stronger academic performance and grades. ✓
- Develops essential life skills and routines. ✓
- Increased student engagement and motivation. ✓
- Better preparation for college and career paths. ✓
- Positive impact on overall social well-being. ✓
- Creates lasting memories and friendships. ✓

NJDOE STATE-EXCUSED ABSENCES (PER NJ ADMINISTRATIVE CODE)



Religious observance (with documentation).



College visits (up to 3 per year, with verification).



Take Our Children to Work Day.



Participation in school-sponsored activities.



Court appearances (with legal documentation).



State-approved reasons by the Commissioner of Education.

****IMPORTANT REMINDER:****

While we want students who are ILL to stay home and recover, **SICK DAYS** (even with medical notes) **ARE NOT STATE-EXCUSED ABSENCES**. They still count towards chronic absenteeism.
Let's aim for consistent attendance when healthy!

Visit: [Mount Arlington Schools Website](https://www.mountarlingtonschools.org)

Phone: 973-398-4400



TU PRESENCIA IMPORTA



AUMENTAR LA ASISTENCIA ESCOLAR: SU ALIADO EN EL ÉXITO ESTUDIANTIL

14.2%

¿SABÍAS QUE? EN EL AÑO ESCOLAR 2024-2025, EL 14.2% DE NUESTROS ESTUDIANTES ESTUVO AUSENTE CRÓNICAMENTE.

Trabajemos juntos para hacer que cada día de clases cuente.



LO QUE DICE LA INVESTIGACIÓN: EL AUSENTISMO CRÓNICO Y SU IMPACTO

- Perder instrucción conduce a brechas significativas en el aprendizaje.
- Afecta las habilidades fundamentales como la lectura y las matemáticas.
- Reduce las posibilidades de graduarse de la escuela secundaria.
- Limita las oportunidades futuras de carrera.
- Desconecta a los estudiantes de la comunidad escolar.
- Incluso faltar unos pocos días puede resultar en pérdidas críticas.

LOS BENEFICIOS DE UNA ALTA ASISTENCIA ESCOLAR

- Mejores resultados académicos y calificaciones. ✓
- Desarrolla habilidades y rutinas esenciales para la vida. ✓
- Mayor participación y motivación del estudiante. ✓
- Mejor preparación para la universidad y las carreras. ✓
- Impacto positivo en el bienestar social en general. ✓
- Crea recuerdos y amistades duraderas. ✓

AUSENCIAS JUSTIFICADAS SEGÚN NJDOE (CÓDIGO ADMINISTRATIVO DE NJ)



Observancia religiosa (con documentación).



Visitas universitarias (hasta 3 por año, con verificación).



Día laboral para que su hijo/a lo acompañe.



Participación en actividades patrocinadas por la escuela.



Comparecencias ante el tribunal (con documentación legal).



Otras razones aprobadas por el Comisionado de Educación del Estado.

****RECORDATORIO IMPORTANTE:****

Si su hijo/a está enfermo y debe quedarse en casa para recuperarse, **LOS DÍAS DE ENFERMEDAD** (incluyendo notas médicas) **NO SE CONSIDERAN AUSENCIAS JUSTIFICADAS POR EL ESTADO**. Ellos aún cuentan hacia el ausentismo crónico.
¡Nuestro objetivo es mantener una asistencia constante cuando estén saludables!

Visite: [Sitio web de las Escuelas de Mount Arlington](https://www.mountarlingtonschools.org)

Teléfono: 973-398-4400



Revised Delayed Opening and Early Dismissal Schedule *(now includes lunch)*



Delayed Opening Schedule

There is no recess on delayed opening days)

Period	Time
HR	10:20 - 10:30
1	10:30 - 10:58
2	10:58 - 11:26
3	11:26 - 11:54
4	11:54 - 12:22
5	12:22 - 12:50
6	12:50 - 1:18
7	1:18 - 1:46
8	1:46 - 2:15
9	2:15 - 2:45
Dismissal	2:45 - 2:55

Early Dismissal Schedule

(There is no recess on early dismissal days.)

Period	Time
HR	8:20 - 8:30
1	8:30 - 9:00
2	9:00 - 9:30
3	9:30 - 10:00
4	10:00 - 10:30
5	10:30 - 10:57
6	10:57 - 11:24
7	11:24 - 11:51
8	11:51 - 12:15
9	12:15 - 12:40
Dismissal	12:40 - 12:50



A Message from our Board of Education

Welcome Back to School!

As we begin a new school year, we are excited to welcome our students, families, faculty, and staff back to our Mount Arlington school community. The start of a new year brings fresh opportunities for learning, growth, and connection, and we look forward to all that our students will accomplish in the months ahead.

This year is especially exciting as we proudly welcome our new Superintendent, Dr. Jessica Neu. Her leadership, vision, and commitment to educational excellence inspire confidence as we work together to support the success of every student. We are grateful for the partnership of our families and community members and look forward to a year filled with achievement, innovation, and memorable experiences. Here's to a wonderful school year ahead! Together, we will make it our best one yet.

Parent Teacher Organization

Welcome Back from the MTA PTO!

The Mount Arlington PTO is excited for all that's ahead. We look forward to supporting our students and staff, bringing families together, and creating fun and meaningful experiences throughout the year. Most of all, we're grateful to be part of such a caring and supportive school.

Here's to a school year filled with kindness, laughter, learning, friendship, and lots of great memories along the way.

Please sign up to receive all PTO correspondence and volunteer opportunities through PTBoard:

[Mount Arlington Schools PTO](https://mta.ptboard.com)
mta.ptboard.com

School code is 93KANX



Save the Date!

DINE TO DONATE

PROUDLY SUPPORTING
MT ARLINGTON 8TH GRADE CLASS

Mark your calendars to support our 8th graders as they raise funds for class activities, including the dance and end of year trip!

FRIDAY 9/25	BUFFALO WILD WINGS ROCKAWAY	11AM - CLOSE
FRIDAY 10/2	PANERA BREAD ROXBURY	4PM - 8PM
MONDAY 11/2	CHIPOTLE ROXBURY	5PM - 9PM
THURSDAY - SUNDAY 12/3-6	FUDDRUCKERS ROXBURY	ALL DAY
MONDAY - THURSDAY 1/11-14	OUTBACK STEAKHOUSE LEDGEWOOD	ALL DAY
TUESDAY 2/2	PUB 199 MT. ARLINGTON, NJ	ALL DAY

Flyers for each restaurant will be shared closer to the date—please be sure to show the flyer when you order!

Thank you for supporting our 8th graders!

DINE LOCAL • SUPPORT LOCAL • MAKE AN IMPACT