

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

The 2024-25 School Year is in Full Swing!

By now we have all settled into a routine, embraced the seasonal change, and maybe enjoyed watching some fall sports. Although the warmth and leisure of summer seem like a distant memory, I would be remiss to not recognize some noteworthy progress and achievements that occurred over the summer months and into the new school year. Many members of the Middlesex County Magnet School District found ways to continue to connect with students, attend national conferences, and Be Compelling.

This past July we held the second Early Career Exploration Institute and expanded the program by offering classes at East Brunswick and Piscataway Magnet Schools. Enrollment doubled from the previous year, we hosted 147 rising 8th graders to our schools and offered 16 career summer programs. I am thrilled to see so many young students throughout Middlesex County are excited to pursue career focused education. Students received a glimpse of specialized training from our teachers in Culinary Arts, Automotive Technology, Digital Filmmaking, and Welding among many others.

A job well done to all our teachers. administrators. and staff for another successful Early Career Exploration Institute.

East Brunswick Magnet School received recognition by Sustainable Jersey for Schools for their progressive work in sustainability. Principal Mr. Michael Cappiello and Mr. Zachary Levine attended an award ceremony during the New Jersey School Board Association Workshop 2024, where they received a

Bronze level certification for their continued commitment to prioritizing sustainability within East Brunswick Magnet School. Congratulations on this outstanding achievement.



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Board of Education

- Keith Jones II, *President*
- Laura Czarneski, Vice President
- Christine Faustini, Member
- Vittorio Tartara, Member

• Kyle Anderson, Interim Executive County Superintendent of Schools

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A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Edison Academy Magnet School students - Abhay Bhaskar, Naisha Bhandari, Akshada Guruvayur and Ethan Poon were selected for the prestigious NASA Student Enhancement in Earth and Space Science (SEES) summer internship sponsored by NASA and The University of Texas at Austin's Center for Space Research. Students worked with scientists and engineers to conduct authentic research from data received from NASA's earth observing



satellites. The internships were organized around an aerospace or space science theme drawn from NASA's diverse engineering and scientific research. Almost 2000 applications were received for only 100 virtual internship positions.

The Perth Amboy Magnet School Culinary Arts program has been recertified as a 3 Star Certified Green Restaurant. They were the first public secondary school in the county to be certified by the Green Restaurant Association. This means that our Culinary Arts program at Perth Amboy Magnet School has met specific environmental standards across categories such as water efficiency, waste reduction, and energy use. This is an indicator of their commitment to eco-friendly practices.

Our Culinary Arts and Baking and Pastry Arts programs district wide have received their Certificate of Accreditation from the American Culinary Federation. This is a prestigious accomplishment that means each program has met rigorous curriculum standards, best practices standards, and upholds the Culinarian's Code of Ethics. Fantastic achievement to all our Chefs!

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A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Many of our current students were busy this summer as well. Students from Piscataway Magnet School Health Technology program attended the HOSA International Leadership Conference in Houston, Texas. These students competed in the Health Education category against 107 teams and proudly won the silver Medal - placing 2nd in the nation for that category.



Woodbridge Academy Magnet School has been named a 2024

National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education, in recognition of exceptional teaching and learning. It is one of only 11 schools in New Jersey and just 356 schools nationwide to achieve this designation in 2024. This honor comes within the same school year that the New Jersey Department of Education ranked Woodbridge Academy Magnet School number one among all New Jersey high schools.

It has been an exciting time for the Middlesex County Magnet School District. This past August Middlesex County announced it will be acquiring the Heldrich Hotel & Conference Center in New Brunswick. Part of this acquisition is a strategic educational investment involving a collaboration with Middlesex County Magnet Schools and Middlesex College. This is once again an example of how our partnership with the college and the county creates innovative opportunities for our students.

These are only a few of the many accomplishments and recognitions you will read about within the Fall 2024 issue of INSIGHT. It is clear the district's focus on real-world learning,

community partnerships, and driving student excellence is producing incredible results. These successes position the Middlesex County Magnet Schools as an exemplary education model. We prepare students for bright futures through innovative, immersive, and impactful learning experiences. Every student, parent, and Middlesex County Magnet School District employee should be commended for their ongoing commitment to educational excellence.

Kind Regards,

Jorge E. Diaz Superintendent



ALUMNI PORTAL

Graduating This Year? Alumni of the District? **Register Today!**

Congratulations to the Middlesex County Magnet Schools Class of 2024. We couldn't be prouder of all our seniors, who weathered unprecedented challenges to reach their senior year.

As you embark on the next phase of your lives and careers, please consider staying in contact with your alma mater and all your fellow alumni. Click here for the official announcement video.

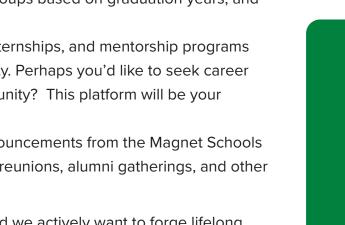
In our schools, we believe in the power of lifelong connections and in providing students with opportunities to benefit them

throughout life. The bonds formed within our schools can continue to grow after graduation day, and we're very excited to announce a new platform that will further strengthen those connections. Our alumni website is a dedicated online platform designed exclusively for our graduates who have passed through our halls in East Brunswick, Edison, Perth Amboy, Piscataway and Woodbridge. This digital hub will be a centralized place for networking, mentorship, career development, and much more.

Whether you were a Vo-Tech student years ago or are a recent Magnet Schools graduate, with the alumni portal, you'll be able to:

- Connect with fellow alumni: Reconnect with old friends and make new connections within our growing alumni network. Find classmates, join affinity groups based on graduation years, and expand your professional network.
- Explore career opportunities: Discover job openings, internships, and mentorship programs tailored to our career and technical education community. Perhaps you'd like to seek career advice from other graduates – or post a new job opportunity? This platform will be your go-to resource.
- Stay updated: Receive the latest news, events, and announcements from the Magnet Schools and throughout Middlesex County. Stay informed about reunions, alumni gatherings, and other opportunities to engage with your alma mater.

Our student successes reflect our community's strength, and we actively want to forge lifelong relationships with every member of our extended family. Join us today on alumni.mcmsnj.net to connect, and help recent graduates continue to unleash their passion.





Middlesex County Magnet Schools Opening Day — and it's the same but it's a new school year so its not

An Opening Day for Middlesex County Magnet Schools like never before! This year was the first time the entire Middlesex County Magnet School District was able to gather in one centralized



location to kickoff the new school year. Upon arrival everyone was greeted by the External Affairs team who handed out District swag bags which included the brand new Middlesex County Magnet School baseball cap.

Teachers, custodians, secretarial staff, and administrators came together at none other than the Performing Arts Center at East Brunswick Magnet School. Board of Education President Keith Jones II gave an energy boost with uplifting beats on the turntables.

Superintendent Jorge E. Diaz opened convocation and spoke on how to #BECompelling, a theme we would like to continue throughout the 2024-25 school year. The district also heard from County Commissioner Director Ronald Rios and Board of Education President Keith Jones II who gave motivational speeches about the influential work each person does within the District. We started the new school year motivated and ready for anything!



Middlesex County Magnet Schools Offers Early Career Exploration Institute for Second Year

Middlesex County Magnet Schools offered the Early Career Exploration Institute for the second year in a row. This three week summer program focused on Career & Technical Education was a huge success!



We hosted a total of 147 rising 8th graders who were able to choose from sixteen different career programs at two Magnet Schools. This was over double the amount of participants from the previous summer. Programs at East Brunswick Magnet School ranged from Introduction to 3D Modeling and Printing (Architecture), Discover Dance, and Agriscience Technology. Piscataway Magnet School offered programs such as Business Entrepreneurship (Global Logistics and Business Administration), 3D Design Concepts, and Welding. A new addition to this year's program was the involvement of eighteen Teaching Assistants who are current seniors at the Middlesex County Magnet Schools.

Eager and ready-to-learn middle schoolers were able to get a preview of what high school could look like for them at the Magnet Schools. They received the same hands-on learning experience with a focus in applying academic learning to solving real-world problems.

There were also opportunities for special guest speakers and field trips. Students enrolled in the Piscataway Explore Baking and Culinary Arts summer programs were able to check out the mobile

food truck of Elijah's Promise and listened about how *Food Changes Lives*. Elijah's Promise harnesses the power of food and gives back to the community in a multitude of ways. Meal services are a small part of what a career in Culinary and Baking

can look like. Did you know that Elijah's Promise utilizes food donations made to REPLENISH to help create delicious meals for the New Brunswick and local communities?

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Middlesex County Magnet Schools Offers Early **Career Exploration Institute for Second Year**

Money talks! The Piscataway Business Entrepreneurship and Finance summer programs students were able to learn all things money, thanks to a speaker from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. It is never too early to understand key principles of banking,

economics, and financial literacy. Part of the Finance summer program prompted students to spend imaginary funds in the stock market. A fun experiment with a zero percent risk!

For many, the Early Career Exploration Institute was an eye opening experience. For one individual, it even solidified their final decision to make Middlesex County Magnet Schools the place they wanted to go for their high school career. This was the case for Brenda Lopez Gonzales of Edison, NJ. Brenda enrolled in the Automotive Technology program at East Brunswick Magnet School and was drawn to this field because she enjoys understanding the mechanics of a car. "I have not seen many women in the automotive industry, and that is a main reason I want to be part of it," says Brenda.

Eddie Quackenbush of Milltown, NJ always knew he wanted to attend the Magnet Schools because he loves cooking. For him, cooking is exciting and has been a passion for guite some time, when

he found out about the opportunity to enroll in the Explore Culinary Arts program he did not hesitate to apply. Eddie shared, "This exceeded my expectations. I have never actually been in a professional kitchen before, or cooking on professional equipment, washing dishes. It's just exciting."

After three full weeks of learning and activities, the Early Career Exploration Institute came to a close with a Gallery Walk Through on the very last day. Families were invited to tour parts of the school and view final projects from each summer career program. Thank you to all the teachers, staff, and high school students that helped create a memorable experience for our visiting 8th graders. These programs would not be possible without the support and guidance of many. We can't wait to see what awaits for next summer!

View more photos of the program here.





District leadership attended the New Jersey School Boards Association signature event, Workshop 2024. This was an opportunity for district leadership to gain dynamic insights, strategies, and potentially find new and exciting collaborative opportunities. The theme was *Quest for Student Success*.

Career and Technical Education Director Lee Neamand was a featured panelist for the New Jersey Department of Education discussion on Increasing Equity in Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment Programs.



Ms. Neamand spoke about our advancements in providing college credit opportunities to our students and the value of having an open dialogue with post-secondary institutions with equity at the forefront of those conversations. She spoke alongside Peter Mazzagatti, Director of Educator Effectiveness for NJDOE, Jared Toscano of Palmyra School District, Dr. Gwen Ryan of Union County, and Shari Castelli of Morris County.

Also included at Workshop 2024 were student films produced by East Brunswick Magnet School's Digital Filmmaking program. The NJSBA and the Garden State Film Festival showcased various films created by students throughout New Jersey in a screening on the exhibition floor. The films from East Brunswick Magnet School were Tellurium vs. Gold by Josias Ortiz, Me vs. Me by Lucas Rodriguez, and Locker Killer by Marlee Marte. Congratulations to the filmmakers on this achievement. Lyview photos from the day here.



MIDDLESEX COUNTY³ (MC³)

Middlesex County, College, and Magnet Schools collaborating to the highest power for their communities!

We had the pleasure of speaking with fellow Middlesex County leaders at the 24th Annual Woodbridge Metro Chamber of Commerce Mayors' Annual Breakfast, hosted by Woodbridge Mayor John McCormac.

Middlesex County Magnet Schools Superintendent Jorge E. Diaz presented alongside Commissioner Director Ronald Rios, Middlesex College President Mark McCormick, Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin and the Middlesex County Department of Economic Development. Messages were shared about business growth opportunities throughout the county and Woodbridge Township. Members of the community not only have the support and resources to grow their businesses; they have access to an educational pipeline that starts with the Middlesex County Magnet Schools, Middlesex College and eventually to employment in various career fields. We look forward to partnering with Woodbridge Township community members and businesses in the near future.

Middlesex County hosted its annual Business Summit at the New Brunswick Performing Arts Center, convening top business leaders, entrepreneurs, and government officials to explore this year's theme, Innovate to Elevate: Shaping Tomorrow's Business Landscape, which emphasized

how businesses can adapt to the changing workforce and leverage innovations such as AI to drive growth and stay competitive in an everevolving market.

Governor Philip D. Murphy, Middlesex County Commissioner Director Ronald G. Rios, and Middlesex County Commissioner Chanelle Scott McCullum opened the event, setting the tone for a day dedicated to future-ready business strategies.

Middlesex County Magnet Schools were on site at the 2024 Middlesex County Business Summit providing information on how businesses can partner with our schools.

└<u>View photos from the day here.</u>





MIDDLESEX COUNTY³ (MC³)

At a press conference on Thursday, August 15, Middlesex County announced its strategic investment in The Heldrich Hotel and Conference Center as part of its ongoing commitment to education. Through consolidation of ownership of this iconic New Brunswick hotel, the County will expand its innovative and holistic economic strategy providing interactive, hands-on learning to County residents — strengthening and accelerating workforce development and fueling regional economic growth. Middlesex College and Middlesex County Magnet Schools students will benefit from new job opportunities, career paths, and expanded educational offerings. Modeled after the RWJBarnabas Health Workforce



Partnership, new or enhanced curriculums will be developed to provide a clear path for County students to take advantage of this unprecedented access to work-based education at an operational hotel that will bolster the future talent pipeline in Middlesex County.

Speakers at the event included Board of County Commissioners Director Ronald G. Rios; New Brunswick Mayor Jim Cahill; President of New Brunswick Development Corporation (DEVCO) Chris Paladino; Middlesex County Magnet Schools Superintendent Jorge E. Diaz; Middlesex College President Mark McCormick; Executive Director of the Middlesex County Improvement Authority (MCIA) James H. Polos; and Middlesex County Department Head of Economic Development Sandy Castor.

Middlesex County Magnet Schools were represented at the Middlesex County E.A.R.T.H. Center 2024 Garden Arts & Music Festival, held in Davidson's Mill Pond Park. E.A.R.T.H. is the headquarters



for Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Middlesex County. The State University's outreach wing, Rutgers Cooperative Extension offers programs such as the Master Gardeners Environmental Stewardship program, 4-H Youth Development clubs and federally funded nutrition classes for limited resource families. The day was spent educating families about our schools, the programs we offer, and filled with fun activities for all. **View photos from the day here.**

MIDDLESEX COUNTY³ (MC³)

Middlesex County Magnet Schools joined Middlesex College for their 2024 HarvestFest. It was an evening of family-friendly fun on the college campus that included live music performances, food trucks, games, a pumpkin patch, and even a vote for your favorite car show. Various club organizations and departments from the college hosted tables to promote their organizations and give out fun treats for the kids.



The External Affairs Department, along with students from East Brunswick and Edison Academy Magnet Schools, represented the school district. Our students spoke with families and parents about their career programs and what it is like attending one of the Magnet schools. This is one of the many ways the External Affairs team reaches the community and lets the residents of Middlesex County know about what we offer at the Magnet Schools.

Middlesex County and RWJBarnabas Health celebrated the unveiling of Our Space, a collaborative mural at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, on Wednesday, October 30. Designed by New Brunswick-based artist Martryce Roach and developed with input from nearly 200 individuals— including hospital staff, patients, students, and community members—the vibrant mural captures the spirit and collective strength of the Middlesex County community.

The unveiling event brought together hospital staff, students, and community leaders,

including Middlesex County Commissioner Director Ronald G. Rios, Deputy Director of the Board of County Commissioners Shanti Narra, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital President Alan Lee, Middlesex College President Mark McCormick, Middlesex County Magnet Schools Superintendent Jorge E. Diaz, Director of the Arts Institute of Middlesex County Lindsay Erben, and artist Martryce Roach.

The journey to create the *Our Space* mural began in December 2023 when hospital leaders approached the Arts Institute of Middlesex County in efforts to integrate more public art into the hospital. Over the course of



the project, artist Martryce Roach led a series of collaborative workshops with students from Paul Robeson Community School for the Arts, East Brunswick Magnet School, and Middlesex College. The mural, prominently displayed within the hospital, is designed to provide hope and inspiration to patients, healthcare workers, and visitors alike. Ly View photos from the day here.

A Tour Fit for a Mayor - East Brunswick Mayor Brad J. Cohen tours the facilities at East Brunswick Magnet School



East Brunswick Mayor Brad J. Cohen and Economic Development Officer Robert Zuckerman toured the classrooms and hallways of East Brunswick Magnet School to see what the Magnet School District is really about. They were blown away, as visitors usually are, by the talents of our students, the passion of our teachers, and the plethora of career programs offered right here in their township.

One fact that took our guests by surprise: Every student receives hours of specialized training within their career program every single school day. This seems normal within the Middlesex County Magnet School District but is rarely seen elsewhere. The career programs our distinguished guests were able to visit included School of the Arts: Music Performance and Technology, Multimedia Art and Design, and Dance. They also visited Manufacturing Engineering and Automation, Machine Fabrication and CNC Technology, Baking and Pastry Arts, and lastly Agriscience. They even had an opportunity to get a behind the scenes tour of the new Performing Arts Center. Our guests were impressed with our hands-on learning, technical education, and industry credentials our students have the opportunity to obtain before graduation. The East Brunswick Magnet School is proud to be a shining gem within the East Brunswick community. Thank you to all the students and educators who showcased their skills and classrooms to Mayor Cohen and Mr. Zuckerman.

►<u>View photos from the visit here.</u>



BEYOND THE BOOKS

Serving Beyond Our Classrooms

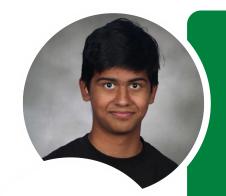
Eighteen of our students from the Perth Amboy Magnet School had the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions, make valuable connections, and explore career paths in the construction industry. The event highlighted the importance of fostering diversity in traditionally male-dominated fields and provided resources and mentorship opportunities for women pursuing construction careers. The OCVTS Women in Construction Networking event was a great success, bringing together women from various construction fields to share their experiences, knowledge, and support. Overall, the event created an empowering atmosphere for growth and networking among participants.

Woodbridge Academy Magnet School senior Shreya Dutt and junior Shreya Nair presented at the New York Integrative Structural Biology Conference 2024 held in October. They presented their findings, after dedicating three years to research on fungal plasma membrane proteins that could act as potential drug targets to prevent yeast infections. They were the only high school students that had the honor of attending the conference alongside many well known and accomplished scientists. They also gained valuable insight talking to experienced scientists in the field of structural biology. This is truly an amazing accomplishment and the entire Woodbridge Academy family is extremely proud. Congratulations Shreya and Shreya!

Edison Academy Magnet School Senior Sounak Bagchi recently published a mathematical paper. Along with some classmates, he is now teaching a math enrichment course on the Middlesex College campus. The course, open to students in grades 6-8, has registration information <u>here</u>. Bagchi's recently published work, in the field of number theory, can be found here.











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COLLEGE READY. CAREER READY.



our social media accounts!



NEWS RECOGNITION

Featured Articles About Us:

Woodbridge Academy Magnet School Blue Ribbon Recognition

- TapInto East Brunswick
- Ed.gov
- RLS Media

Heldrich Hotel Expansion Announcement

- <u>ROI-NJ</u>
- <u>NJ.com</u>
- <u>NJBIZ</u>
- New Jersey Business Magazine
- MyCentralJersey Home News Tribune
- New Jersey Stage
- Americano
- Construction of New Magnet School
 - Middlesex College Quo Vadis Newspaper
 - TapInto Woodbridge/Carteret
- Piscataway and Woodbridge Academy Magnet Schools HOSA ILC Award Recognition Ceremony
 - <u>HŌSA</u>



- East Brunswick Magnet School Student Recognized at Virginia Tech Summer Architecture Program
 - VirginiaTech Inside Design
- East Brunswick Magnet School Student Scholars Perform in Two River Theater Program
- <u>The Monmouth Journal</u>
- Edison Academy Magnet School Student Granted Scholarship for Organ Donation Advocacy
- <u>TapInto Edison</u>

View all District News posted on mcmsnj.net

View all School News posted on mcmsnj.net



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Middlesex County Magnet Schools Welcome External Affairs Interns to Bolster Visual Outreach Efforts

The appointment of two East Brunswick Magnet School Graphic Design seniors to the Department of External Affairs marks a new chapter in the district's approach to visual communications.

East Brunswick Magnet School seniors Madison Cohen and Tesia Yachimovicz were appointed to the Department of External Affairs, providing fresh perspectives on visual communication. These interns are currently working on a plethora of projects to foster partnership between our district and the Districts' community at large.

As graphic design students, this opportunity gives Madison and Tesia the chance to apply their skills in a professional, real-world setting. When asked about their internships, Madison said, "It's exciting to be able to apply what I've learned in graphic design and, all the while, make an impact." Tesia shared a similar sentiment, adding, "I've always had a deep love for the field of communications, whether it be through visual, spoken, or written means. Working as an intern for the Department of External Affairs has only reinforced my understanding of how important strong communication is for any organization."

External Affairs took advantage of the Paid Internship Program, spearheaded by Renee Davis, Ed.D.,

Supervisor of Special Education. This program is through the Middlesex County Office of Human Services with funding from the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission. This allowed Middlesex County Magnet Schools Department of External Affairs to tap into the talent of any junior or senior within the district who is interested in gaining experience in school communications. Throughout this paid internship, Madison and Tesia designed promotional graphics and other materials to advance community outreach efforts. Experiences like these help students develop their career-readiness skills, which will serve them well on their paths towards the future. If you are a junior or senior interested in an internship with External Affairs or would like to participate in a paid internship please reach out to Middlesex County Magnet School Department of Special Education, 732-257-3300 ext. 1934. Written by Tesia Yachimovicz.



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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Extraordinary Students Making a Difference in Their Own Way

When people think about summer what comes to mind are the usual beach scenes, ice cream cones, boardwalk, and sometimes there are fireworks. East Brunswick Magnet School Senior Riley Conti had something different on his summer agenda; that was to accept a full scholarship offer to attend Virginia Tech's Inside Design Blacksburg Summer Program. This program was offered through VT's College of Architecture which aligns with Riley's career program at school,



d tissue

lives through and tissue donation

Architecture Design. Riley stayed on campus, participated in hand-on exercises from university educators, and sampled curriculum focal points of a first year student who attends the nationally ranked School of Architecture and School of Design. He and many other students spoke about their experiences in a short video describing the program itself. <u>Check out Riley's perspective of the Virginia Tech Inside Design Summer Program in this video.</u>

Woodbridge Academy Magnet School senior Anika Bhatnagar was one of seven New Jersey high school students who received a scholarship from the Sharing Network Foundation.

Anika was recognized for her efforts to educate the public on organ and tissue donorship. She also has led fundraising campaigns, established the Donate Life club at the Woodbridge Academy, and leveraged social media to further promote awareness on this life saving cause. Her efforts of advocacy have earned her various awards such as Student of the Year from the Edison Chamber of Commerce and the Youth Volunteer award from the NJ Sharing Network.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Woodbridge Academy Magnet School Students Aryan Garg and Sujal Dhoka joined HOSA State and Local Officers in Washington DC for leadership workshops and activities. They also participated in HOSA's service project with NMDP and visited Capitol Hill to meet with their state representatives and advocate for Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs).

Edison Academy Magnet School Sophomores Diptanshu Halder, Lohitaksh Arige, Ishan Nagpal, and Avika Sharma launched rockets in Wall Township on Sunday, October 6th. They were joined by ninth-graders Jon-Cephas Aholu, Aswath Sarath Kumar, Niral Parmar, Pinak Paul Chowdhury, and Roshni Virudhunagar Sivakumar, with Principal Mossad on hand to watch. Students are participating in the American Rocketry Challenge and are being mentored by volunteers from the Central NJ Rocketry Society. You can watch a video of one of their launches <u>here</u>.

Perth Amboy Magnet School's Mrs. Stoklosa's Spanish 1 and Spanish 2 students celebrated Hispanic Heritage month and focus on the 21 Spanish-speaking countries around the world. Students researched various aspects of these countries, including traditional clothing, famous figures, typical dishes, geographic locations, and other important cultural facts. Hispanic heritage is essential in today's society as it enriches our cultural landscape and promotes diversity. By learning about the traditions, contributions, and histories of Hispanic communities, we foster a greater understanding and appreciation for the rich tapestry of cultures that shape our world.



SA-FUTURE HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

E.B. PHONE HOME

School of the Arts: Digital Filmmaking Celebrates 10 Year Anniversary

When Louis Libitz, teacher of Digital Filmmaking, began his career at Middlesex County Magnet School 10 years ago, he could not have imagined the amount of creativity and ambition that would make its way through his classroom. Students in the Digital Film Program at East Brunswick Magnet School have participated in more than 100 film festivals and their short films have been chosen as featured selections more than 300 times.



Students looking to secure a seat in the Digital Filmmaking career program are required to submit an application and sample of their work to the School of the Arts at East Brunswick Magnet School. Many times television and film is an intriguing hobby but after learning from Mr. Libitz students quickly realized that a career path in Digital Filmmaking is absolutely attainable. Each student is exposed to all areas of film. From pre-production to editing. Theory and practical application of filmmaking is taught on industry-standard equipment with the ability to showcase their work in a brand new, state-of-the-art Performing Arts Center, as well as film festivals throughout the area. This program is well-known throughout the community due to the enthusiasm of its students and reverence for their teacher. There is no lack of experience from Mr. Libitz, who came into teaching after working for the Black Maria Film Festival–now called the Thomas Edison Film Festival–and being an adjunct instructor at New Jersey City University in Jersey City. His initial goal was to build an undergraduate level film program within a high school classroom, exposing students to all genres of film in addition to technique. This was the foundation of the program, but the ultimate goal was to send out his students' talented work to film festivals.

Last year, the Digital Film program celebrated its 10th anniversary and sponsored its 10th Reel Film



Festival, held at the Cranford Theater. The entire film festival can be viewed on YouTube and includes cameo messages from Jorge E. Diaz, Superintendent of the Middlesex County Magnet Schools; Lee Neamand, Director of Career and Technical Education; Michael Cappiello, East Brunswick Magnet School Principal; Mick Foley, professional WWE champion and author; producer Michael Uslan of Batman, Dark Knight, Joker, and The Batman movie franchise; and actor Sam Witwer from Star Wars. **▶**<u>Read the full story here.</u>

STUDENT AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Seniors Nishi Agrawal and Ethan Poon of Edison Academy Magnet School were named Rotary Students of the Month for September and October, respectively. They were honored with a breakfast on October 9th. Thank you to Ms. Simmons and to Ms. D'Agostino, Director of External Affairs, for attending.

This summer, Atharva Tyagi, one of the officers of Woodbridge Academy Magnet School's BioComp club, was admitted into the prestigious Aspiring Summer Scientist Internship Program (ASSIP) at George Mason University. He spent over 350+ hours in a BSL-2 laboratory under the mentorship of Dr. Lance Liotta, ASSIP co-director and former NIH Deputy Director. Immersed in cutting-edge research in pro-tumor cell mechanisms, he mastered over 15 advanced wet lab techniques, including western blotting, immunoprecipitation, laser capture microdissection, and cell culture. He was also privileged to attend the Johns Hopkins Global Health Leadership Conference.

East Brunswick Magnet School's Multimedia, Art & Digital Design Student Giselle Velez was chosen as one of only 150 students to participate in the 25 year anniversary of the Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation Multicultural Teen Corporate Mentoring Program and won second place. Giselle was mentored by her instructor, Mr. Joseph Tiedemann. This exclusive and intensive Multicultural Teen Corporate Mentoring Program mirrored the artistic, creative and digital aspects of Giselle's career major, as well as its business attributes of financial literacy, entrepreneurial leadership and diversity. Giselle utilized all of her career major skills in a cooperative group ensemble at Novartis, focusing on creative solutions in the medical advocacy for multicultural populations. ROTARY

of

STUDENT AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to Ekya Dogra, Adithiya Venkatakrishnan, and Sahil Ghosh of Edison Academy Magnet School for winning 1st place at the Divergent/Microsoft Hackathon. They participated in the Health and Wellness category and developed an end-to-end system for combating crime using artificial intelligence technology.

Woodbridge Academy Magnet School's top students earned the NJ Stars recognition award. New Jersey residents who rank in the top 15% of their class at the end of either their junior or senior year of high school may be eligible to receive a NJ STARS award or attendance at their home county college. Every summer our Guidance Department submits these student names to the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA). Ten qualifying students were presented with a certificate indicating their NJ STARS award status. We are very proud of Shakthi Anand, Arushi Bhattacharya, Diya Bhondave, Maxwell Bouffard, Sarvani Chalamalasetty, Nicole Chang, Sujal Dhoka, Prisha Maurya, Saanvi Mushti, and Ruhi Patel for earning this distinction.

Tesia Yachimovicz, senior Graphic Design student at East Brunswick Magnet School, received two awards from the College Board: National Hispanic Recognition Program and National First-Generation Recognition Program. The programs celebrate the hard work of thousands of high school students nationwide to help them showcase their strong academic performance.











FACULTY AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Woodbridge Academy Magnet School's Ms. Hintelmann was named a News Literacy Project runner-up for the Alan C. Miller Educator of the Year. This award is given in recognition of commitment to news literacy education and contributions to quality journalism, the News Literacy Project honors an educator, journalist and student each year. These exceptional individuals distinguish themselves as champions for a more news-literate nation and a resilient free press.

Over the summer, Perth Amboy Magnet School's Chemistry instructor Mr. Luginsland participated as a coach at the 2024 U.S. Olympic Trials. The athlete that he coached qualified, Monique "Mo" Riddick, and is a native of Edison, NJ, in the women's shot put. In order for her to qualify and declare for the Olympic Trials, she needed to be one of the top 24 shot put throwers in the United States. Mr. Luginsland has been helping Monique for several years throughout her post collegiate and professional career as a coach and friend. She is a former Big Ten Champion and NCAA D1 All-American at Indiana University.

The Olympic Trials were held at Hayward Field on the campus of the University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon. It was televised on NBC and Peacock. The top three (3) in each track & field event qualified to represent Team USA at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, France. Although they did not make the Olympic Team, they had a great time competing and taking in the moment against the best in the United States and the World. They also were able to reconnect with fellow athletes and coaching colleagues including the 2022 World Silver Medalist and 4x Olympian in the Javelin, Kara Winger. Congratulations Mr. Luginsland and Mo on the fantastic accomplishment. LAN C. MILLER

Lindsey Hintelman

ADULT EDUCATION

The Welding Level 1 Course is designed for anyone with little welding experience. Students are provided learning experiences through lectures, demonstrations, and hands-on practices to advance their skills. Adult students in instructor Glen Foli's welding class jumped into action during their first session. Mr. Foli modeled how to light the torch and guided students through the process of safely making their first weld. It was a successful night for all.

Special guest Maria Stampoulos, an alumni, shared insight into the unique and specialized field of mortuary cosmetology with adult cosmetology students in Piscataway.

This expert discussed techniques and best practices for applying cosmetics to the deceased, ensuring they look their best for final viewings and funerals. She demonstrated makeup applications that honor the natural look and preferences of the deceased, respecting cultural and personal aesthetics. She provided in depth information on the sensitivity and technical skills required in this niche area of cosmetology.

Middlesex County Adult Education participated in South Brunswick High School's Tech, Trade & Armed Forces Night. Zachary Levine, Adult Education Evening School Principal and Nancy Giacolone provided information about all adult education program offerings. The Middlesex County Magnet Schools' Adult Education programs include: Adult Evening School, certification programs, apprenticeship training and customized training. Programs that lead to obtaining a license are offered in adult cosmetology and practical nursing as well.



ATHLETICS NEWS

Introducing the newest addition to East Brunswick Magnet School and Perth Amboy Magnet School Athletics programs: the Tigers and Patriots girls soccer team. These dynamic groups of athletes, composed of both seasoned players and enthusiastic newcomers, took the field with passion and determination. The teams emphasized teamwork, sportsmanship, and skill development.

The 12th grade Lady Patriots - the first girls soccer team in Perth Amboy Magnet School history - were celebrated and recognized for their dedication this season. Senior Night was full of smiles, laughs, and some bittersweet tears. It was a sweet moment for the senior girls to share with their friends, families and coaches. The creation of this team is a reminder that sacrifice and dedication will help you achieve your goals.

East Brunswick Magnet School celebrated the Girl's Soccer Team seniors in their inaugural season, while Edison Academy Magnet School honored their seniors on Senior Night.

The Piscataway Magnet School Boys Soccer team became the Gold Division Champions by defeating Timothy Christian School, ending their division with a record of 4-1. Goals scored by Daniel Cerdas and Josh Garcia helped to clinch the victory. Congratulations to this amazing soccer team!

Woodbridge Academy Magnet School student athletes attended the GMC Fall Sportsmanship Summit at the Woodbridge Community Center.



CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The Office of Career and Technical Education attended a Choose New Jersey Economic Development event at the State Theatre in New Brunswick hosted by the Arts Institute of Middlesex County. Speakers included Middlesex County Commissioner Director Ronald G. Rios, County Administrator John Pulomena, Choose New Jersey's Wesley Mathews, representatives from the New Jersey Economic Development Authority and the New Jersey Business Action Center. The Art Institute Director Lindsey Erben led a panel and Q&A featuring Sarah Chaplin, President & CEO of The State Theatre, Kelly Ruffel, Executive Director of Preservation New Jersey, Allison Tratner, Executive Director of New Jersey state Council of the Arts, and Jeremy Grumin of the Grumin Foundation who spoke to the social and economic benefits of funding arts and historical preservation. This will benefit communities and the state as a whole. Thank you to the Arts Institute for including Middlesex County Magnet Schools in this exciting event.

Middlesex County Magnet School students visited the Ocean County Vocational and Technical School district as they hosted their third annual Women in Construction Trades event in Farmingdale. Over 30 female students in construction or related fields from Middlesex County Magnet Schools' East Brunswick, Perth Amboy and Piscataway campuses attended. Students had the opportunity to network with a wide variety of construction trade industry representatives and learned from an in-depth panel discussion featuring Leigh-Ann Branigan of the Associated Construction Contractors of NJ, Tom De Bartolo of Monmouth and Ocean B&CTC, Carol Stillwell of Stillwell-Hansen Inc., Julia Howard of Gilbane Building Co., and Cyndi Williams of the Carpenter Contractor Trust.

@ocear

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION NEWS

Read About Our Students' Latest Assessments, Programs, and How Our Faculty is Leading Students Towards Success

Over the summer, the ELA and Social Studies departments worked on their curricula to update standards, create grading profiles and guides, establish honors expectations, modify pacing, collaborate on cross-curricular opportunities, and diversify our book lists of novels. Thank you to all of the teachers that participated. They also had a highly engaging four-day Differentiated Instruction professional development workshop available to the ELA and Social Studies teachers. The teachers learned about the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to improve instructional outcomes and meet the needs of diverse learners.

In October, PSAT testing took place across the district, with results expected to be available in November. Parents can easily access their child's scores by downloading the <u>BigFuture School™</u> <u>mobile app</u> as soon as they are released. For additional information, please visit the <u>College Board</u> <u>Parent Guide website</u>.

Science teachers attended the NJ Science Convention in Princeton. There were a variety of sessions including topics on literacy in science, artificial intelligence, climate change, the science of learning, different instructional programs, inspiring critical thinking in science, along with demonstration sessions on different EdTech platforms and lab materials. Teachers came away with fresh ideas to bring into their classes and ideas for new resources to explore.

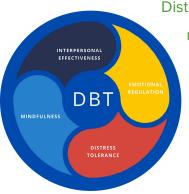
Mrs. Dennison, ELA supervisor, attended the Literacy Symposium at the Chateau Grande Hotel in East Brunswick. This event had leaders from the East Coast come together to discuss instructional challenges and what they are doing to empower educators, promote student engagement, and support literacy growth. Dr. Catlin Tucker was an incredible keynote speaker, providing insight on the importance of students taking ownership in the classroom, using pre-assessment and formative assessment data, using flexible pathways for learning, goal setting, and differentiation strategies like station rotation or reciprocal teaching in the classrooms.



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Your students may sometimes feel stuck, overwhelmed, different, or helpless. <u>This video</u> serves as a visual reminder for educators and parents that the child is not the problem; it's the pathway. What works for one student may not work for others; therefore, pathways must be individualized, even for students who demonstrate similarities in their abilities and interests. Let's embrace the differences among our learners with the goal of continued collaboration on pathways that will support their endeavors.





District Social Worker Grace DiMarco shared helpful tips on stress management with Woodbridge Academy Magnet School seniors.

She talked about Dialectical Behavior Therapy and its four core skills: mindfulness, distress tolerance, emotional regulation, and interpersonal effectiveness. The students discussed the definition of these skills, understood their importance, and were given examples of how to apply them in their daily lives to manage stress. One tip included using H.A.L.T. to navigate complex emotions. H.A.L.T. asks individuals to check in if they are

hungry, angry, lonely, or tired to avoid negative outcomes and stress.

Refer to the HALT COPING EXERCISE to assist your students with managing their feelings and behaviors in your class.

The first Monday of October started the Week of Respect.

Reminding students about the value of respecting others and themselves is critical! Setting boundaries is a powerful way to demonstrate selfrespect. <u>Click this link</u> to learn more about healthy boundary setting.

QUICK TIP: A boundary is something you will do, not a request for someone else to fulfill. For example, "If you continue to interrupt while we're having a conversation, I will remove myself." A boundary is not "Do not interrupt me."



TECHNOLOGY NEWS

The Heroes Behind the Screens: Middlesex County Magnet Schools' Technology Department.

Cyber Security Awareness Month

 In honor of October being Cyber Security Awareness Month, we shared a weekly tip on how to can stay safe online and protect your digital footprint. Some tips we shared were:



- Turn on MFA. Multi Factor Authentication, or MFA, provides extra security by confirming your identity when logging into your accounts. This may be in the form of a code sent to your cell phone, as a confirmation link sent to your email address, or as a code generated by an authenticator app. Enabling MFA substantially lowers your risk of being hacked. In the event your password has become compromised, unauthorized users will be unable to meet the secondary authentication steps and will not meet the requirements to successfully access your account.
- Strong passwords are long, random, and unique. They should include uppercase letters, lowercase letters, numbers and symbols. You should not use the same password for multiple accounts. Password managers can be a helpful tool in assisting you create strong passwords for each of your accounts.

Data Validation

 NJTRAx - District and School data was updated in the NJTRAx dashboard. The information submitted to NJTRAx provides the public with information regarding our District's level of technology readiness and student-to-device ratio.

Web Performance

• The Middlesex County Magnet School website saw over 35,000 clicks in the past 28 days!

Technical Upgrades/Installations

• The Technology department upgraded the PCs in the Architecture and Design classroom at the East Brunswick Magnet School campus.

Edison Academy Magnet School senior Sargam Mondal had the opportunity to present her paper titled "Exact Factorizations of G-crossed Braided Fusion Categories" at the MIT PRIMES conference. You can find the abstract of her paper on page 18 of the abstract booklet <u>here</u>.

Rutgers University made its presence felt at Woodbridge Academy Magnet School, as Admissions Officer Israel Cevallos visited to speak with forty-nine eager seniors about the admissions process. Mr. Cevallos kicked off the session in true Academy spirit, engaging the students with an interactive competition that set an energetic tone for the presentation. The competition featured trivia questions focusing on various aspects of Rutgers University. Students were challenged to recall facts about the school's history, academic programs, campus life, and notable alumni. This approach not only made the session more engaging but also served as an effective way to educate the seniors about Rutgers' unique features and offerings. To add to the excitement, a prize was awarded to the student who demonstrated the most knowledge about Rutgers. The Class of 2025 has shown unprecedented interest in Rutgers University, with a record-breaking 56 students submitting applications. This makes Rutgers the most popular choice among Woodbridge Academy graduating seniors this year, highlighting the strong appeal of the institution to the student body.

Chef Moir and his culinary arts students received a special visit from Ms. Gramcko of Johnson and Wales University. She spoke to the students about the opportunities of being a part of Johnson and Wales University. Thank you to Chef Moir and Ms. Gramcko for this informative and exciting presentation.









Culinary Arts students from the Piscataway Magnet School visited Wegmans of Woodbridge. The students were provided with an overview of the employment opportunities at Wegmans and even had the opportunity to interview for employment. Wegmans employees provided a tour of the store for our students and described the various jobs in many different departments! This was a great learning experience for our Culinary Arts students.

Mr. Rand's 12th grade HVAC students at Perth Amboy Magnet School took a hands-on approach to entrepreneurship by creating business plans for their own HVAC companies. Each student named their business, outlined essential tools and parts, and calculated the costs involved. They also selected company vans and phones, ensuring their operations would run smoothly. The students explored office setups and focused on marketing strategies, especially utilizing social media to reach potential customers. This project gave students practical experience on the business side of HVAC, preparing them for future success in the industry.

Ms. Ciesielski's High School Cosmetology students learned hair color formulation techniques from Jennifer Scaldino. Ms. Scaldino is a L'Oreal Matrix Color Regional Educator and delivered important cosmetology techniques and provided additional industry knowledge. Cosmetology students then demonstrated what they learned by performing foil and cap highlights. The cosmetology students are doing amazing work.





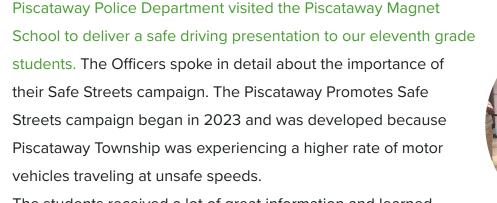




Students in Edison Academy Magnet School's Advanced Placement Chemistry class learned to light and adjust the gas and air inputs in Bunsen burners to create the hottest and most stable flame cone. A hot enough cone can ignite strips of magnesium metal to give off intense white light, as is used in fireworks. Other colors in fireworks are often made by adding transition metals. Students will use transition metal ions in the flame to identify the unique colors given off by each element. This fun activity also gives insight into the quantum properties of electrons within atoms, which helps students understand more complex chemistry concepts.







The students received a lot of great information and learned important safe driving lessons.

Officer Bill Kloos and Sergeant Hakeem Abdullah from the

Erin Pompa, motivational speaker, delivered presentations to the East Brunswick Magnet School student body on October 16th on "Empowering Students to Make Bold Choices and Ditch Destructive Behavior & Thinking". Students heard a powerful story about overcoming addiction, teaching important life skills, helping students deal with tough times using resilience and determination. They learned about gratitude and acceptance, getting tools to live a rich and brave life.





ALUMNI NEWS

An Unlikely Connection Between Dance and Government Affairs

Dana Jordan started her high school career as most students do, attending her local high school. During her freshman year she heard about an open house at East Brunswick Magnet School, previously known as East Brunswick Vocational and Technical Schools. She took a leap of faith and attended the open house by herself to see what other options she had for her education. From that moment on Dana knew she found a way to combine a passion she held since she was 3 years old



with her high school career. She wanted to pursue the Dance program at East Brunswick Vocational and Technical Schools.

Dana organized a meeting between her mom and Dance instructor, Cleo Mack. Her family agreed to let Dana pursue a dual program where she would split her school day to attend her local high school for her academic classes then go to the Magnet School for her training in the career program of Dance. This made Dana's school day almost 45 minutes longer but it was worth every minute.

"The Dance program was more than just dancing. Every week we learned about kinesiology, anatomy, and the history of dance", says Dana. "This program changed the trajectory of my life. Through grants I was able to learn from guest speakers about grant writing or stage lighting. One opportunity that stood out was being taught by the original cast members of Chicago. It was a holistic education that I wouldn't be able to find anywhere else. I was able to learn skills that are applicable to so many different areas of my life."

When it came to college preparation Dana received that weekly within the Dance program. During her junior and senior years she helped at a theater company in Brooklyn, NY twice a week working tech during their rehearsals. She came to the conclusion that performing was not in her future and decided to look into non-profit performing arts management. For her post-secondary career she decided to attend the State University of New York in White Plains, NY. Once her college career began she quickly realized that her education at the Magnet School surpassed what she was being offered at the SUNY school. (continued on next page)

ALUMNI NEWS

(continued from page 30)

Dana eventually decided that she would transfer to Middlesex College and seek out a new academic path. After completing 2 semesters at Middlesex College, she then attended Rutgers majoring in Business Administration and Political Science. Her speciality is in government affairs and policy legislation.



Dana recently worked for Middlesex County as a Workforce Development Board Policy Analyst in the Department of Economic Development. She worked to establish policies that strengthen county business and labor workforce.

Dana says "Dance taught me about resilience and problem solving. In dance you have to figure it out and find a solution, you learn to find a different perspective."

Read the full story on mcmsnj.net.



ALUMNI NEWS

Perth Amboy Vocational Graduate Lands Job at Google

In 2001, Gary Oppel graduated from the original Perth Amboy Magnet School when it was still referred to as Perth Amboy Vocational Technical School. Since his graduation day, Gary has been able to build his skillset professionally and eventually landed a job at Google as a Global Solutions Security Architect. He attributes a lot of his success to the career training he received while he attended high school, "I wanted the hands on learning, I needed that difference. That's what vocational school provided me and that's what really helped me," said Gary. "It is more than what I expected. I wasn't expecting to learn as much as I did and get into the things that I did."

Walking into high school at Perth Amboy Vocational was a new and intimidating experience for Gary. Going to school outside his hometown and not knowing anyone was intimidating — everything was new. However, that initial fear of the unknown quickly changed. Gary was welcomed by teachers and his peers. They were all there for the same reason, to get the career focused training that they were looking for. Gary vividly remembers teachers such as Mr. Scott Katora making an impact on his life.

Mr. Katora realized that Gary had potential but not necessarily the right tools to excel. So Mr. Katora got Gary those tools. Mr. Katora secured learning materials such as a computer that Gary could take a part and learn on. He kept Gary's hands and mind occupied and busy which in turn kept Gary focused on electrical learning.

This progressively evolved and eventually Gary's interests turned to computer programming. Gary ended up teaching himself computer programming all because Mr. Katora believed in him. Mr. Katora did what teachers do best, which is to believe in their students and provide them with opportunities to learn about their different career fields and themselves.

Gary participated in Cooperative Vocational Education (CVE) and was paired with a company called ACE Electronic Alarms. This proved to be another staple in his career progression because the owner turned out to be a very good mentor for Gary. Post high school graduation Gary ended up working for ACE Electronic Alarms for two years. **Participated Gary's full story on mcmsnj.net.**



QUICK CLICKS





Practical nursing students in the Adult Education program are all smiles after completing their first day of clinicals. #quickclicks View all comments



middlesexcountymagnetschools 'Kicking off' the first season for the East Brunswick Magnet School girls soccer team. #quickclicks

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1 DAY AGO



middlesexcountymagnetschools Perth Amboy Magnet School students are back to school and back to hanging out with their besties. #quickclicks

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middlesexcountymagnetschools Shades on, hats on, and all ready for a great school year! #quickclicks

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middlesexcountymagnetschools Wearing pink with a purpose for Breast Cancer Awareness Month at Piscataway Magnet School. #quickclicks View all comments



middlesexcountymagnetschools Spreading encouragement through positive notes during the Week of Respect, thanks to the Edison Academy Magnet School seniors! #quickclicks

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35

QUICK CLICKS

Follow us on Instagram!



Working on a new project in Piscataway Magnet School's Construction Maintenance and Repairs program. #quickclicks

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middlesexcountymagnetschools Senior Night! A great season with even greater soccer players at Woodbridge Academy Magnet School. #quickclicks

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middlesexcountymagnetschools Brainstorming, problem solving and creating solutions during engineering classes at Edison Academy Magnet School. #quickclicks

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middlesexcountymagnetschools Time flies when you're having fun- these seniors just finished their final season playing soccer at Perth Amboy Magnet School. #quickclicks

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middlesexcountymagnetschools Taking care of business everyday: the Adult Education plumbing technology certificate program students are perfecting their skills. #quickClicks

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middlesexcountymagnetschools Shining bright - the Automotive Maintenance and Light Repair students are perfecting their skills at East Brunswick Magnet School. #quickclicks View all comments

QUICK CLICKS

Follow us on Instagram!



middlesexcountymagnetschools Need a trim? Practicing new cut and style techniques in the Adult Education Cosmetology classrooms. #quickclicks View all comments



middlesexcountymagnetschools Guess who's back, back again? East Brunswick Magnet School is back in session, tell a friend. #quickclicks

View all comments 1 DAY AGO



middlesexcountymagnetschools Cupcakes, muffins, cinnamon rolls, oh my! Piscataway Magnet School's Hook Marketplace bakers sure know how to make delicious baked goods. #quickclicks View all comments



middlesexcountymagnetschools Why does Woodbridge Academy Magnet School wear pink? To show support and advocate for Breast Cancer Awareness month. #quickClicks

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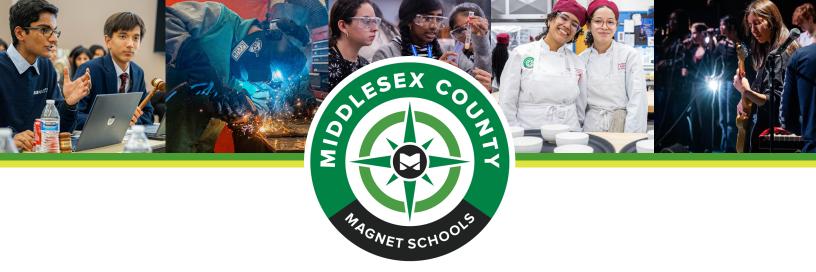
middlesexcountymagnetschools Welcome to our school! Students shared about each of their clubs during this year's open house at Edison Academy Magnet School. #quickclicks

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middlesexcountymagnetschools Who's that on the 1s and 2s?! Thanks to Board of Education President Keith Jones II for inspiring us with his message and music on Opening Day. #quickclicks

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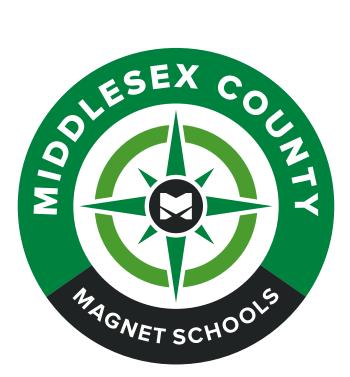
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