

INSIGHT

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

New Year, New Developments at Middlesex County Magnet Schools!

It seems as though we had just started the new school year ... and now we are at the halfway mark. The news of so many wonderful developments in our district has helped time fly by pleasantly.

Amid all the good news, one area of recognition I don't want missed is the Lighthouse Award, presented by the New Jersey Department of Education, for our efforts to increase educational equity in Middlesex County.

The Middlesex County Magnet Schools, led by our administration, board of education, and the county commissioners, are committed to offering educational opportunities to all Middlesex County residents.

We achieve this through our admission policies: Our programs are available to all county residents regardless of where they live or their family income. We continually seek to make our curriculum relevant to all of our 2,300 high school students and 700 adult enrollees.

We offer dual-enrollment programs that allow students to earn college credits and professional certifications while in high school, reducing the cost of their post-secondary educations.

Our rebranding has been an effort to make clear to all county residents that our five free public schools offer them a choice of locations and diverse career majors.

These efforts to ensure our programs are diverse and equitable continue as we plan for a sixth Magnet School on the Middlesex College campus in Edison.

Please enjoy reading this newsletter, which chronicles the achievements of our students and staff in the first half of the school year.

Happy New Year!

Kind Regards,

Jorge E. Diaz

Superintendent of Schools



Board of Education

- Keith Jones II, *President*
- Laura Czarneski, *Vice President*
- Vittorio Tartara, *Member*
- Kyle Anderson, *Interim Executive County Superintendent of Schools*

Quick Links

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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.



SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS APPRECIATION MONTH

Middlesex County Magnet Schools Board of Education Embraces the Goal of High-Quality Education for All New Jersey



Since the first School Board Recognition Month in New Jersey in 2002, the State Board of Education, the state-level public body that regulates public education, has approved resolutions to honor the work done by local school board members.

School board members in New Jersey receive no pay for their service. More than 5,000 men and women serve on New Jersey's local boards of education, making them the largest group of public officials in the state.

"Nothing is more important than our children's education. School board members provide countless hours of service to their communities and strive to provide the resources necessary to meet the needs of all students," said Keith Jones II, president of the Middlesex County Magnet Schools Board of Education. "That is why our board is joining in efforts to recognize these volunteers throughout the state. We urge all citizens to work with their local boards of education and public school staff toward the improvement of our children's education."

Irene LeFebvre, president of the New Jersey School Boards Association, said School Board Recognition Month is "an important way to thank current and former school board members for their dedication and service on behalf of their communities."

"New Jersey's local school boards are selected by their community to serve as their voice in setting goals for their schools", she said. School board members serve without remuneration, and dedicate extraordinary amounts of time to their communities," LeFebvre said. "Additionally, board members attend training programs and many reach out to state legislators and members of Congress on behalf of local schoolchildren. We thank them for their work."



EDUCATORS OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to all the District recipients of the Teacher of the Year and Educational Professional of the Year. Being named is not only an award, but an honor that comes with responsibility to represent the Magnet Schools. We are proud to have you as a part of the Middlesex County Magnet Schools family.



East Brunswick Magnet School

- **Ms. Kylie Naylor**, *Agriscience Technology Instructor*
- **Ms. Bari Marisa Herman**, *School Nurse*



Edison Academy Magnet School

- **Mr. Christopher Price**, *History Instructor*
- **Mr. David Williams**, *Cooperative Education Coordinator*



Perth Amboy Magnet School

- **Mr. Joseph Coyle***, *Graphic Design: Commercial Art and Illustration Instructor*
- **Ms. Grace DiMarco**, *District Social Worker*



Piscataway Magnet School

- **Ms. Julia Henry**, *Music Arts Instructor*
- **Ms. Elissa Goldstein**, *Student Awareness Counselor*



Woodbridge Academy Magnet School

- **Ms. Lindsey Hintelmann**, *Media Specialist*
- **Ms. Cristina Kelly**, *School Nurse*



* Photo taken by Perth Amboy Magnet School student photographers
Lisset Luna Cortes, Emily Zhingri, Adalid Cardona Fernandez, and Yasmerlin Diaz

DISTRICT RECOGNITION

Middlesex County Magnet Schools Have Won First Place in Two Categories in the 2023 New Jersey School Public Relations Association (NJSPRA) Communication Awards



The only school district to receive two first-place honors, the Magnet Schools were recognized in the “Newsletter” and “Marketing, Branding, and Image” categories.

The quarterly newsletter, called “Insight,” was initiated last year by Superintendent of Schools Jorge E. Diaz and executed by the Magnet Schools’ External Affairs Department.

The second award cited the rebranding undertaken by the Magnet Schools over the last year in conjunction with the Middlesex County Board of Commissioners and county administration.

“We appreciate this recognition and thank the staff involved for their hard work,” Superintendent Diaz said. “It is always the goal of the Magnet Schools to provide clear and complete information to all our constituents, our students, their parents, our staff, and the people of Middlesex County.”

NJSPRA developed the School Communication Awards competition to recognize school districts for managing communications and developing tools that go above and beyond in disseminating important messages to the public. Winning entries are intended to be available as best practices for other districts.

“Our Middlesex County Magnet Schools are among the best public schools in the state, in no small part due to the limitless talent of our staff,” said Middlesex County Commissioner Director Ronald G. Rios. “I want to congratulate Superintendent Jorge Diaz and his team on this well-deserved recognition. Middlesex County prides itself on helping residents by providing clear and concise information, and these awards are a wonderful recognition of that.”

Judges who evaluated the school’s marketing and branding submission stated that the district “effectively demonstrated the application of the five-campus unified brand.” Over the past year, the district’s rebranding efforts for its five high schools have helped advertise career pathways to underrepresented, non-traditional, and marginalized populations.

↳ [Read the full article on mcmsnj.net.](https://www.mcmsnj.net)

BUSINESS PARTNER OF THE YEAR

When Christopher Gioffre is hiring a new employee, he is more interested in the candidate's character than in his technical ability.

Gioffre, service director of the Ray Catena Auto Group, who has found what he is looking for among Middlesex County Magnet Schools students, is the district's 2023 Business Partner of the Year.

"Character is foremost," he said. "Skills can be learned on the job. Character and integrity cannot."

"We depend on our business partners to keep our career curricula current and to provide employment opportunities for our students," said Superintendent of Schools Jorge E. Diaz. "Mr. Gioffre has been an outstanding advocate for our program and our students at Ray Catena Auto Group."

Gioffre has been instrumental in forging a connection with the automotive technology programs at East Brunswick, Perth Amboy, and Piscataway Magnet Schools, encouraging his service managers to speak with classes and visiting the schools himself.

Two of the automotive instructors, Kenneth Colavito in East Brunswick and Michael Perpente in Perth Amboy have worked for Ray Catena Auto Group under Gioffre.

"We have a familial relationship," he said. "We know them so well, and they know what kind of kids we're looking for."

"Mr. Gioffre is an exceptional individual who stands out not only for his remarkable skills and expertise but also for his unwavering commitment to excellence and collaborative spirit," Colavito said. "What truly distinguishes Mr. Gioffre is his ability to inspire and elevate those around him. He is a key component to the success of our automotive programs, leaving an indelible impact."

Gioffre hires students for part-time work after school and then offers many of them full-time jobs after they graduate. At any given time, there are five or six Magnet School students working for Ray Catena Auto Group.

➞ [Read the full article on mcmsnj.net](https://mcmsnj.net)



ON THE STAGE

School of the Arts Student Performances

Dance, music, theater, and arts tech students in the School of the Arts at East Brunswick Magnet School performed in two events in December at Middlesex College. “Perception Project” was the winter Dance performance featuring sophomores and juniors on Dec. 14 and 15, while Music Performance and Technology students were featured Dec. 21. Arts Technology students were behind the scenes at both shows, and theater sophomores and juniors offered thoughts on the science and experience of perception and created dramatic text and imagery in between the dance performances.

Before the music concert, Superintendent of Schools Jorge E. Diaz visited rehearsals in the music studio as he began a series of “Walks with the Superintendent,” in which he eventually will visit all career major classrooms.

↳ [Click here to view the "Perception Project" photo album.](#)

↳ [Click here to view the Music Concert photo album.](#)

↳ [Click here to view the first feature video of *Walks with the Superintendent.*](#)



MIDDLESEX COUNTY MAGNET SCHOOLS SPIRIT

School Spirit Week Was a Hit!

Each Magnet School celebrated the holiday season with their own Spirit Week before Winter Break. There were door and hallway decorating contests, dress-up days, scavenger hunts, and more holiday fun as students celebrated the week; each class competing to win "Most Spirited." At the end of the week, students attended a pep rally to find out which class won, and to participate in various activities. Middlesex County Magnet Schools students know how to show up with school spirit!



BEYOND THE BOOKS

Going Above and Beyond for Our Communities

Perth Amboy Magnet School's first "Art Time" mural is complete. A "Welcome to Perth Amboy Magnet School" mural featuring iconic landmarks, locations, buildings, and waterfronts of Perth Amboy now decorates a 28-foot hallway. The images were brought to life inside each letter using color matching and various acrylic paint techniques. Students experimented with various textures presented in the images, including water, grass, bricks, roofs, sky, and trees. Students took creative freedom in adding more refined final details throughout the mural, including small figures, highlights on water, blades of grass, etc. "Art Time" students are excited to bring many more beautiful murals to the building.



Woodbridge Academy Magnet School Interact Club, under the direction of Ms. Bowen, spread holiday joy by creating and delivering 50 holiday gift bags for the residents of St. Joseph's Senior Home in Woodbridge.



MJ Zappola, a senior in Automotive Technology at East Brunswick Magnet School, has been a part of the Boy Scout program since the second grade. He accomplished what only 6% of scouts across the world have done, he accomplished Eagle Rank! If you are not familiar with the Scout program: once crossing over from Cub Scout Boy Scout in the fifth grade, you need to make seven ranks, each with over 20 requirements, a six- to seven-year journey. There are 13 mandatory merit badges, and you need to pick 10 additional elective merit badges. MJ completed 29 merit badges in total. The biggest test to making Eagle is coming up with a project to help others, lead the group, figure out the budget, raise the money, purchase the materials, and instruct a team how to build what you had planned. A big part of this project is writing a proposal, a plan, and an ending summary.

MJ's Eagle project was to build a storage container for Camp Kiddie Well. He built it so that there was a garden on top and two side flower beds so the camp could grow herbs for their kitchen. For his project he drew pictures step by step and wrote out 50-plus directions that the younger Scouts could follow as he led them to build this structure.



BEYOND THE BOOKS

Going Above and Beyond for Our Communities

On Dec. 21, Woodbridge Academy Magnet School, along with Superintendent Diaz and administration, unveiled its Lighthouse School Banner. A Lighthouse School is committed to teaching leadership principles, creating a leadership culture and aligning academic systems. The principles set forth in the Leader In Me program, developed by Stephen Covey, is an ongoing collaboration of leadership that is shared by every member of Woodbridge Academy Magnet School, the entire staff, our students, their parents and our surrounding community partners. With this banner we are celebrating the beginning of a journey which will help to foster and develop the leadership abilities in all our stakeholders.



Holiday drives to collect food and other goods for the needy were conducted at all five Middlesex County Magnet Schools.

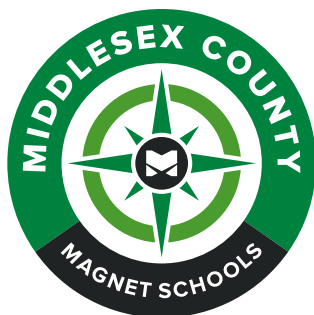
A Replenish Thanksgiving Food Drive organized by the Edison Academy Magnet School Interact Club and FBLA Community Service Council collected over 500 pounds of food. Replenish serves families and communities facing food insecurity in Middlesex County.

The drive was led by E. Poon, S. Kankanala, I. Chan, R. Patel, and A. Poon. Thank you to all the students, parents, and teachers who were involved to help make a difference in other people's lives and to club advisers Ms. Simmons and Ms. Patil.

Ms. Hill and the Perth Amboy Magnet School Interact Club gave donations to local organizations and families. The members of the club organized different donations, such as a coat and shoe drive for the Salvation Army in Perth Amboy to help keep local families warm this upcoming winter season, a food drive with the Replenish organization, and collecting eyeglasses for the local Lions Club to help those with vision impairment and blindness. The food collected at East Brunswick Magnet School was delivered Dec. 19 by members of the Interact Club and advisor Mary Vogt to the Replenish program.



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**ADULT
EDUCATION**

Keep up to date on what's happening throughout the Middlesex County Magnet Schools by following us on all of our social media accounts!



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NEWS RECOGNITION

Featured Articles About Us:

- **NJ.com**
 - [Greater Middlesex Conference Girls Tennis Player of the Year](#)
- **TapInto East Brunswick**
 - [Middlesex County Magnet Schools Now Accepting Applications for the 2024-25 School Year](#)
 - [Middlesex County Magnet Schools recognized with prestigious Lighthouse Award for advancing educational equity](#)
- **TapInto Edison**
 - [Middlesex County Magnet Schools Win Statewide Awards for Outstanding Communications](#)
- **Middlesex College QuoVadis Newsletter**
 - [College Partners with RWJ Program](#)



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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Magnet Schools Digital Film Student Earns National Honor

Lamont Harris took up photography at the age of 8 when his father handed him a camera. He is now a Middlesex County Magnet Schools junior, and his two-minute film “Flashbacks” was an official selection at the largest student film festival in the world and a nominee as Best Adventure/Travel Film by the Teen Indie Awards.

Lamont, a South River resident, may be a digital film career major in the School of the Arts at East Brunswick Magnet School, but he favors throwback equipment: a 35mm film camera from the '70s and an Argus 8mm movie camera he found at a flea market for \$25. The movie film, however, was only available from an online vendor at \$99 a roll.

He likes that he needs to be more discriminatory when he has just 36 photos on a roll of film, rather than unlimited snaps on a digital camera.

“I feel like my film photos are better because I’m stopping, looking around,” he said, adding that the finished product requires less editing. “The photos look good straight off the camera.”

“Flashbacks” was among more than 2,500 entries from all 50 states and more than 40 foreign countries at the All-American High School Film Festival and was one of seven official selections in its category and among five nominees for Best Travel/Adventure Film.

It somewhat mimics the perennial school assignment “What I Did Last Summer,” but recounts his summer in a dream-like manner, almost in slow-motion – a trip to the beach, fireworks, a cruise, and Hersey Park. It is narrated by his classmate Marlee Marte.

Lamont said since he took to the camera at an early age, his parents suggested he might want to become a photographer.

“It’s always been something in the back of my mind,” he said, adding that his arrival at East Brunswick Magnet School cemented his ambition. “When I got here, it really unlocked more of that passion within me.”

↳ [Read the rest of Lamont's story on mcmsnj.net.](https://mcmsnj.net)



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Woodbridge Academy Magnet School Students Recognized Internationally for Their Efforts.

What started as a classroom poster assignment for three Woodbridge Academy Magnet School students has resulted in a paper that was accepted at an international healthcare conference and will be presented online by a prestigious medical publishing company.

Anika Bukkapatnam, Sara Manjaly and Rachana Senthil, current seniors, created a research poster on sepsis – a serious condition in which the body’s response to infection can result in dire consequences – and discovered that as many as 1.7 million people in the country get sepsis annually and, even more startling that New Jersey has one of the highest sepsis mortality rates in the nation.

Their poster was picked for the annual Tech Expo at Woodbridge Academy, which offers career majors in health and biomedical sciences. After it won first place in the expo, they decided to do something to help solve this problem.

Together, they wrote a preliminary machine-learning model to expedite the diagnosis of sepsis, potentially facilitating earlier and more successful treatment. Their paper on the model was accepted for presentation at the 13th International Conference on Current and Future Trends of Information and Communication Technologies in Healthcare in Kazakhstan.

It will be published online by the Dutch company Elsevier Science in the open-access Procedia Computer Science series.

“The Board of County Commissioners and I are inspired by the exceptional work of our Magnet School students,” said Middlesex County Commissioner Director Ronald G. Rios. “The innovative talent that is developing at our schools is the future of our county’s economic growth. This recent honor joins a long list of industry recognition, and we’re proud to see the Magnet School district continue to reach new heights.”

“This is another outstanding achievement by Magnet School students,” Superintendent of Schools Jorge E. Diaz said. “What these students have done is to reach well beyond expectations for their ages and make a real contribution to public health.”

➔ [Read about the rest of the team's accomplishments on mcmsnj.net.](https://mcmsnj.net)



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

From Stress to Success: Creating a Supportive Classroom Environment

A note from Ms. Grace DiMarco, District Social Worker:

The [Traumatic Loss Coalition \(TLC\)](#) is a County resource used by many school districts, including ours, to assist with response to traumatic events. TLC recently announced an extension of its services, the HOPES Program. HOPES provides immediate encouragement and support to families bereaved by the suicide loss of a school-age child. Through their LOSS teams, HOPES provides immediate assistance to survivors to avoid gaps in accessing critical resources after a traumatic loss.

Here are some highlights of how HOPES assists families bereaved by suicide loss:

- The LOSS Team will provide a "hope box" that includes resources, a blanket, and additional items to offer resilience and comfort.
- It will connect the family with members from their community who have also experienced a suicide loss (peer-to-peer support).
- A clinician will oversee and follow up with the family about opportunities to receive professional counseling, engage in support groups, and aid in wellness planning.
- A card will be sent to the family on the birthday and anniversary of their loved one.
- Offer the option to create a quilt or stuffed animal from their loved one's clothing.
- If you or someone you know would benefit from these services, please contact Brett Peppe, Program Manager.

Students and Negative Self-Talk: "I'm dumb." "No one likes me." "I'll never be good at this."

These are examples of negative comments many students (and even adults) say about themselves. It is common for students who struggle in school and experience more setbacks than others to engage in negative self-talk. When something bad or disappointing happens, they may see it as part of a pattern that applies to all parts of their life. If students are constantly saying negative things about themselves, you can help them recognize these thought patterns or "mind traps." Identifying these patterns can be a first step toward helping students manage their worries. [Visit Understood](#) to learn more about negative self-talk and ways to support students.



STUDENT ACTIVITIES

“The Hook” is officially open at Piscataway Magnet School.

The Hook is the name of the storefront of Mr. Diemer’s culinary class. Mr. Diemer’s and Mr. Rios’ classes worked collaboratively and celebrated their soft opening on Oct. 15. The students were very excited to open The Hook to the rest of the school.

Edison Academy Magnet School students showed off their talent in singing, dancing, music, and even comedy at the annual Talent Show on Dec. 1 at Middlesex College’s West Hall. The Interact Club was the sponsor, with seniors V. Naik and Y. Lakhotia as MCs. Thanks go out to adviser Ms. Simmons and to Interact Club officers J. Mudhar, S. Gupta, A. Arora, and N. Agrawal.

East Brunswick Magnet School, led by the Student Council and class advisors, held its first-ever Homecoming Dance on Oct. 26.

Woodbridge Academy Magnet School seniors hosted a spectacular Winter Formal. A great time was had by all. Students decorated the gymnasium to be a Winter Wonderland.

The Edison Academy Magnet School Foundation held its annual International Dinner offering delicious cuisine from around the world. Thank you to Foundation President Ms. Singhal and to all the parents who organized a great social event.



ADULT EDUCATION

The Adult Cosmetology class welcomed two graduates of the Middlesex County Magnet Schools Adult Cosmetology Program, Jackie Russomanno-Clementi (Class of 2013) and Estrella Sexton-Marrero (Class of 2020). Jackie Russomanno-Clementi is a salon owner and Matrix Educator. The topic for the day included highlight techniques and placements. A demonstration was provided to the class on bleach and tint applications.

Thomas Ruperto, who teaches first-year plumbing apprentices, has been an apprentice instructor for the Middlesex County Magnet Schools since 1988. He became an apprentice instructor because he enjoys sharing his experience and knowledge with his students. He is always learning new things and learns a lot by teaching his apprenticeship classes. He started his career as a student in the Middlesex County Vocational and Technical School in New Brunswick. As an alumnus, he attributes his education and background to the success he has had to this day. He is a licensed plumber and owner and operator of RupCoe Plumbing, Heating & Air Conditioning in South Plainfield. He has been providing quality service to his customers for 38 years.

Practical nursing students celebrated Culture Day.

Since culture is such a big part of nursing education, the subject is included in the curriculum, and during the program, friendships are formed and students learn a lot from each other. The students brought in either main dishes, appetizers or desserts, and a grand potluck was enjoyed by all. The big highlight of the day was the nursing basket raffle. The money raised went towards Student Council activities.



ATHLETICS NEWS

The The East Brunswick Magnet School and Piscataway Magnet School soccer teams played in the state tournament, with East Brunswick Magnet School soccer team defeating Morris County Tech to win the NJTAC Groups I and II championship.

Woodbridge Academy Magnet School senior soccer players celebrated their season with family and friends on Senior Night. Coach Modzelewski and the players displayed posters honoring each player and presented a rose to each player's parents. The soccer team played Roselle Park in the first round of the NJSIAA tournament. Although they were defeated, the Hornets entered the tournament as a respectable No. 10 seed and fought hard in the loss.

The Edison Academy Magnet School soccer team celebrated Senior Day Oct. 18 before a game against Dunellen.

Students from each campus of the Middlesex County Magnet Schools participated in the Greater Middlesex Conference Winter Sportsmanship Summit Dec. 7 at the Woodbridge Community Center.

The Perth Amboy Magnet School Patriots Soccer Team celebrated Senior Night on Oct. 10. We are very proud of all they have accomplished this year so far.

The Edison Academy Magnet School girls tennis team celebrated the conclusion of its first season. Manasi Vartak was named Player of the Year by the Greater Middlesex Conference for her outstanding efforts this season.



CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

In October, Middlesex County Magnet Schools received grant funding from the Middlesex County Office of Human Services to allow our district to provide select students with school-based paid internship opportunities over three months.

The Workplace Internship Program was coordinated by Mr. David Williams, who worked closely with administrators and district staff to identify 35 eligible seniors.

The Workplace Internship Program aimed to help students overcome two significant barriers that often prevent them from gaining work experience before graduation: transportation and a “first chance” to work in their chosen field of study. Students were selected for the program through an application and interview process, similar to what they will experience in the adult workforce.

During the program, students worked on special projects under the guidance of CTE instructors and industry specialists from the Facilities Department. The projects required students to work collaboratively with their peers from other CTE classes across the district.

In addition to being financially compensated for their hard work, students gained valuable work experience that they can reference on their resumes and in support of their post-high school career and academic endeavors.



CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION NEWS

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

Middlesex County Magnet Schools media specialists attended the NJASL Conference in Atlantic City, where they were able to choose different areas for professional growth.

Some of the sessions included: Spark & Tell, Benefits of Author Visit, LGBTQ Is Not a Genre, Why Words Matter, and End Literacy Shaming, which included insights into not only book bans but how they approach their collections and introduce new books to students. The final session attended was the Information Literacy Panel, which focused on how media specialists are playing a major role in the implementation of the literacy bill. Finally, they were happy to see that two of our previous district media specialists were honored at the conference. Fran Pfeffer, formerly of Edison Academy Magnet School and now with the NJEA, received an award, while Dagmar Finkle, retired from Perth Amboy Magnet School, was honored in memory.

Math teachers Debora Brown, Wendy Galvez, Shrouk Khalil, Tom Leiberling, Dan Mullarkey, Deanna Petersen, Margaret Zajac and Sarah Rubin attended the AMTNJ annual fall conference at Brookdale Community College. The keynote speaker was Peter Liljedahl, author of "Building Thinking Classrooms." He left the teachers excited about ideas for ways to close a lesson and help students consolidate their thinking. Other sessions included ways to thin-slice content, co-teaching strategies, brain-based retention strategies, data science, room design to facilitate engagement, along with a variety of others. Teachers returned excited to explore new strategies and resources in their own classrooms.

The Curriculum and Instruction Department, along with building administration, completed the first round of walk-throughs at each campus. Walk-throughs play a crucial role in maintaining educational quality by providing real-time insights into classroom dynamics.



FACILITIES NEWS

The Piscataway Magnet School baseball field was named Sports Field of the Year by the Sport Turf Managers Association of New Jersey.

The award was presented to Michael Morvay, head grounds foreman of the Middlesex County Magnet Schools Building and Grounds Department in November. He was cited for “improving the safety, playability and appearance” of the field.

The field was completed in 2015 under the direction of former Athletic Director Ray Cipperly and the watchful eye of former Grounds Foreman Ryan Radcliffe.

Magnet School fields adhere to Major League Baseball Standards, employing an integrated pest management program. Morvay has a plant science degree from Rutgers University and a wealth of expertise, having maintained golf courses, served 16 years at the Jersey Shore BlueClaws stadium as director of grounds, and undertaken the rehabilitation of numerous Little League fields.

Kevin Mikutsky leads day-to-day operations, supported by Fred Broxmeyer and John McCracken, alongside the dedicated grounds staff.

Tiger Field at East Brunswick Magnet School has won numerous awards, particularly excelling under the stewardship of former Grounds Foreman Keith Fischer, ultimately securing a National Award in 2020. The Piscataway baseball field will be entered in the national competition this year.

It's noteworthy that all Magnet Schools varsity fields boast natural playing surfaces.



TECHNOLOGY NEWS

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

Take a look at the many improvements they've rolled out for our students and teachers.

Updates and Installations:

- Imaged the Perkins machines that arrived for the East Brunswick and Edison Academy Magnet Schools.
- Updated SmartDeploy to the latest version of the imaging environment software.
- Replaced 10 more PCs in the academic classrooms in East Brunswick Magnet School based upon the walk-through that was conducted earlier in the month.
- Installed a new teacher PC and increased the number of student PCs in Room 105 at Edison Academy Magnet School.
- Continuing to upgrade District PCs to Windows 11.
- Reimaged all devices in the Computer Systems Technology program at Perth Amboy Magnet School.

KnowBe4: As part of our District-wide Security Awareness and Training Campaign, quarterly training will be released from KnowBe4. The next training is set to launch on January 15 focusing on avoiding online scams, stopping data breaches, and understanding the importance of password complexity requirements. An announcement from District Administration will precede the KnowBe4 email.

IncidentIQ Training: The Technology department attended the IncidentIQ Lunch and Learn information and networking event. Information regarding best practices, workflows, enhanced features, and upcoming updates was shared. The event allowed for the sharing of ideas and use case scenarios among IIQ users from across the state. A demonstration of the Facilities Portion of IIQ is being planned. This will allow the Building and Grounds department to have a ticketing system customized to their needs and specifications.



COLLEGE READY. CAREER READY. LIFE READY.

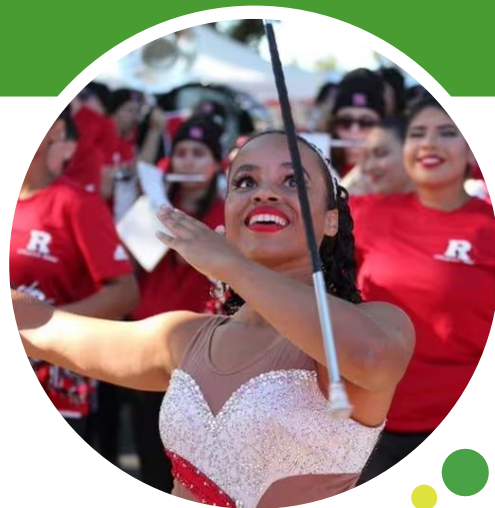
Ms. Tiahna Selby, science teacher at Piscataway Magnet School, performed in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade with the Rutgers University Marching Scarlet Knights. The featured twirler, she has been a part of the Marching Scarlet Knights since 2016. Ms. Selby had a solo moment with the band during the parade.

↳ [Read the full article about Ms. Selby here.](#)

Mr. Stiles and the Woodbridge Academy Junior State of America students competed at Fall State. Our students all won Best Speaker in their main events: N. Murali, V. Bhat, and Y. Thacker.

East Brunswick Magnet School's National Girls and Women in Sports Award recipient was E. Barte. NJSIAA is pleased to partner with Rutgers University in celebrating the 2024 National Girls and Women in Sports Day. The celebratory event was hosted on Jan. 14 at Jersey Mike's Arena in Piscataway as the Rutgers women's basketball team hosted Penn State.

Perth Amboy Magnet School students received an enriching visit from Mr. Terry Moore, representing the University of Northwest Ohio (UNOH). His presentation sparked enthusiasm among HVAC, Auto, and Electrical students, shedding light on tailored programs geared towards emphasizing hands-on learning and industry-specific skills crucial for future success. Mr. Moore unveiled myriad opportunities awaiting aspiring professionals, outlining UNOH's specialized programs designed to prepare students for thriving careers. A highlight was Javian Rodriguez's achievement of second place nationally in a scholarship test, earning a \$5,000 scholarship.



COLLEGE READY. CAREER READY. LIFE READY.

East Brunswick Magnet School FFA members competed in the FFA Fall Competition. For many students, this was the first time for them competing in Career Development Events (CDEs), including Kira Steeber, who will be recognized on stage at the New Jersey State FFA Convention for her first-place award in the Fruit and Vegetable CDE. The East Brunswick Magnet School team placed fifth overall out of 25 teams.



Edison Academy Magnet School seniors presented their Capstone Project proposals to professional engineers in a Shark Tank format. The invited guests asked questions and provided valuable feedback to the students before they embark on their final designs and implementations of their engineering projects. Engineering instructors Dr. Weinstein and Ms. Patil organized the program, and special thanks to our guest judges from JAKTOOL and from our advisory committees.



Students from Piscataway Magnet School's Finance and Banking and Business Administration programs traveled to New York City to visit the historic Federal Reserve Bank of New York on Dec. 15. During this trip, our students were immersed in an inquiry-based, interactive, and informative learning experience designed to promote awareness of the role and responsibilities of the Federal Reserve System and enhance their economic literacy.



Piscataway Magnet School Building Trades students, under the supervision of instructor Andy Carvalhais, successfully installed 9 square yards (3,500 lbs. per square inch) of cement in the school's foyer on Nov. 27. This was a major step in the improvements being done to the foyer area. We can't wait to see what the Raiders' home will look like next!



COLLEGE READY. CAREER READY. LIFE READY.

Edison Academy Magnet School hosted its very first Junior State of America (JSA) ChapterCon Oct. 28 at Middlesex College.

JSA ChapterCon is a one-day convention that brings together students from all over the state to network, learn and debate. This year's convention was the first Middle-Atlantic States (MAS) JSA Conference hosted in the district and was a huge success, with over 100 students attending. Highlights included a mock Republican primary debate, a workshop on public speaking and a MAS staff Q&A session. Students had the opportunity to meet and network with students from different schools, including J.P. Stevens, Woodbridge Academy Magnet School, and South Plainsboro. Sophomores A. Bhattacharjee, A. Baijulal, and R. Paluri, as well as freshman A. Hernandez, won gavels for their public speaking prowess. The event was led by juniors L. Chauhan and B. Wilk. Thank you to advisor Mr. Price for his support.

Kevin Malone, a 2023 graduate of Perth Amboy Magnet School, visited to speak to his former teacher Ms. Hickman and his Electrical Technology class about his last six months in the electrical field. Right after graduation, Kevin was hired by Luke's Electric in Green Brook. He spoke about being an apprentice for a small electrical contractor, what his daily work day is like, and his responsibilities in the company. The Electrical Technology students enjoyed the Q&A with Kevin as they are looking forward to accomplishing the same goals. This is what our Magnet Schools are all about – preparing students to be career ready!



COLLEGE READY. CAREER READY. LIFE READY.

Piscataway Magnet School DECA students participated in a Social Media Presentation with Ms. Rachel Morales from the Department of External Affairs. Ms. Morales demonstrated the benefits of social media marketing for businesses as well as for their club. Students learned the importance of connecting to your audience, brand recognition, and how to get your brand or a product in front of a new audience by creating engaging and relevant content.

Ms. Dlugosz's 12th-grade students at Perth Amboy Magnet School created imaginative self-portraits that contain their representative facial features and expressive, meaningful symbols after analyzing inspirational portraiture artists. The students not only reached a learning goal but also had the opportunity to express who they are in a way where others could see them from a different perspective. They enjoyed getting creative with their portraits, expressing themselves through art and learning about their classmates' interests or hobbies.

The week of Nov. 13, Jacob Persily, Director of Volunteer Services, and Vivian I. Cappolla presented teen volunteer and career opportunities with Robert Wood Johnson and Children's Specialized Hospitals in New Brunswick to Piscataway and East Brunswick Magnet Schools Health Services and Exercise Science majors, as well as Woodbridge Academy Magnet School's Allied Health students. Our thanks to Jacob and Vivian for their presentations and Middlesex County Commissioner Director Ronald G. Rios for addressing our Piscataway Magnet School students. We look forward to our students' taking advantage of these fantastic opportunities to help patients in Middlesex County.



ALUMNI NEWS

A Tale of Two Salons: Adult Cosmetology Grad Shares Insight on Being a Salon Owner and How She Got There

In just 10 years, Jaclyn Clementi has gone from being a student in the Middlesex County Magnet Schools adult cosmetology program to owning two salons in Edison.

Clementi, then Jackie Russomanno, graduated from the Adult Education program at East Brunswick Magnet School in 2013, earned her state license and then worked at a number of salons before opening her own business, Salon 77 on Woodbridge Avenue in Edison, in 2021. This year, she opened Salon Voltage on Stephenville Parkway.

“One on each side of town,” she said.



After working for a number of bosses, she knew what kind of boss she wanted to be.

“I wanted to have an environment where everybody can express themselves,” she said. “A good, happy, healthy environment.”

She said she thought about renaming one of her salons “The Hangout.”

“Everybody just gets along, and it’s like a hangout for your friends,” she said.

Clementi recently visited Phyllis Collabella’s adult cosmetology class at Piscataway Magnet School with the manager of Salon 77, Estrella Sexton-Marrero, a 2020 graduate of the East Brunswick adult cosmetology program.

She said they talked to the students about what is trending in the industry – highlights, for example. She stressed the typical hour spent with a client must include a consultation to ensure that the result is what the client envisioned.

(continued on next page)



ALUMNI NEWS

(continued from page 27)

She said one of the Piscataway students works for her part time and she plans to hire her full time when she graduates in June.

"I always want my girls to continue learning," Clementi said.

She praised her teacher, Valerie Dobrolosky, who continues to teach the East Brunswick adult class.

"I loved my teacher," Clementi said. "She was very straightforward and direct when teaching us. She was strict in a good way."

She said Dobrolosky stressed that the goal of the 10-month program was to pass the state licensing test, "and everyone did."

She said that is an advantage of the public-school program, in addition to being less expensive than private schools.

"I tell students to always go and get their full license," she said. "You want to take that seriously and want to pass that test."

"She was a fun student to have," Dobrolosky said. "She always was very passionate about her career. She worked hard. I understand why she has been successful."



Clementi said she hopes to continue visiting classes in both Piscataway and East Brunswick. The Magnet Schools Cosmetology/Hairstyling Program trains men and women to do all phases of hairdressing and cosmetology, including preparing materials, demonstrating and selling, shampooing, manicuring, hairstyling, scalp treating, facials and makeup, haircutting, rinsing, hair coloring and permanent waving.

↳ Discover Salon 77 at salon77nj.com

↳ Follow Salon 77 on Instagram

↳ Follow Salon Voltage on Instagram



ALUMNI NEWS

Alum Leads Production Team at State Theatre in New Brunswick

Michelle Lane loves to return to East Brunswick Magnet School to talk to current students about her experiences as a theatrical production manager. She says she remembers appreciating visiting professionals when she was a student.

A 2013 graduate of the School of the Arts with a career major in theater, she says she is jealous of current students who are able to major in arts technology. The teacher is Lea Anello, one of the visiting professionals from her student days.

“She was an incredible resource,” Lane says, recalling the difficulty of balancing the performance and technical aspects of the theater major in her day.

“As a high-schooler having to balance all that was a chore,” she said. “Guest artists made the program so much more valuable, getting varied perspectives is so important.”

When she comes back to East Brunswick Magnet School, she hopes to convey to current students “here’s what I learned and here’s what to expect out there.”

“It’s heartwarming and fantastic to see how much the program has grown,” Lane said.

“Everyone has a strong passion for the school,” she said of her fellow theater alums, 15 or 20 of whom return to speak to current students.



She says the necessity to move beyond the school auditorium during the pandemic and while it was being renovated may actually help the students.

“In some ways it’s really beneficial not to be stuck in the same space,” Lane said. “Sometimes you just have to make theater work in places it’s not supposed to work. You have to be able to roll with the punches.”

Lane also gives back to the Magnet Schools by serving on an advisory committee.

Her current job is as production manager of the State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick, making sure all performers, from comedians to Broadway touring companies, have whatever they need. The job can involve arranging lighting, sound, scenery, catering, even parking.

“I make sure we either have everything they need or can get it,” she said. “Kind of like a party planner but for performances.”

↳ [Read the full article on mcmsnj.net](https://mcmsnj.net)

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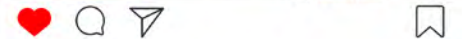
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Just in a day's work. Adult Education students from the Automotive Maintenance course aren't "tired" yet from learning new auto skills. [#quickclicks](#)

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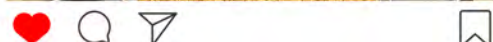
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Team work makes the dream work in Edison Academy Magnet School's mechanical & civil engineering class. [#quickclicks](#)

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Saving lives, one CPR class at a time at Woodbridge Academy Magnet School. [#quickclicks](#)

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How sweet it is. Anyone else craving a cheesecake from the talented Perth Amboy Magnet School chefs? [#quickclicks](#)

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From New Jersey to the Rocky Steps, East Brunswick Magnet School students are on top! [#quickclicks](#)

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Strike a pose. Edison Academy Magnet School's photographers always get the perfect shot. [#quickclicks](#)

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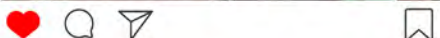
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East Brunswick Magnet School puts the "skills" in "Skills USA." [#quickclicks](#)

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Learning new tricks of the trade in the Adult Education machine shop technology course. [#quickclicks](#)

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Glee, trees and smiles all around. Holiday spirit shined from Edison Academy Magnet School. [#quickclicks](#)

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A bittersweet farewell to Perth Amboy Magnet School's senior soccer players. [#quickclicks](#)

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What's a Spirit Week without our teachers? [#quickclicks](#)

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Bon appétit. Superintendent Diaz learned some tips & tricks from the East Brunswick Magnet School baking students. [#quickclicks](#)
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Laying concrete isn't easy, but the Piscataway Magnet School's building construction technology students got the job done with ease. [#quickclicks](#)
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With great power comes great electric-ability in the Adult Education classrooms. [#quickclicks](#)
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We've got the spirit, how 'bout you? Woodbridge Academy Magnet School's Spirit Week was one of the best yet! [#quickclicks](#)
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The sweet sounds of music filled the air during Edison Academy Magnet School's talent show. [#quickclicks](#)
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Artistic perfection. All things Perth Amboy, from waterfronts to landmarks, are now featured in the school's stunning new mural. [#quickclicks](#)
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And...scene! You might just see these East Brunswick Magnet School Theatre students on Broadway one day. [#quickclicks](#)

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Bones, bodies, blood vessels, oh my! Woodbridge Academy Magnet School's students learn it all. [#quickclicks](#)

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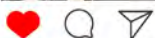
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Let's go Patriots! The new girls soccer team is coming to a soccer field near you next school year. [#quickclicks](#)


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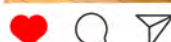
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What are we looking at? A bright future for future doctors & scientists from Woodbridge Academy Magnet School. [#quickclicks](#)

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Make sure to take notes! Piscataway Magnet School teachers always take the time to learn alongside students. [#quickclicks](#)

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Music to our ears! East Brunswick Magnet School student Haley L. sang the National Anthem at the Middlesex County Board of County Commissioners Reorganization Meeting. [#quickclicks](#)

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Rain or shine, Edison Academy Magnet School teachers always have a smile on their face. [#quickclicks](#)

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Dribble, pass, score. Let's go Raiders. [#quickclicks](#)

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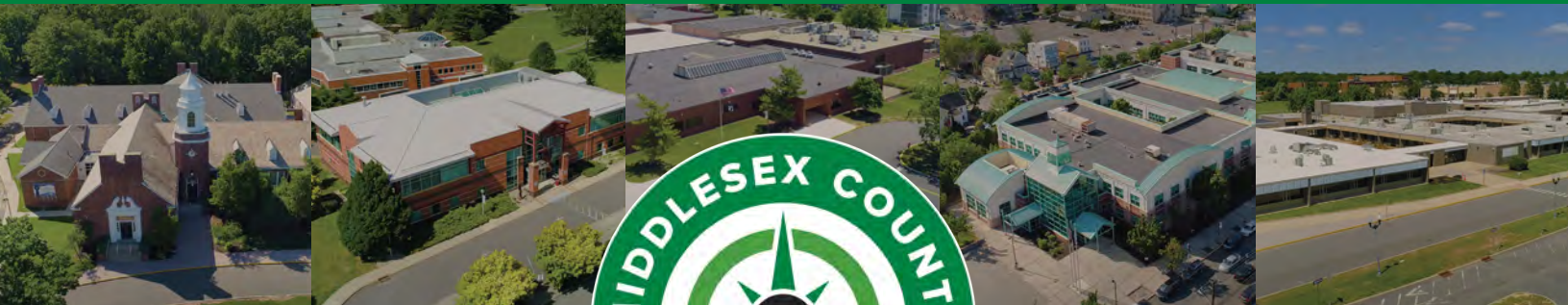
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Learning new skills is always fun at the Adult Education Cosmetology Program. [#quickclicks](#)

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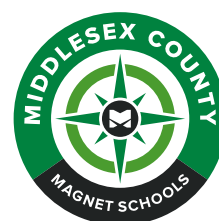
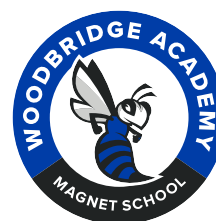


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Goal! Who else is excited for the next soccer season at Piscataway Magnet School? [#quickclicks](#)

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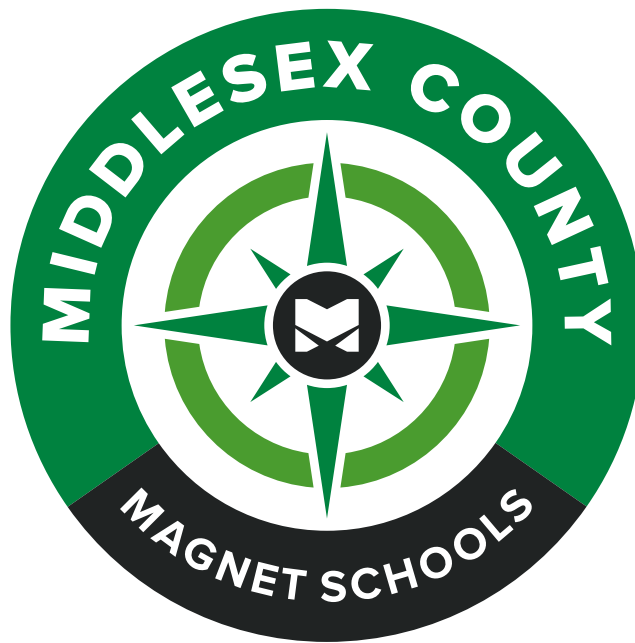


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