



MAKING THE GRADE

Neenah Scores High on State Report Cards

Eleven Neenah Joint School District schools increased their overall score and the District achieved an overall “Exceeds Expectations” rating on the 2016-17 state report card data from the Department of Public Instruction.

The District earned an overall score of 76.5 to gain its high rating. Seven of Neenah’s schools were named in the “Significantly Exceeds Expectations” category with Alliance, Clayton, Lakeview, Roosevelt, Tullar, Wilson and Horace Mann earning that distinction. Five other schools rated as “Exceeds Expectations” with Coolidge, Hoover, Spring Road, Taft and Shattuck landing in that category.

Among the schools earning “Significantly Exceeds Expectations,” Tullar’s score of 96.6 ranked 10th out of the nearly 2,100 schools ranked statewide. Alliance’s score of 94.2 was 29th overall, Lakeview’s score of 90.7 was 99th and Wilson’s 90.2 score was 111th.

Schools are graded on four priority areas: student achievement in

reading and math assessments, student growth in year-to-year improvements, gap closing between specific student groups and on-track and postsecondary readiness. Overall District report cards also include attendance and graduation data. All Neenah schools have at least met expectations every year the report cards have been issued since 2011-12. The seven schools significantly exceeding expectations matches the most Neenah has had in a single year.

Find out more...

State report card scores and ratings for all Neenah schools are available on page 5.

Each public school is graded on a 0 to 100 scale and it should be noted these scores are not a “percent correct” measurement. Hoover, Roosevelt and Clayton had the highest increases among the 11 Neenah schools that improved their scores from 2015-16.

Mill Rate Drops Another 30 Cents to Remain Lowest in Fox Valley

Taxpayers in Neenah will again see a significant decrease in payments to the Neenah Joint School District in 2018 as the District’s mill rate dropped another 30 cents to \$7.75.

The mill rate represents the amount paid per \$1,000 of property value, meaning the owner of a \$100,000 home will pay \$775 to the District in 2018. The state average for mill rates in 2017 was \$9.96. Neenah’s mill rate dropped 52 cents the previous year and has been the lowest in the Fox Valley for the past several years.

The total District budget for 2016-17 is \$91.7 million. The mill rate includes vouchers that are paid for students attending private schools. The mill rate would be \$7.61 without the private school vouchers.

Despite the low mill rate, Neenah is in its third year of a four-year-old kindergarten program and has maintained low class sizes District-wide. The District has made a significant commitment to mental health services at all levels and is in its third year of providing every student in grades 3-12 with their own personal computing device, while having devices available in every classroom for grades 4K-2. In addition, all staff groups have received salary increases and stipends based on performance for each of the past five years.



Horace Mann Middle School recently opened a community “Blessing Box” in front of the school. The idea of teacher Joe Lewis (pictured), the box is filled with non-perishable food items or personal hygiene items. Community members are invited to drop off donations at the Horace Mann office, while those in need are encouraged to take what they need from the box. During the winter months, the box contains gloves, mittens, scarves and hats as well as non-liquid food items.

Words From the Superintendent



Most of us would agree that our jobs and the way we live our daily lives have changed drastically over the past 20 years. Increased technology and modern advancements have made our lives faster paced and far different than the way many of us grew up.

So why has our educational system seemingly been slow to follow? Many people still expect to see students sitting in desks

in neatly arranged rows with a teacher standing up front giving a lesson.

In Neenah, we've been on a mission to change that. Our teachers have been encouraged to take risks and be creative with how they work with our students. Many of them have embraced this challenge and brought a new and exciting dimension to our schools.

Our District is the first in the state to support an INCubatoredu class, which is a modern-day "Shark Tank." Students come up with an idea for a product or service, seek funding, work with local community member mentors and then pitch the idea to investors to actually bring the product to life. How much more real world can school be?

Our freshmen and sophomores have an opportunity that very few public school students have through our Arete Academy, which continues to flourish. The program brings an approach that combines all four subject areas into a series of project-based activities.

At Hoover Elementary, our staff is reaching for an "Innovative School" title we are hoping to achieve next year. At Hoover, teachers are all-in and embracing new ideas, problem-solving with each other to create a more engaged learning environment for students. All that stated, there is an energy that is leading to learning, creating, and problem-solving among students.

These are just some examples of the innovation that exists in so many of our schools and even extends through every grade level. Students from grades 12 to four-year-old kindergarten are equipped with technology devices in their hands on a daily basis. With all of these advances in curriculum, our District is thriving. Seven schools "significantly exceed expectations" and five others "exceeded expectations" on the recent state report cards. It shows that strong test scores will follow no matter how students are learning.

Our District vision states that "all Rockets will embrace their futures with confidence" and we believe our students will be even better prepared for their life after school with a 21st century approach to learning.

Neenah With Pride!
Dr. Mary Pfeiffer
Superintendent

Open Enrollment Runs February to April

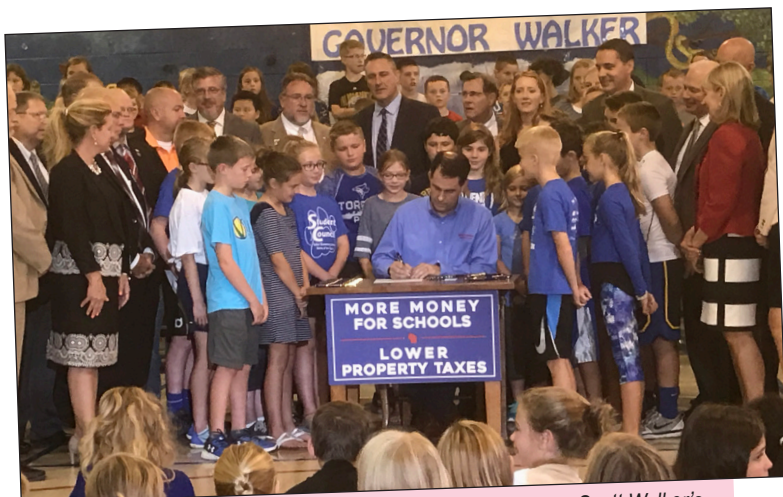
The open enrollment application period, which allows parents to send their children tuition-free to any Wisconsin public school district, runs from Feb. 5 to April 30, 2018.

During the open enrollment period, parents may apply to the school district they wish their children to attend using the online application at the DPI website (dpi.wi.gov/open-enrollment). Paper applications may be obtained at the Neenah Joint School District Administration Building at 410 S. Commercial Street. Application deadlines are firm. Early and late applications are not accepted.

Districts will notify parents by June 10 whether their enrollment applications have been approved or denied. Although an alternate application procedure allows parents to apply for open enrollment outside of the three-month application period, there are more restrictions associated with the alternate procedure. Accepted applicants must notify the non-resident school district where they will attend school by the specified date each June, or the district may refuse to allow the student to attend.

Parents of students who have moved or are planning to move out of Neenah prior to the 2018-19 school year but wish to continue in a Neenah school should complete an open enrollment application.

Those with additional questions may contact Stephanie Leagjeld at the Administration Building at (920)751-6800 ext. 10102.



Tullar Elementary School hosted Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker's signing of the state budget on Sept. 21. Fourth and fifth graders from the school had the opportunity to witness the signing firsthand and many of them received a commemorative pen. The \$76 billion state budget includes an additional \$639 million for public schools

NJSD Asbestos Removal Report

The Board of Education approved an Asbestos Management plan in accordance with the Federal Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). A copy of the District-wide plan is on file at the Administration Building, 410 South Commercial Street. Inquiries about the plan should be directed to the Director of Facilities at (920) 751-6800, ext 10133. Each school building also has a plan, which is on file in the principal's office. Inquiries about a building's plan should be directed either to the building principal or to the school secretary. Asbestos management activities which occurred over the past 12 months include, but are not limited to, the following: 1) the required 6-month inspections; and 2) ongoing operations and maintenance projects done as necessary by certified personnel.

Advanced Courses Help Neenah Grads Get Big Savings on College Tuition

Neenah High School graduates in the Class of 2017 earned 1,761 college credits while in high school through Advanced Placement, CAPP, Fox Valley Technical College and St. Norbert College courses.

Based on approximate tuition costs, these courses saved students over \$425,000 on college tuition. A total of 248 graduates took advantage of this opportunity, including 20 students who graduated with at least 15 post-graduate credits and seven students who had at least 25 credits.

In addition, Neenah High School had 64 students honored for exceptional achievement on Advanced Placement exams during the 2016-17 school year, including Dante Cardelli, who qualified for the National AP Scholar Award. National AP Scholars earned an average score of 4 or higher on a five-point scale on at least eight AP exams.



Neenah High School students Nikki Messick and Jacob Solis won a gold award at the Fox Valley Technical College High School Throwdown after preparing a Pan Fried Chicken with a Squash and Goat Cheese Stuffed Ravioli topped with a Balsamic Tricolored Grape Tomatoes.



Neenah High School's VEX Robotics team won the tournament championship and the Design award at the Northeast Wisconsin competition in January to qualify for the U.S. Open championship. Members are (L to R): Coach Adam Hendries, Olivia Mauk, Zachary Hart, Eli Goethel, Joshua Sturgell and Connor Anderson (seated).

Horace Mann Students Participate in Global Read-Aloud Event

Horace Mann Middle School students participated in the Global Read-Aloud event by reading the book *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park.



Homeroom teachers and students read the book during homeroom, but many included it as an anchor text in their classes and tied it into curriculum standards. Teachers

also used nonfiction articles dealing with Africa's water crisis and articles about refugees.

Science classes created water filtration systems (pictured, top) and a group of Fox Valley Technical College students from different countries shared their experiences coming to the United States (pictured, right).

The book is a dual narrative that takes place in Sudan: one story is about a girl who has to walk miles each day to fetch water for her family in 2008, and the other is about a boy who has to flee Sudan in 1985 during the country's civil war.



Neenah students were among over 100 million students globally who participated in an "Hour of Code" during the week of Dec. 4-10. The event was part of Computer Science Education Week. Students in grades kindergarten through sixth grade participated.

China Bound

Neenah Orchestra Students to Perform Across China in March

Neenah High School orchestra students will have the opportunity to perform across China as part of a performance tour put on by the League of Astonishing Strings from March 22-April 1, 2018.

The 23-student "Touch of Class" ensemble mixes warm classical playing with the energy of Celtic reels and a little bit of rock and roll for a lively and inspiring musical experience that appeals to all ages.

While in China, the group will perform in world class concert halls in a "professional" format and work with international string educators and artists. They will perform in six different cities across China during the 11-day trip.



Individuals, organizations and companies are invited to help defray some of the costs for the trip through tax deductible donations. Touch of Class will perform a private concert for any donors or members of organizations that contribute at least \$1,000 toward the trip.

Donations may be made through the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation website. The link is also available on the Neenah Joint School District website on the music page. Those organizations wishing to have a performance by Touch of Class may e-mail director

Philip Smyth at: philip.smyth@neenah.k12.wi.us.

Risgaard Wins State Singles Title as Girls Tennis Finishes Runner-up

Neenah High School senior Kiki Risgaard captured the WIAA state girls tennis singles title with five straight-set wins on Oct. 13-14 in Madison.



Risgaard became the second Neenah player to win a state girls singles title, joining Tami Whitlinger who won four straight from 1983-86.

Risgaard defeated top-seeded and previously unbeaten Andie Weise of Homestead 7-5, 6-0 in the championship match. She won last year's state doubles title and became just the third player in state history to win individual titles in singles and doubles.

Risgaard placed third in singles as a sophomore in 2015.

Neenah made its fourth straight appearance in the state team championship match and finished runner-up with a 4-3 loss to Homestead. The Rockets beat Eau Claire Memorial 4-3 and Madison West 5-2 to reach the final. They finished the season 16-2 overall.



Neenah's girls swimming and diving team posted its highest finish at the WIAA state meet with a sixth place finish on Nov. 10 in Madison. Individually, sophomore Av Osero successfully defended her state diving title as Neenah has had five of the last six state champions in the event. Isabel Cortina was third in the 500-yard freestyle.

Neenah Fishing Team Captures State "Team of the Year" Award

Neenah High School's fishing team earned the inaugural Wisconsin Interscholastic Fishing Association High School "Team of the Year Award" for 2016-17.

The group had an award-winning season on the lake with a second and third place finish at the state meet, but it also had a big year outside of competition. With over 40 members, the team has hosted several "Reel Choices" fishing outings with local elementary students and "learn to ice fish" events with middle school students. They have also co-hosted two Memory Café fishing events for adults with Alzheimers.

DESTINED FOR SUCCESS

Neenah Student Speaks at National Gala

Destinee Ramos may only be in eighth grade, but she's already spoken in front of a former United States president and the commissioner of the National Football League.

The Shattuck Middle School student was selected to represent the nationwide Fuel Up to Play 60 program as a speaker at the GENYOUth Annual Gala on Dec. 6 at the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum in New York City. Former president Bill Clinton was the keynote speaker and NFL commissioner Roger Goodell gave an address at the fundraising event.

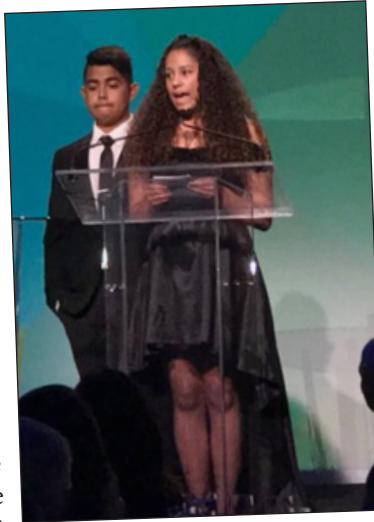
Ramos was one of four student speakers representing groups funded by GENYOUth. Others were from Massachusetts, Arizona and Minnesota. All of the students received a four-day, three-night, all-expense paid trip to New York City.

The daughter of Juan and Sarah Ramos, Destinee attended Alliance Charter Elementary. She spoke for four minutes about what the Fuel Up to Play 60 program has meant to her personally as well as her community and school. Shattuck and Horace Mann Middle Schools both regularly have half days with an all-school focus on being active.

Ramos was selected to speak after writing and performing a short song at a Fuel Up to Play 60 national summit in Minneapolis last summer. A regular participant in Neenah middle school drama productions, she also was among three students who appeared in a Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board commercial with Green Bay Packers' kicker Mason Crosby last summer.

Ramos first became involved with the Fuel Up to Play 60 program as a sixth grader at Horace Mann. She quickly became an "ambassador" in the program, rallying other students and leading the program at her school. In the summer of 2016, she attended her first national summit in West Lafayette, Ind. among 156 students from 45 states and a variety of NFL players.

According to the Fuel Up to Play 60 website, the organization has 60,000 student ambassadors nationwide and is the nation's largest in-school wellness program. GENYOUth is a philanthropic organization focused on elevating youth leadership to advance wellness in schools and communities. Fuel Up to Play 60 is the nonprofit's signature program.



The third class of the Neenah Joint School District Hall of Fame was inducted on Sept. 30. Inductees were (left to right) David McClaren, Kathy Hagerstrom and Robert Keller. Jean Sather, Peter Dunwiddie and Alice Freeman represented their father, Bill Dunwiddie. John Schneller III represented his father, John.

State Report Card Scores and Ratings

School	Score	Rating
Alliance	94.2	Significantly Exceeds Expectations
Clayton	89.4	Significantly Exceeds Expectations
Coolidge	78.6	Exceeds Expectations
Hoover	76.8	Exceeds Expectations
Lakeview	90.7	Significantly Exceeds Expectations
Roosevelt	84.0	Significantly Exceeds Expectations
Spring Road	77.0	Exceeds Expectations
Taft	82.6	Exceeds Expectations
Tullar	96.6	Significantly Exceeds Expectations
Wilson	90.2	Significantly Exceeds Expectations
Horace Mann	85.1	Significantly Exceeds Expectations
Shattuck	74.7	Exceeds Expectations
High School	68.6	Meets Expectations
District Composite	76.5	Exceeds Expectations

Rally 'Round Reading Volunteers Sought

A program that provides volunteer readers to Neenah elementary students is looking for more volunteers. "Rally 'Round Reading" assists selected kindergarten, first and second graders at Coolidge, Hoover, Roosevelt, Spring Road, Taft and Wilson Elementary Schools. It enhances student learning by providing up-to-date research-based practices in learning to read and write.

The program has 100 volunteers from the community. Each week, 15 volunteers work with students at each school.

Before volunteers work with students they are required to go through a one-hour training session provided by Sue Ruthven and Cindy Buchta and a background check. Each volunteer works with two students one day a week for one half-hour each. At the end of the week those students will benefit from 2 1/2 hours of individual tutoring.

To help with the program, contact Cindy Buchta at 428-3156 or cbuchta@new.rr.com or Sue Ruthven at 915-4152 or hawkshaw4@msn.com.

Eleven Neenah Schools Honored With Wisconsin School Health Awards

For the second straight year, 11 schools from the Neenah Joint School District were among the 68 winners of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's 2017 Wisconsin School Health Awards.

Neenah was tied for the most schools to earn the award of any District. Four Neenah schools were among 36 schools statewide recognized with the gold award as Hoover Elementary, Horace Mann Middle School, Spring Road Elementary and Wilson Elementary received the honor. Hoover has been recognized every year in the award's five-year history, while Spring Road was honored for the fourth straight year and Horace Mann received laurels for the third straight year.



Neenah physical education teachers were awarded Wisconsin School Health Awards at a ceremony in Appleton on Dec. 7. Front (L to R): Roxann Barrow, Kim Woodkey, Vicki Dohr, Desiree Lulloff, Carrie Raeth. Back: Jesse Lenz, Jeff Leopold, Judd Eastman.

Shattuck Middle School was the only Neenah school in the silver category. Six schools were recognized as bronze award winners: Alliance Charter Elementary, Clayton Elementary, Coolidge Elementary, Lakeview Elementary, Neenah High School and Tullar Elementary. All of the Neenah schools were honored at the same level as the previous year.

The award signifies a commitment to providing students with the knowledge and skills to make healthy decisions that will contribute to their academic success. Parental and community involvement and staff wellness activities also contribute to the award. The goal is

to motivate and empower Wisconsin schools as they create and maintain healthy school environments.

Schumacher Transitions from Teacher to Principal at Clayton

After 18 years of teaching in the Neenah Joint School District, Amy Schumacher has been named principal at Clayton Elementary School.

Since coming to Neenah, Schumacher taught her entire career at Tullar Elementary. She most recently taught third grade and previously taught kindergarten.

Schumacher has been a forerunner in the use of technology in the classroom, particularly the Schoology learning management system. She presented on personalized learning at the Schoology national convention this past summer in Chicago. Schumacher also presented at the Wisconsin Educational Media and Technology Association conference in March about her implementation of a "Genius Hour" that allowed her third graders to explore their passions and encouraged creativity.



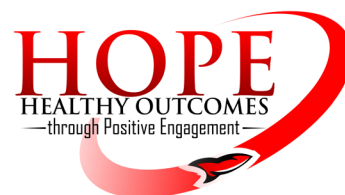
HOPE Program Provides Elementary Support Services in Inaugural Year

A first-year program is helping elementary students in Neenah receive support and care through a variety of services from local providers. The HOPE (Healthy Outcomes through Positive Engagement) program provides counseling at the schools (Catalpa Health), screenings filled out by parents about their students (Samaritan Counseling) and a parent peer advocate (NAMI Fox Valley).

All fourth and fifth grade students' parents have been given a screener for them to fill out about their child to determine if their student may be struggling emotionally. The screening specialists from Samaritan Counseling follow up with all the parents whose screeners come back positive and help them find resources for their students.

In addition, NAMI Fox Valley offers a Parent Peer Advocate, Megan McLachlan. She is a former teacher who now works as a parent educator and advocate. Any caregivers who have students from 4K to fifth grade are able to talk with her about their children's mental health concerns (call 920-954-1550). If you have any questions regarding the HOPE program, talk with your school counselor or call Mike Altekruse at 751-6800, ext. 10123.

The HOPE Program is funded through a \$300,000 grant from the Basic Needs Giving Partnership of Community Foundation of the Fox Valley Region. Neenah elementary students will have access to these mental health services over the next three years and the Board of Education has committed to funding the program long-term.



Dialogue Receives State Recognition

The Neenah Joint School District *Dialogue* received an award of merit from the Wisconsin School Public Relations Association in the community newsletter category. It marks the third time in the past four years that the publication has been honored among the state's best.

The District's Hall of Fame event also received an award of merit in the special events category.

The *Dialogue* and Hall of Fame program are both produced and edited by District Communications Manager Jim Strick. Both are printed by Graphic Composition in Greenville.



Launch leaders, Key Club members, National Honor Society members and high school staff members collected snow pants and coats for the Neenah-Menasha Emergency Society and also donated over 1,000 food items for the school's Orbit closet and the St. Joseph's Food Pantry during a holiday challenge. Additionally, the annual Helping Hands craft fair raised \$11,325 that was distributed to high school families in need during the holiday season.



The Velocity program at Shattuck received \$15,500 from the J.J. Keller Foundation "Kickstart" community initiative. The funding will support their "Safety Net" idea to offer various mental wellness groups to over 70 students in the Velocity Academy at Shattuck. Each student will have the opportunity to choose and participate in groups that focus on mental wellness, positive coping strategies and resiliency-building skills throughout the academic year.



Four students in the Horace Mann magnet program placed among the top 10 percent of 23,000 participating students nationwide in the Noetic Learning Math Contest. Fourth grader Derek Seymour and fifth graders Connor Gibbs, Nathan Rank and Sam Kane earned a place on the National Honor Roll and received medals for their achievement.



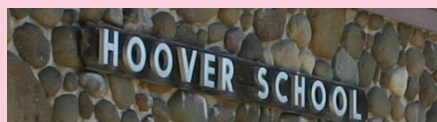
Alliance second grader Annie Aykens was looking for a way to recycle a couple of pairs of glasses that she had outgrown and decided to collect old glasses for those less fortunate. She collected 334 pairs from people throughout the community and gave them to the Lions Club's "Recycle for Sight" program.



Clayton fifth grade students collected 135 books and raised \$628 to purchase another 125 books for the Neenah Library's Give-a-Kid-a-Book program. Students went to Barnes and Noble on transportation provided by Kobussen to pick out books and make purchases with the money that was donated.



Coolidge students participated in a cardboard challenge with engineers from Oshkosh Corporation. Students formed teams and were assigned the task of building an apparatus from cardboard that would move a small object a foot. Engineers from Oshkosh came to school several days and assisted the students.



Hoover students spread holiday cheer to their neighborhood houses by decorating, creating and delivering wreaths before leaving for winter break on Dec. 22. The four-year-old kindergarten students also showed their creativity by making gingerbread houses out of a variety of items.



Lakeview first grade students and their families generously donated supplies and wrote cards and letters to a Lakeview alum now serving in Afghanistan. First Lieutenant Tom Huxtable was deployed along with 13 soldiers in his unit to keep Afghani people safe and help them build roads, hospitals and houses.



Roosevelt and Alliance students and families participated in a "Play and Take" Math Night earlier this year. Families were able to take part in math games with each other and then bring them home to continue their fun and learning. The event also featured food trucks and an opportunity for school families to meet each other.



Spring Road's Wellness Committee recently was awarded a grant through the Well City Fox Cities Adopt-A-Student grant. Students will build "anxiety" or "worry" boxes for each classroom. When students are getting frustrated or anxious about something in their life they can use the equipment in the box to de-stress.



Taft students took part in a mindfulness booster in early January to help refocus for the start of the new year. During the afternoon, students had the opportunity to paint mantra rocks that will be placed on the peace path in the courtyard. They also learned yoga, breathing exercises and how to eat mindfully.



Tullar hosted a book swap to help students stay sharp on their reading skills at home. Families brought in used books and placed them in the boxes outside the office. Students then picked out books to take home. There were enough left over to keep in classrooms and send students home with multiple books.



Four-year-old kindergarten registration for the 2018-19 school year will take place March 19-22. Information for the program will be mailed to all prospective households in mid-February. Those who do not receive a packet will be able to find the documents online or should contact the District Office at 920-751-6800.



Wilson second grade students learned more about the history of their community with a visit to the Neenah Historical Society. Students learned about transportation in the early days of the city and got a horse and carriage ride. They also went through items in an old history trunk and learned the art of letter writing.

A Passion for Excellence
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Upcoming Key Dates

February

- 1-3 Winter Drama, "Almost Maine," 7 p.m. (Pickard Auditorium)
- 4..... Winter Drama, "Almost Maine," 2 p.m. (Pickard Auditorium)
- 21..... Parent-Teacher Conferences, Grades 6-12, 4-8 p.m.
- 22..... Early Dismissal - All Levels (Parent-Teacher Conferences)
- 22..... Parent-Teacher Conferences, All Levels, 12:30-8 p.m.
- 23..... No School - All Levels (Parent-Teacher Conferences)
- 23..... Parent-Teacher Conferences, Gr. 4K-5, 7:45-11:45 a.m.
- 26..... No School - All Levels (Professional Learning Day)

March

- 8-11..... Middle School Musical, 7 p.m. (Pickard Auditorium)
- 23..... Early Dismissal, Grades K-8 (End of Quarter)
- 26-30 No School - All Levels (Spring Break)

April

- 2..... No School - All Levels (Professional Learning Day)
- 19-21 Spring Drama, 7 p.m. (Pickard Auditorium)
- 22..... Spring Drama, 2 p.m. (Pickard Auditorium)

May

- 25..... No School - All Levels (Professional Learning Day)
- 30..... NHS Graduation, 7 p.m.
- 31..... Last Day of School - 4K and Early Childhood

June

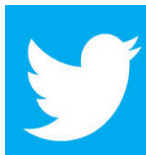
- 1..... Last Day of School (Early Dismissal) - Grades K-12



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Board of Education meetings are typically held the first and third Tuesdays of every month at 6 p.m. at the District Administrative Building at 410 S. Commercial St. (Check the NJSD website for complete schedule)