



# The Panther Press

Your Source for News from Point Pleasant Borough Schools

VOLUME 24 • NUMBER 1

## Congratulations to Point Pleasant School District's 2023-2024 Retirees!

The Point Pleasant Borough School District would like to congratulate our retirees from the 2023-2024 school year. We thank each of you for your hard work, dedication, and most importantly, for enriching the lives of our students throughout your career!

### Point Pleasant Borough High School

**Cynthia Barry**  
Nurse

**Jeanmarie Harris**  
Resource Teacher

**Jill Nydam**  
School Counselor

**Cynthia Todd**  
Science Teacher

### Memorial Middle School

**Jacqueline Bruno**  
Cafeteria Manager

**Jacqueline Natter**  
Instructional Paraprofessional

**Donna Palermo**  
Special Education Teacher

**Elizabeth Stupar**  
Math Teacher

### Nellie Bennett Elementary School

**Judy Schaller**  
2nd Grade Teacher

### Ocean Road Elementary School

**Elizabeth Acerra**  
Instructional Paraprofessional

**Dania Bober**  
Special Education Teacher

**Mary Cawley**  
Music Teacher

**Nancy Morris**  
5th Grade Teacher

**Nanci Pogoda Ciccone**  
LDTTC

**Althea Zusi**  
Kindergarten Teacher

### District

**Jonathan Triebwasser**  
Supervisor of Transportation  
& Food Services



Congratulations to the Point Pleasant Borough High School Class of 2024!

## District Launches 17th Annual Summer Reading Program

The Point Pleasant Borough School District is pleased to announce the arrival of its 17th annual Summer Reading Program, "Adventure Begins at Your Library!" Running now through August 25th, the program encourages positive reading habits while also providing students the opportunity to earn prizes courtesy of the Point Pleasant Foundation for Excellence in Education and the schools' Parent Teacher Organizations.

"Our annual Summer Reading Program exemplifies the district's commitment to fostering a lifelong love of reading in our students," Director of Curriculum & Instruction Dr. Christine McCoid said. "We are grateful to the Point Pleasant Foundation for Excellence in Education and the Parent Teacher Organizations for their support in making this program a success. I encourage all students to dive into new books and explore the endless possibilities that reading offers!"

Throughout the program, students entering grades one through twelve are to record each

book they read on reading logs available on the district's Summer Reading Program webpage. Every participant who submits a completed reading log will be entered into a prize drawing at the start of the school year. Two winners from each grade level will be selected via random drawing, and one participant from each school will be randomly chosen for the grand prize.



Nellie Bennett students and staff kicked off the Summer Reading Program with "Beach Towel and a Book Day!"

*Continued on Page 3*

## Students Attend Environmental Sciences Symposium

On Friday, May 17th, the Point Pleasant Garden Club hosted a group of Point Pleasant Borough High School students and science teacher Gina Brewer at the Pollinator Point Environmental Sciences Symposium. Held at the Pollinator Point community garden at Borough Hall, the event included a full day of engaging presentations and activities, covering topics such as environmental engineering, coastal habitat restoration, community gardens, monarch butterfly migration, and soil assessment.

Becky Laboy, M.Ed., Education Outreach Coordinator for the Ocean County Soil Conservation District, led a hands-on soil assessment demonstration.

During this activity, students had the opportunity to sift, observe, and touch the various grades of soil particles.

"Start with Healthy Soil is the first step to a Jersey-Friendly garden, as exemplified by Pollinator Point," Ms. Laboy said. "It was a pleasure to 'dig' into the topic of soil and provide a fun and educational outdoor learning experience to the Point Pleasant Borough High School students at the Pollinator Point Environmental Sciences Symposium."

Another presenter, Bailey Sanders, a Stewardship Specialist with Barnegat Bay Partnership, played a game with the students that demonstrated the perils a monarch butterfly faces in its journey from Mexico to Canada.

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*Environmental Sciences Symposium (continued from page 1)*

“Pollinator Point provided the perfect backdrop for teaching the students about native plants,” Ms. Sanders said. “Being able to point out specific native plant species really looped in the concept of host plants for certain pollinators like the Monarch!”

The day’s events were coordinated by Heidi Riley, Co-Chairperson of the Pollinator Point Committee. According to Ms. Riley, when the Point Pleasant Garden Club developed Pollinator Point, one of the main goals was to use it for educational purposes and to share a sample native plant garden with the community.

“It was a great day to share a learning experience with some of the Borough’s Environmental Science class and club members,” Ms. Riley said. “Introducing the students to neighbors who are applying knowledge of the environment in a variety of ways to solve the many issues we face as a society, from creating access to fresh produce through a community garden with ARC to developing methods to clean up waterways or restore shorelines for greater storm protection, hopefully will encourage them to continue to study the sciences, or be aware of the impact of their future decisions on the environment.



Students participated in a hands-on soil assessment activity.



The students were engaged and had an opportunity to gain knowledge in a relaxed and informal setting. The Point Pleasant Garden Club Pollinator Point Committee is proud to be able to create this opportunity in coordination with the Point Pleasant Borough Schools.”

Ms. Brewer thanks Ms. Riley and the Garden Club for coordinating this event, and she looks forward to taking her Environmental Science students on this field trip each year.

“Thank you to Heidi and the Garden Club for all their effort in putting this event together,” Ms. Brewer said. “I received great feedback from the kids, especially with all of the different speakers and activities they enjoyed. Each student had something they were able to relate to. The students were able to see and hear how what they have been learning all year is used in the real world, and they were able to participate in discussions with the speakers and the activities at a higher level than most high school students. Each time they knew something, I would see their excited faces, and they were proud of themselves. I look forward to continuing this field trip each year.”

Director of Curriculum & Instruction Dr. Christine McCoid is grateful that our students were afforded the opportunity to

learn from the Garden Club at Pollinator Point.

“The Pollinator Point Environmental Sciences Symposium provided a fantastic opportunity for our students to engage with professionals who are tackling real-world environmental issues,” she said. “This hands-on experience not only enhanced their understanding of key environmental science topics but also inspired them to think critically about their role in protecting our natural world. We are so grateful to Heidi Riley, the Point Pleasant Garden Club, and all of our community partners for taking the time to create such a valuable and fun learning opportunity for our students. We look forward to our continued partnership and collaboration!”

**Sharpen Your Math Skills With IXL Summer Bootcamp!**

Stop the summer slide! Students in kindergarten through 8th grade or taking Algebra 1 are encouraged to sharpen their math skills this summer through IXL. Complete math activities for a chance to win a prize in September!

Students entering kindergarten through 4th grade who would like to participate should visit the IXL Summer Math Bootcamp webpage on the district website and click on the link associated with their grade level. As students complete math activities, fill out the provided “Skills I Practiced” worksheet and hand it in the first week of school.

Students entering 5th through 8th grade or Algebra 1 are directed to log in to their IXL account and begin working on the plan that has been set up for them. Student practice will be recorded by IXL. Complete activities throughout the summer months to be featured on our Summer Bootcamp Leaderboard!

For more information, please visit [www.pointpleasant.k12.nj.us/summerbootcamp](http://www.pointpleasant.k12.nj.us/summerbootcamp).

**District Accepting Preschool Enrollment Requests on July 13**

If awarded state funding, the Point Pleasant Borough School District will offer free full-day preschool for 3 and 4-year-old Point Pleasant residents beginning in January 2025.

The district will accept enrollment requests online only on Saturday, July 13, 2024, from 9 AM to 4 PM. Please scan the QR code or visit the district website to access the enrollment request form. Complete this form only if your child will be age 3 or age 4 on or before October 1, 2024.

Please note that completion of this form does not guarantee placement for your child. Should the district receive funding to open preschool classrooms, enrollment will be on a first-come, first-served basis, after certain state-funding placement requirements are met.

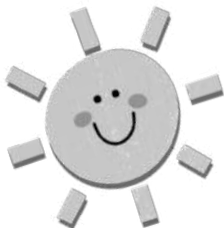
Parents/guardians will be contacted about their child's enrollment status after the district is notified in the fall regarding funding.

Parents/guardians of students offered enrollment will be required to appear in person and provide the following

documentation at the time of registration:

- Photocopy of child’s birth certificate
- Photocopy of current deed or lease indicating a Point Pleasant Borough address
- Photocopies of three current documents showing a Point Pleasant Borough address
- Photocopy of child’s immunization records to date

If you anticipate not having access to the internet on the day the form opens, please contact Dr. Christine McCoid at [cmccoid@pointpleasant.k12.nj.us](mailto:cmccoid@pointpleasant.k12.nj.us) for assistance no later than July 11, 2024.



Scan here to access the preschool enrollment request form!



Summer Reading (continued from page 1)

Students can select books of their choice, however, parents are encouraged to help their children choose appropriate books for their age and ability. The International Reading Association suggests that parents look for reading materials that relate to their child’s interests, such as baseball, swimming, animals, or nature. Families should keep in mind that reading materials come in many forms. In addition to books, children’s magazines or online resources may link to a child’s interest. Book recommendations and digital book resources can be found on the Summer Reading Program webpage.

“The long-awaited summer months are finally here, and while fun in the sun is top of mind for us all, we’re also thinking about how we can help encourage students to keep reading over the summer,” Elementary Reading Specialist Lori Cordasco said. “Summer reading is critical not only for helping kids maintain learning while school is out, but also for fostering social-emotional development, discovering the joy of stories, and elevating the

importance of lifelong learning.” Summer Reading Bingo is also available on our webpage to help further engage elementary students in the books they read. Reading Bingo encourages students to participate in a variety of fun activities and provides book recommendations. Bingo board squares include suggestions such as reading a book with a friend and using your library card to check out a book. Additionally, the district is celebrating students' favorite books on the Summer Reading Program Instagram account, @ptbororeads. Students can submit pictures throughout the summer for the opportunity to be featured in an Instagram post. Suggestions include a picture at the library, a favorite reading spot, and a book you’re excited to read this summer.

“Just like any muscle, it's important for our students to maintain their 'reading muscles' that they have worked hard building all school year,” Supervisor of Humanities Heather Karagias said. “Our intent with

promoting the Summer Reading Program is to foster a love for reading while increasing reading stamina as our students enter the 2024-25 school year.” For more information, please visit [www.pointpleasant.k12.nj.us/summerreading](http://www.pointpleasant.k12.nj.us/summerreading).

Happy Reading!



Looking for a book to add to your summer reading list? Ms. Hoffman recommends *The Lemonade War* by Jacqueline Davies!

"Evan and Jessie are siblings who launch an all-out war to see who can sell the most lemonade before school starts! Evan is good at talking with people, especially adults. Jessie is really smart, especially in math. Read to find out who wins the lemonade war!"

Introducing the 2024 Principals’ Teachers of Special Recognition

The Point Pleasant Foundation for Excellence in Education plays an essential role in the district. Whether through grant programs, scholarships, or various recognition programs, the Foundation consistently supports our schools, staff, and students. Administration from each school selects one exemplary teacher or staff member every year to receive the Foundation’s Principal’s Teacher of Special Recognition Award. This year, the recipients of this prestigious award are Caitlin Jensen, Point Pleasant Borough High School; William Pirl, Memorial Middle School; Bridget Cook, Nellie F. Bennett Elementary School; and Alison Soltis, Ocean Road Elementary School.



CAITLIN JENSEN,  
POINT PLEASANT  
BOROUGH HIGH  
SCHOOL

Ms. Caitlin Jensen has completed her 8th year as an English teacher at Point Pleasant Borough High School. She is a true professional who takes on new challenges and is always eager to help others. She has also revitalized the high school’s Journalism class and publishes the Point Press, the school newspaper. She has demonstrated her leadership within the English department by leading numerous trainings. Outside of the classroom, Ms. Jensen has been a class advisor for the past five years. After her seniors graduated last year, she then became the Class Advisor for the freshmen class (Class of 2027). This important role requires high levels of organization, professionalism, and a strong rapport with students. In addition to this extremely active role, Ms. Jensen can also be found at many after-school events to support her students. In a relatively short period of time, she has immersed herself into the Point Pleasant community. Ms. Jensen is humble, kind, collaborative, and always eager to take on a new challenge. She is

the ideal candidate for the Foundation’s Principal’s Teacher of Special Recognition Award!



WILLIAM PIRL,  
MEMORIAL MIDDLE  
SCHOOL

It is an honor to recognize Mr. William Pirl as Memorial Middle School’s Teacher of Special Recognition for the 2023-2024 school year. Mr. Pirl is in his 6th year as a distinguished Teacher of Life Science in our 7th grade. Mr. Pirl is an outstanding educator who emphasizes "real life" hands-on experiences in his classroom. He promotes extensive student engagement through a variety of activities, which often center around local environments such as the Barnegat Bay and the Slade Dale Sanctuary. Mr. Pirl is also eager to share his energy and expertise outside of the classroom. He is a leader on the School Improvement Panel, a frequent presenter during school and district professional development programs, and he often hosts science teachers from across the district in his classroom to observe his instructional techniques. He has also supported our Panther athletes for many years as a coach with our track team. In addition, Mr. Pirl has served as a Team Leader in his grade level. We are extremely fortunate to have Mr. Pirl here at Memorial Middle School. He makes MMS better!



BRIDGET COOK,  
NELLIE F. BENNETT  
ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL

Ms. Bridget Cook is a caring, positive, and humble educator. More importantly, she is an incredible human being. She leads by example both in and outside of the

classroom and is a tremendous role model for her staff and students alike. In addition to her current position as a fifth-grade teacher, Ms. Cook has served as an educator in various positions at Nellie F. Bennett School, including Think Tank advisor, Basic Skills instructor, and remote Kindergarten teacher. In essence, Ms. Cook has a can-do, will-do, must-do attitude! She continues to be a respected and resilient educator whose work ethic and dedication to her students are only surpassed by her gracious demeanor and gentle spirit. We are proud to congratulate Ms. Cook as this year’s Teacher of Special Recognition!



ALISON SOLTIS,  
OCEAN ROAD  
ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL

It is a pleasure to recognize Ms. Alison Soltis as Ocean Road School’s 2023-2024 Point Pleasant Foundation Teacher of Special Recognition. Ms. Soltis is an exceptional teacher with a high level of expertise and a passion for her craft. She has an extensive repertoire of instructional strategies that she tailors to meet the needs of each child in her Basic Skills classes. Ms. Soltis is flexible and creative in scheduling students, often spending extra individual time during the week with children who need her most. She is positive, peppy, and kind, leading children and staff members at Ocean Road School to enjoy spending their days with Ms. Soltis. We are very proud to name Ms. Soltis as Ocean Road School’s Teacher of Special Recognition!





# Superintendent’s Message

Dear Point Pleasant School Community,

As commencement ceremonies were held across our campuses, the buses made their final runs, and the Class of 2024’s graduation hats flew on Al Saner Field, we closed out another school year. This year marked some solid progress for Point Pleasant Schools. We’ve witnessed our remarkable students navigate the challenges of learning and growing together while charting their own Panther Paths.

In our schools, teachers, counselors, support staff, and administrators strive to engage students in enriching learning activities and challenges to ignite passion, build resilience, and unlock their full potential. This year, we saw that come to life in countless ways, from the growth of our authentic learning experiences to our clubs and activities fostering student leadership and community building.

At Point Pleasant Borough High School, our athletic teams experienced significant success throughout the school year! Our fall Girls Soccer, Football, Field Hockey, and Boys & Girls Cross Country teams earned divisional titles. The winter Girls Track team won the Ocean County Relay Champions title, and our spring Girls Track, Softball, and Baseball teams finished the school year strong with divisional titles. The Performing Arts Department was also busy! Students put on an outstanding spring musical of *Big Fish* and an immersive student-led production of *Marian, or the True Tale of Robin Hood*. Additionally, we recognized the Competition Marching Band earlier this year for winning the Tournament of Bands Atlantic Coast Championship in Hershey, PA.

Our students' academic achievement and extracurricular and co-curricular involvement have helped ensure their acceptance to some of the best colleges and universities, including New York University, Auburn University, University of Mississippi, DeSales University, Holy Family University, Lehigh University, Penn State University, and Ithaca College. Through the District's partnership with Ocean County College and its Early College program, our students can take classes for college credit while still in high school. Our district families and students who participated in this program during the 2023-2024 school year saved a total of \$669,175 due to a reduced tuition rate. We look forward to continuing our partnership with Ocean County College next school year. At the annual Point Pleasant Borough High School Senior Scholarship Evening, students were awarded scholarships totaling \$223,595. The Class of 2024 has a lot to be proud of during their time in Point Pleasant Schools, and we wish them the best as they embark on a new journey.

Memorial Middle School also had a lot to celebrate! We were proud to honor our 8th graders at the annual Middle School Awards Ceremony, and we recognized all our students who had won the Point Pleasant Student Voices Essay Contest throughout the school year. Students enjoyed multiple PBSIS events as the school year came to a close. The middle school held its Students vs. Staff Basketball Game and Pep Rally, where the school community came together to celebrate PBSIS, participate in challenges, and win awesome prizes! Additionally, students enjoyed participating in various fun games, sports, art, and mindfulness activities at the end-of-the-year PBSIS Field Day. We congratulate the 8th grade Class of 2024 and look forward to seeing what they will accomplish at the high school level!

Our elementary schools wrapped up the school year with exciting events and annual traditions, such as Field Day, No Child Left Inside Day, Bike Rodeos, kindergarten shows, art shows, chorus and band concerts, and more. Thanks to the amazing generosity of our school community, Nellie Bennett and Ocean Road collected almost 500 boxes of cereal for Panthers, Let’s Eat! Students enjoyed participating in a “cereal domino challenge” with the donated boxes. Our 5th-grade students were proud to be recognized at their promotion ceremonies, and we are excited to watch them continue on their journey at Memorial Middle School!

As we enjoy summer, let’s use this time to reflect on the achievements of this past year and all the possibilities that lie ahead. As a community, Point Pleasant Brough supports its students through recreation programs, extracurricular activities, community events, and simple messages of encouragement. Together, we can ensure every student thrives on their unique Panther Path.

Sincerely,



Adam L. Angelozzi, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools



Adam L. Angelozzi, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools



## The Panther Press

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### District Mission Statement

Hub of the Community in the  
Borough of Point Pleasant

Supporting Students in Safe, Nurturing,  
and Inclusive Schools

Promoting Passion and Resilience  
through Diverse and Challenging  
Learning Opportunities

Guiding Students Towards Developing  
Leadership and Interpersonal Skills while  
Achieving Their Full Potential

Helping Students Find and Navigate  
Their Panther Paths

# Student Reflections: Senior Spotlight

The Class of 2024 shares post-secondary plans, how their time at Point Pleasant Borough High School has prepared them for life after graduation, and what they will miss most about high school!

*“I plan to go to college and become an English teacher at a high school. My time at Point Boro has taught me that I shouldn’t change who I am for anyone else, to live my own life free from fear of judgment, and to stick with the people who care about my true self the most.”* - Chase L.

*“I will be attending Penn State University to major in graphic design and minor in creative writing! This school has prepared me by making me feel comfortable reaching out to teachers, and it has taught me how to look for lifelong friends.”* - Mia R.

*“I plan to attend Auburn University to study neuroscience”* - Ava V.

*“I plan to attend the University of New Haven with a major in Forensic Science and a masters degree in Chemistry. I can’t wait to meet new people and make lifelong friends for an amazing future. My goal is to get a job right from college and along the way travel the world.”* - Paige M.

*“I will be attending the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss).”* - Marley K.

*“I will be majoring in Physical Education at East Stroudsburg University. My time at Point Boro helped me find my passion and it gave me many lessons to bring with me moving forward.”* - Jared D.

*“My plan after graduation is to attend college at TCNJ and study marketing. I’ve learned many skills from high school such as time management, independence, and that hard work pays off.”* - Anna C.

*“I will be attending Montclair State University and majoring in Justice Studies. I will also be a member of their cheerleading team.”* - Ava C.

*“My plan after graduation is to travel a lot this summer then continue my education at OCC for business. After one year, I have a plan to transfer to Rutgers and probably graduate from there. My time at Point Boro prepared me for life after high school by showing me that as a community, anything is possible. Be kind to the people around you and do not take what you have for granted. The Point Boro community makes this place a special place to be.”* - Natalia H.

*“I will be attending Lehigh University & Majoring in International Relations. My time at Point Boro taught me valuable life lessons and has given me wonderful mentors and friendships.”* - Adelaide V.

*“I am attending Wagner College to complete an accelerated/dual enrollment, Bachelors in Science/ Masters in Advanced Physician Assistant Studies. After becoming a Physician Assistant I plan to work in the emergency department or in trauma surgery.”*  
- Robyn K.

*“I plan to attend Ocean County College to study Business Administration and minor in Sports Management. My goal is to work for a big sports business brand such as the Philadelphia Eagles or Under Armour. I will miss all of the friends I made through the years from Point Pleasant and from other school districts. I will also miss our student activities such as our Friday Night Football games, Be on Point pep rallies, starring in school plays and musicals, performing in our award-winning marching band, and our school proms.”* - Ryan K.

*“I plan to continue my academic and athletic career at the University of Rhode Island and get my masters in marine biology.”* - Nathan R.

