



Rochelle Park School District

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Dear School Community Members,

As the month of August nears its close, the eagerness for welcoming a new school year is on the rise! On behalf of the district, I hope you and your loved ones have had an enjoyable and relaxing summer break.

The district has many new and exciting happenings for this school year, from safety and security measures to instructional programming, some of which are highlighted here:

- The parking lot and drop off/pick up routes are changing. As shared in last month's notice, and posted on the district website, the parking lot is expanded to include a park and walk zone. In addition, the driving entrance and exit have been reversed, lengthening the drop off que. This should help alleviate the hurried bustle of the former short drop off zone, and alleviate some traffic congestion on Rochelle Avenue.
- Thanks to an inter-local agreement between the school district and the police department, Midland School will have a full-time School Resource Officer. Sgt. Christopher Bermudez is eagerly preparing for the arrival of the new school year.
- The basketball ball court is being moved to the fenced in recess playground side of the building. There will be two new basketball courts that will also provide four square and pickle ball play areas. In addition, a covered pavilion will be installed. This will provide both outdoor learning opportunities as well as general shade and rest space. Moving all of the recess time to one side of the building also provides an added layer of security for monitoring students.
- The students in the middle school will experience a new schedule. The A/B day rotation has been changed. Instead, students' schedules will be consistent across Monday-Friday.
- The middle school schedule change serves to enhance English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics classes, providing consistent double block periods. In addition, there will be cross curricular enhancements for ELA and Social Studies, and Math and Science.
- Three new courses have been added for middle school students: Civics in grade 6, Career Explorations in grade 7, and Financial Literacy in grade 8. Not only do these courses serve to be compliant with the NJ Department of Education learning standards, but they truly will provide students with beneficial knowledge for current and future growth.
- The Readers and Writers workshop models are moving forward. Writers workshop was introduced last year and will be built upon. Readers Workshop will be introduced this year. These models offer strategies for differentiating instruction and meeting the varied needs of students' learning styles.
- The STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) room and classes are improving. We are moving STEM to STEAM, which includes Art. The STEAM room has been

redesigned to provide a more robust program, enhancing students' knowledge and skills, by now including 3D printers, a laser engraving machine, and a kiln - just to name a few of the items that will serve our students to become more proficient in their learning.

- In addition to Spanish courses for middle school students, in-person instruction for Spanish will be provided to students in grades 3, 4, and 5 in lieu of on-line instruction.
- Social-Emotional learning initiatives were piloted during the Summer Transition Program. These will be infused throughout the year for all grade levels. In addition, the district's wellness program will be expanded to include more grade level events and family programs.
- Special education services now provide a full continuum for self contained programming from PreK to grade 8, in addition to the existing in-class support and resource room services. This serves to provide students with opportunities to remain at their local school district where they can remain part of the school community while addressing their academic needs.
- All students will receive student identification cards this year. These cards serve as another layer of increasing safety and security measures. Details about the distribution and responsibility of these cards will be provided by the principal and teachers.
- Some first floor classrooms were impacted by a flood in July. Reconstruction to these rooms is in progress. All efforts are being made to ensure they are ready for opening day.

As you can see from these highlights there has been a great deal of planning and preparation for the new school year. Finishing touches of shining floors and decorating classrooms are in progress. Midland School is eager to have the exciting sounds of student and staff voices fill its classrooms and spaces! In the meantime, continue to enjoy some lazy summer days, catch some sunshine and share time with loved ones. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,
Dr. Sue DeNobile, Superintendent