



LINDENWOLD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING • 801 EGG HARBOR ROAD • LINDENWOLD, NJ 08021

KRISTIN P. O'NEIL, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

August 21, 2024

Dear Lion Families,

Welcome to the 2024 – 2025 school year! It has definitely been a very busy summer with lots of construction projects being completed across the District. We are excited about the facilities and maintenance work taking place, and we are very grateful to all of the tradesmen/tradeswomen, architects, engineers, township officials, and to our Board of Education for making this all possible for our students and our community.

Exciting Facilities Updates for Summer 2024:

- Our Early Childhood Center is on-target to open September 2025. It is really starting to look like a building.
- LHS added a new, gorgeous, and future focused culinary room to the building. This will assist us in expanding programs that meet student interests and needs of our students.
- School 5 & LMS both had HVAC work taking place all summer long.
- LMS had its auditorium, sound, and lighting project completed.
- The District expanded its security camera systems throughout our buildings.
- Next summer, you will see roofs and HVAC work continuing throughout our existing district schools. By the end of Summer 2026, all of our schools will be air conditioned in every wing.

Student Dress Code Update:

We will be entering year 2 of the *District Dress Code Pilot*. Please visit the District Website under the [Parents Tab & Dress Code Pilot 2023 – 2025](#) tab for more information. We did note a significant reduction in dress code violations at conclusion of this first-year pilot – especially at LHS. As a result of the noted benefits, the Board of Education opted to extend the Pilot one more year to collect additional data before considering this as a fully revised policy. We do still have some areas where **we need your help** in addressing:

- Pajama pants are not permitted to be worn during the school day.
- Shirts must cover one's back and abdomen region. Crop tops are not permitted to be worn during the school day.
- Hoodies and hats may not be worn in school during the school day. (This is a school safety issue as we do need to see everyone's full face when inside a school building.)

Back-to-School Information:

Back-to-School Information has already been shared in our July & August Lion's Roar Newsletters. Our newsletters are emailed to you, posted on our social media sites and posted on our District Website. Visit the Parent's tab and click on the link: The Lion's Roar. All newsletters can be translated into your preferred language by clicking on the "TRANSLATE" button on the right-hand side of the newsletter. Our District Calendar and important beginning of the year dates are included on the District Website under the [Parents Tab/Calendar 2024 – 2025 Tab](#).

Family/Community Partnerships - Electronic Devices (Cell Phones, Smart Watches, etc.):

This year, we are focusing on the importance of the home-school partnerships. There are so many things that we

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can not do alone. **WE NEED YOU.** One area where you can assist us is to support our protocols regarding the use of electronic devices (including but not limited to: cell phones, smart watch communication apps, and AirPods) in school. Electronic devices have become a significant learning distraction and have also become an actual safety issue in schools across the country. As a result, we need our families to understand our protocols and support us by reinforcing this message at home, too.

Grade PK – Grade 8: Students **may not** have electronic devices (cell phones, smart watch communication apps, AirPods, etc.) visible and in during the school day. This protocol begins the moment a student steps off onto school property. Students will be asked **ONE TIME** in a school day to put their electronic device away which means devices must be placed in their backpack or locker. Electronic devices should remain out of sight and in backpacks and/or lockers during the school day. Please let your children know, after requesting one time for an electronic device to be deactivated from use or put away, the electronic device will be confiscated by an administrator. Devices will then be secured in the main office and released **ONLY** to an adult. Electronic devices will not be returned to a child.

Refusing to surrender an electronic device to an administrator will be considered insubordination. If, as a parent, you do not wish to engage in this process, you must keep the cellular devices at home. **If you allow your child to bring an electronic device into school, you are agreeing to follow our protocol.**

Grade PK – Grade 12: Students may not use their personal electronic devices to randomly record or photograph other students during the school day. Only school-related photographs may be taken during the school day. Those photographs are taken by our identified and trained LHS District Student Photographers or by designated School Staff.

School District Photographers or school staff **ONLY** use photographs for the following identified purposes: communication with families, commemorating school-related celebrations, unique educational experiences, or for school/district promotional purposes.

ANY student who chooses to video record or photograph during the school day – including but not limited to – inappropriate student behavior for the purpose of personal entertainment, humiliation, bullying, or harassment will be disciplined in accordance to the Code of Conduct. Furthermore, any student **SHARING** photographs/videos of other students for the purposes of bullying, harassment, humiliation, etc. will be addressed in the same manner. Sharing photos and videos causes significant harm to others.

We hope you can support us as these actions have become socially, emotionally, and sometimes physically harmful to oneself and others.

How You Can Help Us:

Many school-related issues first begin in the community, outside of school, and are brought into the school via social media. **If you see something, please say something!** Families, community members, and students may report anything they see directly to a teacher, staff member, or administrator. Families, community members, or students may also use our **ANONYMOUS REPORTING APP** called “**Stop It.**” You can report **ANYTHING** anonymously to us using this website/app. You can find it in your App Store or you can find it online: www.lindenwold.k12.nj.us (scroll to the middle of the page) and look for their emblem (below). You can also directly visit their website:



<https://appweb.stopitsolutions.com/login>



Please screen shot or save what you “**See**” and “**Say Something**” to us via email, telephone, or on our STOP IT anonymous app. You can upload any information there. You are helping us to help support children.

District Strategic Plan:

This is our 3rd and final year of our District Strategic Plan. We have made **a lot** of progress, but we have farther to go! A progress update will be shared during our fall Board of Education Meetings. Our goals fall into one of three categories: Organizational Capacity, Rigorous Instruction, and District Culture.

Structure of our School District in 2025 – 2026:

This past spring, our community was asked to respond to a survey regarding your preference on the structure of our schools for Grade 2 – 5. As expected, feedback varied among sub-groups: (elem., middle, high school) parents, teachers, high school students, community members, etc. However, overall, when including the “no preference” responses, the data showed an approximate 50/50 split between model preferences. Fortunately, we know that we reached at least a wide range of families based on the following data:

- 2800 times the first informational newsletter was opened
- 2100 times the second informational newsletter was opened
- Over 1100 times the QR code was scanned to review the Grade Level Schools information
- A total of 424 individuals responded to the survey.

We did track the social media data on our Facebook and Instagram platforms, and we do know how many times our English and Spanish Informational Videos were viewed.

At this time, the District **has not** made a final decision about Grades 2 – 5. However, the one DEFINITE plan at this time is the following for 2025 – 2026:

Early Childhood Center: ALL PK, Kindergarten, and 1st Grade Students

Grades 2 – 5: To Be Determined

LMS: ALL 6th, 7th, 8th Grade Students

LHS: ALL 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th Grade Students

It is important you know the Superintendent & District Central Administration do believe a grade level schools model WILL enhance the overall instructional and educational services provided to all of our students. As Central Office Administration, it is our job to recommend what we believe is the best way to support our student learning, growth, and instructional/academic programs for our students. We believe a grade level structure will help us in building a stronger foundation of learning for our children and professional support our staff to the best of our ability.

Our Recommendation:

School 4: 2nd, 3rd

School 5: 4th, 5th

District Central Office Administration Believes:

- Student academic programming and supports will be more equitable to all students within a grade level.
- Keeping all grade level staff together has many great benefits including staff being able to work together as a complete unit on curriculum and instruction which assists in planning throughout the entire school year.
- Grade level staff members will see each other much more frequently than they do now. Elementary Staff now see each other on in-service days. At this time, grade level elementary staff come together as an entire grade level very infrequently.
- The District Central Administration believes this model will allow the District to utilize our resources in the most effective manner (academically & economically): staffing, program assignment, time, etc.
- Since our grade level sizes are over 200 students (closer to 230-250), student placement options will be more flexible and vaster. There will be 10-12 classrooms in a grade instead of 5 – 6.

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- Although we will NOT know until students actually enter LMS in 6th grade, District Central Administration do believe keeping our students together as a grade level will improve student relationships when entering the middle school years. Our LMS and LHS students indicate their #1 concern as peer-to-peer relationships, and it is also the #1 issue students say they need our help and support to resolve. Interestingly, over 70% of our survey respondents also agreed that keeping our students together as a whole grade level as they move through the District would improve relationships, too.

Please access and review our Grade Level School District information on our webpage. You can find it under the [Parent's Tab called Alternate Consideration – Grade Level School Model](#). Community presentations are recorded and posted on this page in both English and Spanish. The Superintendent will be sharing more information about the Grade Level School Model during each Back-to-School Open House Night. Questions posed in the survey will be answered in the presentation: What will the staggered starting time schedule be for School 4 and School 5? What about busing? What school will be grades 2 & 3?

This same presentation will then be shared with the Board of Education following all Back-to-School Open House Nights. The goal of the Superintendent is to decide this fall so we can begin to start planning for the 2025 – 2026 school year.

Clearly, we have a LOT going on throughout our District. We hope you can see we are dedicated and working hard to move our District forward. Unfortunately, when we want to see great things, we need to embrace change. While we talk about strengthening our school district academically and operationally, we just need your partnership to make this hard work become a reality!

As you prepare for the upcoming school year, here are some important “SAVE THE DATE” school events that should be marked on your calendar now! Welcome Back to School!!!!

Important Dates to Know

Summer Letters Mailed: 8/21/24 (If not received by 8/26/24, please contact your child's school.)

Bus Passes Mailed: 8/26/24 (If not received by 8/30/24, please contact your child's school.)

September 4th:

LMS Grade 5- Orientation 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

September 5th

Preschool Back-to-School/Open House (6pm)

September 6th

Grade 9 Orientation (9:45 am)

September 9th

First day of school for all students

September 17th

School 4 and School 5- Back-to-School/Open House

September 19th

LMS Back-to-School Open House

September 26th

LHS Back-to-School Open House

Fall Evening Conferences:

Preschool: 12/10/24 (note month change)

School 4 & 5: 12/11/24 (note month change)

LMS: 11/25/24

LHS: 11/26/24

PK, Elementary, & LMS Spring Conferences

Spring Afternoon: 3/18/24, 3/19/24

LMS Promotion Ceremony: June 17th

LHS Graduation: June 18th

Sincerely,



Dr. Kristin P. O'Neil
Superintendent