District Highlights & Progress: A Monthly Update from the Superintendent

DR. LAURA A. WINTERS, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

OCTOBER 28, 2026

Student Enrollment

(October 23, 2026)

School	Number of Students
Spruce Street School	289
Oak Street School	692
Clifton Avenue Grade School	734
Lakewood Middle School	706
Lakewood High School	1,020
Total	**3,441**
Mixed Delivery Preschool	88
Adult High School	6
Out-of-District (OOD)	465
Total	**4,000**

Student Transfers
(as of October 23, 2026)

- Number of students who transferred out:
  - October - 13
- Number of NEW students who enrolled in the District:
  - October - 25

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.

- 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:

The Board is being asked to **ratify the recall and hiring of up to 30 full-time paraprofessionals** to provide consistent, reliable support in special education classrooms.

- Part-time recruitment and third-party staffing vendors have been unable to consistently fill paraprofessional vacancies.
- Reliable staffing is essential to support student safety, implement Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and deliver mandated special education services.
- All 165 paraprofessionals who received reduction-in-force (RIF) notices were offered the opportunity to return. Approximately 95 declined.

As of today, the District has rehired **62 full-time paraprofessionals** to fill the **72 approved full-time positions**, leaving **11 full time positions unfilled**.

During the Month of October

Districtwide School Walkthroughs

- Administrators and supervisors, accompanied by two Board members, conducted walkthroughs in every school building in October.
- Throughout the district, classrooms reflected a positive focus on teaching and learning. Students were engaged in lessons, and teachers were actively providing instruction and supporting student learning.
- The walkthroughs provided an opportunity to see firsthand the dedication of our staff and the positive learning environments they create for our students each day.

School	Date
Oak Street School	October 20, 2026
Clifton Avenue Grade School	October 22, 2026
Lakewood Middle School	October 26, 2026
Lakewood High School	October 26, 2026
Spruce Street School	October 27, 2026

On tonight's agenda is the District's Revised QSAC Scores for the 2025-2026 SY

NJQSAC AREAS	Initial Placement Scores for 2025-2026 (June 2026)	Initial Review REVISED (September 2026, Received by the district on October 2, 2026)	Comment
INSTRUCTION & PROGRAM	77%	77%	**District Improvement Plan was approve on September 23, 2026**
FISCAL MANAGEMENT	**82%**	**86%**	**A Reconsideration was requested and 4 points was added to the score.**
GOVERNANCE	79%	79%	**District Improvement Plan is on the 10/28/2026 agenda for BOE approval.**
OPERATIONS	80%	80%	
PERSONNEL	98%	98%	

New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC)

- The Lakewood School District received less than 80% in the areas of:
  - Instruction & Programming (77%)
  - Governance (79%)
- Instruction & Programming
  - Received 40 out of 40 available points for Curriculum
  - Lost Points in the areas of student Performance
  - The District Improvement Plan for I&P was approved on September 23, 2026

A score below 80% in a NJQSAC performance area identifies an area requiring improvement. The District must develop and implement a District Improvement Plan to address the identified indicators.

NJQSAC - Governance

The District lost points in **three Governance indicators** based on the following County findings:

- **Budget Policies and Planning:** The County cited the Board's vote against adopting the budget as a failure to follow the established budget process under the indicator addressing alignment of budget policies and financial planning with District priorities. **(Lost 8 Points)**
- **Budget Adoption Process:** The County cited the same vote under a separate indicator requiring the Board to follow the prescribed budget process, including timely adoption at a public meeting. **(Lost 8 Points)**
- **Financial Disclosure Requirements:** A Board member did not file the required Financial Disclosure Statement due April 30, 2025, due to a serious medical illness for which she was hospitalized numerous times. The individual subsequently resigned from the Board on May 7, 2026. **(Lost 5 points)**

The first two deductions arose from the same Board vote, <u>with a loss of 16 points</u>, and were applied to two separate Governance indicators.

The District's Improvement Plan is on the agenda for approval.

NJQSAC – Fiscal Management

Due to the District's request for Reconsideration, **four points** were **restored in Fiscal Management**.

Fiscal Management Indicator 10 — Annual Budget Calendar

- The District initially lost **four points** because the County linked the Board's failure to adopt the budget to compliance with the annual budget calendar.
- The District requested reconsideration, providing evidence that the calendar was developed, shared with the Board, and included input from relevant program staff.
- **NJDOE agreed that the District met the indicator's requirements and restored all four points.**
- **Result: Fiscal Management increased from 82% to 86%.**

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 months of September & October.

School Security Update

Required September Drills

- All Lakewood Public Schools completed the required monthly fire drill and non-bomb-threat evacuation drill for the month of October.

Piner Press: 2026-2027

If you have not had a chance, please take a moment to review the Lakewood School District's **Piner Press** for the 2026–2027 school year.

All editions are available on the District website.

- WWW.Lakewoodpiners.org
- Under Announcements!

Happy Halloween




THANK
YOU